

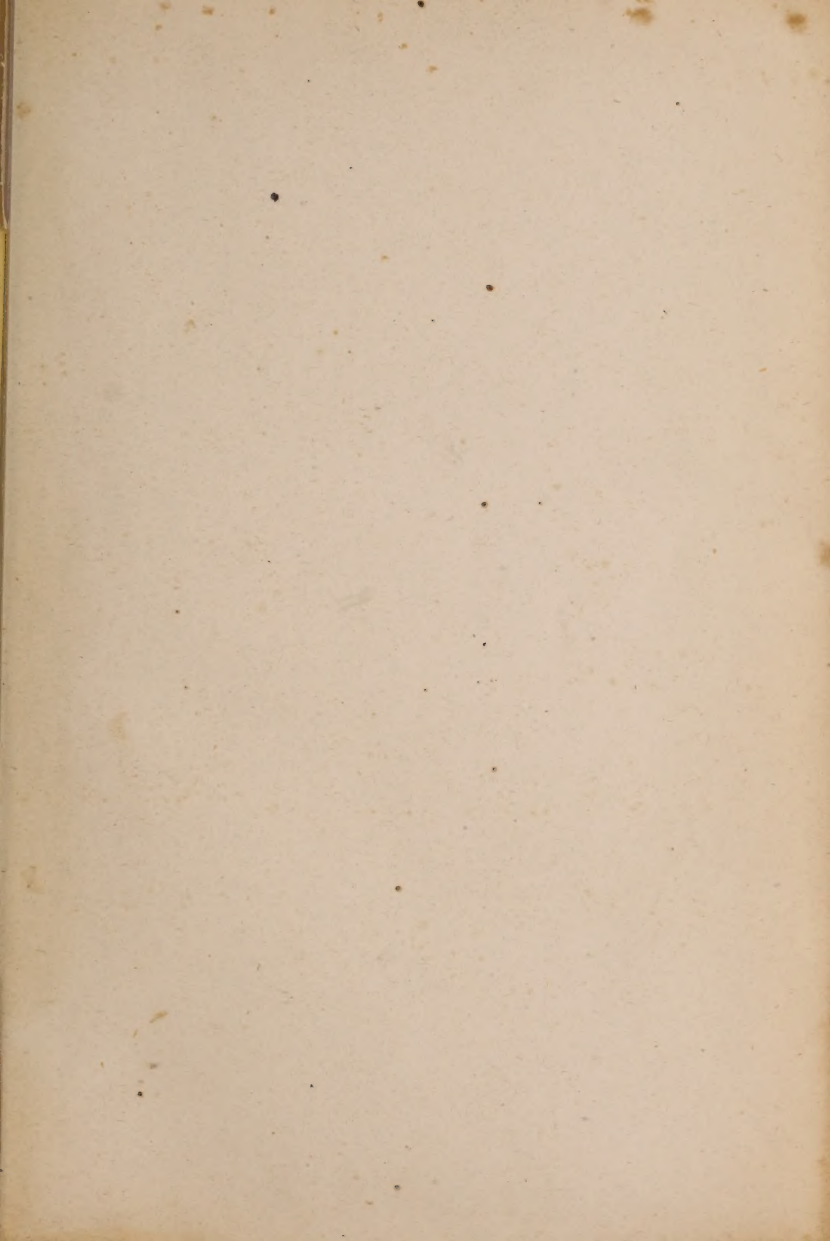
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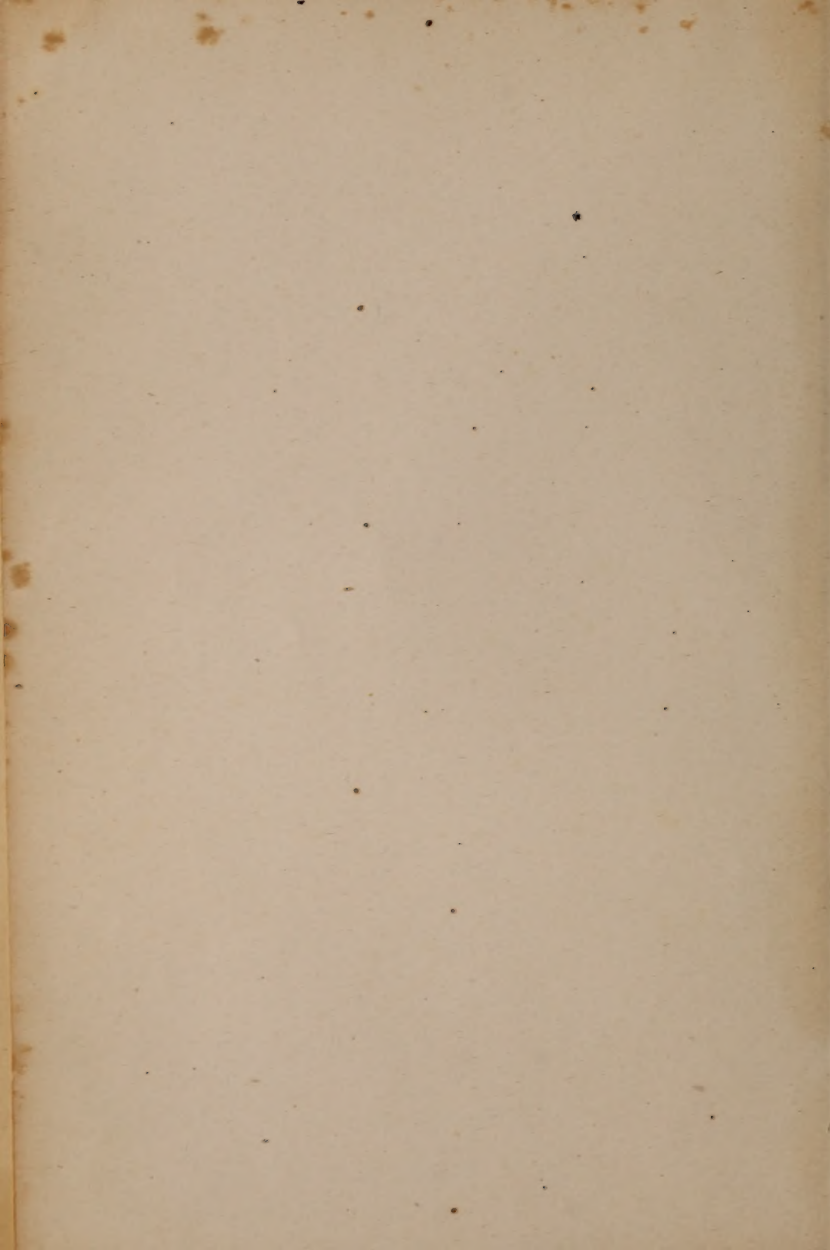
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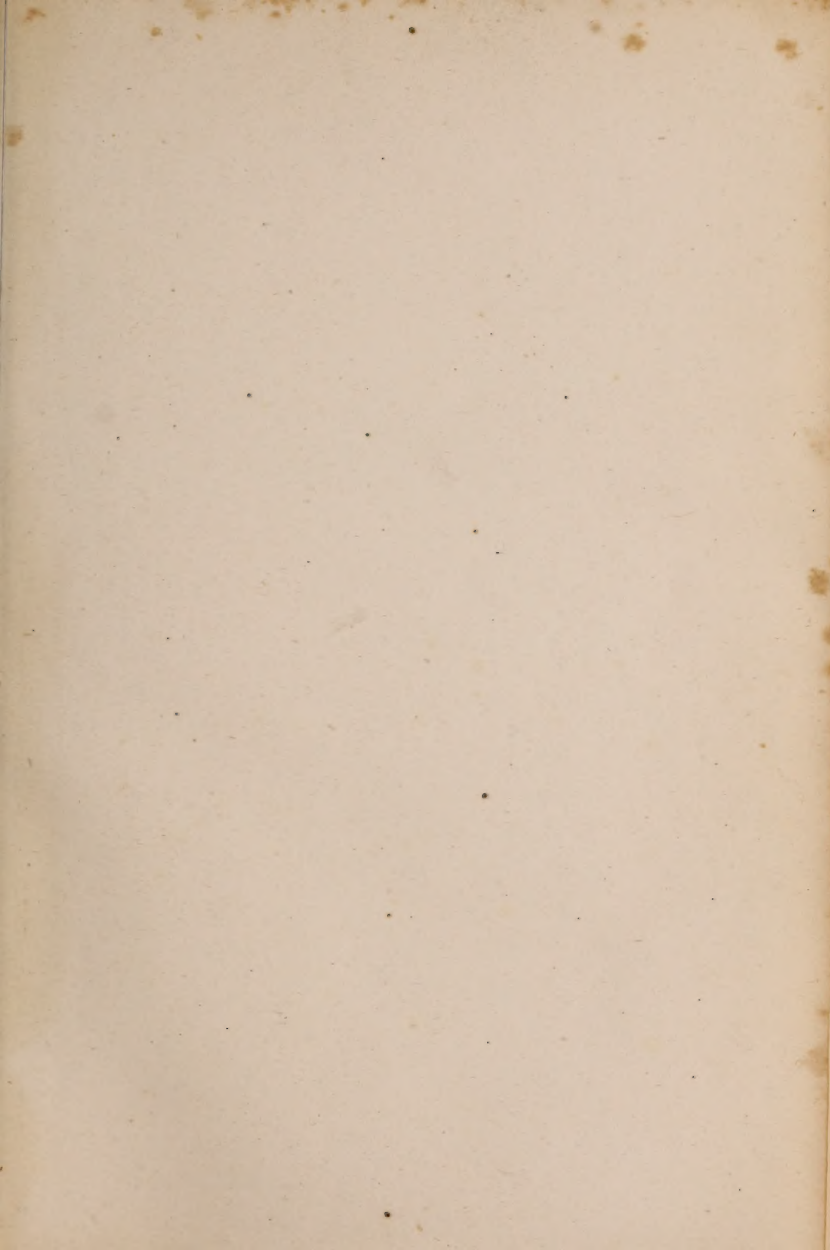
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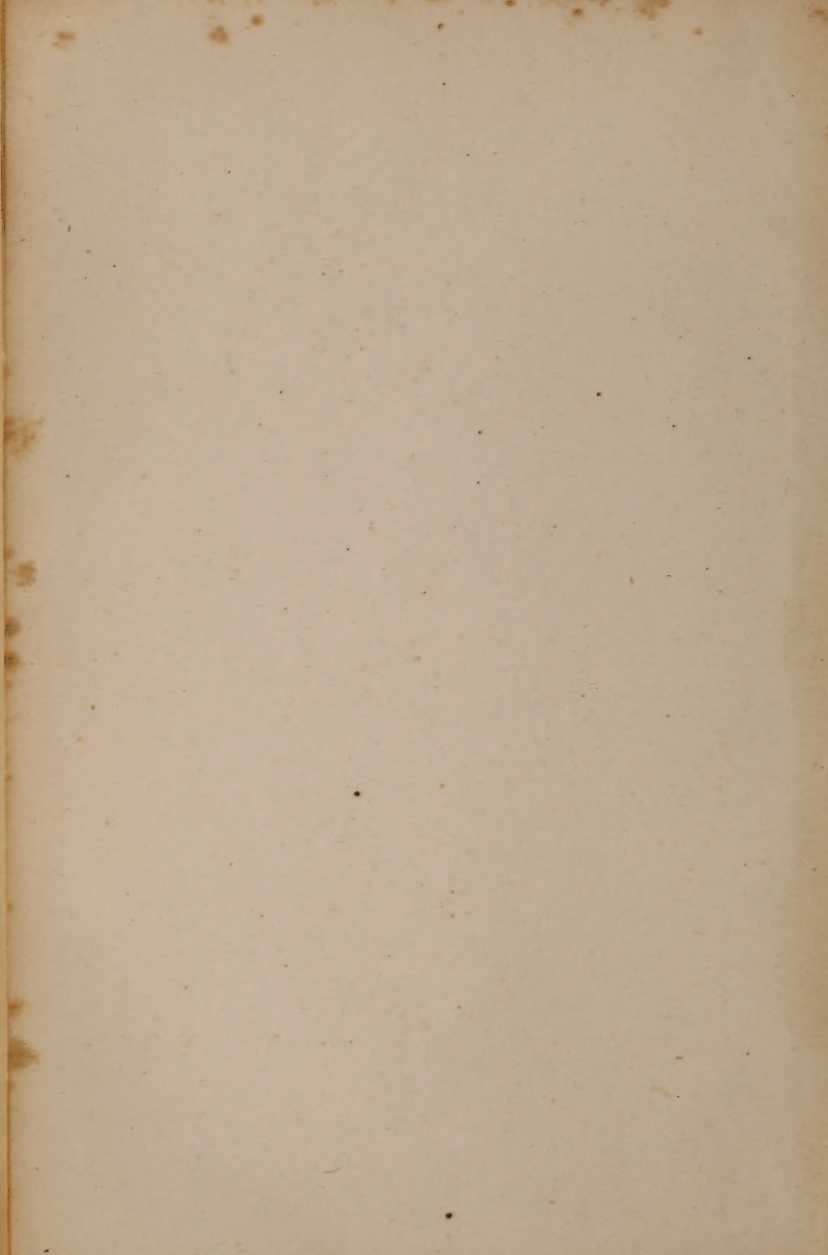
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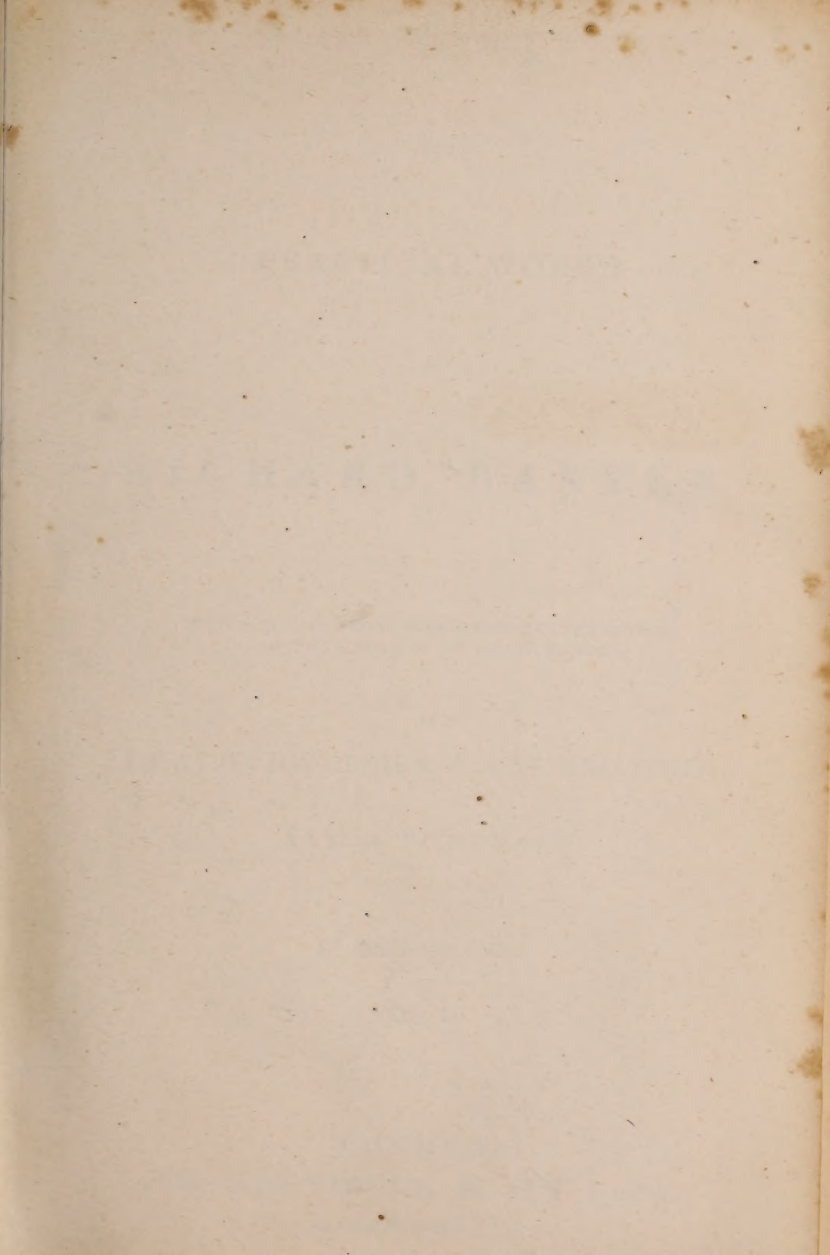


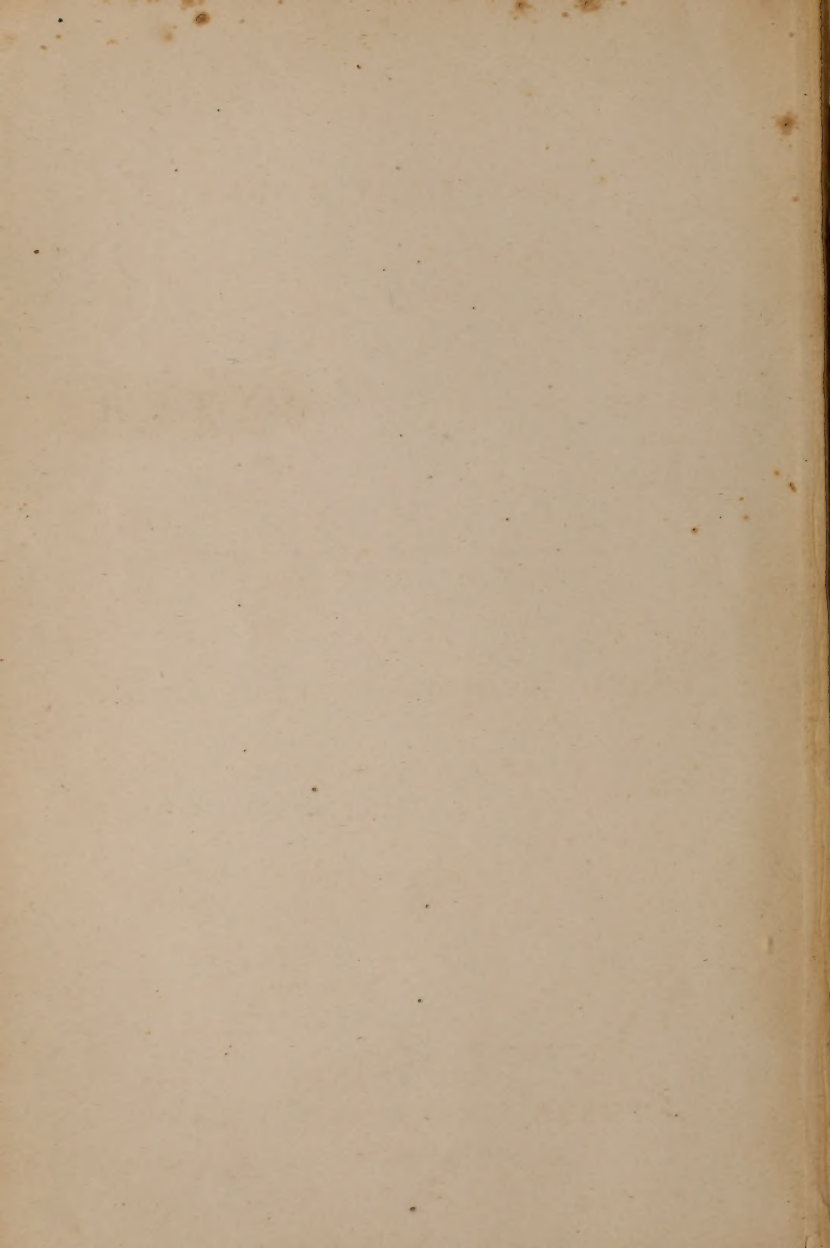












THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF
RICHARD BAXTER:

WITH A PREFACE, GIVING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR,
AND OF THIS EDITION OF HIS PRACTICAL WORKS;

AN
ESSAY ON HIS GENIUS, WORKS, AND TIMES ;
AND A PORTRAIT.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE REASONS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

THE FIRST PART, OF GODLINESS;

PROVING BY NATURAL EVIDENCE THE BEING OF GOD, THE NECESSITY OF HOLINESS, AND A FUTURE LIFE OF RETRIBUTION; THE SINFULNESS OF THE WORLD; THE DESERT OF HELL; AND WHAT HOPE OF RECOVERY MERITS INTIMATE.

THE SECOND PART, OF CHRISTIANITY;

PROVING BY EVIDENCE, SUPERNATURAL AND NATURAL, THE CERTAIN TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEF, AND ANSWERING THE OBJECTIONS OF UNBELIEVERS.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

BECAUSE there are some who, judging of others by themselves, will say, What need this labour among christians, to prove a God, a life to come, and the truth of the gospel? or, at least, what need is there of it after so much already written? I take myself obliged to give you an account of this attempt; for my own reason is much against overdoing, and wasting our little time in things superfluous, which is but enough for necessary things; but it hath recorded this among the *indubitata*; *boni raro nimis*; *optimi nunquam*; *indifferentis sapissime*; *mali semper*.

The true reasons of this work are no fewer than these following. 1. *Quod cogitamus, loquimur*: that which is most and deepest in my thoughts, is aptest to break forth to others. Man is a communicative creature. Though it be to my shame, I must confess, that necessity, through perplexed thoughts, hath made this subject much of my meditations: it is the subject which I have found most necessary and most useful to myself; and I have reason enough to think that many others may be as weak as I, and I would fain have those partake of my satisfaction who have partaken of my difficulties.

2. I perceive, that because it is taken for a shame to doubt of our christianity, and the life to come, this hindereth many from uttering their doubts, who never get them well resolved, but remain half infidels within, whilst the ensigns of Christ are hung without, and need much help, though they are ashamed to tell their needs; and prudent charity will relieve those who are ashamed to beg.

3. As the true knowledge of God is the beginning and maintainer of all holiness and honesty of heart and life; so latent atheism and infidelity, in the minds of hypocrites in the church, is the root of their profaneness, dishonesty, and wickedness. Did they seriously believe as christians, they would not live as the enemies of christianity. I take it, therefore, to be the surest and most expeditious cure of the security, presumption, pride, perfidiousness, sensuality, and wickedness of these hypocrites, to convince them that there is a God, and a life to come, and that the gospel is true.

4. And this profaneness and sensuality tendeth to greater infidelity. They that will not live as they profess to believe, may most easily be drawn to believe and profess as they are willing to live: and therefore this prognostic commandeth me to endeavour to prevent men's open profession of infidelity, lest the

present torrent of ungodliness, selfishness, malice, uncharitableness, perjury, treachery, faction, whoredom, and other sensualities, should fall into this gulf, or one that is not much unlike it.

5. The best complain of the imperfection of their faith : and too many good christians, especially if melancholy surprise them, are haunted with such temptations to atheism, blasphemy, and unbelief, as make their lives a burden to them : and one that hath heard so many of their complaints as I have done, is excusable for desiring to relieve them. It hath many a time been matter of wonder to me to observe, that there is scarce one deep, melancholy person among ten, religious or not religious before, but is followed with violent suggestions to doubt of the Godhead, and of the truth of the gospel, or to utter some word of blasphemy against God : and he that must pray, Lord, increase my faith, and help my unbelief, must use other means as well as pray.

6. The imperfection of our faith (even about the gospel, and the life to come) is the secret root of all our faults, of the weakness of every other grace, of our yielding to temptations, and of the carelessness, badness, and barrenness of our lives. So transcendent are the concerns of the life to come, that a certain, clear, and firm belief of them would even deride temptations, and bear down all the trifles of this world, by what names or titles soever dignified, as things not worthy of a look or thought. What manner of person will that man be, in all holy conversation and godliness, who, believing that all these things must be dissolved, doth look for the coming of Christ, and for the blessed consequents ! 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12, 14 ; 2 Thess. i. 10. Oh what a life would that man live ! What prayers, what praises, what holy discourse would employ his tongue ! With what abhorrence would he reject the baits of sin, who did but see, but once see, those unseen and future things, which every christian professeth to believe ! How contentably would he think and speak, both of the pleasures and the sufferings of this dreaming life, in comparison of the everlasting things ! What serious desires, and labours, and joys, and patience, would such a sight procure ! How much more holy and heavenly would it make even those that, by the purblind world, are thought to exceed herein already ! And if we took our belief to be as certain as our sight, believing would do greater matters than it doth. I oft think what one told me that an infidel answered him, when he asked him how he could quiet his conscience in such a desperate state : saith he, I rather wonder how you can quiet your conscience in such a common, careless course of life, believing as you do. If I believed such things as you do, I should think no care, and diligence, and holiness could be enough.

7. The soul in flesh is so much desirous of a sensitive way of apprehension ; and sensible things being still before us, do so increase this malady, and divert the mind from spiritual things, that we have all great need of the clearest evidence, and the most suitable, and frequent, and taking explication of them that can possibly be given us ; not only to make us believe things unseen, but to make us serious, and practical, and affectionate about the things which, in a sort, we do believe, to keep drowsy hearts awake.

8. The way of taking religion upon trust, without rising up to make it our own, hath filled the church so full of hypocrites, who have no better than a human faith, that thereby the complexion of it is much changed from its primitive beauty ; and thousands do perish by self-deceit : and though some of their gifts be serviceable to the gospel, others of them do more effectually serve the devil, against the cause and servants of Christ, than they could have done if they were professed infidels.

9. It makes me blush, and stirs my indignation, to read and hear abundance of hot and vehement disputes, and tedious or critical discourses, about many small, less needful things, by those men that never studied the foundation, nor can with sense and reason defend their christianity against an infidel. Such preposterous methods are perverse and nauseous.

10. I am much afraid lest many of those ignorant, zealous christians, who now turn to that sectary whom they cannot answer, would turn to the infidels at last, when they find themselves unable to confute them, through their own insufficiency and ungroundedness in the truth.

11. But if they do not apostatize, what a shame will it be to the church of God, to have our religion thus betrayed by such as are not able to defend it ! And how many others may it tempt to infidelity, to hear an ignorant christian baffled !

12. I am too sure that too many teachers that should be champions for the truth are lamentably unfurnished for such a conflict, by neglecting the study of the foundation, and bestowing all their thoughts on the superstructure.

13. I know that it is God's method to cause the growth of faith at the root, in proportion to its growth in tallness and in fruit. It is his merciful providence to keep those, whose faith hath weaker roots, from the strong temptations which others undergo. As the plant that is little doth bear but little of the stroke of the winds, which else would quickly overturn it ; but the root growing downwards as the top growth upwards, the radication and the assaults are still proportioned ; so faith must grow equally in its roots and branches while we live. Had I felt as strong assaults against my faith while I was young, as I have done since, I am not sure it would have escaped an overthrow.

14. I have, in the anatomizing of the controversies which most hazard the church of Christ, found so much latent atheism and infidelity, that I think, among many, that do not observe it, the true root of all the difference is, whether there be a God, and a life to come, and whether the Scriptures be true ? And I think that a sound agreement in these would do more to the ending of such controversies, and to the healing of our wounds, than any disputing of the controverted points.

15. We have had hot and scandalous disputes among christians, *de resolutione fidei*, each party invalidating the other's foundations, as if it had been our work to persuade the infidel world that they are in the right ; and I thought it the only way to end that controversy, to open all the causes of our faith. The Roman party may here perceive our grounds, and better know into what we resolve our faith, than if we named only one sort of cause, and said, I resolve it into this ; as if all the frame had but one wheel. Faith hath variety of causes and objects, into which, respectively, it may be said to be resolved (by those that will not use an insignificant word, to make people believe there is a difference when there is none, and to keep men from understanding the matter itself). Augustine saith of his friend Nebudius, (Ep. xxiii. Bonif.) That he exceedingly hated a short answer to a great question, and took it ill where he might be free of any that did expect it from him. Answer me in a word, is the command of an ignorant or a slothful person, or of a deceiver, when a word is not capable of the necessary answer.

16. There is no more desirable work in the world than the converting of idolaters and infidels to God, and to the christian faith ; and it is a work which requireth the greatest judgment and zeal in them that must perform it. It is a doleful thought, that five parts of the world are still heathens and Mahometans, and that christian princes and preachers do no more to their recovery, but are taken up with sad contentions among themselves ; and that the few that have attempted it have hitherto had so small success. The opening of the true method for such a work is the highest part of my design, in which, though many others have excellently laboured, (especially Savonarola, Campanella, Ficinus, Vives, Micrælius, Duplessis, Grotius, and our Stillingfleet,) my zeal for the saving of men's souls hath provoked me to try whether I might add any thing to their more worthy labours, in point of method and perspicuity of proof.

17. Lastly, I have long ago written much on this subject, which is dispersed and buried in the midst of other subjects, except my book of the "Unreasonableness of Infidelity;" and I thought it more edifying to set it in order together by itself. If these reasons justify not my undertaking, I have no better. The Lord have mercy on this dark, distracted, sensual world ! Christians, watch, pray, love, live, hope, rejoice, and patiently suffer, according to this holy faith which you profess, and you shall be blessed in despite of earth and hell.

Your brother in this life of faith,

RICHARD BAXTER.

October 31, 1666.

Virtus fidei in periculis secunda est ; securitate periclitatur.—CHRYST. IN MATT. XX.

TO THE DOUBTING AND THE UNBELIEVING READERS.

THE natural love to knowledge and to myself, which belong to me as I am a man, have commanded me to look beyond this life, and diligently to inquire, whether there be any certainty of a better, and which is the way to it, and to whom it doth of right belong ; and what I have certainly discovered in this search, the love of mankind, and of truth, and of God, oblige me to communicate : but it was not a cursory glance at truth, nor a look towards it afar off, in my state of ignorance and diversion, which brought the satisfying light into my mind, nor can you reasonably expect it should do so by you. I saw that in one Savonarola, Campanella, Ficinus, Vives, Mornay, Grotius, Camaron, Micrælius, which I now see might satisfy all the world, if it were duly received ; but it was not a bare reading of one or all of these and others, which was a due reception : I found, that truth must be so long retained, and faithfully elaborated, by a diligent and willing mind, till it be concocted into a clear methodical understanding, and the scheme or analysis of it have left upon the soul its proper image, by an orderly and deep impression ; yea, till the goodness of the matter become as nutriment, blood, and spirits to the will, before it is truly made our own : it expecteth, I say, not greater courtship, but more cordial friendship, than a transient salute, before it will unveil its glory, and illustrate, beautify, and bless the soul : it is food and physic ; it will nourish and heal ; but not by a bare look or hearsay, nor by the reading of the prescript. Could I procure the reader to do his part, I doubt not but this treatise will suffice, on its part, to bring in that light, which the *sagæ*, the *lemures*, and *dæmones* of atheism, infidelity, and ungodliness, will not be able to endure.

But I am far from expecting universal success : no ; not if I brought a book from heaven. The far greatest part have unprepared minds, and will not come up to the price of truth ; and nothing is more sure than that *recipitur ad modum recipientis ; et pro capto lectoris habent sua fata libelli*. These drones imagine that they are fit to judge of a Scripture difficulty, or of an argument concerning the mysteries of religion, before they know what it is to be a man, or understand the alphabet of nature, even those points which supernatural revelations pre-suppose : such uncapableness in the reader is as great a hindrance, as the want of solid proof and evidence in the writer. Most men are drowned in filthy sensuality or worldly cares, and their relish is vitiated by luscious vanities ; their reason is debased by subjection to the flesh, and darkened and debilitated by long alienation from its proper work ; and yet they are so constituted of ignorance and pride, that they can neither understand plain truth, nor perceive that it is long of themselves that they understand it not ; and slothfulness and sensuality have so far conquered humanity itself, even the natural love of truth and of themselves, that they will take up with what their play-fellows have taught them, and venture their souls and their everlasting concerns, unless they can secure them by an idle, gamesome, fleshly life, or grow wise by the short, superficial studies of an alienated, unwilling, tired mind. Unless the great things of God and immortality will be savingly known by a few distracted thoughts of a discomposed mind, or the rambling talk of their companions, whose heads are as unfurnished and giddy as their own, or by the cursory perusal of a few books which cross not their carnal interest and humour in the midst of their more beloved employments and delights, they will neither be solid christians nor wise and honest men. If God will be conversed with in the midst of their feasting, cups, and oaths ; in their pride and revelling, and with their whores ; if he will be found of them that hate his holiness, and all that love it and seriously obey him, then God shall be their God, and Christ shall be their Saviour ; and if this be the way, they may become good christians ; but if retired, serious thoughts be necessary, and an honest faithfulness to what they know, they must be excused. They that know that it is not an hour's perusal of a book of astronomy, geometry, music, physic, &c. which will serve to make them skillful in these arts, do expect to attain far higher wisdom by inconsiderable industry and search ; and will not be wise, unless they can be taught by vision in their dreams, or in the crowd and noise of worldly business and of fleshly lusts.

I find that it is a difficult task which I have undertaken, to be the instructor of such men : if I be large

and copious, their laziness will not suffer them to read it: if I be concise, I cannot satisfy their expectations; for they think nothing well proved, if every objection be not answered, which idle, cavilling brains can bring: neither have they sufficient attentiveness for brevity, nor will their ignorance allow them to understand it. The contradictive vices of their minds do call for impossibilities for the cure. Their incapacity saith, It must be a full explication, or I cannot apprehend the sense or truth: their averseness and slothfulness say, It must be short, or I shall be tired with it, or cannot have while to read it. I cannot answer both these expectations to the full; but though the greatness of the matter have made the book bigger than I intended, the nauseating stomach of most readers hath persuaded me to avoid unnecessary words. And as big as the book is, I must tell the reader, that the style is so far from redundancies, though some things be oft repeated, that if he will not chew the particular words, but swallow them whole, and bestow his labour only on the sentences, I shall suppose that he hath not read the book.

Ficinus very truly noteth, that while children and youth are sufficiently conscious of their ignorance, to keep in a learning course, they may do well; but when they first grow to a confidence of their own understandings, and at ripeness of age imagine that their wits are ripe, and think that their unfurnished minds, because they have a natural quickness, are competent judges of all that they read; then they are most in danger of infidelity, and of being undone for ever (from eighteen to twenty-eight being the most perilous age. But if God keep them as humble, diligent learners, till they have orderly gone through their course of studies, and sanctify their greener youthful knowledge, they then grow up to be confirmed christians. Ficin. De Verit. Rel. cap. iii. It is, therefore, the diligence and patience of the reader which I still entreat, and not his belief: for I will beg nothing of his understanding but justice to the truth; but supposing God's help, do trust to the cogeny of evidence.

Yet I must tell you, that I expect the reader, by the truths which he learneth, should be able himself to answer a hundred trivial objections, which are here passed by: and that in particular textual difficulties, he have recourse to commentaries and tractates on those subjects: for this book is long enough already. He that will diligently consider the connexion of the consequent propositions to the antecedent, and will understand what he readeth as he goeth along, will see that I give him sufficient proof of all which I desire him to assent to. But I make no doubt but a hasty and half-witted reader can find objections and words enough against the plainest truth here written; and such as he thinks do need a particular answer; when an understanding reader would be offended with me if I should recite them. I had more compassion on the sober reader, than for the humouring of every brain-sick sceptic to stand proving that two and two are four. I write for such as are willing to be wise and happy, and that at dearer rates than jesting. For others, I must leave them, whether I will or no, to be wise too late.

And for those capricious brains, who deride our ordinary preaching, as begging and supposing that which we do not prove, when they have here, and in other such writings, found our fundamentals proved, let them hereafter excuse our superstructure, and not think that every sermon must be spent in proving our christianity and creed.

In the first part of this book, I give you no testimonies from the christian writings or authorities, because I suppose the reader to be one that doth not believe them; and my business is only to prove natural verities by their proper evidence. But lest any should think that there is not so much legible in nature, because the wisest heathens saw it not, I have cited in the margin their attestations to most particulars, to show that indeed they did confess the same, though less distinctly and clearly than they might have done (as I have plainly proved). But, being many years separated from my books, I was forced to do this part less exactly than I would have done, had I been near my own or any other library. Again, I seriously profess, that I am so confident of the just proofs and evidences of truth here given, that I fear nothing as to frustrate the success, but the reader's incapacity, (through half-wittedness or wickedness,) or his laziness, in a cursory and negligent perusal of what is concisely but evidently proposed. It is true that Seneca saith, *Magna debet esse eloquentia, quæ inuitis placeat*; I may add, *Et veritatis evidentia quæ cæcis, malignis vel ignavis prodest*. And who feeleth not the truth of Hierom's words, (ad Paul.) *Nunquam bene fit, quod fit præoccupato animo*. Be true and faithful to yourselves, and to the truth, and you shall see its glory, and feel its power, and be directed by it to everlasting blessedness. This is his end, who is

An earnest desirer of mankind's felicity,

Octob. 31, 1666.

RICHARD BAXTER.

TO THE HYPOCRITE READERS;

WHO HAVE THE NAME OF CHRISTIANS, AND THE HEARTS AND LIVES OF ATHEISTS AND UNBELIEVERS.

It is the great mercy of God to you, that you were born of christian parents, and in a land where christianity is the professed religion, and under governors and laws which countenance it: but this, which should have helped you to the intelligent and serious entertainment of religion, hath been abused by you to detain you from it. You have contented yourselves to have religion in your princes' and your parents' precepts, in libraries and laws, and to say over some of these by rote, whilst you banished it from your hearts and lives, if not also from your sober thoughts and understanding; and having indeed no religion of your own, because the labour of understanding and obeying it seemed too dear a price to purchase it, you have thought it most serviceable to your quietness and your reputation, to seem to be of the religion of your parents or your king, be it what it will. This is, indeed, the common course of the rude and irreligious rabble, in all nations of the world. Oh that I might be your effectual monitor, to awaken you to consider what you have been doing! and yet, if you are men, to suffer your reason to look behind you, within you, and before you, and seriously think what it is to be in heaven or hell for ever, and prudently

to manage your own concerns! Can you think that that man hath any religion, who hath no God? Or hath he, indeed, a God, who preferreth his lust, or wealth, or honour, or any thing in the world before him, or that is not devoted to his obedience and his love? Is he a God that is not better than the pleasures of the flesh and world? or that is not greater than a mortal man? or is not sufficient for you? Did you know what you did when you owned your baptismal vow and covenant, which is, when you usurp the name of christians, and join in visible communion in the church? Do you know what it is to believe that there is a God, and a life to come, and to renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil, and give up yourselves to a Saviour and Sanctifier? Or can you think, while you are awake and sober, that perfidiousness will save you, and be taken by God instead of christianity? Will God accept you for a perjured profession, to be that and do that which never came into your hearts? Is hypocrisy a virtue, and will lying bring a man to heaven? Christianity is such a believing in Christ, to bring us unto God and everlasting glory, as maketh the love of God the very nature of the soul, and thankful obedience its employment; and a heavenly mind and life to be its constitution and its trade; and the mercies of this life to be but our travelling helps and provisions for a better; and the interest of fleshly lust to be esteemed but as dross and dung. Is this the life which you live, or which you hate? I beseech you, sirs, as you regard the reputation of your reason, tell us why you will profess a religion which you abhor? or, why will you abhor a religion which you profess? Why will you glory in the part of a parrot or an ape, to say over a few words, or move your bodies, while you detest the human part, to know, and love, and live to God? Do you live only to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every one according to his deeds? Rom. ii. 5, 6. Do you profess yourselves christians only for self-condemnation; to be witnesses against yourselves in judgment, that you wilfully lived unchristian lives? What is there in the world that you are so averse to, as to be seriously that which you profess yourselves to be? Who hate you more than those that are in heart and life that which you call yourselves in customary words; or that are serious in the religion which you say yourselves you hope to be saved by? Read Matt. xxiii. 29—31. Why do you honour the dead saints, and abhor the living; and would make more martyrs, while you keep festivals of commemoration of those that others made? *Quæ est illa justitia sanctos colere, et sanctitatem contemnere? Primus gradus pietatis est sanctitatem diligere.* Chrysost. In Matt. xxiv. Christ hath not more bitter enemies in the world than some of you who wear his livery. Turks and heathens are more gentle to true christians, and have shed less of their blood, than hypocrite christians have done. The zeal of the Pharisees consumed many, whom the clemency of the Romans would else have spared. Be it known to all the infidel world, who detest christianity because of your wickedness, that you are none of us. Christ renounceth you, (Matt. vii. 22, 23,) and we renounce you. They may as well hate philosophy, because some vagrant sots have called themselves philosophers, or have sailed with Aristotle or Plato in the same ship. They may as well hate physic, because many ignorant women and mountebanks have professed it. They may as well reproach us for loyalty to our king, because there are secret traitors that call themselves his subjects. What are you to christians, that we should be reproached for your villanies? O you Turks and heathens, rather reproach us because there are wicked persons of yourselves; for you are not so cruel enemies to christians, as many of these hypocrites are. *Nullus enim christianus malus est, nisi hanc professionem simulaverit.* Athanasior. Leg. Pro Christ. pag. 3. *Nemo illic, in Carcera, christianus, nisi plane tantum christianus: aut si aliud, jam non christianus.* Tertull. Apol. c. xliii. *Sed dicet aliquis etiam de nostris excedere quosdam a regula discipline. Desunt tum christiani haberi apud nos.* Id. ib. c. xlii. Leg. Twis. Vind. Grat. l. iii. c. 8. sect. 6. p. 75. and my "Fifth Disp. of Sacraments." If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, Rom. viii. 9; Luke xvi. 26, 33. They are spies in his army; they are Absaloms, Hams, and Judases, in his family. Try them by the character that Christ hath given of his true disciples; and if they be such, then tell us of their lives, and spare not. They are not of us, while they are among us, 1 John ii. 19. They are more of your party than of ours, if the mind, heart, and life, be more of the man than the tongue and knee. What if a Celsus, or Porphyry, or Epicurus, had called himself a christian, must Christ be answerable for him? Is it not enough that they abuse him by their hypocrisy, and living contrary to his laws, but he must be accused for their crimes which he so strictly forbid, and for which he will cast them into hell for ever? Would you have him do more than this is to disclaim them? Were they, indeed, christian princes, barons, priests, and people, of whom Abbas Urspergensis speaketh, (Chron. p. 32.) *Ut omnis homo jam sit perjurus et prædictis facinoribus implicatus; ut via excusari possit, quin sit in his; sicut populus, sic et sacerdos.* Et (p. 321,) *Principes terrarum et barones, arte diabólica edocti, nec curabant juramenta infringere, nec fidem violare, et jus omne confundere?* Were they christian knights that Erasmus speaketh of? (Colloqui. p. 415.) *Ni sis bonus aleator, probus chartarius, scortator improbus, potator strenuus, profusor auidax, decoctor et conflator æris alieni, deinde scabie ornatus Gallica, vix quisquam te credet equitem.* It was Cotta's proof that there are atheists, in Cicero. De Natur. Deor. li. 1. What shall we say of the sacrilegious, perjured, and ungodly? If Carbo, &c. had thought that there are gods, he had not been so perjured and ungodly. What more necessary to ungodly men, whatever they call themselves, than to convince them that there is a God, and a life to come? Christ will not care for their image of religion, or deceitful promises and professions. All wise men are of Solon's mind: *Probitatem jurejurando certior habere.* Laert. in Sol.

Believe it, hypocrites, your fornications, gluttony, drunkenness, idleness, covetousness, selfishness, or pride, will find no cloak in the day of judgment from the christian name; you might better cheap have been sensual and wicked at a further distance than in the family or church of God. *Nihil prodest æstimatione, quod non sis: et duplicis peccati reus es; non habere quod crederis, et quod non habueris simulare.* Hieron. Ep. ad fil. Maur. Or suppose your lives are more civilly and smoothly carnal? To do no harm, is too little to prove you christians, much more to do evil with some bounds. *Nullum est aliud latronum beneficium, nisi ut commemorare possint, iis se vitam dedisse quibus non ademerint.* Cicero. Phil. ii. *Non est bonitas pessimis esse meliorem.* Seneca. My reasonable demand is, that you will be what you call yourselves, or call yourselves as you are. I am not inviting you to a new religion, or to a sect, but to be really and seriously what you are nominally, and what you have vowed and professed to be: jest not with God, and heaven, and hell. You may mock yourselves, but God will not be mocked. At last turn back, and study what that religion is which you profess; review your baptismal covenant, and be true to that,

and I have done; and cast out of your way the common block of hating those whom you should imitate. *Ita comparatum est, ut virtutem non suspicamus, neque ejus imitandæ studio corripimur, nisi eum in quo ea conspicitur, summo honore et amore prosequamur.* Plutar. In Cat. Utic. It was one of the Roman laws of the twelve tables, *Impius ne audeto placare donis iram deorum.* Repent and pray, was Peter's counsel to one of your predecessors, Acts viii. 22. Judas hath a kiss for Christ: but it is hearty love, and a sober, righteous, godly life which must be your evidence. I have faithfully warned you; the Lord have mercy on you, and convert you!

October 31, 1666.

R. B.

Cujus aures clausæ veritati sunt, ut ab amico verum audire nequeat, hujus salus desperanda est. Cic. Rhet. i.

Prov. xxviii. 9, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."

Antisthenes civitates tunc interire aiebat, cum bonos discernere nequeunt a malis. Laert. In Antisth.

1 John ii. 8, "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning; for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

PART I.

OF NATURAL RELIGION, OR GODLINESS.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE NEAREST TRUTHS, VIZ. OF HUMAN NATURE.

RESOLVING on a faithful search into the nature and certainty of religion, as being the business which my own and all men's happiness is most concerned in, being conscious of my weakness, and knowing that truths have their certain order, in which they give much light to one another, I found it meet to begin at the most evident, from whence I ascended in the order following.^a

SECT. 1. I am past all doubt that I have sense, cogitation, understanding, and will, with executive operation.^b

Though I could not exactly define what these are, yet I am satisfied that I have them: and I discern that a simple term doth better express one of these to me, than a definition doth; because they are known so immediately, in and of themselves, partly by internal sensation, and partly by intuition. And words are but to make known my mind about them to another, and another's to me; but the things themselves are otherwise to be known. What it is to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, I know better by seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, than by any defi-

nitions of them; and the bare denomination, when I understand the term, is my best expression. And if I could not answer a sceptic, who denied the certainty of my judgment by sensation and reflexive intuition, yet nature would not suffer me to doubt: or if any such should really make me doubt whether I may not possibly live in a continual delusory dream, and all my senses and understanding be deceived, yet would it satisfy me in the main, that I must judge by such powers as I have, and can do no better, and therefore should be no further solicitous. If any would persuade me that I feel not when I am sick or wounded, or see not when I see, or taste not when or what I taste, yet must I be persuaded that, fallible or infallible, this sense must be used, and serve for the ends to which it is given me; and that I have no better faculties to use.

SECT. 2. By my actions I know that I am; and that I am a sentient, intelligent, thinking, willing, and operative being; or a wight that hath these powers.^c

For *ab operari ad posse et esse*, the consequence is

^a Non tam autoritatis in disputando, quam rationis momenta querenda sunt. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. p. 6.

Animo ipso animus videtur, et nimirum, hanc habet vim præceptum Apollinis, quo monet ut se quisque noscat: non enim credo id præcipit ut membra nostra, aut staturam figuramve noscamus: quæ nos corporis sumus: neque ego tibi dicens hoc corpori tuo dico. Cum igitur nosce te, dicit, hoc dicit, nosce animum tuum. Nam corpus quidem quasi vas est, aut aliquid animi receptaculum: ab animo tuo quicquid agitur id agitur a te. Hunc igitur nosce nisi divinum esset, non esset hoc acrioris cujusdam animi præceptum, sic ut tributum Deo sit, hoc est, seipsum posse cognoscere, sed si qualis sit animus, ipse animus nesciat, dic quæso, ne esse quidem se sciet? Cicero Tusc. Quest. l. l. pag. (mibi) 226, 227.

Patet æternum id esse quod seipsum movet; et quis est qui hanc naturam animis tributam neget. Inanimum est enim omne quod pulsu agitur externo,—Sentit igitur ani-

mus se moveri: quod cum sentit, illud una sentit, se vi sua, non aliena moveri; nec accidere posse ut ipse unquam a se deseratur, ex quo efficitur æternitas. Id. ibid.

^b Obj. Age ostende mihi Deum tuum.

Resp. Age ostende mihi hominem tuum: fac te hominem esse cognoscere, et quis meus sit Deus demonstrate non morabor. Theophil. Antioch. ad Autolycum, lib. l. initio.

Cum despiciere cœperimus et sentire, quid simus, et quid ab animantibus cæteris differamus, tum ea insequi incipimus, ad quæ nati sumus. Cic. 5. de Fin.

Qui seipsum cognoverit cognoscat in se omnia: Deum, ad cuius imaginem factus est: mundum, cuius simulacrum gerit. Creaturas omnes cum quibus symbolum habet. Paulus Dem. de Scala Thess. pag. 722.

^c Ut Deum noris, et si ignores et locum et faciem; sic animum tibi tuum notum esse oportet, etiam si ignores et locum et formam. Cic. l. Tusc. l.

undoubted. Nothing is no agent; and none doth that which he cannot do.

Sect. 3. This mind, or foresaid power, is found in, or conjunct with, an organized body.

He that doubteth not of his sense and intellection, need not doubt of his body, which is the object of both.

Sect. 4. This body is a quantitative or extensive, nutritive, changeable, corruptible matter.

Of which my senses and experience will not suffer me to doubt.

Sect. 5. This mind is fitted to the use of knowing, and is desirous of it, delighted in it, and the more it knoweth, the more it is able and disposed to know.^d

All this our actions and experience testify. Knowing is to the mind, as seeing is to the eye. One act of knowledge promoteth and facilitateth another.

Sect. 6. Being and verity are its direct objects.

As light and colours are the objects of our sight. To these it hath power and inclination.

Sect. 7. When I know the effects, I have an inclination to know the cause; not only the lower, but the very first.^e

Though it be possible that some sensual, sluggish person, may be so taken up with present earthly things, as to drown these desires, and scarce to think of any first cause, or take any pleasure in the exercise of his higher faculties; yet as I feel it otherwise in myself, so I find it otherwise in multitudes of others, and in all that have free minds, and in the worst at certain times; so that I perceive it is natural to man, to desire to know even the first cause and highest excellency.

Sect. 8. Yet do I find that my mind is not satisfied in knowing, nor is entity and verity the ultimate object which my mind looketh after, but goodness.^f

Entity and verity may be unwelcome, loathed things, if against my good. The thief could wish, that neither law, nor judge, nor gallows had a being, and that his sentence were not true. Knowledge is but a mediate motion of the soul, directive to the following volitions and prosecution.^g

Sect. 9. I find I have a will, inclined to apprehend good; that is, both to that which hath a simple excellency in itself, and which maketh for the happiness of the world, or for my own.^h

This maketh itself as well known to me, as my natural appetite. For my apprehensions do but subserve it, and my life is moved or ruled by it.

Sect. 10. It is also averse to apprehended evil as such, as contrary to the foresaid good.

Though real evil may possibly be chosen, when it is a seeming good, and also that which appeareth proximately evil, for a higher good to which it seemeth a means, yet ultimately and for itself, no rational will desireth or chooseth evil.

Sect. 11. While sensitive pleasure is apprehended as good by the senses, reason may discern a further good, which may cross at least the present sense.

To take bitter physic, to corrode or cut off ulcerated parts, to use hard diet and exercise, &c. may be ungrateful in themselves to sense; and yet commanded by reason, and commanded by the will: I yet forbear all higher instances.

^d Non ii sumus quibus nihil verum esse videatur, sed ii qui omnibus veris falsa quædam adjuncta esse dicamus tanta similitudine, ut, &c. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 1. p. 7.

^e Lege Pisonis dicta de mente et corpore, in Cic. de Finib. l. 5. p. 189.

^f Omnes ad id quod bonum videtur, omnes suas actiones referunt. Aristot. de Repub. l. 1. c. 1.

^g In homine optimum quidem ratio, hæc antecedit animalia, Deos sequitur. Sen. ep. 77.

^h Malitia præmiis, excrucietur: ubi ea dempseris, nemo omnium gratuito malus est. Salust.

ⁱ Animi imperio, corporis servitio magis utimur; alterum

Sect. 12. My sense and bodily faculties are naturally to be subjected to the guidance of my reason and the command of my will, as the superior faculties.ⁱ

For one is common to brutes, and the other proper to rational creatures; and rational agents are more excellent than brutes; and the most excellent should rule. Reason can see further than sense; and the wisest is most fit to govern. They that deny this, should claim no government or power over their beasts, their dogs, or sheep. If reason ruled not sensuality, most persons would presently destroy their lives; even as swine would kill themselves with eating, if the reason of man did not restrain them.

Sect. 13. The sum is, that man is a living wight, having an active and executive power, with an understanding to guide it, and a will to command it; and that there is a certain difference between truth and falsehood, natural good and evil.^k

All this is quite beyond dispute.

CHAPTER II.

OF MAN, AS RELATED TO THE THINGS BELOW HIM.

SECT. 1. There are other things, called inanimates and brutes, in being, besides man.^a

My understanding, by the help of all my senses, telleth me that there are beasts and birds, trees and herbs, and that I live among a multitude of beings inferior to man. Though I may be ignorant of their principles, and many things in their natures, yet can I no more doubt of their being than of mine own, nor of the inferiority of their natures, when I see their inferior operations.

Sect. 2. Man hath a certain sub-propriety in them for his use.^b

They that deny this, will not say their lands, their fruits, their money, their goods and cattle are their own; nor question any one for stealing them, or depriving them of their propriety; nor may they possess and use them as their own.

Sect. 3. Man hath the right of governing the brutes, so far as they are capable of government.

Which is not proper, moral government, by laws and judgment; but such an image of it as is suitable to their several kinds. This is in order to their own preservation, but especially for our use and ends: he that denieth this, must not rule his dog, his horse, or ox, or sheep, but leave them every one to themselves.

Sect. 4. Man is also, subordinately, their benefactor, and their end; and they are more for him than for themselves.

He is their end as he is better than they, and hath the foresaid propriety in them: the cause will further appear anon. The beauty and sweetness of my flowers are more for me than for themselves, and I do more enjoy them. My trees, and herbs, and fruits, and metals; my horse and ox that labour for me, and

nobis cum diis, alterum cum belluis commune est. Salust. Cat.

^a Est homini cum Deo rationis societas.—Cic. l. de Leg.

^b Deus animal unum spectabile hominem, in quo omnia animalia continerentur efficit. Cic. de Univers.

^c Aliorum causa omnia generata sunt, ut effruges atque fructus quos terra gignit animantium causa; animantes autem hominum; ut equum vehendi causa, &c. Ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum, &c. Cic. 2. de Nat. Deor.

^d Bestiis homines uti ad utilitatem suam possint sine injuria.

all the creatures on whom I feed, I find are for my use; even their life and labour. Mankind accuseth not himself as wronging them, when for his own advantage he maketh use of both; and his care is necessary to their preservation: planting, dressing, watering, feeding, defending, providing for them; without which the usefulest would perish.

Sect. 5. The sum is, that man is the owner, the governor, and the end and benefactor of the inferior beings; and so is lord among them in the world.

CHAPTER III.

OF MEN AS MUTUALLY RELATED TO EACH OTHER.

SECT. 1. I see that there are more men besides me upon earth.*

Sect. 2. The natural dignity of men, and their likeness to each other, maketh them all confess that it is their duty to love one another.

He that denieth this, will not expect to be loved himself by others, nor will he pretend to any virtue, nor to merit the benefit of human convers-.

Sect. 3. Individual persons are commonly conscious of self-insufficiency, and of their need of others, and inclined to a sociable life.

If birds and beasts will go together, in flights and herds, with those of their own kind, no wonder if man also have a natural inclination to society, besides the knowledge of the necessity and benefits of it.

Sect. 4. Each individual, in these societies, must contribute his endeavours to the common good.^b

For this is the end of the association: he that will be for none but himself, cannot justly expect that any should be for him; and he that would have all the society be helpful to him, must to his power be helpful to all.

Sect. 5. The distinction of persons, and their interests and actions, foundeth a distinction of propriety and rights.^c

For natural individuation maketh it necessary that every man have his own food, and his own clothing, at least for the time; and, therefore, it is usually needful to the good of the whole and the parts, that each one have also their provisional proprieties; and the difference of men in wit and folly, industry and sloth, virtue and vice, good or ill deserts, will also cause a difference of propriety and rights, though these may be in part subjected to the common good.

Sect. 6. Parents, also, may upon the merits of children, if not arbitrarily, make an inequality in propriety, and so may other donors and benefactors.

As all children need not the same proportion, so all deserve not the same, and those parents that have great estates, may leave more to their own children than to others; so that many ways, both propriety and disproportion may certainly come to pass, and be allowed in the world.

Sect. 7. Therefore, there is such a thing as justice

due from man to man, for the preservation of these rights and order, and it is injustice to violate them.^d

This is confessed by all the world, that look for justice from others; and if it be not maintained, the world will be as in continual war or robbery, but better grounds and proofs of it will be mentioned anon.

Sect. 8. Therefore, there is a difference between good and evil, as respecting the benefit or hurt of others, besides that which respecteth men as to themselves.

Those that think they are bound to avoid hurting no man but themselves, or for themselves, nor to do good to any but themselves, or for themselves, have so far obliterated the laws of humanity, and so openly renounce the benefits of society, and bid defiance to mankind, that I suppose them so few, that I need not dispute against them; nor have I ever met with any defender of so inhuman a cause, whatever may be in their hearts and practice.

Sect. 9. Nature teacheth parents to educate their children in sobriety, obedience, justice, and charity, and to restrain their contraries.

Did parents make no difference between their children's temperance and gluttony, drunkenness and unchastity; between their obedience and disobedience, and contempt of their own authority; between actions of justice and charity, and actions of falsehood, robbery, cruelty, and inhumanity, what a degenerate thing would mankind prove! Even cannibals exercise some government over their children.

Sect. 10. The means which nature teacheth all the world to suppress iniquity, and promote well-doing, is by punishments and benefits, that it may turn to the hurt of the evil-doer himself, and to the benefit of the well-doer.

Thus parents do by children, yea, men by beasts, on the account of prudence, though not of justice. Without punishments and rewards or benefits, laws are ridiculous or deceits, and government is nothing.

Sect. 11. For the just and effectual performance of this, nature teacheth the world to set up governments, that by settled laws and righteous judgment it may be rightly done.^e

Though better principles should acquaint men with the nature and necessity of government, yet these are so obvious to all the world, that for their own preservation, together with some natural sense of justice, the most barbarous nations, that are nearest unto brutes, are for some civil government, besides economical government, which none but mad-men ever questioned.

Sect. 12. By this government, the liberty, estates, and lives of offenders are destroyed, for the ends of the government, viz. for justice and the common good.

That this is so, *de facto*, is so undeniable, that even those heathens, the supposed relics of the Pythagoreans, who will not kill a harmless beast, will yet kill those men who deserve to die; and if government had not the power over the liberties, estates, and lives of offenders, it could not preserve the liberties, estates, and lives of the innocent.

* Nullum est unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam omnes inter nos ipsos sumus. Quod si depravatio consuetudinum, si opinionum varietas, non imbecillitatem animorum torqueret, et flecteret, quocunque cœpisset, sui nemo ipse tam similis esset, quam omnes essent omnium. Cic. 1. de Leg.

^b Homines hominum causa sunt generati, ut ipsi inter se, alii aliis prodesset possint. Cic. 1. de Amicit.

^c Sic nos nati videmur, ut inter omnes esset societas quædam. Cic. de Amicit.

Homo naturaliter est animal politicum et civile. Arist. 1. Polit.

^d Inter nos natura ad civilem communitatem conjuncti et

consociati sumus. Quod ni ita se haberet, nec justitiæ ullus esset nec bonitati locus; et quomodo hominum inter homines juris esse vincula putant, sic homini nihil juris esse cum bestiis: Chrysippus ait cætera nata esse hominum causa et Deorum; eos autem societatis suæ, &c. Cato in Cicer. de Finib. 1. 3. p. 149.

^e Salus civilitatis in legibus est. Arist. 1. Rhet. c. 4.

Quoniam ea natura esse hominis, ut ei cum genere humano quasi civile jus intercederet quid id conservaret, eum justum, qui migraret injustum fore. Chrysip. in Cato. in Cicer. ubi supra.

SECT. 13. The combination of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the individuals, and the eminency of these in the governors, is the cause of the order, strength, and safety of these human societies.^f

All the parts are in the combination to contribute to the good of the whole, and that according to the nature of the parts. It is not a heap of stones, nor a forest of trees, nor a herd of cattle, which we are speaking of, but an association of men, which must be promoted and blessed by the worth and duty of the individuals; and this consisteth in the perfections and right exercise of their power, intellects, and wills.

But as the place of the governor requireth more of the exercise of these than is requisite in any individual else, so doth it therefore require, that these be in him in greater eminency and excellency than in others; viz. that in himself he excel in wisdom and goodness; and by his interest in the people, that he excel in power or strength. Take away power, and societies are indefensible, exposed to the will of enemies, and unable to execute their laws upon their own offenders, and so to attain the ends of their association and government: take away wisdom, and they are a rout of idiots or madmen, and government can be none at all: take away goodness, and they are as a company of devils, or confederacy of robbers or pernicious enemies, who can neither trust one another, nor promote the common good, but are fit to destroy and be destroyed.

SECT. 14. By all this, it is manifest, that man is not only a living wight, having power, intellect, and will, and dominion over inferior things, as their owner, ruler, and end; but also is a sociable wight, or fitted for society where government is exercised by power, wisdom, and goodness, which are his perfections.^g

I have looked thus long at the things that are seen, as nearest me, and most discernible, before I proceed to the cause, which is unseen.

CHAPTER IV.

OF MAN, AND OTHER THINGS, AS PRODUCED BY THEIR FIRST CAUSE.

SECT. 1. I was not always what I am.^a

It is not yet sixty years since I was no man: I had a late beginning, and though I now inquire not of what duration my soul is, my present composition is not from eternity: the same I see of others, that are born men, who were lately none, and so of all things that are here generated.

SECT. 2. I did not make myself, at least, as an independent, uncaused being.^b

I could not, as I am, make myself what I am; for so myself as the cause, should be before myself

^f Est unum jus quo devincta est hominum societas, et quod lex constituit una: Quæ lex recta ratio est imperandi atque prohibendi. Cicero, de Leg. l. 3. p. 225.

^g Si veritatem de anima cognoverimus, valde magnum nobis erit introductorium ad omnem veritatem, et ad omnes partes philosophiæ insignes dat occasiones. Themist. sup. l. de Anim.

^a Read Galen's "Admirations of the Creator," l. de usu part. præcipue. l. 3. cap. 10.

^b Animorum nullo in terris origo est. Nil enim est in animis nostris mixtum et concretum, aut quod ex terra natum, humidum, igneum, &c. His enim naturis nihil inest quod vim memoriæ, mentis, cogitationis habeat, &c. Nec invenitur unquam unde ad hominem venire possint, nisi a Deo. Cicero.

Quis est tam vecors, qui cum suspexerit in cælum, Deos

as the effect, which is a contradiction, unless the word "self" be used equivocally: when I was not I acted not. If it be said by any, that the soul did fabricate a body to itself, and so one part of me made the other, I answer, 1. My soul did not make the matter of that body; for if it did, it made it of something or of nothing: if of something, either it made that something or not; if not, then it made not the first matter of the body: if it made it of nothing, it must be omnipotent, but it is conscious of impotency. 2. My soul did not make itself, for then it must be before itself, which is impossible; and if I made neither form nor matter, I did not make myself. If it be said, that my soul is an eternal, uncaused being, and so did fabricate this body as a dwelling for itself, I answer, 1. As to the supposed fabrication, it is conscious itself of no such thing; and if my soul made my body, either it was as a *causa subministra vel instrumentalis*, by the direction and power of a superior cause, or else of and by itself, as the prime cause. If the first, then it is a caused and dependent being itself, and so leadeth us to a higher cause. If the second be affirmed, and so my soul an eternal, uncaused, independent being, then, 1. That which is without beginning, cause, and dependency, must needs be self-sufficient, and be the highest excellency; it must have an infiniteness, and need no help from any other. But my soul is conscious of imperfection in knowledge, its ignorance is its burden and dishonour, it knoweth not so much as is here asserted of itself, it knoweth no such perfections or operations, it knoweth little comparatively of the universe or of any particular thing in it. If it were an eternal, uncaused, independent being, it need not all the helps of evidence and argument in this dispute. Moreover, it is conscious of imperfection in goodness and defilement of evil; it is defective in governing this flesh, which could never be able to make me a sinner, or culpable, if it were animated with an uncaused, independent being. Moreover, I am conscious of impotency in every thing that I go about; a thousand difficulties pose and stall me; a thousand things I would do and cannot, and as many I would have and cannot; whereas, an uncaused, independent mind should necessarily have an uncaused, independent power, and wisdom, and goodness, and so should at least partake of infiniteness in all.

And if my soul did thus fabricate my body, then what need it pre-existent matter to make it of? And why did it not make it sooner, seeing it hath such an inclination to it? Can an independent mind be ignorant what it was, and what it did itself from all eternity, before it entered into this flesh? And why doth it not amend the infirmities of this body? or why did it not make itself a body more excellent, more comely, more sound, more clean, and more durable? Could it choose no better? Can it not heal and perfect this? Can it not prevent the dissolution of it? Seeing I find it so much in love with

esse non sentiat; et ea quæ tanta mente fiunt, ut vix quisquam arte ulla, ordinem rerum, atque vicissitudinem persequi possit, casu fieri putet. Cicero, de Resp. Arusp.

Placet Stoicis corruptibilem esse mundum, quippe genitum eorum ratione quæ per sensus intelliguntur. Cujus et partes sunt corruptibiles et totum, partes autem mundi corruptibiles sunt, in se invicem mutantur. Est igitur corruptibilis mundus. Ac quicquid mutari in deterius potest, corruptibile est. Mundus autem huic mutationi et corruptioni obnoxius est. Laert. in Zenone.

^c Mundum autem fieri (dicunt Stoici) cum ex igne substantia per aërem versa in humorem fuerit; deinde crassior ipsius pars effecta fuerit terra; porro subtilior in aërem cesserit eademque magis ac magis extenuata in ignem evaserit. Id. ibid.

it, and so unwilling to be separated from it, if it were an independent mind, and caused it at the first, it would not be unwillingly taken from it, and leave it to rottenness and dust.

And if my soul did thus independently make my body, did all other souls do so by their bodies, or not? If they did not, then they had a superior cause; if they did, then it seems that every worm, and fly, and toad hath a soul, that is, an eternal, uncaused, independent being. But why then have they no knowledge, no reason, no speech? Why did they not choose a more honourable dwelling? Why do they all stoop to the service of man, if they are equally excellent? And then it would follow that there are as many eternal independent beings as there are souls, or living wights, in all the world. And so instead of one true perfect God, there would be innumerable demi-gods, which all had the perfection of independencies, and none of them had a perfection of being and sufficiency; which would put us upon the further inquiries, whether they do all their business independently, or by a general council and consent, and how they all do to agree, and not fall into perpetual wars; how the soul of an idiot, or a wicked man, or of a toad or serpent, came to be so self-denying as to be contented with that part, when the soul of Aristotle, and Seneca, and Paul were so much better provided for.

And if all this were so, who made the things inanimate, that have no souls of their own to make them? For my part I made them not. And my soul is conscious that it is a dependent being, that cannot illuminate itself, nor know what it would know, nor be what it would be, nor do what it would do, nor can support its body or itself an hour. It looketh dependently to something higher for help, and protection, and supply, and mercy; and is past all doubt that it is no God.

If it be said, that all souls are but one, even parts of the universal soul of the world, and that individuation is by matter only, and that so though my soul be not the whole first cause and being, it is a part of it: I answer, 1. I note by the way, that this hypothesis acknowledgeth that which I am searching after, viz. that there is a God: and it asserteth higher things of man than I am proving, viz. that he hath not only an immortal soul, but a soul that is part of God himself. 2. And according to this, the soul of every Heliogabalus, Sardanapalus, idiot, or toad, should be part of God. 3. And then all souls should be alike, if all be God; the soul of a murderer and of him that is murdered; of a Nero and a saint; yea, of Caesar and of his dog. And how then cometh there so much enmity between them, and so great disparity? Why is one wise, and another foolish or brutish, and one the ruler of the other? The soul of a bird or horse seemeth to be lodged in as good a kind of matter as man's; or, at least, the soul of a Nero in as good a matter as the soul of Paul; or, at least, the soul of one that turneth to villany from virtue, hath the same matter which it had before. And certainly it is not matter that principally individuateth, but forms. Nor is the difference between good men and bad, and between men and serpents or beasts, so much in matter as in the soul.^a

Moreover, nature teacheth all men to seek felicity,

^a Chrysippus et Possidonius aiunt mundum regi et administrantur eorum mentem et providentiam, mente per omnes illius partes pertingente: sicut et in nostra anima contingit, sed per has magis, per illas minus. Laert. in Zen.

Anaxagoras docuit mentem, confusam primo rebus accessisse, omnique compage simul et ordinasse. Laert. in Anax. ex Timone.

Ovid's description of the creation of the world, is almost as if he had taken it out of Moses. Metam. l. 1.

and fear infelicity and calamity; which they need not do, nor could not do, if they were all parts of God. God cannot be miserable, but man can, as to his soul as well as his body; and the misery of the body is little to that of the soul, even in this life. God cannot be evil, but the soul may be vitiated and evil, as experience teacheth. God may not be punished or afflicted, but a wicked man may be punished and afflicted even in his mind or soul; and a magistrate will not think, when he hangeth a thief, that he either punisheth bare flesh, or that he punisheth God.

Moreover, God can wrong no man, but one man may wrong another; God need not fear doing any thing amiss, but the soul of man must fear it. No part of God can be so unhappy as to choose to be a toad, or a wicked or miserable man. God hath no body, but so have these souls; else when men eat a plant, or bird, or any flesh, they eat part of the body of God.

Moreover, I find, that it is bodies only that are quantitative or extensive, and so divisible into parts. Many parts of one body may be animated by one soul, but not by many parts of that one soul, except the soul be material itself.

But why (may some object) may I not hold, that all the orbs being one world, are one body of one informing soul, which is God; and so that really those which you call individuals, are but parts of this one animated world? Answ. This is confuted by what is said: Whether the world be animated by one universal soul, we are not now inquiring; but that God is not this informing soul, is before disproved. In point of efficiency, we grant that he is as the soul of souls, effecting more than souls do for their bodies, but not in point of constitution. He is much more than the soul of the world, but is not formally its soul. But, 2. Those men that will think so, must acknowledge, that as they take the horse and the rider to be both parts of God, and the child and the father, and the subject and the prince, and the malefactor and the judge, and the flagitious wretch and the best of men, so it is no other membership than what consisteth with the difference of moral good and evil, of wise and foolish, of governors and subjects, of rewards and punishments, of happiness and misery, which are the things that I am seeking after. But so few lay this claim to Deity, that I need no further mind them.

Sect. 3. My parents were not the first cause of my being what I am.

As each individual cannot be the first cause of itself, so neither can their parents; for they do not so much as know my frame and nature, nor the order and temperature of my parts, nor how or when they were set together, nor their use, nor the reason of their location; and certainly he that made me, knew what he did, and why he did it in each particular. My parents could not choose my sex, nor shape, nor strength, nor qualifications.

Sect. 4. The world which I see and live in did not make itself.

As men, and beasts, and trees, and stones did not make themselves, so neither did they join as con-causes or assistants in the making of the whole, nor did any one of them make the rest; nor did any of the more simple substances, called elements, make

^a The Pythagoreans and Plato. So Balbus in Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. 2. and many more. But Cicero in other places speaketh of God, not as the soul of the world formally and constitutively, but only efficiently, calling him, The Parent of the Universe, The Maker of all things, &c. So that it seems that he took not God, *pro forma mundi*, but as we do, for more than the soul of it, even the first efficient. And, lib. de Univ. he supposeth the Eternal God to have created that God who is the soul of the world.

themselves, neither the passive elements or the active, the earth, the water, the air, or the fire; for we know, past doubt, that nothing hath no power or action, and before they were, they were not, and, therefore, could not make themselves;¹ nor can they be the first cause of mixed bodies, because there is that exceeding wisdom most apparent in the generation, production, nature, and operations of these bodies, which these elements have not.

Sect. 5. The visible world is not an uncaused, independent being.

For all the generated parts we see, *do oriri et interire*; they have a beginning, progress, decay, and end. And the inanimate parts having less of natural excellency than the living, cannot infinitely exceed them in the excellency of Deity, as uncaused and independent; and we see that they are all dependent in their operations. They show, in the order of their beings and action, that incomprehensible wisdom which is not in themselves; the earth, the sea, the air, and winds, are all ordered exactly by a wisdom and a will which they themselves are void of: besides, they are many and various, but their order and agreement sheweth that it is some one universal wisdom and will which ruleth them all; and if they are dependent in operation, they are certainly dependent in being; and had they that excellency to be uncaused and independent, they would have had therewith all other perfections, which we see they want; and they would not have been many, but one in that perfection.

Sect. 6. The first universal matter is not an uncaused, independent being.

If such there be, its inactivity and passiveness sheweth it to want the excellency of independency; and the ordination of it into several beings, and the disposals of it there, is done by a principle of infinite power, activity, and wisdom: on which having this dependence in its ordination and use, it must be dependent also in its being.

Sect. 7. If it were doubtful whether the world were eternal, and whether it were the body of God as the informing soul, yet it would be past doubt that it is not uncaused, or independent, but caused by God.²

That the world is not eternal, we want not natural evidence; "For," saith Lullius,³ "then there would be two eternals, the cause and its effects, and then all things would be caused by natural necessity, and not by free-will, and consequently always alike; and then there hath been evil eternally, and both the caused good and the evil would in all other aggravations be answerable to eternity, and the evil would be as soon, as great, as durable as the good. The same world which is finite in good and evil, and other respects, would be infinite in eternity, and the evil would have an infiniteness in point of eternity, and this necessitated by the eternity of the world; and seeing no individuals are eternal, the supposed eternity of the world must be but of some common matter, or only intentional, and not real. The corporeal part having quantity, is finite as to extension, and therefore cannot be infinite in duration. In eternity, then, there is no time, *no prius et posterius*; but in the world there is. Much more is said by many, but this is not my present task; I shall say more of it afterward.

¹ God never wrought miracles to convince atheism, because his ordinary works convince it. Lord Bacon, Essay 16. p. 87.

² The Platonist's simile is, As the substance and shadow may be at one time, though one be the cause of the other; so here.

³ Vide Raymond, Lullium Arte magna de tabul. cap. 2—5. ad fin. 23. And Alex. Gill. on the Creed, p. 88, 89, &c. and p. 96, &c. Lege etiam disputationem Zachariæ Scholast.

But if it were doubtful whether the world were not eternally the body of God, yet would it be undoubted still that he caused it. And that there were the difference of a cause and an effect, in order of nature, though not in duration. As if a tree or a man's body were supposed eternal, yet the root and spirits of the tree, and the principal parts and spirits in man's body, would be the causal parts on which the rest depend.

Sect. 8. It remaineth, therefore, most certain that something is a first cause to all things else, and that he is the Creator of all things.

For if the world be not uncaused and independent, it hath a cause; and if it have a cause, it hath a Creator: for when there was nothing but himself, he must make all things of himself, or of nothing; not of himself, for he is not material, and they are not parts of God (who is indivisible). He that thinks otherwise, should not kill a flea or a toad, nor blame any man that beateth, or robbeth, or wrongeth him, nor eat any creature; because he doth kill, and blame, and eat a part of God, who is unblamable, and can injure none, and is to be more revered.

Sect. 9. If there were any doubt whether the sun, or fire, or passive matter had a first cause, there can be no doubt at all concerning man, which is the thing which I am inquiring into at the present.⁴

For every one seeth that man hath his beginning, and confesseth that it is but as yesterday since he was not; and therefore hath a cause which must be uncaused, or have a cause itself: if the latter, then that cause again is uncaused, or hath a cause itself. And so we must needs come at last to some uncaused cause.

Sect. 10. If any second cause had made man or the world, yet if it did it but as a caused cause, itself would lead us up to an uncaused cause, which is the first cause of all, which we are seeking after.⁵

For what any cause doth by a power received from a higher cause, and consequently ordered by it, that is done principally by that first or highest cause. And if God had made the world by an angel or intelligence, it would have been nevertheless his creature, nor any thing the less to his honour, than if he had made it by himself alone.

Sect. 11. The sum of all is, that there is certainly a first, uncaused, independent cause of man, and all things else beside that cause.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT THIS CAUSE IS IN ITSELF. THAT IT IS GOD.

Sect. 1. The first cause is known to us imperfectly, and by the effects.⁶

Man is so conscious of his ignorance herein, and of the perplexities and diversities of opinions which follow thereupon, and of the necessity of beginning downward at the effect, and rising upward in his inquiry, that I need not prove this proposition to any man.

Sect. 2. Though God, or the first cause, is to be Episc. Mitilen. cum Ammonio contra mundi æternitatem, in Bib. Pa. Græcolat. tom. 1. p. 330, &c.

¹ Quid enim potest esse tam apertum, tamque perspicuum, cum cælum suspeximus, cælestiaque contemplati sumus, quam esse aliquod nomen, præstantissimæ mentis, quod hæc regatur. Cic. l. 2. de Nat. Deor.

² Esse igitur Deos perspicuum est: ut quid neget, vix eum sanæ mentis existimem. Cic. de Nat. Deor. 2.

³ Agnoscimus Deum ex operibus ejus. Cic. l. 1. Tuscul.

searched after in all his works, yet chiefly in the chiefest of them within our reach; which is man himself.^b

If any shall say, that the sun and other creatures are more excellent than man, and therefore God, or the first cause, is to be searched after rather in them, and his attributes denominated from them; I answer, there is no doubt but, *secundum quid*, the sun is a nobler creature than man; but what it is *simpliciter*, we cannot tell, unless we knew it better. The highest excellences known to man in the sun, are the *potentia motiva, illuminativa, et calefactiva*; motion, light, and heat, with their effects, do tell us what we know of it. That which we are conscious of in man is, *posse, scire, velle*, power, intellection, and will, with their perfections; which are a higher excellency than motion, light, and heat.^c

Sect. 3. He that giveth being to all else that is, must needs be the first being formally or eminently himself.

Entity must needs be, in the noblest sense or sort, in the *primum ens*, the original of being, rather than in any derived being whatsoever; for it cannot give better than it hath. So that *ens*, or I am, is his first name.

Sect. 4. He that hath made substances more noble than accidents, is himself a substance, either formally or eminently; and a living substance, yea, life itself.

Once for all; by eminently, I mean somewhat more excellent, or transcendent, which yet man hath no better name for, or fitter notion of: God is thus a substance, life transcendently, if not formally.

Sect. 5. He that hath made intelligences, or spirits, or minds, more noble and excellent than bodies, is himself a mind, intelligence, or spirit, either formally, or transcendently and eminently.

We find that corporeal, gross, and dense beings are most dull and passive, and have least of excellency. The body of itself, in comparison of the mind, is a dull and dirty clod. Though we have no adequate conception of a spirit, we know not only, negatively, that it containeth a freedom from the baseness and inconveniences of corporeity, but also we know by its essential acts, that, positively, it is a pure, active life, intelligence, and will, and, therefore, a more excellent sort of being than things merely corporeal, which have no such action. So that we have found, as to his being, that the first cause is *ens, substantia, vita, spiritus*.

Sect. 6. There must needs be in the first cause an *esse, posse, et operari*.

If there were no operation, there were no causation; if there were no power, there could be no operation; and if there were no being, there could be no power. Not that these are things so various as to make a composition in the first cause; but they are transcendently in it without division and imperfection, by a formal or virtual distinction.

Sect. 7. Seeing the noblest creatures known to us are minds that have a *posse, scire, velle*, active, execu-

tive power, with an understanding to guide it, and a will to command it; God hath either formally, or eminently and transcendently, such a power, intellect, and will, which is his essence.

For nothing is more certain than that no cause can give more than it had to give: if the first cause had not power, understanding, and will, either formally or eminently in a higher and nobler kind, he could not have endowed all mankind with what he had not.

1. That the first cause is most powerful, is evident by his works: he that gave man his measure of power, and much more to many other creatures, hath himself much more than any of them: he that made this marvellous frame of all the orbs, and causeth and continueth their being, and their constant, rapid motion, is incomprehensibly potent. Whatsoever power there is in all the creatures visible and invisible set together, there must be more, or as much, in their first cause alone, because nothing can give more power than it hath.

2. His works also prove that the first cause is an understanding; for the admirable composure, order, nature, motion, variety, and usefulness, of all his creatures, do declare it. He that hath given understanding to man, hath formally or eminently more himself than all men, or all his creatures have. If intellection were not an excellency above mere natural or brutish motion, man were not better than the inanimates or brutes; but if it be, the giver of it cannot want it. Not that his intellection is univocally the same thing with ours, but it is something incomparably more noble, which expresseth itself in human intellection as its image, and is seen by us in this glass, and can be expressed by us no better than by this name.

3. As it is a nobler nature which acteth by volition, or free-will, than that which hath no will at all, and so no voluntary choice and complacency; so the first cause which hath given this noble faculty to man, hath certainly himself, though not a will univocally the same with ours, yet a will of a transcendent excellency, which expresseth itself in ours as its image, and must be something better and greater, but cannot be lower or less. And though such indetermination as proceedeth from imperfection, and consequently such liberty, belongeth not to the first cause, which hath no defects, yet all that liberty which belongeth to perfection must undoubtedly belong to him. He that did what we see, hath done it willingly and freely.

Sect. 8. Whatever the first cause is, it must needs be in absolute perfection.^d

It must needs have in it more than the whole world besides, because it giveth all that to the whole creation which it hath received, and is. An imperfect cause could never have made such a world as we behold, and partly know; and were the first cause imperfect, there would be no perfection in being.

Sect. 9. The perfection of the first cause in being

dat bonum posse; sapientia tribuit scire, benignitas præstat velle; hæc triplex animæ rationalis vis est; scilicet, posse, scire, velle: quæ supra dictis tribus fidei, spei, et charitatis cooperantur, &c. Potho Præmensis de statu Domus Dei, lib. 1. in Biblioth. Pat. v. 9.

^d Deo nihil præstantius, ab eo igitur necesse est mundum regi. Nulli igitur est naturæ obediens aut subjectus Deus: omnem igitur regit ipse naturam. Etenim si concedimus intelligentes esse Deos, concedimus etiam providentes, et rerum quidem maximarum.—Cicer. de Nat. Deor.

Dicitur nihil esse quod Deus efficere non possit, et quidem sine ullo labore: ut enim hominum membra sine ulla contentione, mente ipsa ut moveantur, sic numine Deorum omnia fingi, moveri mutarique posse. Neque id dicitur superstitiosè atque aniliè, sed physica constantique ratione: inquit Cotta de Stoicis in Cicer. de Nat. Deor. 3. p. 110.

^b Commoda quibus utimur, lucem qua fruimur, Spiritum quem ducimus, a Deo nobis dari et impertiri videmus. Cic. pro Rosc.

^c Jovem dominatorem rerum et omnia nutu regentem, et præsentem et præpotentem, qui dubitat, haud sane intelligi cur non idem, sol sit, an nullus sit dubitare possit. Cicer. de Nat. Deor. 1. 2. p. (mihi) 48.

Tria sunt invisibilia Dei: h. e. potentia, sapientia, benignitas; a quibus omnia procedunt, in quibus omnia subsistunt, per quæ omnia reguntur: Pater est potentia, Filius sapientia, Spiritus sanctus benignitas: potentia creat, sapientia gubernat, benignitas conservat (et perficit). Potentia per beniginitatem sapienter creat: sapientia per potentiam benigne gubernat; benignitas per sapientiam potenter conservat; sicut imago in speculo cernitur, sic in natura animæ, &c. Huic similitudini Dei approximatur homo: Cui potentia Dei

requireth that it be eternal, without beginning or end of duration.

Nothing in the world can be more evident to reason, than that something must be eternal, without beginning; nothing being more evident, than that nothing hath no power, no action, no effect, and so can make nothing. And, therefore, if ever there had been a time when nothing was, nothing could ever have been: imagine that there were nothing now, and it is certain there never would be any thing.

Object. Something may *oriri de novo* without any cause, as well as God be eternally without any cause.

Ans. It is impossible: for he that is eternally hath all perfection eternally in himself, and needeth no cause, being still in being, and being the cause of causes. But nothing hath no perfection or being, and therefore needeth an omnipotent cause to give it a being.

Object. If the world may be created of nothing materially, it may be what it is without any thing efficiently.

Ans. Impossible: pre-existent matter is not necessary to the first created matter; for matter may be caused of nothing by an omnipotent efficient, as well as the wonderful frame of all things be made out of matter: but without an efficient, no being can arise *de novo*.

So that it is most evident, seeing any thing now is, there hath been something eternally; and if something, it must needs be the first cause, which is chief in excellency, and first in order of production, and therefore of existence.

SECT. 10. The first cause must needs be independent in being, perfections, and operations; and so be absolutely self-sufficient.^a

For it were not the first, if there were any before it; and being caused by nothing else, it was eternally sufficient in and for itself; otherwise, that which it were beholden to would have the place of a cause to it. And if it caused not all, or needed the help of any other, it is not absolutely the first cause to all others, nor perfect in itself. That which could be eternally without a cause, and itself cause all things, is self-sufficient and independent.

SECT. 11. The first cause must needs be free from all imperfection of corporeity, (or materiality,) composition, passibility, corruptibility, mutability, and mortality, and all other imperfections of dependent beings.^b

There is such a thing as a living principle, and a pure, spiritual nature, in the created world; and the maker of it must be life and spirit in a higher, purer sense than it, and therefore must be free from all its imperfections; and having no cause, hath no defect; and having no beginning, can have no end: all this reason doth certainly apprehend.

SECT. 12. This perfect first cause must be immense or infinite in being.

Not by corporeal extension; as if God, as a body, were in a place, and, being more extensive than all place, were called immense; but in the perfect es-

sence of an eternal life, and spirit, and mind, he is every where without locality, and all things live, and move, and be in him. The thought of space is but a metaphorical help to our conception of his immensity.

SECT. 13. Therefore he must needs be omnipresent.^c

Not by extension quantitative, but in a sort transcendent and more excellent, according to the transcendent way of his existence: for if we must have conceived of him as no better than a body, and of magnitude as an excellency, we might well have concluded that he hath made nothing greater than himself; *nemo dat quod non habet*; and therefore he must be more extensive than all the world, and consequently absent from no part of it. Much more when his being, which surpasseth corporeity, directeth us to acknowledge a more noble kind of omnipresence than extensive.

SECT. 14. Therefore is he incomprehensible as to human understanding, or any other created intellect.

Of our own incomprehension, experience sufficiently convinceth us here, and reason evinceth the same of all created intellects; for the less cannot comprehend the greater, and between finite and infinite there is no proportion. We know nothing purely intelligible so easily and certainly, as that God is; but there is nothing that we are so far from comprehending; as we see nothing more easily and certainly than the sun, which yet we see not with a comprehensive, but a partial and defective sight.

SECT. 15. This infinite being can be but one.^d

For if there were many, they could not be infinite, and so indeed there would be none, nor would there be any one first cause of all things; for if one caused one part of the world, and another another part, no one were the first cause of all; and if they joined in causing all together, they would all conjunctly make but one first cause, and each one several be but part of the cause. If there be no one that is sufficient to make and govern all the world, there is no perfect being, and no God; but the effect sheweth the sufficiency and the unity of the world, the orbs being one frame, the unity of the first cause. Perfection consisteth more in the unity of one all-sufficient Being, than in a voluntary concurrence of many beings. The most learned heathens, who thought there were many to be named gods, did mean but subordinate, particular gods, that were under the one universal God, whom the stoics and academics took to be the universal soul, and the subordinate gods, the souls of the particular orbs and planets.

SECT. 16. The power of this God must needs be omnipotency.

He that hath given so great a power to the creatures, as is exercised by them, especially the sun and fixed stars in their several vortices or orbs; and he that could make such a world of nothing, and uphold the being, and maintain the order and cause, and continue the rapid motions of all the vortices or orbs, which are to us innumerable, and each of incomprehensible excellency and magnitude; is cer-

^a Deus est mens, soluta libera et segregata ab omni concretionem mortali, omnia sentiens, movens, &c. Cicero. I. Tuscul.

^b Velleius (in Cicero, de Nat. Deor. I.) reciteth the opinions of many of the philosophers, of God, p. 10. Sed Deo (si Deus est) longum nihil omnino est, cui punctum terra est, et sub nullo omnia constituta. Arnob. l. 7. p. 63.

^c Plato in lib. leg. Quid sit omnino Deus, inquiri oportere non censet. Cicero. I. de Nat. Deor.

^d The wisest sort of the heathens believed one only parent of the universe, but durst not speak out what they knew of his unity or perfections. Cicero saith, Illum quasi parentem hujus universitatis invenire difficile; et cum invenis, indicare in vulgus, nefas. De Universit. p. 2. And the same he saith, Lib. 2. de Nat. Deor.

Stoici dicunt unum Deum esse: ipsumque et mentem, et fatum, et Jovem dicunt: principio illum cum esset apud se, substantiam omnem per aërem in aquam convertisse. Et quemadmodum in foetu semen continetur, ita et hanc serendi rationem in humore talem residisse, materia ad operandum aptissime parata, ex qua cætera post hæc gigneretur. Tum genuisse primum elementa quatuor, ignem, aquam, aërem, terram. Videntur autem illis duo esse rerum omnia principia, faciens videl. et patiens: quod patitur sine qualitate esse substantiam materiam: quod autem faciat Verbum Deum esse quod in ipsa sit. Hunc enim quippe sempiternum per ipsum omnem singula creare. Laert. in Zenone, p. (mibi) 359, 360.

tainly to be accounted no less than omnipotent: by his omnipotency, I mean, that by which in itself considered, *in primo instanti*, he can do all things possible; that is, which belong not to impotency, but to power, and by which, *in secundo instanti*, he can do all things which his infinite wisdom judgeth congruous and meet to be done; and in *tertio instanti*, can do all that he will do, and are pleasing to him.

Sect. 17. The understanding of the first cause must needs be omniscient and infinite wisdom.

1. He that hath given so much wisdom to such a worm as man, must have more than all the men in the world. Whatever knowledge is in the whole creation, being given by him, doth prove that, formally, or eminently, he hath more. Were it all contracted into one intelligence, it must be less than his that caused it. He hath not given more wisdom than he had to give, nor so much as he had, or is, himself. For if he should make any thing equal to himself, there would be two infinities, and there would be a perfect, self-sufficient being, which yet had lately no sufficiency or being; and there would be a being independent *in facto esse*, which was dependent *in fieri*: which are contradictions.

2. The effects in the admirable frame, and nature, and motions of the creation, declare that the Creator is infinitely wise. The smallest insect is so curiously made, and so admirably fitted and instructed to its proper ends and uses. The smallest plants, in wonderful variety of shapes, and colours, and smells, and qualities, uses, and operations, and beautiful flowers, so marvellously constituted and animated, by an unseen form, and propagated by unsearchable seminal virtues. The smallest birds, and beasts, and creeping things so adorned in their kinds, and so admirably furnished for their proper ends, especially the propagation of their species, in love, and sagacity, and diligence to their young, by instinct equalling, in those particulars, the reasonable creature. The admirable composure of all the parts of the body of man, and of the vilest beast and vermin; the quality and operation of all the organs, humours, and spirits. The operations of the mind of man, and the constitution of societies, and overruling all the matters of the world, with innumerable instances in the creature, do all concur to proclaim that man as mad as madness can possibly make him, in that particular, who thinketh that any lower cause than incomprehensible wisdom, did principally produce all this; and that by any brutish or natural motion, or confluence of atoms, or any other matter, it could be thus ordered, continued, and maintained, without the infinite wisdom and power of a first cause, superior to mere natural matter and motion. What, then, should we say, if we had a sight into the inwards of all the earth, of the nature and cause of minerals, and of the forms of all things? if we saw the reason of the motions of the seas, and all other appearances of nature which are now beyond our reach? yea, if we had a sight of all the orbs, both fixed stars and planets, and of their matter, and form, and order, and relation to each other, and their communications with and influences on each other, and the cause of all their wondrous motions? if we saw, not only the nature of the elements, especially the active element,

fire; but also the constitution, magnitude, and use of all those thousand suns and lesser worlds which constitute the universal world; and, if they be inhabited, if we knew the inhabitants of each? did we know all the intelligences, blessed angels, and holy spirits, which possess the nobler parts of nature; and the unhappy, degenerate spirits that have departed from light and joy into darkness and horror, by departing from God? Yea, if we could see all these, comprehensively, at one view, what thoughts should we have of the wisdom of the Creator, and what should we think of the atheist that denies it! We should think Bedlam too honourable a place for that man that could believe, or durst say, that any accidental motion of subtle matter, or fortuitous concourse of atoms, or any thing below a wisdom and power infinitely transcending all that with man is called by that name, was the first cause, and is the chief continuer, of such an incomprehensible frame.¹

Sect. 18. The first cause must needs be infinitely good.²

By goodness, I mean all essential excellency, which is known to us by its fruits and appearances in the creature; which, as it hath a goodness, natural and moral, so is it the index of that transcendent goodness which is the first cause of both. This goodness is incomparably beyond that which consisteth in a usefulness to the creature's good, or goodness of benignity as relative to man; and it is known better by the mere name, as expressing that which nature hath an intrinsic sense and notion of, than by definitions, as sensible qualities, light, colour, sound, odour, sweet, bitter, &c. are known by the name best which lead to the sensitive memory, which informeth the intellect what they are; as the mention of things sensible entereth the definition of sense, and the mention of sense doth enter the definition of things sensible, and yet the object is in order of nature before the act; and as truth must enter the definition of intellection, and intellection the definition of truth, and yet truth is in order before intellection, and contemporary with the intellect; so is it between goodness and the will. But, if we speak of uncreated good, and of a created will, then good is infinitely antecedent to that will; but the will which is created hath a nature suited to it, and so the notion of excellency and goodness is naturally in our estimative faculty, and the relish of it, or complacency in it, is naturally in the will, so far as it is not corrupted and depraved; as if I knew a man that had the wisdom and virtue of an angel, my estimation calleth him excellent and good, and my will doth complacentially cleave to him, though I should never look to be the better for him myself; or if I only heard of him, and never saw him, or were personally beholden to him.

That God is thus infinitely excellent and good, the goodness of his creatures proveth; for all the goodness that is in men and angels, earth and heaven, proceedeth from him. If there be any natural goodness in the whole creation, there must be more in the Creator; if there be any moral goodness in men and angels, there must be more in eminency in him; for he can make nothing better than himself, nor give to creatures what he hath not.³

¹ Nec enim ignorare potest Deus qua mente quisque sit. Cicero, de Div.

At ignorantia rerum aliena est nature Deorum; et sustinendi muneris propter imbecillitatem difficultas, minime cadit in majestatem Deum: ex quo efficitur id quod volumus, Deorum providentia mundum administrari. Cicero, ib.

² Quod si inest in hominum genere mens, fides, virtus, concordia, unde hæc in terras nisi a superis diffundere potuerunt? Cumque sit in nobis consilium, ratio, prudentia, necesse est Deos hæc ipsa habere majora: nec habere solum,

sed etiam his uti in optimis et maximis rebus. Cicero de Natur. Deorum, lib. 2. pag. 76.

³ Deus est summum bonum, supra omnem substantiam, omnemque naturam; quod cuncta expetunt, cum ipse sit plenæ perfectionis, nullius societatis indigus. Plato in Tim.

Amor divinus fuit causa factionis mundi, et originis omnium rerum. Id. ib.

Bonus quidem Deus, et quidem Deus causa bonorum: malorum autem omnium non causa. Idem. de Leg.

Sect. 19. The goodness of the first being consisteth in this infinite perfection or excellency, containing his happiness, his holiness, and his love or benignity."

Sect. 20. The happiness of the first being consisteth, 1. In his being himself; 2. In his knowing himself; 3. In his loving and enjoying himself.

The most perfect being must needs be the most happy, and that in being what he is; his own perfection being his happiness: and as knowledge in the creature is both his perfection and delight, so the transcendent omniscience of the Creator must needs be both part of his perfection, as distinguished by our narrow minds, and such felicity as may be called eminently his delight, though what God's delight is we know not formally: and as love or complacency is the perfective operation of the will, and so of the human nature in man, and is his highest, final, and enjoying act, of which all goodness is the object; so there must be something in the perfection of the first cause, though not formally the same with love in man, yet eminently so called, as knowable to us by no other name: and this complacency must needs be principally in himself, because he himself is the infinite and only primitive good; and as there was primitively no good but himself to love, so now there is no good but derived from him, and dependent on him; and as his creature (of which anon) is obliged to love him most, so he must needs be most amiable to himself. Self-love and self-esteem in the creature, may be inordinate, and therefore called pride; but it is impossible that infinite goodness itself can be overvalued or overloved by himself, or by any creature.

Sect. 21. The holiness of the first being consisteth, 1. In his separation from all creatures, by that transcendence which maketh him their end; 2. In the special perfection of his will, which willett and hath complacency in that alone, *ad extra*, which is agreeable to his perfect nature and infinite wisdom; 3. And so being the fountain and rule of moral goodness to the rational creature.

The holiness of man consisteth, 1. In his separation from common uses unto God; 2. In the rectitude of his will, as habitually thus inclined and bent to moral good, and hating evil; 3. Whereby it is conformable to the governing will of God: and hence we may learn what holiness is in God, though not formally the same with that in man.

Sect. 22. The benignity and love of the first being is his essence or nature, as inclined to complacency in all created good; and to benevolence or doing good to creatures, freely and agreeably to his infinite wisdom.

The love of complacency to all created good, is necessary in God, supposing the continued existence of that created good, which is the object; but it is not necessary that such created good do continually exist. The love of benevolence is also natural to God in this sense, that it is his natural perfection, as respecting the creature, to be used agreeably to his perfect wisdom, but the exercise of it is not necessary, because the being or felicity of the creature is not necessary, but it is acted freely, according as

the infinite wisdom seeth it fit, as to those ends to which all creatures are but the means.

Sect. 23. The first being must needs be the only ultimate end to himself, so far as he may be said to intend an end."

God doth not *intendere finem* in defectiveness and imperfection, as the creature doth; he wanteth nothing, nor is he *in via* as to his felicity; but, eminently, he may be said to intend an end, as he maketh one thing a means to produce or attain another, and doth nothing disorderly, nor in vain, but ordereth all things in infinite wisdom. He is not wanting, but enjoying his end at all times, even in the midst of his use of means. To his essential goodness and blessedness there is no means; nothing is capable of the honour of contributing to it; but his will is the beginning of all derived beings, and his will is the ultimate end of all. He is pleased to make and order all by his power and wisdom, and he is pleased in all things as so made and ordered. The complacency of his will, then, is the ultimate end of all his works, as the glory of his own power, wisdom, and goodness shineth in them; and though complacency, or pleasedness, or will, be not formally the same in God as in us, yet something eminently there is in him, which, under this notion, we must conceive of, and express.

Sect. 24. The *posse*, *scire*, *velle*, the operative power, understanding, and will of God, according to their perfection, called his omnipotency, omniscience, and goodness, by which he is *maximus*, *sapientissimus*, *optimus*, is a wonderful, yet an intelligible and certain trinity in unity, viz. in the unity of essence there is this trinity of principles or faculties, as they may be called from the manner of imperfect man, but deserve a higher name in God.

Sect. 25. The essence of God is not the *genus*, and these three the species; nor is it the *totum*, and these three the parts; nor is it a substance, of which these three are accidents: but they are like the essential faculties in man, which are one with the soul in essence, but are not one and the same faculties, but truly distinct, whether it be really, formally, or relatively and denominatively only. God's power or omnipotency is not formally the same (*quoad conceptum objectivum*) with his understanding and wisdom, nor this the same with his will and goodness; they are as three essential principles, and yet but one essence, and so one God: nor is it part of God that is omnipotent, and part that is omniscient, and part that is good; or *quæ potest intelligit et vult*; but the whole Godhead is omnipotent, the whole omniscient, and the whole is good, or power, wisdom, and goodness itself; yet each of these notions, by itself alone, is not a total or full expression of the whole perfection of the Deity.

Therefore, we must neither confound the essential principles in God, nor divide the essence. The omnipotency is as one faculty, the understanding another, and the will another; but the Godhead and essence of them all is one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal; such as the power is, such is the understanding, and such is the will. The power uncreated, the understanding uncreated, and the will

^m Deus si vim spectes, valentissimus, si decorem formosissimus, si vitam immortalis, denique si virtutem præstantissimus est. Aristot. de Mun. c. 6.

Deus est actus illis porro actus qui per se est, et optimus et æternus. Atque Deum animal esse et æternum et præstantissimum dicimus. Vita igitur et ævum continuum et perpetuum Deo suppetit: est enim hoc Deus. Aristot. Metaphys.

ⁿ Creatas autem potentias, creatrix utique potentia jure supereminet eo ipso vel maximo quo creavit. Nam et animam animæ præstantiorem sæpe et experimur et dicimus. Claudian. Mammert. de Animæ Statu. l. 1. cap. 15.

When I consider, that taking any one sound, if you join thereto another a third above it, and then place another a third above that also; these three, thus conjoined and sounding together, do constitute one entire harmony, which governs and compriseth all the sounds which, by art or imagination, can at once be joined together in musical concordance: this I cannot but think a significant emblem of that supreme and incomprehensible Three in One, governing, comprising, and disposing the whole machine of the world, with all its included parts, in a perfect harmony. Christoph. Simpson's Division Violist. p. 17.

uncreated; the power incomprehensible, the understanding incomprehensible, and the will incomprehensible; the power eternal, the understanding eternal, and the will eternal: and yet there are not three eternal Gods or essences, but one eternal; nor three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one. The power is God, the understanding is God, and the will is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God: so then there is one power, not three powers; one understanding, not three understandings; one will, not three wills. And in this Trinity none is in duration before or after other, none is greater or less than other; but the whole three principles be co-eternal together, and co-equal: so that in all things, as aforesaid, this Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, is to be acknowledged as undeniable in the light of nature, and to be adored and worshipped by all.^o

And because of the unity of the essence, these three may be predicated in the concrete of each other, but not in the abstract, because of their formal diversity; and so it may be said, that the power is an understanding or wise power, and the understanding is an omnipotent understanding, and the will a most wise and omnipotent will, and the power a good and willing power; but not that the power is the understanding, and the understanding the will, or the will is the power or understanding.

So as to their order, the power, as in itself considered as an active, vital power, is first in our conception, and doth, as it were, act by the understanding, and the understanding by the will, and in execution so go forth with the will, that the effect is immediately to be ascribed to it.

Sect. 26. Though all the divine faculties and principles are adumbrate (or made manifest) in the creation or frame of the world, yet the omnipotency is therein to us most eminently apparent.

It is infinite wisdom and infinite goodness which shine to us in this wonderful frame, but we first, and with greatest admiration, take notice of the omnipotency; to consider the innumerable number of the orbs, the multitude of the fixed stars, (which may be called so many suns,) and to think of their distances, magnitude, powers, orders, influences, communications, effects, &c.; and how many millions of these, for aught we know, there may be besides those which are within our sight, even though helped by the most perfect telescopes: it striketh the soul with unspeakable admiration at the power that created and maintaineth all this, when we think of the unconceivable, rapid, orderly, perfect, constant motions of all these orbs, or at least of the planets and circumjacent bodies in every vortex. All these thoughts do make the Deity, or first being, to be just to the mind as the sun is to the eye, the most intelligible of beings, but so incomprehensible that we cannot endure to gaze too much or near upon his glory.

Sect. 27. Whether the whole world be animated or inanimate; whether the whole have one constitutive soul or not; whether each orb have its particular soul or not, are things unrevealed, and beyond the certain knowledge of the natural mind: but it is certain that the first being is not the proper, constitutive form or soul of the world, but yet that he

is much more to it than such a form or soul, even the total, perfect, first cause of all that it is, and hath, and doth.

He is not the constitutive form or soul of the universe, as it seems Cicero, with the academics and stoics, thought, because then the creator and the creature should be the same, or else the creature should be nothing but dead, passive matter; and then man himself, who knoweth that he hath a soul, would either be God, which his experience and the consciousness of his frailty forbid him to imagine, or else he should be a creature more noble than the universe, of which he is so small a part, which his reason also forbiddeth him to believe.

But yet, that God is much more to the world than a constitutive soul, is undeniable, because he is the creating cause, which is more than a constitutive cause; and his continued causation in its preservation, is as a continued creation; as in man the soul is a dependent cause, which can give nothing to the body but what it hath received, nor act but as it is acted or empowered by the first efficient; and, therefore, though we call not God the soul of man, because we would not so dishonour him, nor confound the Creator and the creature, yet we all know that he is to us much more than the soul of souls, for "in him we live, and move, and have our being;" so also it is as to God's causation of the being, motion, and order of all the world; God is incomparably more to it than its form, as being the total, first cause of form and matter. To be the Creator is more than to be the soul.

Sect. 28. The glory of all being, action, and order in the creatures, is no less due to God when he worketh by means, than when he worketh by none at all.^a

For when no means is a means, nor hath being, aptitude, force, or efficacy, but from himself, he only communicateth praise to his creatures when he thus useth them, but giveth not away the least degree of his own interest and honour; for the creature is nothing, hath nothing, and can do nothing, but by him; it useth no strength, or skill, or bounty, but what it first received from him; therefore, to use such means, can be no dishonour to him, unless it be a dishonour to be a communicative good. As it is no dishonour to a watchmaker to make that engine which showeth his skill, instead of performing all the motions without that little frame of means; but yet no similitude will reach the case, because all creatures themselves are but the continued productions of the Creator's will, and the virtue which they put forth is nothing but what God putteth into them; and he is as near to the effect when he worketh by means, as when without.

Sect. 29. Those that call these three faculties or principles in the divine essence, by the name of three hypostases, or persons, do seem to me to speak less unaptly than the schools, who call *Deum seipsum intelligentem*, the Father; and *Deum ut a se intellectum*, the Son; and *Deum a se amatum*, the Holy Ghost. For that in God, which is to be conceived of us by analogy to our essential faculties, is with less impropriety called an hypostasis or person, than that which is to be conceived by us in analogy to our *actus secundi*, or receptions.^b

^a See Theophil. Antioch. ad Autol. l. 1. p. in B. p. 128. Showing that by God's voice speaking to Adam, is meant his Son.

^b Sic Plato, cum de Deo loqui esset animatus, dicere quid quis, non est ausus: hoc solum de Deo sciens, quod sciri qualis sit, ab homine non possit; solum vero ei similitudinem de visibilibus solum reperit et per ejus similitudinem viam sermoni suo attollendo se ad comprehensibilem patefecit. Nam Deus qui prima causa est, unus omnium principis et origo est. Hic superabundanti fecunditate majes-

^o The reason why the heathens made gods of several virtues, was, because those virtues were most eminent in God, and by adoring them, men would learn to love and imitate them. Bene mens, pietas, virtus, fides consecratur manu: quarum omnium Romæ dedicata publice templis sunt, ut illa qui habeant (habent autem omnes boni) Deos ipsos animis suis collocatos putent. Cicero de Leg. 2. p. 240.

^p Fas autem nec est, nec unquam fuit, quicquam nisi pulcherrimum facere cum qui esset optimus. Cicero de Univer. pag. 269.

Sect. 30. And those that say the first faculty, omnipotency, as eminently appearing in the frame of nature, may therefore be said to be especially therein personated, or denominated, the creating person, speak nothing which derogateth from the honour of the Deity.

Sect. 31. Though we cannot trace the *vestigia*, the adumbration, or appearances, of this Trinity in Unity, through the whole body of nature and morality, because of the great debility and narrowness of our minds; yet is it so apparent, on the first and most notable parts of both, as may make it exceedingly probable that it runneth in perfect method through them all; if our understandings were but able to follow and comprehend that wonderful method in the numerous, minute, and less discernible particulars.*

I shall now give no other instance than in two of the most noble creatures. The soul of man, which is made after God's image, from whence we fetch our first knowledge of him, hath in the unity of a living spirit, the three foresaid faculties of vital and executive power, understanding, and will, which are neither three species, nor three parts, nor three accidents of the soul; but three faculties certainly so far distinct, as that the acts from which they are denominated really differ, and therefore the faculties differ at least in their virtual relation to those acts, and so in a well-grounded denomination. To understand is not to will; for I understand that which I have no will to, even against my will, for the intellect may be forced. Therefore, the same soul hath in it the virtue or power, both of understanding and willing, and so of executing, which are denominated from the different acts which they relate to. There is some reason in the powers, virtues, and faculties of the real difference in the acts.†

So in the sun, and all the superior luminaries, there is, in the unity of their essence, a trinity of faculties or powers, 1. *Motiva*, 2. *Illuminativa*, 3. *Calefactiva*; causing motion, light, and heat. The doctrine of motion is much improved by our late philosophers. When the doctrine of light and heat are so also, and vindicated from the rank of common accidents and qualities, the nature of the luminaries and of fire will be also better cleared. The sun is not to these powers or acts either a *genus*, a *totum*, or a *subjectum*. It is not one part of the sun that moveth, and another which illuminateth, and another which heateth; but the whole sun, if it be wholly fire, or ethereal matter, doth move, the whole illuminateth, and the whole doth heat: and motion, light, and heat, are not qualities inherent in it; but motion, illumination, and calefaction, are acts flowing immediately from its essence, as containing the faculties or powers of such acts.‡

He that could write a perfect method of physics and morality, would show us trinity in unity through all its parts, from first to last. But as the veins, arteries, and nerves, the vessels of the natural, vital, and animal humours and spirits, are easily discernible

tatis de se mentem creavit. Hæc mens que *vis* vocatur, qua patrem inspicit, plenam similitudinem servat auctoris. Macrobius. § Nulla gens est tam immanusæ neque tam ferreæ, que non etiam ignoret qualem Deum habere deceat, tamen habendum sciat. Cicero 1. de Leg.

† Omnis in natus et quasi insculptum est, esse Deos. Idem de Nat. Deor.

‡ Nulla gens tam fera cujus mentem non imbuierit Deorum opinio. Idem 1. Tusc.

§ Dicunt Stoici Deum esse animal immortale, rationale, perfectum et beatum; a malo omni remotissimum, providentia sua mundum et que sunt in mundo administrans omnia: non tamen inesse illi humanæ formæ lineamenta: ceterum esse opificem immensi bujus operis, sicut et patrem omnium. Laert. in Zenone, p. (mihi) 364.

in their trunks and greater branches, but not so when they are minute and multiplied into thousands, so is it in this method.*

But I must desire the reader to observe, that though I here explain this trinity of active principles in the divine essence, which is so evident to natural reason itself as to be past all controversy; yet whether, indeed, the trinity of hypostases or persons, which is part of the christian faith, be not somewhat distinct from this, is a question which here I am not to meddle with till I come to the second part of the treatise: nor is it my purpose to deny it, but only to prepare for the better understanding of it. Of which more shall there afterwards be said.

Sect. 32. And thus, all creatures, and especially ourselves, declare that there is a first Being and Cause of them all, who is a substance, life, and spirit, or mind, an active power, understanding, a will, perfect, eternal, independent, and self-sufficient; not compounded, not possible, not mutable, corruptible, or mortal; immense, omnipresent, incomprehensible, only one, omnipotent, omniscient, and most perfect, most happy in being himself, in knowing himself, and enjoying himself; most holy, transcending all the creatures, of a perfect will, the fountain of all moral good, love or benign; having a trinity of essential, transcendent principles, in unity of essence, which have made their adumbration or appearance on the world: whereof, though he be not the constitutive form or soul, he is to it much more, the first efficient, dirigent, and ultimate final cause of all, that is, there is a God.

CHAPTER VI.

OF GOD AS RELATED TO HIS CREATURES, ESPECIALLY TO MAN, AND AS HIS OWNER.

PASSING by all that is doubtful and controverted among men truly rational, and taking before me only that which is certain, undeniable, and clear, and wherein my own soul is past all doubt, I shall proceed in the same method *secundum ordinem cognoscendi, non essendi*. The word God doth not only signify all that I have been proving, viz. the perfect nature of the first cause, but also his relations to us his creatures: and therefore, till I have opened and proved those relations, I have done but part of my work to prove that there is a God.†

Sect. 1. God having produced man, and all the world, by his power, understanding, and will, is by immediate resultancy related to him as his Creator.

Though he made his body of pre-existent matter, yet was that matter made of nothing; and therefore God is properly man's Creator, and not his fabricator only: and a creature is a relation, which inferreth the correlate, a creator, as a son doth a father.

I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, Talmud, Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind. Lord Verulam, Essay 16.

* Multi de Diis prava sentiunt: id enim vitiosum more effici solet: omnes tamen esse vim et naturam divinam arbitrantur. Nec vero id collocutio hominum aut consensus efficit; non institutis opinio est confirmata; non legibus: omni autem in re consensus omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est. Cicer. Tusculan. Qu. 1. l. p. 220.

† Cesarius, and some other of the ancients, make the image of God on man to be his natural perfections, and his similitude to be his moral perfections.

‡ Read the proofs of the Deity, and of Providence, at large, in Cicer. de Nat. Deor. lib. 2. by Balbus.

This, therefore, is God's first grand relation unto man, which hath no cause to produce it but his actual creation, which is its *fundamentum*.

Sect. 2. This grand prime relation inferreth a trinity of grand relations, viz. That God is our Owner, our Ruler, and our Benefactor, of which we are now to speak in order.

That these three are justly distinguished from each other, is past doubt to all that understand what is meant by the terms. An owner, as such, is not a ruler or benefactor; a ruler, as such, is not an owner or benefactor; a benefactor, as such, is neither an owner nor a ruler. And the enumeration is sufficient: all human affairs, or actions of converse and society, belong to man in one of these three relations, or such as are subordinate to them, and mere dependents on them, or compounded of them. They are in some respect the *genera*, and in some as it were the elements of all other relations: and from the manner of men, they are applied to God, with as much propriety of speech, as any terms that man can use concerning him. And he that could draw a true scheme or method of the body of morality, (or theology, for all is one with me,) would reduce all the dealings of God with man, which are subsequent to the fundamental act of creation, to these three relations; and accordingly distinguish of them all; yet in the mixed acts, (as most are such,) distinguishing only of the compounding elements (I mean, the interest of these three relations, as making up the several acts).

Sect. 3. A full owner or proprietor is called *dominus* in the strictest sense, and is one that hath a *jus possidendi, disponendi, et utendi*; a right of having or possessing, disposing and using, without any copartner, or superior proprietor, to restrain him.

The meaning is better known by the bare terms of denomination, through common use, than by definition. We know what it meaneth when a man saith of any thing, It is my own. There are defective half-proprieties, of copartners, and subordinate proprietors, which belong not to our present case. The word *dominus et dominium*, is sometimes taken laxly, as comprehending both propriety and rule; and sometimes improperly, for government or command itself: but among lawyers it is most commonly taken properly and strictly for an owner, as such: but lest any be contentious about the use of the word, I here put instead of it the word owner and proprietor, as being more free from ambiguity.

Sect. 4. God is, *jure creationis et conservationis*, the most absolute owner or proprietor of man and the whole creation.^b

It is not possible that there should be a more full and certain title to propriety than creation and total conservation is. He that giveth the world all its being, and that of nothing, and continueth that being, and was beheld to no pre-existent matter, nor to any co-ordinate con-cause, nor dependent on any superior cause in his causation, but is himself the first, independent, efficient, total cause of being and well-being, and all the means thereto, must needs be the absolute owner of all, without the least limitation or exception.

It is not the supereminency of God's nature, excelling all created beings, that is the foundation of his this propriety in the creature: for excellency is no title to propriety. And yet he that is *unicus in capacitate possidendi*, that is, so transcendently excellent as to have no copartner in a claim, might by occupation be sole proprietor, in that kind of pro-

priety *secundum quid*, which man is capable of; because there is no other whom he can be said to wrong. But God hath a more plenary title by creation to absolute propriety.

Sect. 5. Therefore it belongeth to God to be the absolute disposer of all things; to do with them what he please; and to use them to the pleasure of his will.

Every one may do with his own what he list, except the propriety be but limited, and dependent on another, or but *secundum quid*. Who should interpose, and any way hinder God from the free disposal of his own? not any copartner, for there is none; nor the creature itself, because it is absolutely his.

Sect. 6. Therefore, also, *in hoc instanti*, antecedently to any further relation or covenant, it is not possible for God to do wrong to his creature, however he shall use it: because it is absolutely his own, and he oweth it nothing: and where there is no *debitum*, there is no *jus*, and can be no *injuria*.

It is to be remembered that I speak not here of God, as now related to the rational creature as a rector and a benefactor, and as having declared his own will in his laws or promises to the contrary; but I speak of God only in the relation of a proprietor, simply in itself considered, and so of his absolute right, and not his ordinate will, as it is commonly called. No man need to fear lest God should deal unequally with himself, or contrary to that which true reason calleth justice. For God having made him rector of the world, hath, as it were, obliged himself, that is, declared his will, to deal equally with all men, and judge them according to their works: and so hath created a *debitum et jus* to man, which inferreth a certain justice on God's part. But, considering him only in this first relation, merely *ut dominus absolutus*, or proprietor, it is not possible for any thing that he can do to be an injury: and mere corporal pain (including no contradiction or error, as consciences' accusation of the innocent doth) could be no wrong: there being less appearance of reason to call it wrong, than for my burning my wood, or plucking a rose, to be a wrong: for it is not the pain of one that can make it an injury any more than the destruction of the other: where there is no *jus*, there can be no *injuria*; and where there is no *debitum*, there is no *jus*. My rose hath possession of its life, but no right to it; therefore it is no wrong to destroy it. And yet in this, and in the killing of birds, and beasts, and fishes, and labouring my horse and ox in continual weariness and pain, my borrowed half-propriety *secundum quid*, excuseth me from doing them any wrong; which God's absolute propriety will do much more unquestionably by him.

Sect. 7. Though all God's three essential principles or faculties, power, wisdom, and goodness, appear in each of his three grand relations, owner, ruler, and benefactor, yet each one of these hath most eminently some one of God's essential principles or faculties appearing in it; viz. his power most appeareth in his propriety, his wisdom in his rule, and his goodness or love in his benefits given us.

Therefore, propriety resulteth immediately from creation, as producing the creature as a creature; but so doth not government, as we shall see anon. And as omnipotency is the most eminent attribute in the creation, so is it in that absolute propriety of the Creator, acquired by it.

^b Those writers who confound propriety and government under the word dominion, and then bestow long and sharp disputes on the question, What is the *fundamentum* of God's

dominion? do but delude the ignorant, and exercise the patience or contempt of the intelligent.

CHAPTER VII.

I. OF MAN'S RELATION TO GOD, HIS OWNER.

SECT. 1. God being our undoubted, absolute Owner, it followeth, undeniably, that we are his own.

The relations^a are mutual, and the thing needeth no proof.

SECT. 2. Therefore, man being an intellect creature, that can know this his relation to his Maker, is bound by nature to consent to it, and absolutely resign himself to the will, disposal, and use of his Creator.^b

For there is nothing more reasonable, than that every one should have his own: and the understanding of man should conceive of things as they are, and the will of man should consent to his Maker's interest and right, or else it were most crooked, irregular, and unjust. Therefore, it must needs be the duty of every reasonable creature to bethink him, that God is his absolute Owner, and thereupon to make a deliberate, resolved resignation of himself to God, without any exceptions or reserves.

SECT. 3. Therefore, man should labour to know wherein he may be most useful to his Maker's interest, (which is his pleasure in our perfection,) and therein he should willingly and joyfully lay out himself.^c

For it is undeniable that God should be served with his own, and that entirely, without dividing; for we are not in part, but wholly his.

SECT. 4. Therefore no man can have any propriety in himself, but what is derived from his absolute Lord, and standeth in full subordination to his propriety.

For there can be but one full and absolute proprietor. I can have no other propriety in myself, but by derivation and trust from my Creator.

SECT. 5. Therefore also no creature can have any propriety in another creature, but only derivatively, subordinate, *et secundum quid*.

No parent hath any propriety in his children, nor the most absolute and potent prince in his people, but as God's stewards under him; no not in themselves, and therefore not in others. And a steward hath no propriety in his master's goods, but derivative, dependent, subordinate, and improper, and only the *usum fructuum*, and such possession as is necessary thereto, and such an imperfect propriety as will justify that possession.

SECT. 6. And as I am not my own, so nothing is properly my own which I possess, but all that I have is God's as well as I.

For no man can have more title to any thing else than to himself. He that is not owner of himself, is owner of nothing. And we have not any thing, nor can have, which is not as much from God as we, and therefore is not as much his.

SECT. 7. Therefore no man should repine at God's disposal of him, but all men should acquiesce in the disposing will of God.

For it is unreasonable and unjust to murmur at

God, for doing as he list with his own, and using any thing to his ends.

SECT. 8. And therefore all men should avoid all selfish affections, and partiality, and be more affected with God's interest than their own.

For we are not so much our own as his, and our interest is not considerable in comparison of his.

SECT. 9. Therefore no man should do any thing for selfish ends, which is injurious to the will and interest of God, our absolute Owner.

SECT. 10. And therefore no man should dispose of his estate, or any thing he hath, in any way, but for the interest of his absolute Lord.

SECT. 11. And therefore all men should make it the very care and labour of their lives to serve the will and interest of this their absolute Owner.

SECT. 12. And therefore no man should prefer the will or interest of the greatest mortal man, or the dearest friend, before the will and interest of God.

SECT. 13. Nor should the public interest of states or kingdoms be pleaded against his will and interest.

But yet we must take heed how we oppose or neglect this last, especially, because the will of God doth take most pleasure in the public or common benefit of his creatures; and therefore these two are very seldom separated; nor ever at all as to their real good, though as to carnal lower good, it may so fall out.

All these are so plain, that to stand to prove or illustrate them, were but to be unnecessarily and unprofitably tedious.

SECT. 14. It being a God of infinite wisdom and goodness, as well as power, who is our owner, his title to us is a great consolation to the upright.

For as he hath taught men (and brutes too) to love their own, it intimateth that he will not despise his own; and therefore his interest in us is our comfort.

SECT. 15. No man is capable of giving any thing properly to God, but only by obediential reddition of his own: no, nor to man, but as God's steward, and according to our propriety, *secundum quid*, in respect to other claimers.

CHAPTER VIII.

II. OF GOD'S RELATION TO MAN, AS HIS GOVERNOR.

SECT. 1. God having made man a rational free agent, and sociable, among sensible objects, and out of sight of his invisible Creator, and so infirm and defectible, it followeth, necessarily, that he is a creature which must be governed by moral means, and not only moved by natural necessitation, as inanimates and brutes.^d

The thing that I am first to prove is, that man's Creator hath made him such a creature, whose nature requireth a government, that he hath a necessity of government, and an aptitude to it.

Note, that all Cicero's unanswerable reasons for the law of nature (*lib. de Leg.*) prove, that God governeth by laws; for the law of nature is God's law, who is the Maker of nature.

Omnia quæ in hominum doctorum disputatione versantur, nihil est profecto præstabilius, quam plane intelligi nos ad justitiam esse natos; neque opinione sed natura, constitutum esse ius. Id jam patet, si hominum inter ipsos societatem conjunctionemque prospexeris, &c. Cicero de Leg. l. p. 221.

^a Prima pietatis magistra natura est. Cic.

^b Omnis est Deorum vita beata, hominum autem quatenus in ea licet quoddam ejus actionis exemplar. Aristot. Eth. 10. c. 8.

^c Audi ne consecrentur Platoni assentior: qui his fere verbis utitur: terra igitur, ut focus domicilium sacrum omnium Deorum est: quocirca nequis iterum idem consecrato. Aurius autem et argentum in uribus et privatim et in fanis, invidiosa res est. Cicero de Leg. l. 2. p. 245.

^d Stoici dicunt mundum regi et administrari secundum mentem et providentiam. Laert. in Zenone.

By government, I mean, the exercise of the moral means of laws, and execution by a ruler, for the right ordering of the subject's actions, to the good of the society, and the honour of the governor.

I distinguish laws from all mere natural motions and necessitation; for though, analogically, the shepherd is said to rule his sheep, and the rider his horse, yea, and the pilot his ship, and the ploughman his plough, and the archer his arrow, yet this is but equivocally called government, and is not that which we here mean, which is the proposal of duty, seconded with rewards or punishment for the neglects, by those in authority, for the right governing of those that are committed to their care and trust. So that it is not all moral means neither which is called government, for the instruction or persuasion of an equal is not such. Laws, and judgment, and execution, are the constitutive parts of government; but by laws I mean the whole kind, and not only written laws, nor those only which are made by sovereign rulers of commonwealths, which, by excellency, are called laws, but I mean the signification of the will of a governor, making the subject's duty, and determining of rewards to the obedient, and punishments to the disobedient; or, an authoritative constitution, *de debito officii, præmii et pænæ*, for the ends of government: so that as parents, and tutors, and masters, do truly govern as well as kings; so they have truly laws, though not in such eminency as the laws of republics. The will of a parent, a tutor, or master, manifested concerning duty, is truly a law to a child, a scholar, or a servant. If any dislike the use of the word, law, in so large a sense, it sufficeth now for me to tell them in what sense I use it, and so it will serve to the understanding of my mind: I take it for such an instrument of government. The parts of it are, 1. The constituting of the *debitum officii*, or what shall be due from the subject; 2. The constituting the *debitum præmii vel pænæ*, or what shall be due to the subject, which is in order to the promoting of obedience; though as to the performances, obedience may be in order to the reward. Now, that man is a creature made to be governed by such a proper, moral government, I prove.

1. The several parts of government are necessary, therefore government is necessary: from all the parts of government to the whole is an unquestionable consequence. It is necessary that man have duty prescribed and imposed; else man shall have nothing which he ought to do. Take away duty, and we are good for nothing, nor have any employment fit for reason; and take away all reward and punishment, and you take away duty in effect: experience teacheth us that it will not be done, for a rational agent will have ends and motives for what he doth.

2. From the imbecility of our younger state, so weak is our infant understanding, and so strong our sensitive inclination, that if parents should leave all their children ungoverned, abused reason would make man worse than beasts.

3. From the common infirmity and badness of all the world, the wise are so few, and the ignorant so many, that if all the ignorant were left ungoverned to do what they list, they would be like an army of blind men in a fight, or like a world of men bewil-

dered in the dark. What a confused, loathsome spectacle would the world be! And the rather, because men are bad, as well as foolish. Would all the sensual, vicious persons in the world be ordered like men, without any government, by such as are wiser than themselves?

4. From the power of sensitive objects, the baits of sense are so numerous, so near, and so powerful, that they would bear down reason in the most, without the help of laws; nay, laws themselves, even of God and man, do so little with the most, as tell us what they would be without them.

5. The variety of men's minds, and interests, and dispositions, is such, as that the world ungoverned would be utterly in confusion; as many minds and ways as men. No two men are in all things of the same apprehensions.

6. From the nature of man's powers, he is a noble creature, and therefore hath answerable ends to be attained, and therefore must have the conduct of answerable means. He is a rational free agent, and therefore must have his end and means proposed to his reason, and is not to be moved by sense alone; his chief end, as well as his chief governor, being out of his sight.

7. The experience of all mankind constraineth them to consent to this, that man is a creature made for government. Therefore, even among cannibals, parents govern their children, and husbands govern their wives; and in all the rational world there are rulers and subjects, masters and servants, tutors and scholars, which all are governors or governed. Few men are to be found alive on earth, who would have all men, or any men, save themselves, ungoverned; otherwise, men would be worse to men, I say not than serpents, and toads, and tigers, are to one another, but than any of them are to men. Every man that hath strength and opportunity would make a prey of the life or welfare of his brother. Men's own necessity forceth them every where to set up governments, that they may not live as in a continual war, in danger and fear of one another; nay, a war that is managed by armies is also ordered by government, because many must agree for mutual defence; but else every man would be against another, and they would be as so many fighting cocks or dogs, every one would fight or fly for himself; for fighting or flying, injuring and being injured, would be all their lives.*

He that denieth man to be a creature made for government, and, consequently, denieth God's government of the world, by moral, proper government, doth own all these absurdities, which elsewhere I have heretofore enumerated.

1. He denieth that there is a God; for to be God, includeth to be governor of the rational world.

2. He denieth that man oweth any duty to God or man; for where there is no government there is no proper duty.

3. He denieth the justice of God; for justice is the attribute of a governor; that is, distributive justice, which we speak of; for commutative justice God cannot exercise towards man, because of our great inferiority to him.

4. He denieth all the laws of nature; for where there is no government there are no laws.

5. He denieth the virtue of obedience, and all other

* Si leges abrogantur et cuiusvis licentia faciendi quicquid voluerit data sit, non solum respublica pessum ibit, sed nec quicquam intererit inter nostram et ferarum vitam. Demost. Or. 2. cont. Aristog.

Bonus legibus, honestorum studiorum emulatione pia, temperans, justa, et re bellica præstans civitas redditur. Dion. Halic. l. 4.

Modestiam quandam cognitio rerum cælestium affert iis, qui videant quanta sit etiam apud Deos moderatio, quantus ordo; et magnitudinem animi, Deorum opera et facta cernentibus. Justitiam etiam, cum cognitum habeas, quod sit summi rectoris et domini numen, quod consilium, quæ voluntas; cuius ad naturam apta ratio vera illa et summa lex a philosophis dicitur. Cicero, de Finib. l. 4. p. 156.

virtues concatenated with it; for where there is no government there is no obedience.^f

6. He denieth that there is any such thing as sin, or any fault against God or man; for where there is no government there is no transgression. Both the vicious habits and the acts will have no more crime than the poison of a toad.

7. And then no man should forbear any act as sinful or criminal.

8. Nor should any persons reprove sin in others, nor exhort them from it.

9. Nor should any one confess any sin, or repent of it, because it is not

10. Nor should any man ask forgiveness of any crime of God or man.

11. Nor should any man thank God for the pardon of his sin.

12. It will follow that there is no moral difference between men or actions, as good and bad, but all are alike, whatever they be or do.

13. He denieth all God's judgments, and all his rewards and punishments; for these are all of them acts of government.

14. It will follow, that every man should do what he list.

15. And that all parents may forbear the government of their children, and all masters of their servants, and governors of their families.

16. It treasonably subverteth all kingdoms and commonwealths, and denieth that there should be any kings or subjects.

17. It denieth all human justice, because it denieth human government.

18. It maketh man a beast, who is incapable of moral government.

19. It maketh him far worse than a beast, as *corruptio optimi est pessima*: for a beast hath an analogical, improper government by man, but man must have such as moveth him rationally, according to his nature, or he must have none at all: and it would banish all order, duty, and virtue, out of the world, and make earth somewhat worse than hell, which is not wholly destitute of government.

20. But the best of it is, while it nullifieth right and wrong, it inferreth, that whosoever shall beat or hang the owners of this doctrine, do them no wrong, nor offend any laws of God or man: for if there be no government, there is no transgression; and if they are brutes, they may be used as brutes, who are incapable of titles, rights, inheritances, or of any plea as against an injury.

Sec. 2. Man being made a creature to be governed, it thence followeth, that his Creator must needs be his sovereign governor, as being only fit, and having, in his propriety, the only right.^g

1. A governor he must have; for there is no government, nor governed, without a governor.

2. If there be never so many inferior governors, there must be some supreme; or else each one would be absolutely supreme, and none inferior. But I will first prove that God is man's Sovereign, and then show the foundation of his right, and of this relation.

^f Fundamentum libertatis, fons æquitatis, mens et animus et consilium, sententia civitatis posita in legibus. Cic.

Atqui si natura confirmatum jus non erit, virtutes omnes tollantur: ubi enim liberalitas? Ubi patriæ caritas? Ubi pietas? Ubi aut bene merendi de altero, aut referendæ gratiæ voluntas, poterit existere? Nam hæc nascuntur ex eo quod natura propensum sumus ad diligendos homines, quod fundamentum juris est. Neque solum in homines obsequia, sed etiam in Deos ceremoniæ religionesque tolluntur, quas non motu, sed ex conjunctione, quæ est homini cum Deo, conservandas puto. Cic. de Leg. l. 1. p. 225.

^g Mundus numine regitur, estque quasi communis urbs et civitas hominum. Cicero 2. de Finib.

The only objection made against it consisteth of these two parts. 1. That God moveth man effectually, *per modum nature*, as an engineer; and that this is more excellent than moral government. 2. And that moral government, being a less effectual way, is committed to angels and to men; viz. kings, and states, and magistrates, who are sufficient to perform it.^h

This objection confesseth the government of one man over others, but denieth the government of God over man; and, instead of it, substituteth his mere physical motion, or natural government, such as a pilot useth to his ship. I shall, therefore, against it prove, that not only man, but God, doth exercise this proper moral government, by laws, and executions, and not a physical motion only.

Sec. 3. 1. God hath *de facto* made laws for mankind; therefore, he is their governor by laws.

The consequence is undeniable: the antecedent I further prove.

Sec. 4. He that doth, by authoritative constitution of duty, oblige man to obedience, doth make laws for him, and govern him by laws: but God doth, by authoritative constitution of duty, oblige man to obedience; therefore, he maketh laws for him, and ruleth him thereby.ⁱ

The major is not to be denied; for it only asserteth the name from the definition. The authoritative appointment of the *debitum officii*, obliging to obedience, is the definition of legislation, as to its first and principal act; which the appointment of the *debitum præmiæ vel pœnæ* followeth. And I think that the interest of mankind will not suffer him to be so erroneous as to deny the minor: I think few will believe that there is no such thing as a law of nature made by the God of nature; or that there is no such thing as duty incumbent on man from God; and so no such thing as an accusing or excusing conscience. Few persons will believe that it is no duty of parents to nourish their children, or no crime to murder them; or that it is no duty for children to be thankful to their parents, and to love them; or no sin to hate, or scorn, or kill them. Few kings will believe, that it is no duty towards God, for their subjects to obey them, and no crime to rebel or murder them; and that conscience hath nothing to say against him for such things, that can but scape the judgment and revenge of man: and few subjects will believe, that it is no crime for a prince to oppress them, in their liberties, estates, and lives: and few neighbours will think that he is innocent before God, who beateeth them, or setteth fire to their houses, or murdereth their children or other relations. If man be under no duty to God, and if nothing that he can do is a sin against God, what a thing will man be, and what a hell will earth be! Deny the law of nature, and you turn men loose to every villany, and engage the world to destroy itself, and set all as on fire about their ears.

For if God only move us physically, there is neither virtue nor vice, good nor evil, in a moral sense; but what God moveth a man to, that will he

^h Nec solum jura a natura judicatur, sed omnino omnia honesta et turpia: nam et communis intelligentia nobis notas res efficit; easque in animis nostris inchoavit, ut honesta in virtute ponantur, in vitiiis turpia. Hæc autem in opinione existimare, non in natura ponere, dementis est. Nam et nec arboris, nec equi virtus, quæ dicitur in quo abutimur nomine, in opinione sita est in natura. Cicero de Leg. l. 1. p. 225.

ⁱ Repere natura male administrari non vult: et multorum dominatus et principatus non est utilis: unus ergo sit princeps. Aristot. lib. 11. Metaph. c. 10.

Quod in navi gubernator, quod in curru agitator, quod in choro præcor, quod denique lex in civitate, et dux in exercitu, hoc Deus est in mundo. Aristot. de Mund. c. 6.

do, and what he doth not move him to he will not do; and so there being only motion and no motion, action and no action, there will be no duty and no obligation, and so no moral good or evil.

Sect. 5. II. If God should rule us only by physical motion, and not by laws, he should not rule man as man, according to his nature. But God doth rule man according to his nature, therefore not only by physical motion.⁴

Otherwise man should not differ from inanimates and brutes. A stone is to be moved physically, and a brute by the necessitating objects of sense; but man hath reason, which they have not, and he is a free agent. And, therefore, though God concur to his physical motion as such, yet he must move him as rational by such objects, and such proposals, and arguments, and means, as are suited to reason. By presenting things absent to his understanding, to prevail against the sense of things present, and by teaching him to prefer greater things before lesser, and by showing him the commodity and discommodity, which should move him: God would not have made him rational, if he would not have governed him accordingly.

Sect. 6. III. If the way of physical motion alone is not so excellent and suitable as the way of moral government by laws also, then God doth not only move man physically, and leave it to magistrates to rule as morally. But the antecedent is true; therefore, so is the consequent.

God doth not omit the more excellent, and choose a lower way of government, and leave the more excellent way to man. And that the minor is true appeareth thus; the way which is most suitable to the object or subject of government is the most excellent way; but such is the moral way by laws; the other, beasts are as capable subjects of as men, and trees as either. Wisdom and justice are eminently glorified in the moral way; and omnipotency itself also appeareth in God's making of so noble a creature, as is governable by reason without force.

Sect. 7. IV. If God were not the sovereign Ruler of the world, there could be no government of men's hearts. But there is a government of hearts; therefore God is the Ruler of the world.

Man knoweth not the hearts of those whom he governeth; and therefore he can take no cognizance of heart sins or duties, unless as they appear in words or deeds; and therefore he maketh no law for the government of hearts. But the heart is the man, and a bad heart is the fountain of bad words or acts, and is itself polluted before it endeavour the injury of others. He that thinks all indifferent that is within him, is himself so bad, that it is the less wonder if, being so indifferent, yea, so vitiated within, he thinks nothing evil which he hath a mind to do. He that thinketh that the heart is as good and innocent, which hateth his God, his king, his friend, his parents, as that which loveth them; and that it is no duty to have any good thought or affection, but only for the outward action's sake; nor any sin to be malicious, covetous, proud, deceitful, lustful, impious, and unjust, in his cogitations, contrivances, and desires, unless as they appear in the acts; doth show that he hath himself a heart which is too suitable to such a doctrine. But nature hath taught all the world to judge of men by their hearts, as far as they can know them, and not to take the will, which is

the first seat of moral good or evil, to be capable of neither good nor evil. Therefore, seeing hearts must be under government, it must not be man, but the heart-searching God, that must be their Governor.

Sect. 8. V. If God were not the Governor of the world, all earthly sovereigns would be themselves ungoverned. But they are not ungoverned; therefore God is their Governor, and so the Governor of the world.¹

The kings and states that have sovereign power through all the world are under no human government at all, though some of them are limited by contracts with their people. But none have so much need to have the benefit of heart government; none have so strong temptations as they, and no men's actions are of so great importance to the welfare or misery of the world. If the monarchs of the earth do take themselves to be left free by God to do what they list, what work will be made among the people! If they think it no duty to be just, or merciful, or chaste, or temperate, what wonder if they be unjust, and cruel, and filthy, and luxurious, and use the people for their own ends and lusts, and esteem them as men do their dogs or horses, that are to be used for their own pleasure or commodity. What is the present calamity of the world, but that the heathen and infidel rulers of the world are so ignorant and sensual, and have cast off the fear of God, and the sense of his government, in a great degree; when yet most of them have some conviction that there is a God, who ruleth all, and to whom they must be accountable. What, then, would they be, if they once believed that they are under no government of God at all? If they should oppress their subjects, and murder the innocent, it would be no fault; for where there is no government and law, there is no transgression. No one forbiddeth it to them, and none commandeth them the contrary, if God do not; for the people are not the rulers of their rulers, nor give them laws; and neighbour princes and states are but neighbours; therefore, if they should sacrifice peace and honesty, liberties, lives, and kingdoms to their lusts, no man could say, They do amiss, or violate any sort of law.²

Object. But the fear of rebellions, and the people's vindicating their liberties, would restrain them.

Ans. Only so far as they feel themselves unable to do hurt, as a man is restrained from killing adders lest they sting him; and the advantage of their place doth usually empower them to make desolations, if they have a mind to it: and great minds will not easily bear a popular restraint. And, indeed, the honest and better any people are, the more undisciplined are they to rebel; and therefore tyrants may, with smallest danger and fear, destroy them.

Object. But their own interest lieth in the people's welfare; and therefore there is no danger of such miseries.

Ans. Did Nero think so, that wished Rome had but one neck? that set the city on fire, that he might sing over it Homer's poem of the flames of Troy? that ripped up his own mother, that he might see the place where once he lay? Did Caligula think so? Did Commodus, Caracalla, Heliogabalus think so? Did the Spaniards think so by the Indians, who are said by their own writers to have murdered in forty-two years' space, no less than fifty millions of them? Did king Philip think so, who

⁴ Est enim virtus perfecta ratio, quod certe in natura est. Cicero de Leg. 1. p. 226.

¹ What Cicero (de Leg. 3.) saith, That he must first learn to obey, who will learn to govern, is true in respect of obedience to God.

² Quæ lex est recta ratio imperandi atque prohibendi:

quam qui ignorat, est iniustus, sive est illa scripta uspiam, sive nuspiam. Quod si iustitia est obtemperatio scriptis legibus, institutisque populorum, et si idem dicitur, utilitate omnia metienda sunt, negliget leges, easque peremptur, si poterit, is qui sibi eam rem fructuosam putabit fore. Cicero de Leg. 1. p. 225.

put his own son and heir to death by the inquisition ; besides so many thousands more in Spain, and the Low Countries, by that and other ways ? How full of such bloody instances is the world ! If it were a tyrant's interest that kept him under some moderation to the people of his own dominions, it might yet possibly leave him a bloody destroyer of other nations in his conquests. The world hath not wanted men that think the lives of many thousands a little sacrifice to a proud design, or furious passion ; and are no more troubled at it, than a Pythagorean would be to kill a bird. It hath had such as Sylla, Messala, Catiline, and the conquerors of Jerusalem, who, as Josephus saith, crucified so many thousands, till they wanted crosses for men, and place for crosses, besides great numbers famished.

Object. But if chief governors be under no law, they are under covenants, by which they are obliged.

Answer. What shall make their covenants obligatory to their consciences, if they be under no government of God ? The reason why men's covenants bind them is, because they are under the government of God, who requireth all men to keep their covenants, and condemneth covenant-breakers ; but if God had never commanded covenant keeping, nor forbid covenant breaking, they could never be matter of duty or sin ; so that this doctrine, that God hath made no laws for man, and is not his Governor, doth leave all sovereigns from under the least conscientious restraint from any acts of cruelty or injustice, and tendeth to deliver up the world to be a sacrifice to their lusts, when it is the government of the universal Sovereign that is their restraint.

Sec. 9. VI. If God have not the sovereignty over all the world, then no man on earth can have any governing power ; but princes and rulers have a governing power, therefore the sovereignty is in God.

The reason of the major is, because kings can have no power but what they receive from some or other ; there is no effect without a cause. And if they receive it, it is either from God or man as the original. Not from man, for the people themselves have no governing power to use or give, as to the government of commonwealths ; for their personal power over themselves is of another species, and cometh short of this in many respects (as elsewhere I have proved) ; and if it were otherwise, yet they have nothing themselves but derivatively from God, as is proved before ; and, therefore, they themselves must have their power from him, from whom they are and have all that they possess : but God cannot give that which he hath not himself, either formally or eminently ; therefore, he hath governing power, formally or eminently, or else no prince, or man, or angel, can have any, more than they can have being or reason without him. And though his power be transcendent, his exercise of it must be according to the capacity of the subject, and, therefore, morally, by laws and executions. So that as all things else in the creature are derived, so is power. And as in beings, *aut Deus aut nihil*, is an undeniable truth, so as to governing power, or sovereignty, either it is

* There is scarce any thing that the world needeth so much as good governors, or that is a greater blessing to them : which Diogenes intimated when he was to be sold, and bid the crier cry, Who will buy him a master ? And when they asked him what he could do, he said, He could tell how to command or rule men. Laert. in Diog.

Dicebatur cum intueretur in vita gubernatores, medicos, et philosophos, animalium omnium sapientissimum, hominem esse : cum autem inspiceret somniorum interpretes, conjectores, vates, vel qui glorie aut divitiis addicti essent, tunc demum nihil se stultius existimare hominem. Id. Ibid.

† Cicero (de Leg. 1.) proveth, that right is founded in the law of nature, more than in man's laws : Because, else, saith he, men may make evil good, and good evil ; and make

primatively, supremely, and transcendently in God, or there is none in any prince or parents : for if they have it not from him, they can have none at all.*

Object. Governing by laws is caused by human impotency, because man is not every where present, nor of power to effect himself, in and by others, all the things which he commandeth : but were man omnipresent and omnipotent, as God is, he would make all men do well, and not command them to do it ; therefore, it is so in the government of God.†

Answer. It is granted that man is impotent, and God omnipotent, and omnipresent, and therefore, that God could indeed do as is here intimated, even make all men do well, and not command it ; but, 1. It is apparent, that, *de facto*, he doth not so. 2. And his wisdom, being more eminently to be manifested in the work of government than his omnipotency, doth show us, partly, why he doth not so, even because the sapiential way is more suitable to his ends and to the subject. Creation did most eminently glorify or manifest omnipotency ; government doth most eminently glorify God's omniscience or wisdom ; as our perfection or glorification will most eminently manifest and glorify his love and goodness : each attribute shineth most eminently in its proper work, and man's conceits must not confound this perfect order.‡

Yet, let it be here noted, that all this while I meddle not with the controversy of the liberty of man's will, and so whether God's sapiential government by laws do operate also by necessitation and physical causation, as the natural motions of the orbs, or the artificial motions of an engine. I only argue, that whether God thus operate by his government by secret necessitation or not, yet it is most certain that he governeth morally, and useth the means of doctrine, laws, and judgments : which might consist with physical, necessitating efficacy in all that do obey indeed, if God's wisdom and man's freedom of will did infer nothing to the contrary. But, if it had been granted, that all God's government is by physical efficacy, it would stand good, nevertheless, that laws and judgment are part of the means which he maketh so effectual : but yet I shall go further in the next argument.

Sec. 10. VII. Experience satisfieth all the rational world, that there is, *de facto*, a course of duty appointed by God for men, which they do not eventually fulfil. Therefore, there is not only a moral government, which is effectual, but also, which is separated from necessitating efficacy.

They that deny this, and plead for physical government only, must affirm, that nothing is any man's duty but what he actually performeth, and that nothing is any man's sin which he doth, or omitteth to do ; that is, that there is no sin or moral evil in the world ; for all that God physically effecteth is good ; and they suppose him to have no law which commandeth any thing but what he physically effecteth, and he will not physically effect that which he forbiddeth. And if there be no such thing as moral evil or sin in the world, then no man should fear any, adultery, perjury, &c. just, by making a law for them. A cursed consequence, which the atheist cannot deny upon his principles.

‡ Quod si populorum jussis, si principum decretis, si sententia iudicum jura constituerentur, jus esset latrocinari, jus adulterare, jus testamenta falsa supponere, si hæc suffragiis, aut scitis multitudinis probarentur. Quæ si tanta potentia stultorum sententia atque jussis, ut eorum suffragiis rerum natura vertatur, cur non sanciant, ut quæ mala perniciosæque sunt habeantur pro bonis et salutaribus. Aut cur cum jus ex injuria facere lex possit, bonum eadem facere non potest ex malo. Atqui nos legem bonam a mala nulla alia nisi naturali norma dividere possumus. Cicero. de Leg. 1. p. 225.

or avoid any. Let but a man leave any thing undone, if it be nourishing his children, defending his king, loving God or man, and he may thence conclude that it never was his duty; let him but do any thing that he hath a mind to, if it be killing father or mother, or his prince, or friend, and he may be sure that it is no sin because he hath done it, for if God forbid it not it is no sin; nay, he may make it an effect of God's government: but this consequence is so false and horrid, that no nation on earth receiveth it, and cannibals themselves abhor it, who eat not their friends, but strangers and enemies.

Sect. 11. VIII. If God be not the Governor of the world by laws, then no man need to fear or avoid any thing forbidden by the laws of man, who can either keep it secret by wit, or keep himself from human revenge by power. But the consequent is false, therefore so is the antecedent.³

The reason of the consequence is evident, because where no human revenge is to be feared, there is no punishment at all is to be feared, if God be no Governor of the world; but those that can hide their actions by craft, or make them good by power, need not fear any human revenge; therefore, they need to fear none at all upon the atheist's grounds. And if that be so, 1. How easy is it for cunning malice to burn a town,⁴ to kill a king, to poison wife or children, and to defraud a neighbour, and never be discovered. If this be so, then thieves, adulterers, traitors, when they are detected, have failed only in point of wit, that they concealed it not, and not in point of honesty and duty. 2. And then any rebel that can get enow to follow him, hath as good a cause as the king that he rebelleth against; and if he conquer, he need not accuse himself of doing any wrong: and then there will be nothing for conscience to blame any man for, nor for one man to accuse another of, but witlessness or impotency. And then the thief must suffer only for want of strength or cunning, and not because he did any wrong.

Sect. 12. IX. If there be no government by God, there can be no true propriety but strength, and he that is strongest hath right to all that he can lay hold on. But the consequent is false, therefore so is the antecedent.⁵

The consequence is undeniable: for if there be no divine government, there is no law but human, and no man can have any right, besides strength, to make laws for any other whomsoever. For if God have no government and law, he constituteth no *debitum vel jus*, no due-ness or right. And man can have no right to govern others, if he have no governor to give any. If God do give right to govern, he thereby maketh obedience to that governor a duty; and he that constituteth or instituteth right and duty, governeth. And if God give men no right to govern, they can have none. And then if strength be all their title, any man that can get as much strength doth get as good a title, and may seize upon the lives, the lands, and estates of prince or people, and

give laws to the weaker, as others before gave laws to him. And so there will utter confusion and misery be let in upon the world. As in the poet's description of the degenerate age, *Virtutis ex raptis, non hospes ab hospite tutus*, &c. reason would have nothing to say against strength: the great dog would have the best title to the bone. *Melior mihi dextera lingua est.*

Dummodo pugando superum, tu vince loquendo — OVID. Met.

The honest, poor, and peaceable, would have such a peace with thieves and strong ones,

Cum pœcore infirmo quæ solet esse lupis. — OVID.

Sect. 13. If God govern not the world, then mere communities are incapable of right or wrong, and no man is bound in duty to spare his brother's life or state. But the consequent is false, therefore so is the antecedent.⁶

By community, I mean a company of men, that have yet set up no government among them; if God be not their governor, such have none at all, and so are under no moral obligation; for covenants themselves cannot bind, if there be no superior obligation, requiring man to stand to his covenants.

Object. Then God's covenants to man do not bind him.

Ans. Not at all, by proper obligation; as if it were his duty to keep them, and his sin to break them; for God is not capable of duty or sin. But yet, improperly, they may be called obligations, because they are the demonstrations of his will, which the perfection of his nature will not let him violate. It would be an imperfection, if God should break promise, though not a sin or crime; and therefore it is impossible for God to lie.

Object. But suppose we say, that man is under no other obligations than a beast; and that among men there is no proper right or wrong, duty or fault; yet men by confederacies, without any other government, would settle rules for the safety of cohabitation and converse; and, for love of themselves, would forbear wronging others. And this is all the law of nature that man hath above brutes.

Ans. Those confederacies would no further oblige them, than their interest required them to observe them. Still, by this rule, a man is left free to kill wife and children, if he be weary of them; which no neighbour, being wronged by none, will seem obliged to revenge: still, he that is the stronger is left to do his worst, without fault, to seize upon other men's estates, and to depose kings and destroy them; and all the world would be in a state of war: or, if self-interest keep some quiet for a time, it would be but till they had strength and opportunity to do otherwise. He is not fit for human society, who would tell all about him, I take myself free to defraud and murder any of you, as soon as my own safety and interest will allow me. And no man, that thus taketh a man for a beast, can expect any better usage than

³ Par et æquum legis acceptum ferre debetis. Demosth.

⁴ Stoici dicunt, sinceros esse sapientes, observareque et cavere sollicite, ne quid de se melius quam sit commendare putemur, quod seu arte aliqua mala occultante, et bona quæ usunt apparere faciente, ac circumcidere vocis omnem fictionem. Laert. in Zenone.

⁵ As London now is.

⁶ Tutum aliqua res in mala conscientia præstat, nulla securum. Putat enim etiam non deprehenditur posse se deprehendi: et inter somnos movetur, et quoties alicuius scelus loquitur, de suo cogitat. Sen. Ep. 106.

Prima et maxima peccantium poena est peccasse: hæc et secundæ poenæ premunt et sequuntur, timere semper et expavescere et securitati diffidere. Id. Ep. 47.

Mihi laudabiliora videntur omnia, quæ sine venditione et sine populo teste fiunt. Nullum theatrum virtuti conscientia majus est. Cic. in Tuscul. 2. p. 268.

Animal hoc providum, sagax, multiplex, acutum, memor, plenum rationis et consilii quem vocamus hominem, præclara quadam conditione generatur esse a supremo Deo: solum est enim ex tot animantium generibus et naturis participes rationis et cogitationis, cum cætera sint omnia expertia. Quid est autem non dicam in homine, sed in omni cælo, atque terra ratione divini, quæ cum adolevit atque perfecta est, nominatur rite sapientia. Est igitur quoniam nihil est ratione melius, eaque et in homine et in Deo, prima homini cum Deo rationis societas. Inter quos autem ratio, inter eosdem recta ratio est communis: quæ cum sit lex, lege quoque consociati homines cum Diis putandi sumus; quibus autem hæc sunt inter eos communia et civitatis ejusdem habendi sunt unde universis hic mundus una civitas communis Deorum atque hominum existimanda. Cic. de Leg. 1. p. 219

a beast himself, any further than self-love shall restrain others from abusing him; nor can he plead any better title to his estate, nor exemption from the violence of the stronger. And it will also follow, that honesty is nothing but self-preserving policy; and that blasphemy and impiety against God need not be feared or avoided; nor any thing as a fault, but only as a folly, exposing the person himself to danger. Incest, perjury, lying, might be imprudencies, but not any crimes?

Object. If you supposed them in God, they would be but imperfections, and not crimes; and why should you judge otherwise of them in man.

Ans. Because the absolute perfection of his nature is instead of a law to God, who hath no superior. But man hath a superior, and hath an imperfect nature, which is, therefore, to be regulated by the wisdom and will of that perfect superior.

And, moreover, if man have reason and wisdom above a beast, which make him capable of knowing right and wrong, and of being moved by the things that are evident to reason, though not to sense; and if he be made to be governed by laws, as was proved before, then he is certainly governed accordingly; or else his nature and reason were given him in vain, which could not be by the most wise Creator.

Object. God governeth the world as the soul governeth the body, which is, rationally, *ex parte animæ*; but not by giving reason or laws to the body; but, despotically, by the natural power of the will.

Ans. The flesh is not capable of laws, as having no reason; and therefore no proper laws can be given to it in itself by the soul; but the soul is capable of reason, and made to be moved by proposed reasons in a law, and not only by natural force as the flesh. The government must be agreeable to the capacity of the subject. Though the rider rule the horse by a bridle and spur, and not by a law, it followeth not that the king must not rule the rider so. The soul and body constitute one *suppositum*, or man; and therefore the body is governed by a law, because the soul is so, which despotically moveth it. Laws are for distinct individuals, and not for one part of an individual to give to another part.

Object. If God be the constitutive soul of the world, then he need not give it laws.

Ans. Because it is most certain, *de facto*, that he doth give us laws, therefore it is certain that he is not the constitutive soul of the world, as is also further proved before, though he be much more to it than a soul.

Sect. 14. XI. If a man act *per media propter finem*, and both discerned by reason, then he must be ruled by a law. But the antecedent is sure; *ergo*, &c.

For the end is ever something apprehended *sub ratione boni* (and the ultimate end, *sub ratione optimi possibilis*); and the means are chosen and used *sub ratione conducibilis*, as apt to attain the end. This means and end are not to be discerned only by sense and imagination, as in brutes every object is apprehended but by reason: this reason is defectible and liable to error, and therefore the rational evidences must be proposed to it, and that conveniently; for he that knoweth not reason why he should choose, refuse, or act, cannot do it rationally; and the will being as apt to be seduced by the sense, hath need of due motives to determine it.

Therefore there is need of the regulation of a law,

containing the direction of a superior wisdom, with authority and motives of consequential good or evil, proposed by one that can accomplish it."

But the whole world doth so universally consent that there is a difference between right and wrong, duty and crimes, good and evil, and so a necessity of some government, human at least, and that man is not like the beasts, where strength is the only title, and good and evil is but natural, called *jucundum et utile*, with their contraries, that I need not plead that part of the cause any further; universal consent not only making it unnecessary, but also being a valid argument against it, as proving that it is against the common reason of mankind and light of nature.

Sect. 15. XII. If God be not the universal Governor of the world, then error, malice, and tyranny, and selfishness, will make injustice finally prosperous, and oppressed innocence remediless. But that cannot be, as shall hereafter be fuller made appear.

There must be some infallible judge to pass the final sentence, and hear all causes, as it were, over again; and some perfect, righteous judge to set straight all that men's unrighteousness made crooked; or else unrighteousness will finally prevail: and this must be God, who, being the fountain of all government, is also the end of all.

Sect. 16. XIII. If God be not the supreme, universal Governor, there can be no unity and harmony in the moral order and government of the world.

As all the corporations in the kingdom would be in continual discord with one another, if they were not all united in one king; so would all the kingdoms of the world, much worse than they are, if they were not under the government of one God.

Sect. 17. XIV. The last argument shall be *a jure et aptitudine*. If man be made a creature to be morally governed, and the undoubted right and aptitude for supreme government be in God alone, then God is actually the supreme Governor of the world: but the antecedent is true, therefore the consequent.

1. That God only is able, is undeniable: men can govern but their particular provinces or empires; and none of them is capable of governing all the world, for want of omnipresence, omnipotency, and omniscience: and, therefore, the pope that claimeth the government of all the world, if all turn christians, doth, thereby, pretend to a kind of deity. And if angels were proved able to govern the earth, it can be but as officers, and not in absolute supremacy: for who then shall be the governor of them: their being is merely derivative and dependent; and therefore so must be their power. God only is all-sufficient, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, and most good; sufficient to give perfect laws to all; to execute righteous judgment upon all; and to protect the world as his dominion: when princes cannot protect one kingdom, nor themselves.²

And God's title and right is as undoubted as his power; for he is absolute owner of the world. And who should claim sovereignty over him, or without him, where he is sole proprietor. He hath undoubted right to rule his own.

Object. Propriety among men is no title to government.

Ans. Absolute propriety in a governable creature is a plenary title. But no man hath absolute propriety in another. Yet parents, and the masters of slaves, who come nearest it, have an answerable power of governing them. But man's fullest pro-

et ornatos. 2. Unam esse hominum inter ipsos vivendi parum communem rationem. 3. Omnes inter se naturali quadam indulgentia et benevolentia, tum etiam societate juris contineri.

² Non potest consistere respublica, ubi non est honos virtuti, nec pœna scelerosis. Demosth.

³ Atticus (in Cicer. de Leg. l. p. 213.) saith, that he cannot but believe that jus est ortum ex natura, because of these principles. 1. Quasi muneribus Deorum nos esse instructos

priety is in brutes and inanimates, which are not creatures capable of government.

Sect. 18. The relation, then, of sovereign King or Rector in God to man, is founded in the fore-named relation of a Proprietor; supposing the aptitude of the subject and the owner.

Having proved that God is the universal King, I come to show his title to his kingdom. *Titulus est fundamentum juris.* Sovereignty, or *summa potestas*, is *jus supremi regiminis*. Where this right is founded, great ignorance hath made a great controversy, the thing, to men that are of competent understandings in such subjects, being most easy and past controversy. God having made man, is immediately his Owner, because his Maker. Having made him a rational free agent, and so to be governed, he hath the *jus regendi* by immediate resultancy from his absolute propriety; supposing the nature of the creature, and the perfection of the Creator alone, which so qualify one to be a subject, and the other to be the governor, that they are as it were the remoter *fundamentum relationis*. From the being of man, *hoc aliquid a Deo creatum*, resulteth the propriety of God: from the specific nature of man, as a rational, free, sociable creature, he is by immediate resultancy *gubernandus*; and being such, his Creator, remotely, for his infinite perfections and sole aptitude, and, proximately, because he is man's absolute Owner, is by resultancy his rightful Governor: and that he neglecteth not this his right, but actually governeth him, appeareth in the very making man such, and continuing him such as is made to be governed; as also in his actual laws and judgments. This is the true and plain resolution of the question of the title of God to his kingdom, or *fundamentum* of the relation of universal King.¹

Sect. 19. Human government is an ordinance of God, and human governors are his officers, as he is supreme: and he hath not left it free to the world, whether they will live in governed societies, or not.

That human government is appointed by God, appeareth thus: 1. In that the light of nature teacheth it all the world. 2. In that God hath put into man's nature a necessity of it, and therefore signified his will concerning it: it is needful to the very lives of men, and to their highest perfections, order, and attainments. If parents did not govern children, and teachers their scholars, and masters their servants, and princes their subjects, the world would be as a wilderness of wild beasts, and men would not live like men, according to their natural capacities: I deny not, but some one or few by necessity, or some extraordinary circumstances, may be exempted from this obligation, by being incapable of the benefit; being cast into a wilderness, or such like place, where the benefit of government is not to be had; but that is nothing to the commoner case of mankind: as marriage is indifferent to those individuals that need not the benefit of it; but it is not lawful for the world of mankind to forbear procreation, to the extinction of itself.

Sect. 20. Therefore, as all rulers receive their power from him, and hold it in dependence on him; so must they finally use it for him, even for his will and interest, which they must principally intend.

¹ See this fuller proved in my Political Aphorisms, p. 52, &c.

Videtur magistratus hanc esse vim, ut præsit, præscribatque recta et utilia, et conjuncta cum legibus: ut enim magistratus leges, ita populo præsumt magistratus: verique dici potest, magistratum esse legem loquentem, legem autem mutum magistratum. Cicero de Leg. 3. init.

² Read what is after cited out of Zeno. Laert. (in Zen) *taith* that the stoics say, Virtutes sibi invicem esse connexas, ut qui unam habuerit, omnes habeat: esse enim illarum communes speculationes, &c. Qui enim probus est, ea despiciere

He that is the original of power must needs be the end. He that giveth it to man, doth give it for the accomplishment of his own will. It is held in pure subordination to him, and so it must be used, or it is abused.

Sect. 21. Therefore, no man can have any power against God, or his laws or interest; for he giveth not power against himself.

That is, he giveth no man right, authority, or commission, to displease him, by the breaking of his laws; for that is a contradiction, or chargeth his laws with contradiction. Yet must not any subjects make this a pretence to deny any just obedience to their rulers, or to rebel against them, on supposition that their government is against God. For as private men are not made public judges of the interest of God, but only private discerners, in order to their own obedience to him; so may that government be for God, in the main, which is against him in some few particulars.

Sect. 22. The highest duty of man is to Him who is the Highest, and the greatest crime is that which is committed against the greatest authority.

This is, *sua luce*, so evident, that it needs no proof: formally, the chief obedience is due to the chief governor; (to a king rather than to a justice of peace or constable;) and, consequently, the greatest sin is against him. If God be above man, so is duty to God, and sin against God, the greatest in both kinds.

Sect. 23. Therefore, there are good and evil which respect God, and are called holiness and sin, which are incomparably greater than good and evil so called from respect to any creatures, whether individuals or societies.²

Therefore they that know no good, but that which is so called from its respect to man's commodity or benefit, nor any evil but that which is so called from its respect to the hurt of creatures, do not know God, nor his relation to his works; but make gods of themselves, and accordingly judge of good and evil.

Sect. 24. The consciences of men do secretly accuse them, or excuse them, according to this sort of good or evil.

When men have wrangled against religion ever so long, there are very few so blind and bad, in whom God hath not a resident witness, called conscience, which secretly telleth a man that he doth well or ill, as he keepeth or breaketh the laws of nature; and that with respect to the sovereign Lawgiver, and not only to the good or hurt of man. As conscience doth not accuse a man for being poor or sick, or wronged by another, (though about these we may have also an inward trouble,) so it doth not justify him for his prosperity in the world, though it may be laid asleep and quieted by such means. But it is for moral good or evil that conscience doth accuse or justify: if I make myself poor wilfully, my conscience will trouble me for the wilful fault, and breed in me repentance and remorse; and so it will if I hurt or impoverish my neighbour: but if I hurt myself or neighbour unavoidably, without any fault of mine, I am sorry for it, but my conscience will not accuse or condemn me for it.

Sect. 25. This power of conscience causeth all the

et agere que sint agenda: que vero facienda sint, ea et eligenda esse, et sustinenda, et distribuenda, et perseveranter tenenda: sequuntur autem prudentiam consiliorum maturitas et intelligentia; temperantiam vero ordinis dexteritas et ornatus; justitiam autem æquitas et gratitudo; fortitudinemque constantia, atque valentia. Placet autem eis, nullum inter virtutem et vitium esse medium. Quemadmodum enim lignum aut distortum aut rectum oportere esse aiunt, ita iustum vel iniustum.—At virtutem Chrysippus quidem amitti posse, Cleanthes vero non posse ait.

world to praise or dispraise men, according to this moral good or evil.*

Mark but the infidels themselves, or any whom vice hath turned into monsters, and they will commend men upon the account of that inward sincerity and honesty, which God only can make laws for; and dispraise men for the contrary. If you say, that they do this only because such virtues make men fit for human converse, and profitable, or not hurtful to one another; I answer, we are not inquiring of the final cause, but the formal: though they praise sincere and honest men, and those that are loving, compassionate, and kind, and dispraise dissemblers, malicious, and men of hurtful dispositions, yet you may observe that they speak not of these only as useful or hurtful qualities, but as moral good or evil; as things that men ought or ought not to do; which they are bound to do or not do by some obligation: and what obligation can make it any man's duty, if there be no law of God in nature for it, when it is out of the reach of the laws of men? Mark heathens, and infidels, and atheists, in their talk, and you shall hear them praise or dispraise men for some things which intimate a divine obligation; which sheweth that the conscience of the world beareth witness to the supreme, universal government of God.

No man who believeth that there is a God, can believe that the actions of his rational creatures have no relation to him, or that the good or evil of them, which is the result of their relation to God, can be of less or lower consideration than their relation to themselves, or one another: therefore, if it be laudable to perform duty to kings, and parents, and neighbours, conscience will tell the world that it is incomparably more necessary to perform our duty to God; and it cannot be that the world should stand related to God as their Creator, Proprietor, Governor, and End, and yet owe him no duty.

Sect. 26. God's government (as man's) consisteth of three parts; legislation, judgment, and execution.^b

Without laws, the subject can neither know his duty nor his rewards and punishments; without judgment, laws will be ineffectual; and without execution, judgment is a deceitful, ludicrous thing.

Sect. 27. By a law, I mean, an authoritative institution, what shall be due from and to the subject for the ends of government; or, a sign of the ruler's will, instituting what shall be due to and from the subject for the ends of government.^c

The fuller reasons of this definition of a law I have given in another writing. *Signum* is the genus of it; the will of a ruler being no otherwise to be known to subjects, but by signs: the relation of ruler, and subjects, is presupposed. It is, therefore, only an authoritative sign, or the sign of a ruler's will, because a ruler only hath the power of government: I say of his will, as that which is the nearest, perfect efficient, or imperant faculty, including the understanding's conduct. I call it an institution, or instituting sign, to signify its efficiency *de debito*, and to distinguish it from the judicial, decisive de-

termination of the ruler. It is only to subjects that this signification is made, he being not a ruler to any others. The product of the institution, or *statutum*, is only *debitum*, which is the immediate, full effect of laws. This *debitum* is twofold: 1. *Officii*, what shall be due from the subject, or what shall be the subject's duty. 2. What shall be due to him, 1. If he keep the law, which is the *debitum præmi*; 2. If he break it, which is the *debitum pænæ*. I say, to the ends of government, for it is a relation which must have the end in the definition; and seeing I only define a law in *genere*, I mention but the ends of government in *genere*, for several governments have several ends. The government of single persons only, as of a scholar, a son, a servant, by a tutor, parent, master, intendeth, proximately, but the good of the individual subject: the mandates of such rulers have the true nature of a law, though it be of the lower sort, as is the government; and custom hath appropriated the word law to a nobler species only. The government of societies is always immediately for the order of the society, but not always for their good, much less chiefly: the government of a society of slaves (as the Spaniards over the Peruvians and Mexicans, in digging their mines) is for the order of those slaves, but for the benefit of the lords. The government of some armies is for the order of the armies, but for the good of those they fight for. The government of a true commonwealth is for the *bonum publicum*, the common good, which includeth the happiness of the rulers with the subjects. The universal government of the world is, proximately, for the order of the world and for its good; but, ultimately and principally, for the fulfilling and pleasing the will of God in the said order and good, and in the glory or operations of his own power, wisdom, and goodness therein, as shall be further proved afterwards.

Sect. 28. Any signification of the will of God, that man shall be benefited on condition of his obedience, is the præmiant part of his law; and any signification of his will, that man shall be punished if he sin, or that punishment shall be his due, is the penal part of his law.

If it only foretold, that, in a way of physical efficiency, obedience will produce good, and disobedience hurt to himself, this were not properly præmiant, or penal; but when the good is promised upon the condition of obedience, and the hurt threatened upon condition of sin, as means to move a rational, free agent to obey, this is truly a præmiant and penal act of law: and this is fulfilled also in a physical way of production; the Lawgiver being also the Creator and Disposer of all the world, doth wisely order it, that moral good shall be attended with physical good, and moral evil with physical evil, first or last.

Sect. 29. The immensity, (or omnipresence,) the omnipotency, omniscience, and infinite goodness, of God, with his total causation in the support of all his creatures, do most undoubtedly prove his particular providence, in observing and regarding all

* *Que autem natio non comitatem, non benignitatem, non gratum animum, et beneficii memorem diligit? Que superbos, que maleficos, que crudeles, que ingratos non aspernatur, non odit? Cicero, de Leg. l. p. 222.*

^b *Legibus et earum observantia exornantur omnia.* Demosth.

^c *Nihil omnino neque pulchrum neque decorum reperiri potest; quod non cum lege aliqua communicet.* Id. Orat. l. cont. Arist.

^d *Lex nihil aliud est, quam recta et a numine Deorum ratio, imperans honesta, prohibensque contraria.* Cicero, Phil. l.

^e *Vitiorum emendatricem legem esse oportet, commenda-*

tricemque virtutem: ab ea enim vivendi doctrina vitium. Cicero l. de Leg.

Ad salutem civium, civitatumque incolumitatem, vitium hominum et quietam, et beatam, conditæ sunt leges. Cicero l. de Leg.

A majoribus nostris nulla alia de causa leges sunt inventæ, nisi ut suos cives incolomes conservarent. Cicero in Vatin.

Nil est tam aptum ad jus conditionemque nature sine quo nec domus ulla, nec civitas, nec gens, nec hominum universum genus stare, nec rerum natura omnis, nec ipse mundus potest. Nam et hic Deo pareat, et huic obediunt maria terræque et hominum vita jussis supremæ legis obtemperat. Cicero, de Leg. 3. p. 253, 254.

the actions of his subjects in the world, and so declare his actual government.^a

It is the gross ignorance of the divine perfections, which ever made any one question the particular providence of God as extending to the smallest things and actions: 1. It is proved by his immensity (conceived of as without corporeal extension of parts, as before said). He that made and upholdeth all the world, did never make that which is greater than himself, and excludeth his presence. Though being a Spirit, he hath not corporeal quantity; yet, analogically, and in a way of eminency and transcendency, we must say that he is greater and immense: and it is his perfection which denieth extension and dimensions: and, therefore, in a nobler kind, he is every where present. And if he be here as certainly as I am, and in a more excellent manner, he cannot but observe all things and actions which are here.

2. He is omnipotent and all-sufficient, and therefore as able to observe and govern every the smallest thing and action, as if he had but that one to look after in the world. And I think, if God had but one man at all to mind and govern in all the world, the adversary himself, that now denieth his particular providence, would confess that God doth observe and regard that one individual. It is men's atheistical or blasphemous diminutive thoughts of God, who conceive of him as finite, though they call him infinite, which is the cause of all such kind of errors.

3. His omniscience infallibly proveth also his particular observance of all things and actions in the world; for his knowledge, being his natural perfection, is necessary; he cannot be ignorant of any thing that is. If I had but one thing just before my eyes to see, in the open light, I must needs see it, if it have the necessities of a visible object, unless I wink. If the sun's illumination were an act of vision, (as it is like it is nothing more ignoble,) how easily would it at once discern all that is upon one half of the earth at once! All things are naked and open before the eye of the omniscient Being; he cannot but behold or know them, and therefore observe them and regard them.

4. His creation, causation, and manutenance, also prove that he both knoweth and regardeth all things: for can he be either ignorant, forgetful, or mindless, of that which he made, and still doth so conserve as to continue a kind of creation of it? His omnipotent will, which gave it a being, doth still continue it; should he withdraw his active sustentation, it would turn all, not only to confusion, but to nothing. And doth he not know and regard what is continually as in his hand, or by continual volition produced or maintained by him? He is the universal cause of all the agency and motion in the world; in him we live, move, and be: and can he be ignorant or regardless of what he doth? Why will he make, maintain, and move that which he doth not regard?

5. His relation of Owner proveth his regard; all things are his own.

6. And his relation of a Governor proveth his regard, and his actual government of man and all his actions: for he taketh not on him a vain relation; and he that maketh laws for every person and action, doth regard and govern every person and action. But so doth God; ergo.

Sect. 30. Those who think God doth nothing to all the rest of the world, but by those noblest creatures which are next him, and that he hath committed the government of all the rest of the world to the intelligences of the first order, cannot, without blindness and contradiction, deny, that he is still himself no less the actual Mover and Governor of all, than if he used no officer or instrument at all.

For, 1. God ceased not himself to be omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, or most benign, when he gave that supposed power to those instruments. 2. He made them, and ordered them, under him, through plenitude of goodness, delighting to communicate power and dignity, as well as being, to his creatures, and not through impotency, or insufficiency to supply any defect in his own government, and to help him: he useth them to honour them, and not to dishonour himself. He gave away from himself no degree of perfection, nor deprived himself of the smallest part of honour which he communicated to them; but honoureth himself in the appearance of his perfections by the said communications. As God can do that by himself without the creature which he causeth the creature to do, (as to move, illuminate, and heat the lower parts without the sun as well as with it, or any thing which importeth not impotency or contradiction,) for he ceaseth not to be omnipotent; so that which he doth by any creature, is as truly and fully done by himself, as if there were no created instrument or cause in it. For that creature which is nothing of itself, and hath not any being but in full dependence on its Maker, can have no action of itself but in full dependence upon him; whatever it doth, it doth by him: though, as to the specifying comparison, why this rather than that, God hath given men a power with liberty, yet the action, as an action, being from the power which was totally from him, is so itself. There can be no less of God's agency in any action, because he doth it by a creature, than if he did it without: though there be more of the creature's, there is no less of his. His communication of power is not by dissection, or division, and diminution of his own. He that knoweth what a Creator and total first cause is, needs no other proof of this. Men, indeed, communicate power to their officers, through their own insufficiency, to be their helpers, and supply the want of their presence or action; but so doth not God. Therefore, if angels or intelligences govern and move all inferior things, they are all governed and moved no less certainly, proximately, honourably by God himself, than if he had never used such a subordinate agent; and that *immediate essentie et virtutis*, immediately, though not so immediately as to use no honorary second cause.

Sect. 31. Justice is an attribute of God as Governor, by which he maketh equal laws, and giveth all their due according to them; (or judgeth them righteously according to his laws;) for the ends of government.*

As justice is conceived of in God according to the image in man, which we call the virtue or habit of justice, so it is his eternal nature, being nothing else but the perfection of his infinite wisdom, and his will or goodness, as respecting a kingdom of subjects as possible and future. For he may so be called just, that hath no kingdom, because he hath that virtue which would do justice if he had a kingdom. But as justice is taken either for the exercise of right-

^a Of this read Cicero's 2. lib. de Nat. Deor.

* Dii, qui quæ velint, possunt laedere, nec a quodam lædi vicissim, non nocent nisi improbis. Plut. in Læcon.

Hanc videtur sapientissimum fuisse sententiam, Legem neque hominum ingenium excoGITATAM, neque actum aliquod

esse populorum, sed æternum quoddam quod universum mundum regeret imperandi prohibendique sapientia. Ita principem legem illam et ultimam mentem esse dicebant omnia ratione aut cogentis aut vetantis Dei. Cicero de Leg. 2. p. 234.

eous government, or for the honourable relation and title of one that doth so exercise it; that is, of an actually just governor; so formally and denominatively it is an attribute of God, which is not eternal, but subsequent to his relation of a King or Governor. He that is not a governor, is not a just governor. *A negatione est secundi adjecti ad negationem est tertii valet argumentum.*

The law is *norma officii et judicii*. He that maketh a law, thereby telleth his subjects, that according to this they must live, and according to this they must be judged. Indeed the immediate sense of the words of a law, as such, is not to be taken as *de eventu*, but *de debito*. He that saith, Thou shalt not murder, saith not, Eventually it shall not come to pass that thou shalt not murder, but, It shall be thy duty not to do it. And he that saith, If thou murder thou shalt be put to death, doth primarily, in the sense of the words themselves, mean no more but, Death shall be thy due. But in that he declareth that he will justly govern according to this law, therefore he meaneth secondarily and consequently, that ordinarily he will give to all their due. In what cases the letter and nearest sense of a law may be dispensed with, or the lawgiver reserveth a liberty of dispensation to himself, belongeth not to this place to be disputed.

CHAPTER IX.

II. OF MAN'S SUBJECTION TO GOD, OR RELATION TO HIM AS OUR GOVERNOR.

SECT. 1. Man being made thus a rational free agent, and sociable to be governed, and God being his rightful Governor, is immediately related to God as his subject, as to right and obligation.^a

There is no sovereign without a subject. Subjection is our relation to our governor, or else our consent to that relation. In the former sense we take it here. A subject is one that is bound to obey another as his ruler. He that is a subject by right and obligation, and yet doth not consent and actually subject himself to his rightful governor, is a rebel. There cannot be greater obligations to subjection imagined by a created understanding, than the rational creature hath to God.

Sect. 2. All men are obliged to consent to this subjection, and to give up themselves absolutely to the government of God.^b

God's absolute propriety in us, as his creatures, giveth him so full a title to govern us, that our consent is not at all necessary to our obligation and subjection relative; but only to our actual obedience, which cannot be performed by one that consenteth not. Therefore, God's right and our natural condition are the foundation of our subjection to him, as to obligation and duty; and he that consenteth not,

^a Seneca (Epist. ad Luc. 83. p. (mih) 711.) saith, Sic certe vivendum est, tanquam in conspectu vivamus. Sic cogitandum, tanquam aliquis in pectus inspicere posset et posset: quid enim prodest ab homine aliquid esse secretum. Nihil Deo clausum interest animis nostris, et cogitationibus mediis intervenit.

^b Diogenes (in Laert.) said to an immodest woman, Non vereri mulier, ne forte stante post tergum Deo (cuncta enim plena ipso sunt) inhoneste te habeas?

^c Primum est Deorum cultus, Deos credere; deinde reddere illis majestatem suam: reddere bonitatem, sine qua nulla majestas est: scire illius esse qui president mundo, qui universa, ut sua, temperant: qui humani generis tutelam gerunt. Senec. Epist. 92.

sinneth by high treason against his sovereign. As God did not ask our consent whether he should make us men, so neither whether he should be our Governor, and we his subjects as to obligation, nor yet whether he shall punish the rebellious and disobedient: but he asketh our consent to obey him, and to be rewarded by him; for we shall neither be holy nor happy but by our own consent. Those, therefore, whom I have confuted in my treatise of policy, who say, God is not our King till we make him King, nor his laws obligatory to us till we consent to them, speaking *de debito*, do not reason, but rave, and are unworthy of a confutation.^c

Sect. 3. All men, therefore, are obliged to subject their understandings to the revealed wisdom of God, and their wills to his revealed will; and to employ all the powers of soul and body, and all their possessions, in his most exact obedience.

Subjection is an obligation to obedience. Where the authority and subjection are absolute and unlimited, there the obedience must be absolute and most exact. The understanding of our absolute Ruler is the absolute rule of our understandings. No man must set up his conceits against him, or quarrel with his government or laws. If any thing of his revelation or prescription seem questionable, unjust, or unnecessary to us, it is through our want of due subjection, through the arrogance and enmity of our carnal minds. His will, *de debito*, must be the absolute rule of all our wills. So much secret exceptions and reserves as we have in our resignation and subjection, so much hypocrisy and secret rebellion we have. Our subjective obligation is so full and absolute, and our Ruler so infallible, just, and perfect, that it is not possible for any man's obedience to God to be too absolute, exact, or full. Nothing can be more certain, than that a creature, subject to the government of his Creator, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, doth owe him the most perfect and exact obedience, according to the utmost of his powers, without any dissent, exception, resistance, unwillingness, or neglect.^d

Sect. 4. All obedience which rulers require of their subjects, or subjects give to any governors, must be in full subordination to the government and will of God.

For all powers, under the absolute Sovereign of the world, are derivative and dependent, and are no more than he hath given: they are from him, under him, and for him; and can no more have any authority against him, than a worm against a king, or than they could have being and authority without him. He that contradicteth this proposition, must take down God, and deify man, and so defy and conquer heaven, or else he will never make it good. As for the difficulties that seem to rise, by allowing subjects to prefer God's authority before their parents' or princes'; it belongeth no more to the clearing of the present subject that I resolve them, than that I resolve such as arise from our allowing subjects to disobey a justice or constable when he is against the king.^e

^d Nihil mihi videtur frigidius, nihil ineptius, quam lex cum prolegomeno: Dic quid me velis fecisse; non disco, sed pareo. Senec. Ep. 95. If men's laws must have so great authority, much more God's. Ex quo intelliges par est, eos qui perniciosa et injusta populis jussa descriperint, cum contra fecerint quod polliciti professique sint, quidvis potius tulisse quam leges. Cicero de Leg. l. 2. p. 235. Multa perniciosa, multa pestifera scisciscuntur in populis, quæ non magis legis nomen attingunt, quam si latrones, &c. Id. Ibid.

^e Plutarch (de Tranquil. Anim.) saith, that it is one of Aristotle's sayings, That he that believed as he ought of the gods, should think as well of himself as Alexander, who commanded so many men. P. 155.

Sect. 5. They that are obliged to such absolute and exact obedience, are obliged to use their utmost diligence to understand God's laws, which they must obey.

For no man can obey a law which he doth not know of, and understand. Subjection includeth an obligation to study our Maker's laws, so far as we must do them: indeed, those that concern others, we are not so much bound to know, as a subject to know God's laws for kings and pastors of the church; but for our own duty, we cannot do it before we know it. Those that are ignorant of their Maker's will, through unwillingness, contempt, or negligence, are so far disobedient to his government.

Sect. 6. There are many and great temptations to draw us to disobey our Maker, which every one is bound with greatest vigilancy and constancy to resist.¹

He that is bound to obey, is certainly bound to resist all temptations to disobedience. For that is far from absolute or true obedience which will fail, if a man be but tempted to disobey. Kings and parents will not accept of such obedience as this; they will not say, Be true to me, and honour me, and obey me, till you are tempted to betray me, and to reproach me, and rebel. He that will be false to God, when he is tempted to it, was never true to him. No temptation can bring so much for sin, as God giveth us against it; nor can offer us so much gain, or honour, or pleasure by it, as he offereth us on condition we obey him. And that the world is full of such temptations, experience putteth past dispute; of which, more anon.

Sect. 7. No price can be offered by any creature, which, to a subject of God, should seem sufficient to hire him to the smallest sin.²

Sin hath such aggravations (which shall be opened anon) that no gain or pleasure that cometh by it can counterbalance; there being no proportion between the creature and the infinite Creator, there can nothing by, or of, the creature be proportionable, or considerable, to be put into the balance against the Creator's authority and will. The command of kings, the winning of kingdoms, the pleasure of the flesh, the applause of all the world, if they are offered as a price or bait to hire or tempt a man to sin, should weigh no more against the command of God, than a feather in the balance against a mountain. All this common reason will attest, however sense and appetite reclaim.

Sect. 8. No man can reasonably fear lest his true obedience to such a governor should prove his final detriment or hurt; but if it did, it were nevertheless our duty to obey.³

1. No man can reasonably think that God is less able to reward, protect, and encourage his subjects in their duty, than any tempter whatsoever in their disobedience. And no man can think that he is less wise to know how to perform it: nor can any think that infinite goodness is less disposed to do good to the good, than any tempter whosever can be to do good to the evil. These things being all as clear as light itself to the considerate, it must needs follow that no reason can allow a man to hope to be finally

a gainer or saver by his disobedience to his Maker, or to fear to be a loser by him.

2. But if it were so, obedience would be our duty still; for the authority of God, as his propriety, is absolute, and he that giveth us power to require the analogical obedience of our horse or ox, though it be to our benefit only, and his hurt, yea, though it be in going to the slaughter, if he did so by us, could do us no wrong, nor give us any just excuse for our disobedience. For as sweet as life is to us, it is not so much ours in right as his, and therefore should be at his disposal.

Sect. 9. The breaking of God's laws must needs deserve a greater penalty than the breaking of any man's laws, as such.

The difference of the rulers and their authority, puts this past all controversy; of which, yet I shall say more anon.

Sect. 10. What is said of the subjection of individuals to God, is true of all just societies as such, the kingdoms of the world being all under God, the universal King, as small parcels of his kingdom, as particular corporations are under a human king.

Therefore, kings and kingdoms owe their absolute obedience to God, and may not intend any ultimate end, but the pleasing of their universal Sovereign; nor set up any interest against him, or above him, or in co-ordination with him; nor manage any way of government, but in dependence on him, as the principle and the end of it; nor make any laws, but such as stand in due subordination to his laws; nor command any duty, but what hath in its order a true subserviency and conducibility to his pleasure.

CHAPTER X.

OF GOD'S PARTICULAR LAWS, AS KNOWN IN NATURE.

THE true nature of a law I have opened before.⁴ It is not necessary that it be written or spoken, but that it be in general any apt signification of the will of the rector to his subjects, instituting what shall be due from them, and to them, for the ends of government. Therefore, whatsoever is a signification of God's will to man, appointing us our duty, and telling us what benefit shall be ours upon the performance, and what loss or hurt shall befall us if we sin, is a law of God.

Sect. 1. A law being the rector's instrument of governing, there can be no law where there is no government; and, therefore, that which some call the eternal law, is indeed no law at all, but it is the principle of all just laws.

The eternal wisdom and goodness of God, that is, the perfection of his nature and will, as related to a possible or future kingdom, is denominated justice; and this justice some call the eternal law; but it is truly no law, because it is the will of God in himself, and not as rector: nor is it any signification of that

¹ Dicebat Thales, homines existimare oportere Deos omnia cernere, deorumque omnia esse plena, et tunc fore omnes castiores. Cicero 2. de Leg. Athenodorus dicere prudenter solebat, ita cum hominibus homines vivere debere, ac si Deus retributor bonorum malorumque ultor, omni loco ac tempore actiones nostras intueretur, conspicereturque humanis nostris oculis. Fulgus. 1. 7. c. 2.

² Sic vive cum hominibus tanquam Deus videat: sic loquere cum Deo tanquam homines audiant. Sen. Ep. 10. Chilon (in Laert. p. 43.) inquit, Damnum potius quam turpe lucrum eligendum, nam id semel tantum dolori esse: hoc semper.

³ Plus apud bonos pietatis jura quam omnes opes valent. Justin. Hist. 1. 3. Because God hath penalties to promote obedience, all religion is called, "The fear of God." Laertius saith of Cleanthes, Cum aliquando probro illi daretur, quod esset timidus: at idem, inquit, parum pecco. Fear is a preserving, cautious passion, though it make not a good man of itself, but as joined with love.

⁴ Though Cicero's books *De Legibus* be usually read by us when we are boys, they are worthy the perusal of the wisest men, and fit for the edification and pleasure of the learned.

will, nor doth it suppose any governed subjects in being from eternity; nor doth it make any duty to any from eternity: but all the laws which God maketh in time, and consequently which men make, which are just and good, are but the products of this eternal will and justice.

And whereas some say, that there is an eternal truth in such axioms as these, Thou shalt love God above all, and do as thou wouldst be done by, and the good should be encouraged, and the bad punished, &c.; I answer, God formeth not propositions, and therefore there were no such propositions from eternity; nor was there any creature to love God, or to do good or evil, and be the subject of such propositions: that proposition, therefore, which was not from eternity, was neither true nor false from eternity; for *non entis non sunt accidentia vel modi*. But this is true, that from eternity there were the grounds of the verity of such propositions when they should after be; and that if there had been subjects from eternity for such propositions, and intellects to frame them, they would have been of eternal truth.

Sect. 2. At the same time of his creation, that God made man his subject, he also made him some laws to govern him.^b

For subjection, being a general obligation to obedience, would signify nothing, if there were no particular duties to be the matter of that obedience. Else, man should owe God no obedience from the beginning, but be lawless; for where there is no law, there is no obedience, taking a law in the true comprehensive sense, as I here do.

Sect. 3. All the objective significations, in *natura rerum*, within us, or without us, of the will of God, concerning our duty, reward, or punishment, are the true law of nature, in the primary proper sense.

Sect. 4. Therefore, it is falsely defined by all writers, who make it consist in certain axioms, as some say, born in us, or written on our hearts from our birth; as others say, dispositively there.

It is true, there is that in the nature of man's soul a certain aptitude to understand certain truths as soon as they are revealed, that is, as soon as the very *natura rerum* is observed; and it is true that this disposition is brought to actual knowledge as soon as the mind comes to actual consideration of the things; but it is not true that there is any actual knowledge of any principles born in man, nor is it true that the said disposition to know is truly a law, nor yet that the actual knowledge following it is a law: but the disposition may be called a law, metonymically, as being the aptitude of the faculties to receive and obey a law, as the light of the eye, which is the *potentia et dispositio videndi*, may be called the light of the sun, but unhandsomely. And the subsequent, actual knowledge of principles, may be called the law of nature, metonymically, as being the perception of it, and an effect of it; as actual sight may be called the light of the sun; and as actual knowledge of the king's laws may be called his laws within us, that is, the effect of them, or the reception of them; but this is far from propriety of speech.

That the inward axioms, as known, are not laws,

^b Quod (de magistratu loquitur) cum dico legem, a me dici nihil aliud intelligi volo quam imperium, sine quo nec domus ulla, nec civitas, &c. Cic. de Leg. 3. init.

^c Omnis lex inventum sane et donum est Deorum: Decretum vero hominum prudentium. Demost. cont. Aris. or. 1.

^d Communis lex nunquam immutatur, cum secundum naturam sit: sed vero scriptum sapientis. Aristot. 1. Rhet. ad Theod. c. 4. Diogenes (in Laert.) congregatis ad se plurimis exprobravit, quod ad inepta studia concurrerunt; ad ea vero quae gravia ac utilia, negligenter convenirent. Dicebatur de fodiendo et calcitrando certare homines, ut autem boni et probi fierent curare neminem. Musicos in jus vocabat,

is evident, 1. Because a law is in *genere objectivo*, and this is in *genere actionum*. A law is in *genere signorum*; but this is the discerning of the sign. A law is the will of the rector signified: this is his will known. A law is obligatory: this is the perception of an obligation. A law maketh duty; but this is the knowledge of a duty made. 2. The law is not in our power: we change or abrogate; but a man's inward dispositions and perceptions are much in his power to increase, or diminish, or obliterate. Every man that is wilfully sensual and wicked, may do much to blot out the law of nature, which is said to be written on his heart; but wickedness cannot alter or obliterate the law of God. If this were God's law which is upon the heart, when a sinner hath blotted it out, he is disobliged from duty and punishment; for where there is no law, there is no duty or transgression: but no sinner can so disoblige himself by altering his Maker's laws. 3. Else, there would be as many laws of nature, not only as there are men, but as there is diversity of perceptions; but God's law is not so uncertain and multifarious a thing. 4. And if man's disposition, or actual knowledge, be God's law, it may be also called man's law; and so the king's law should be the subject's perception of it.

It is, therefore, most evident, that the true law of nature is another thing; and is it not, then, a matter of admiration, that so many sagacious, accurate schoolmen, philosophers, lawyers, and divines, should, for so long time, go on in such false definitions of it? The whole world belongeth to the law of nature, so far as it signifieth to us the will of God, about our duty, and reward, and punishment: the world is as God's statute book: the foresaid natural aptitude maketh us fit to read and practise it. The law of nature is as the external light of the sun, and the said natural disposition is as the visive faculty to make use of it, yet much of the law of nature is within us too; but it is there only in *genere objectivo*, et signi. Man's own nature, his reason, free-will, and executive power, are the most notable signs of his duty to God; to which all mercies, judgments, and other signifying means, belong.

Sect. 5. The way that God doth by nature oblige us is by laying such *fundamenta* from which our duty shall naturally result, as from the signification of his will.

Sect. 6. These *fundamenta* are some of them unalterable, while we have a being, and some of them alterable; and therefore some laws of nature are alterable, and some unalterable accordingly.^d

As for instance, man is made a rational free agent; and God is unchangeably his rightful Governor, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness: therefore the nature of God and man (*in via*) thus compared are the *fundamentum*, from whence constantly resulteth our indispensable duty to love him, trust him, fear him, and obey him: but if our being, or reason, or free-will, which are our essential capacities, cease, our obligations cease *cessante fundamento*. God hath made man a sociable creature; and while he is in society, the law of nature obligeth him to many things, which he hath no obligation to when the

quod cum lyra chordas congrue aptarent, animi mores inconcinnos haberent. Mathematicos carpebat, quod Solem, et Lunam, et Sidera intuentes, quae ante pedes erant, negligerent. Oratores item, quod studebant iusta dicere, non autem et facere. Avaros quoque, quod pecuniam vituperarent, ac summe diligerent: et eos qui iustos, quod pecunias continerent, laudabant; pecuniosos vero imitari satagebant. Stomachabatur eis, qui pro bona valetudine sacra facerent, inter sacrificia contra sanitatem caerent. Servos mirabatur, qui cum edaces dominos cernerent, nihil diriperent ciborum. Dicebat manus ad amicos, non complicatis digitis extendi oportere.

society is dissolved: as when a parent, child, wife, or neighbour dieth, all our duties to them cease. Nature by the position of many circumstances, hath made incest ordinarily a thing producing manifold evils, and a sin against God: and yet nature so placed the children of Adam, in other circumstances, that the said nature made that their duty (to marry one another) which in others would have been an unnatural thing. Nature forbiddeth parents to murder their children; but when God the absolute Lord of life, would that way try Abraham's obedience, when he was sure that he had a supernatural command, even nature obliged him to obey it. Nature forbiddeth men to rob each other of their proper goods; but when the Owner of all things had given the Israelites the Egyptians' goods, and changed the propriety, the *fundamentum* of their former natural obligation ceased. Changes in *natura rerum*, which are the foundation of our obligation, may make changes in the obligations, which before were natural. But so far as nature, that nature which foundeth duty, is the same, the duty remaineth still the same. The contrary would be a plain contradiction.

Sec. 7. The *authoritas imperantis* is the formal object of all obedience: and so all our duty is formally duty to God as our supreme, or to men as his officers; but, as to the material object, our natural duties are either, I. Towards God; II. To ourselves; III. To others.

Sec. 8. I. The prime duties of the law of nature are towards God, and are our full consent to the three relations, of which two are mentioned before: to be God's rational creatures, and not obliged to take him heartily for our absolute Owner and Ruler, is a contradiction in nature.

Sec. 9. Man's nature being what it is, and related thus to God, and God's nature and relations being as afore described, man is naturally obliged to take God to be what he is in all his attributes forementioned, (cap. 5.) and to suit his will and affections to God accordingly; that is, to take him to be omnipotent, omniscient, and most good, most faithful, and most just, &c.; and to believe him, seek him, trust him, love him, fear him, obey him, meditate on him, to honour him, and prefer him before all the world; and this with all our heart and might, and to take our chiefest pleasure in it.*

All this so evidently resulteth from the nature of God and man compared, that I cannot perceive that it needeth proof or illustration.

Sec. 10. It is a contradiction to nature, that any of this duty, proper to God, may be given to any other; and that any creature, or idol of our imagination, should be esteemed, loved, trusted, obeyed, or honoured as God.

For that were falsehood in us, injury to God, and abuse of the creature.

Sec. 11. Nature requireth that man, having the gift of speech from God, should employ his tongue in the praise and service of his Maker.

This plainly resulteth from our own nature, and the use of the tongue, compared with or related to God's nature and perfections, with his propriety in us, and all that is ours, and his government of us.

Sec. 12. Seeing man liveth in total dependence upon God, and in continual receivings from him, na-

ture obligeth him to use his heart and tongue in holy desires, expressed and exercised in prayer, and in returning thanks to his great Benefactor; of which more anon.

For though God knows all our sins and wants already, yet the tongue is fitted to confess our sins, and to express our desires; and, by confessing and expressing, a twofold capacity for mercy accrueeth to us: that is, 1. Our own humiliation is excited and increased by the said confessions; and our desires, and love, and hope, excited and increased by our own petitions (the tongue having a power to reflect back on the heart, and the exercise of all good affections being the means of their increase). 2. And a person that is found in the actual exercise of repentance, and holy desire, and love, is morally, and in point of justice, a much fitter recipient for pardon and acceptance, and other blessings, than another is; and it being proved, by nature, that prayer, confession, and thanksgiving hath so much usefulness to our good, and to our further duty, nature will tell us that the tongue and heart should be thus employed; and, therefore, nature teacheth all men in the world, that believe there is a God, to confess their sins to him, and to call upon him in their distress, and to give him thanks for their receivings.

Sec. 13. Seeing societies, as such, are totally dependent upon God; and men's gifts are communicative, and solemnities are operative; nature teacheth us, that God ought to be solemnly acknowledged, worshipped, and honoured, both in families and in more solemn, appointed assemblies.^f

It greatly affecteth our own hearts, to praise God in great and solemn assemblies: many hearts are like many pieces of wood or coals, which flame up greatly when set together, which none of them alone would do. And it is a fuller signification of honour to God, when his creatures do purposely assemble for his solemn and most reverent praise and worship; and, therefore, nature showing us the reasons of it, doth make it to be our duty.

Sec. 14. Nature telleth us, that it is evil to cherish false opinions of God, or to propagate such to others; to slander or blaspheme him, to forget him, despise him, or neglect him; to condemn his judgments, or abuse his mercies; to resist his instructions, precepts, or sanctifying motions; and that we should always live as in his sight, and to bend all our powers entirely to please him, and to think and speak no otherwise of him, nor otherwise behave ourselves before him, than as bescemeth us to the infinite, most blessed, and holy God.

Sec. 15. Nature telleth us, that in controversies between man and man, it is a rational means for ending strife, to appeal to God the Judge of all, by solemn oaths, where proof is wanting; and that it is a heinous crime to do this falsely, making him the patron of a lie, or to use his name rashly, irreverently, profanely, or in vain.

All this being both against the nature of God, and of our speech, and of human society, is, past all doubt, unnatural evil.

Sec. 16. Nature telleth us, that God should be worshipped heartily, sincerely, spiritually, and also decently and reverently, both with soul and body, as being the Lord of both.^g

deorum ac mente opinio sit. Cicer. pro Planc. De diis ita ut sunt loquere. Bias in Laert. Equidem is qui de diis talia commentus est, an philosophus appellandus sit nescio, (inquit Laert. De Orpheo, p. 3.) Videant certe qui ita volunt, quo sit censendus nomine, qui diis cuncta hominum vitia, et que raro a turpibus quibusque, et flagitiosis geruntur, adscribit. Fulmine interisse cognoscitur. Laert. Proem.

^f Lege Laert. de Magis. Cicero de Nat. Deor. lib. I. p. 46, saith, that Possidonius believed that Epicurus thought

* Laertius saith of the Magi, that they do Deorum cultui vacare; signa statusque reprehendere; et eorum imprimis qui mares esse Deos et feminas dicunt, errores improbare. Signa et status ex disciplina instituto e medio tulisse. Qui et revicturos homines, immortalesque futuros, dicunt, et universa illorum precationibus consistere. Plerique et Judæos ab his duxisse originem tradunt. Laert. p. 4-6.

^g Pietas est scientia colendi numinis; inquit Æmilius in Plutarch. Nulla pietas est erga deos, nisi honesta de numine

Sect. 17. It telleth us, also, that he must not be worshipped with sin or cruelty, or by toyish, childish, ludicrous manner of worship, which signify a mind that is not serious, or which tend to breed a low esteem of him, or which are any way contrary to his nature or his will.

Sect. 18. Nature telleth us, that such as are endued with an eminent degree of holy wisdom, should be teachers of others, for obedience to God and their salvation.

As the soul is more worth than the body, and its welfare more regardable, so charity to the soul is as natural a duty as to the body, which cannot better be exercised than in communicating holy wisdom, and instructing men in the matters of highest, everlasting consequence.

Sect. 19. Yea, nature teacheth, that so great a work should not be done slightly and occasionally only, as on the by, but that it should be a work of stated office, which tried men should be regularly called to, for the more sure and universal edification of mankind.

Nature telleth us, that the greatest works, of greatest consequence, should be done with the greatest skill and care, and that it is most likely to be so done when it is made a set office, intrusted in the hands of tried men, for it is not many that have such extraordinary endowments, and if unfit persons manage so great a work, they will mar it, and miss the end; and that which a man taketh for his office, he is liker to take care of, than that which he thinks belongeth no more to him than others; and how necessary order is, in all matters of weight, the experience of all governments, societies, and persons, may soon convince us.

Sect. 20. Nature telleth us also, that it is the duty of such teachers to be very diligent, serious, and plain; and of learners to be thankful, willing, studious, respectful, and rationally obedient, as remembering the great importance of the work.

For in vain is the labour of the teachers, if the learners will not do their part; the receiver hath the chief benefit, and, therefore, the greatest part of the duty, which must do most to the success.

Sect. 21. Nature telleth men, that they should not live loosely and ungoverned, but in the order of governed societies, for the better attainment of the ends of their creation, as is proved before.

Sect. 22. Nature telleth us that governors should be the most wise, and pious, and just, and merciful, and diligent, and exemplary, laying out themselves for the public good, and the pleasing of the universal Sovereign.

Sect. 23. It teacheth us also, that subjects must be faithful to their governors, and must honour and obey them in subordination to God.^a

Sect. 24. Nature telleth us that it is the parents' duty, with special love and diligence, to educate their children in the knowledge, fear, and obedience

of God, providing for their bodies, but preferring their souls.

Sect. 25. And that children must love, honour, and obey their parents, willingly and thankfully receiving their instructions and commands.

Sect. 26. Nature also telleth us, that thus the relations of husband and wife should be sanctified to the highest ends of life; and also the relation of master and servant; and that our callings and labours in the world should be managed in pure obedience to God, and to our ultimate end.¹

Sect. 27. Nature teacheth all men to love one another, as servants of the same God, and members of the same universal kingdom, and creatures of the same specific nature.

There is somewhat amiable in every man, for there is something of God in every man, and therefore something that it is our duty to love; and that according to the excellency of man's nature, which sheweth more of God than other inferior creatures do, and also according to their additional virtues. Loveliness commandeth love, and love maketh lovely. This, with all the rest aforementioned, are so plain, that to prove them is but to be tedious.

Sect. 28. Nature telleth us that we should deal justly with all, giving to every one his due, and doing to them as we would be done by.

Sect. 29. Particularly it telleth us that we must do nothing injuriously against the life, or health, or liberty of our neighbour, but do our best for their preservation and comfort.

Sect. 30. Man being so noble a creature, and his education so necessary to his welfare, and promiscuous, unregulated generation tending so manifestly to confusion, ill education, divisions, and corruption of mankind; and unbridled exercise of lust, tending to the abasement of reason, and corruption of body and mind; nature telleth us that carnal copulation should be very strictly regulated, and kept within the bounds of lawful marriage; and that the contract of marriage must be faithfully kept, and no one defile his neighbour's bed, nor wrong another's chastity, or their own, in thought, word, or deed.

This proposition, though boors understand it not, is proved in the annexed reasons. Nothing would tend more to household divisions and ill education, and the utter degenerating and undoing of mankind, than ungoverned copulation. No one would know his own children, if lust were not bounded by strict and certain laws; and then none would love them, nor provide for them; nor would they have any certain ingenuous education. Women would become most contemptible and miserable, as soon as beauty faded, and lust was satisfied; and so one half of mankind made calamitous, and unfitted to educate their own children, and ruin and deprivation of nature could not be avoided. They that think their choicest plants and flowers fit for the enclosure of a garden, and carefullest culture, weeding, and defence, should not

¹ Nihil interest utrum vir bonus scelestum spoliaverit, an hominem improbus: nec utrum bonus an malus adulteratus sit: sed lex damni solum spectat dissimilitudinem, utiturque pro paribus, si alter violat, alter violatus est. Aristot. Ethic. 5. c. 4. Vide Plutarchi Roman. quest. 65. Temperantia libidinum inimica est. Cic. When an adulterer asked Thales whether he should make a vow, he answered him, Adultery is as bad as perjury; intimating that he that made no conscience of adultery, would make none of perjury. Laert. Cyrus is praised by Plutarch, (de Curiosis) that would not see Panthæa: and they are by him reproved, that cast a wanton eye at women in coaches as they pass by, and look out at windows to have a full view of them, and yet think that they commit no fault, suffering a curious eye and a wandering mind to slide and run every way.

that there was no God, and therefore not according to his judgment; but, in scorn, describeth God like a man careless, idle, &c. which that he would have done, if he had thought that there was a God indeed. Impellitur natura ut prodesset velimus quampluribus, imprimisque docendo rationibusque prudentie tradendis. Itaque non facile est invenire, qui quod sciat, ipse non tradat alteri. Ita non solum ad discendum propensi sumus, verum etiam ad docendum. Cic. 2. de Fin. Descriptionem sacerdotum nullum iuste religionis genus præmittit. Nam sunt ad placandos Deos alii constituti, qui sacris præsent solennibus; ad interpretanda alii prædicta vatum; neque multorum ne esset infinitum, neque ut ea ipsa que suscepta publice essent, quicquam extra collegium nosset. Cic. de Leg. 1. 2. p. 241.

^a Autoritate nutuque legum decemur domitas habere libidines, coercere omnes cupiditates, nostra tueri, ab alienis mentes, oculos, manus abstinere. Cic. 1. de Orat.

think their children should be educated or planted in the wilderness. It is not unobservable that all flying fowls do know their mates, and live by couples, and use copulation with no other; and that the beasts and more terrestrial fowl do copulate but only so oft as is necessary to generation: and shall man be worse than beasts?

Sect. 31. Nature bindeth us not to violate the propriety of our neighbour, in any thing that is his, by fraud, theft, or robbery, or any other means; but to preserve and promote his just commodity as our own.

Sect. 32. Government and justice being so necessary to the order and welfare of the world, nature teacheth us that bribery, fraud, false witness, and all means that pervert justice, must be avoided, and equity promoted among all.^k

Sect. 33. The tongue of man being made to be the index of his mind, and human converse being maintained by human credibility and confidence, nature telleth us that lying is a crime, which is contrary to the nature and societies of mankind.

Sect. 34. And nature telleth us that it is unjust and criminal to slander or injuriously defame our neighbour, by railing, reviling, or malicious reports; and that we ought to be regardful of his honour as of our own.

Sect. 35. Nature telleth us that, both in obedience to God, the just Disposer of all, and for our own quietness, and our neighbour's peace, we should all be contented with our proper place, and due condition and estate, and not to envy the prosperity of our neighbour, nor covetously draw from him to enrich ourselves.

Because God's will and interest is above our own, and the public welfare to be preferred before any private person's; and therefore all are to live quietly and contentedly in their proper places, contributing to the common good.

Sect. 36. Nature teacheth us that it is our duty to love human nature in our enemies, and pity others in their infirmities and miseries, and to forgive all pardonable failings, and not to seek revenge, and right ourselves by our brother's ruin: but to be charitable to the poor and miserable, and do our best to succour them, and help them out of their distress.^l

All these are our undeniable duties to God, and our neighbours.

Sect. 37. Nature also telleth us, that every man, as a rational lover of himself, should have a special care of his own felicity, and know wherein it doth consist, and use all prudent diligence to attain it, and make it sure.

Sect. 38. Nature telleth us, that it is the duty of all men to keep reason clear, and their wills conformable to its right apprehensions; and to keep up a

^k Aristotle, *Ethic. A.* saith, Every lie is evil, and to be avoided. The Roman laws against perjury, and false witness, and bribery, tell us what nature saith thereabout. Read, in Lamprid. how vehement Alexander Severus was against bribery: Fundamentum justitiæ est fides, id est, dictorum conventorumque constantia et veritas. Cicero.

^l De altero temere affirmare periculosum est, propter occultas hominum voluntates, multiplicesque naturas. Cicero.

^m A man that loved his belly, desiring to be admitted into Cato's family; Cato answered, Non possum cum tali vivere, cujus palatum vis sapit quam cerebrum. Erasmus. Nullus mihi per otium dies exit. Partem noctium studiis vendico, non vaco somno sed succumbo. Sen. What mean you to make your prison so strong? said Plato, to one that pampered his body. Piecin in Vit. Plat. Vires corporis sunt vires carceris, inquit Petrar. l. 1. dial. 5. Cato, homo virtuti similissimus — qui nunquam recte fecit ut facere videretur, sed quia aliter facere non poterat; cuique id solum visum est rationem habere: quod haberet justitiam. Velleius Pater. l. 2. Magna pars libertatis est, bene moratus venter. Sen. Plato saith, God is the temperate man's law, and pleasure the intemperate man's. Temperantia voluptatibus imperat; alias atque

constant government over their thoughts, affections, passions, senses, appetite, words, and actions, conforming them to our Maker's laws.ⁿ

Sect. 39. Nature telleth us, that all our time should be spent to the ends of our creation, and all our mercies improved to those ends; and all things in the world be estimated by them, and used as means conducing to them.

Sect. 40. Nature commandeth us to keep our bodies in sobriety, temperance, and chastity; and not be inordinate or irregular in eating, drinking, lust, sleep, idleness, apparel, recreation, or any lower things.

Sect. 41. It commandeth us, also, watchfully and resolutely to avoid or resist all temptations, which would draw us to any of these sins.

Sect. 42. And it teacheth us patiently to bear our crosses, and improve our trials to our benefit, and see that they breed not any sinful distempers in our minds or lives.

Sect. 43. And nature telleth us, that this obedient pleasing of our Maker, and holy, righteous, charitable, and sober living should be our greatest pleasure and delight; and that we should thus spend our lives, even to the last; waiting patiently in peaceful, joyful hopes for the blessed end which our righteous Governor hath allotted for our reward.^o

All this is evidently legible in nature, to any man that hath not lost his reason, or refuseth not considerately to use it. And he that will read but Antonine, Epictetus, and Plutarch, (who are so full of such precepts, that I refer you to the whole books, instead of particular citations,) may see, that he who will deny a life of piety, justice, and temperance to be the duty and rectitude of man, must renounce his reason and natural light, as well as supernatural revelation.

Sect. 44. Reason also teacheth us, that when the corruptions, sluggishness, or appetite of the flesh, resisteth or draweth back from any of this duty, or tempteth us to any sin, reason must rebuke it, and hold the reins, and keep its government, and not suffer the flesh to bear it down, and to prevail.

CHAPTER XI.

III. OF GOD'S RELATION TO MAN, AS HIS BENEFACTOR AND HIS END, OR AS HIS CHIEF GOOD.

THE three essential principles in God do eminently give out themselves to man in his three divine rela-

abigit; alias dispensat, et ad sanum modum dirigit, nec unquam ad illas propter ipsas venit. Senec. Scit optimum esse modum cupidorum, non quantum velis, sed quantum debeas sumere. Sen. Animis tenduntur insidiæ — ab ea que penitus in omni sensu implicata insidit imitatrix boni, voluptas, malorum autem mater omnium; cujus blanditiis corrupti, que natura bona sunt, quæ dulcedine hac et scabie carent, non cernimus satis. Cic. de Leg. l. 1. p. 226. Ampliat ætatis spatium sibi vir bonus; hoc est, vivere bis, vita posse priore frui. Martialis.

ⁿ As a summary of what the light of nature may teach man, see the Stoics' Ethics, collected by Barlaam; (much of which may be found in Seneca, and is confessed and praised by Cicero, though he chides them for their new words and schism;) where you will see, that the Stoics were wiser and better men than the Epicureans would have men believe. Oculos vigilia fatigatos, cadentesque, in opere detineo. — Male mihi esse malo, quam mollior: si mollis es, paulatim effeminatur animus, atque in similitudinem otii sui et pigritiæ, in qua jacet, solvitur. Dormio minimum, et brevissimo somno utor: satis est mihi vigilare desinisse. Aliquando dormire scio, aliquando suspicor. Sen.

tions to us,—his power, intellect, and will; his omnipotency, omniscience, and goodness; in his being our Owner, our Ruler, and our chief Good. The two first I have considered already; our omnipotent Lord or Owner, and our most wise Governor, and our counter-relations with the duties thereof. I now come to the third.

For the right understanding whereof, let us a little consider of the image of God in man, in which we must here see him.^a It is man's will, which is his ultimate, perfective, imperant faculty; it is the proper subject of moral habits, and principal agent of moral acts; and therefore in all laws and converse, the will is taken for the man, and nothing is further morally good or evil, virtuous or culpably vicious, than it is voluntary. The intellect is but the director of the will; its actions are not the perfect actions of the man: if it apprehend bare truth, without respect to goodness, its object is not the highest, or felicitating, or attractive object, and therefore the act can be no higher: if it apprehend any being or truth as good, it apprehendeth it but as a servant or guide to the will, to bring it thither to be received by love. The perfect excellency of the object of human acts is goodness, and not mere entity or verity. Therefore, the excellentest faculty is the will: it is good that is the final cause in the object of all human acts; therefore, it is the fruition of good which is the perfective, final act; and that fruition of good, as good, is, though introductorily by vision, yet finally and proximately by complacencies, which is nothing else but love in its most essential act, delighting in its attained object. And for the executive power, though, in the order of its natural being, it be before the will, yet in its operation, *ad extra*, it is after it, and commanded by it.

Accordingly, while we see God but in this glass, we must conceive that his principle of understanding and power, stand in the foresaid order as to his will; and his omnipotence and omniscience, to that eminently moral goodness, which is the perfection of his will. The natural goodness of his essence filling all.

Therefore, here note, that this attribute of God, his goodness, doth make him our chief Good, in a twofold respect, both efficiently and finally. In some sort it is so with the other attributes; his power is efficiently the spring of our being and actions; and, finally and objectively, it terminateth our submission and our trust. His wisdom is the principle of his laws, and also the object and end of our inquiries and understandings; but his goodness is the efficient of all our good in its perfection of causality, and that end of our souls, which is commonly called *ultimate-ultimus*. So that to submit to his power, and to be ruled by his wisdom, is, as I may say, initially our end. But to be pleasing to his good will, and to be pleased in his good will, that is, to love him, and to be beloved by him, is the absolute perfection and end of man.^b

Therefore, under this his attribute of goodness, God is to be spoken of, both as our Benefactor, and our End; which is to be indeed our *summum bonum*.

SECT. I. Man hath his being, and all the good

which he possesseth, from God, as the sole, first efficient by creation.

SECT. 2. Therefore, God alone is the universal, grand Benefactor of the world, besides whom they have no other, but merely subordinate to him.

No creature can give us any thing which is originally its own, having nothing but what it received from God; therefore it is no more to us, but either a gift of God, or a messenger to bring us his gift: they have nothing themselves but what they have received; nor have we any sort of good, either natural, moral, of mind, or body, or fortune, or friends, but what is totally from the bounty of our Creator, and as totally from him, as if no creature had ever been his instrument.

SECT. 3. As God's goodness is that by which he communicateth being, and all good, to all his creatures, and is his most complete attribute in point of efficiency; so is it that attribute which is in *genere causæ finalis*, the *finis*, *ultimate-ultimus* of all his works. God can himself have no ultimate end but himself; and his rational creatures can have no other lawful, ultimate end. And in himself, it is his goodness which is completely and ultimately that end.^c

Here I am to show, I. That God himself can have no ultimate end but himself. II. That man should have no other. III. That God, as in his goodness, is *ultimate-ultimus*, the end of man.

I. 1. That which is most beloved of God, is his ultimate end; but God himself is most beloved of himself, therefore he is his own ultimate end.

The reason of the major proposition is, because to be the ultimate end, and to be *maxime amatum*, is all one. *Finis quærentis* hath respect to the means of attainment, and is that *cujus amore media eliguntur et applicantur*. This, God is not capable of, (speaking in propriety,) because he never wanteth his end. *Finis fruitoris* is that, which *amando fruimur*, which we love, complacentially, in full attainment; and so God doth still enjoy his end, and to have it in love is to enjoy it.

The minor is past controversy.

Object. But if God have it not *finem quærentis*, then in every instant he enjoyeth his end; and if so, then he useth no means at all, for what need any means be used for that end which is not sought, but still enjoyed. And, consequently, where there is no means, there is no end.

Answ. As *finis* signifieth nothing but *effectum*, viz. *perfectionem operis*, which is but *finis terminativus*, so it is not always at present attained; and God may be said to use means, that is, subordinate efficient, or instruments, to accomplish it. But as it signifieth, *Causam finalem*, scil. *cujus amores res fit*, so far as it may, without all imperfection, be ascribed to him, he must be said continually to enjoy it; and yet to use means for it, but not as wanting it, but in the same instant using and enjoying; that is, he constantly communicateth himself to his creature, and constantly loveth himself so communicated. He is the first, efficient, and ultimate end, without any interposing instant of time, were eternity divisible; but in order of nature, he is the efficient before he is the end enjoyed, but not before the end intended. He still sendeth forth the beams of his own glory,

^a Porro celi generationis auctorem summe bonum atque excellentissimum (asseruit Plato): ejus quippe quod sit in rebus conditis pulcherrimum, cum esse conditorem, quem intelligibilium omnium constet esse prestantissimum. Itaque, quoniam hujusmodi Deus est, celum vero prestantissimo illi simile est; quoniam pulcherrimum cernitur, nulli creaturæ erit similis, quam Deo soli. Laert. in Plat.

^b Nihil est Deo similis at gratius, quam vir, animo perfecto bonus, qui hominibus cæteris antecellit, quod ipse a diis immortalibus distat. Luc. Apml. de Deo Socr.

^c Quis dubitare potest, mi Lucili, quin Deorum immortalium munus sit quod vivimus. Sen. Prope Deus est, tecum est, intus est: ita dico, Lucili, sacra intra nos spiritus sedet, bonorum malorumque nostrorum observator et custos. Ita prout a nobis tractatur, ita et nos tractat ipse. Bonus vero vir sine Deo nemo est. An potest aliquis supra formam, nisi ab illo, adjutus exurgere. Ille dat consilia, magnifica et erecta, in unoquoque bono viro. Sen.

and still taketh pleasure in them so sent forth. His works may be increased, and attain perfection, (called *finem operis* by some,) but his complacency is not increased or perfected in his works, but is always perfect; as if the sun took constant pleasure in its own emitted light and heat, though the effects of both on things below were most various. God is still pleased in that which still is, in all his own works, though his works may grow up to more perfection.

Or, if any think fit to say, that God doth *querere finem*, and that he may enjoy more of it at one time than another, yet must he confess, that nothing below the complacency of his own will, in his own emitted beams of glory, shining in his works, is this his ultimate end.

2. That which is the beginning, must be the end: but God is the beginning of all his works, therefore he is the end of all. He himself hath no beginning or efficient, and consequently no final cause of himself, but his works have himself for the efficient and for their end: that is, he that made them, intended in the making of them that they should be illustrious with his communicated beams of glory, and thereby amiable to his will, and should all serve to his complacency.

If the end were lower than the beginning, there would be no proportion, and the agent would sink down below himself.

3. If any thing besides God were his ultimate end, it must thereby be in part deified, or his actions de-based by the lowness of the end: but these are impossibilities. The actions are no nobler than their end, and the end is more noble than the means as such.

4. The ultimate end is the most amiable and delectable. The creature is not to God the most amiable and delectable; therefore, the creature is not his ultimate end. The first argument was from the act; this from the object.

5. The ultimate end is that in which the agent doth finally acquiesce: God doth not finally acquiesce in any creature; therefore, no creature is his ultimate end.

6. That which is God's ultimate end, is loved simply for itself, and not as a means to any higher end. The creature is not loved by him simply for itself, but as a means to a higher end, viz. his complacency in his glory shining in it; *ergo*, it is not his ultimate end. The ultimate end hath no end; but the creatures have an end, viz. the complacency of God in his glory shining in the creature.^a

Object. But you confound the final object and the final act. God's complacency of love is his final act, but our inquiry is of the final object.

Ans. The *finis cui*, or personal end, is most properly the ultimate, he for whose sake or for whom the thing is done: but this is God only, and therein he is both the act and object. He that did *velle creaturas*, did *velle eas ad complacentiam propriæ voluntatis*. The question is not of the *actus complacentiæ*, but of the *actus creandi vel volendi creaturarum existentium*: which he doth *propter voluntatis impletionem, et inde complacentiam*, which is the final act, and the final object of the creating act; but for the *actus complacentiæ*, it is not *actus intentionis*, but *fruitionis*, and therefore hath no end above itself. And the final object of that complacency, is not the creature itself, but the impletion of the divine will in the creature; yea, the image of his omnipotency, wis-

dom, and goodness shining in the creation, is not loved *propter se*, ultimately; but for the sake of that divine essence and perfection of which it is the image (as we love the image of our friend for his sake): so that when all is done, God himself is his own end in all his works, so far as, very improperly, he may be said to intend an end.

Or, if you could prove the creature to be the *objectum finale*, that proveth him not to be properly the *finis ultimus*. For that is a difference between man's agency and God's. Man is an agent made and acting for his final object, and more ignoble than his object (as the eye of a fly that beholdeth the sun): but God is an agent more noble than the object, who gave the object itself its being, and made it of nothing for himself; and so the object is for his final act.

Object. But God, being perfect, needeth nothing, nor can receive any addition of perfection or blessedness; and, therefore, it is not any addition of good to himself which he intendeth in the creation, and consequently it is his ultimate end to do the creature good.

Ans. All the antecedent part is granted, and is, anon, to be further asserted, but the last consequence is denied; because there is another end besides the addition of good to himself, which God may intend, so far as he may be said to intend an end. He doth all the good to the creature which it receiveth, but not ultimately for the creature's sake.

II. That man should have no ultimate end but God, that is, *ultimate-ultimus*, as it is called, is proved in what is said; and the fuller opening of it belongeth to the next chapter.

III. It is God in all his perfections, omnipotency, wisdom, and goodness, that is man's ultimate end; but it is the last which supposeth both the other, and to which man's will, which must perform the most perfect, final act, is most fully suited, and therefore is, in a special sort, our ultimate end. The omnipotency of God is truly the efficient, dirigent, and final cause of all things, but it is most eminent in efficiency. The wisdom of God is truly the efficient, dirigent, and final cause of all things, but it is most eminent in direction and government. The goodness of God is truly the efficient, dirigent, and final cause, but it is most eminent in being the perfective, efficient, and final cause.

Sect. 4. God's ultimate end in creation and providence, is not any supply or addition of perfection or blessedness in himself, as being absolutely perfect in himself, and capable of no addition.

But those who think that God doth produce all things *ex necessitate naturæ* from eternity, say, That as the tree is not perfect without its fruits, so neither is God without his works. They say, with Balbus (in Cicero) and other stoics, That the world is the most excellent being, and that God is but the soul of the world; and though the soul be a complete soul, if it had no body, yet it is not a complete man: and as the tree is complete, in *genere causæ*, without the fruit, yet not as a *totum* containing those effects *ab essentia*, which are its part and end; so, say they, God may be perfect without the world, as he is only the soul and part of the world, but he is not a complete world, nor *in toto*.

Ans. I. That God is not the soul or constitutive cause of the world, but somewhat much greater, is proved before:^c and also that it was not from eter-

^a That the *finis cui* is properly the ultimate end, and the *finis cuius* is subordinate to it, Cicero sheweth in Piso's Speech, l. 5. de Finib. p. 188. In nobis ipsis ne intelligi quidem, ut propter aliam quampiam rem, verbi gratia, propter voluptatem, nos amemus. Propter nos enim illam, non prop-

ter eam nosmetipsos diligimus. Quid est quod magis perspicuum est, non modo carum sibi quemque, verum etiam vehementer carum.

^c Chap. iv.

nity, and consequently that he created it not by natural necessity; the foundation, therefore, being overthrown, the building falleth. Those that hold the foresaid opinion, must hold that God is, in point of duration, an eternal, efficient, matter, form, and end; and that, in order of nature, he is first an efficient principle, causing matter; and secondly, he is an efficient with matter; and in the third instant, he is the form of the effected matter; and in the fourth instant, he is the end of his operations herein. And if you call the efficient principle only by the name of God, then you grant what I prove, and you seem'd to deny; but if he be not God as the mere efficient and end, but also the matter, then you make every stone, and serpent, and every thief, and murderer, and devil to be part of God, and make him the subject of all the sin and evil, all the weakness, folly, and mutations, which be in the world, with the other absurdities before mentioned. And if you say, that he is God, as efficient, form, and end, and not as matter, then you contradict yourself, because the form and matter are parts of the same being: and whether you call him God as the form only, and so make him but part of being, and consequently imperfect, and consequently not God, or as matter and form also, and so make him a compounded being, still you make him imperfect in denying his simplicity or unity, and as guilty of all the imperfections of matter and of composition, and you make one part of God more imperfect than the rest, as being but an effect of it. All which are inconsistent with the nature of God, and with the nature of man and every creature, who is hereby made a part of God.

2. If this had been true of the world, as consisting of its constitutive causes, that it is God in perfection, and eternal, &c. yet it could not be true of the daily generated and perishing beings.¹ There are millions of men and other animals that, lately, were not what they are; therefore, as such, they were not eternal parts of God, because, as such, they were not eternal; therefore, if God brought them forth for his own perfection, it would follow that he was before imperfect, and consequently not God, and that his perfections are mutable and perishing; therefore, at least, some other cause of these must be found out.

And as for the similitudes in the objection, I answer, 1. That the fructifying of a tree is an act of generation, and the ends of it are partly the use, for food, to superior, sensitive creatures, especially man, and partly the propagation of its species, because it is mortal; fructification is, indeed, its perfection, but that is, because it is not made for itself, but for another; *sic vos non vobis*, may be written upon all: but God is neither mortal, needing a propagation of the species, nor is he subservient to any other and finally for its use.

And as for the soul, it made not the matter of its own body, but found it made, though in the formation of it it might be so efficient, as *domicilium sibi fabricare*.² But God made all matter of nothing, and gave the world whatsoever it is or hath, and therefore was perfect himself before; for an imperfect being could never have been the cause of such a frame: therefore, he needed no *domicilium* for himself, nor as an imperfect part, a form, to concur to the constitution of a whole; but he is the efficient, dirigent, and final cause of the world and all things,

¹ Quid enim est aliud natura quam Deus, et divina ratio? Toti mundo partibusque ejus inserta? Ergo nihil agis in-gratissime mortalium, qui te negas Deo debere sed naturæ; quia nihil natura sine Deo est, nec Deus sine natura, sed idem est uterque nec distat officio. Senec. de Benefic.

² Leg. Aeneas Gazeum de Anima. iii. P. T. 2. Gr. Lat. p. 385, 386, &c.

^b Goodness signifieth more than utility or pleasure to our-

but not the constituent or essential, for then the creature and Creator were all one, and God debased and the creature deified: but he is to them a super-essential cause, even more than a form and soul, while he is a total efficient of all.

3. If all that is in the objection had been proved, it would not at all shake the main design of my present discourse, which is to prove that God is our grand Benefactor and chief Good, and that he is man's ultimate end; for if the world were his body, and he both its efficient and its soul, he would be the cause of all its good, and the cause would be more excellent than the effect; and if our souls, that never made the matter of our bodies, are yet the noblest part of us, and far more excellent than the body, much more would God, that made or caused all the matter and order in the world, be more excellent than that world which he effected: and as the soul is not for the body as its ultimate end, though it be the life of the body and its great benefactor, but the body is finally more for the soul, though the soul need not the body so much as the body needeth the soul; and as the horse is finally for the rider, and not the rider for the horse, though the horse needeth his master more than the master doth the horse, for the horse's life is preserved by the master, when the master is but accommodated in his journey by his horse; even so, though the world need God, and he needeth not the world, and God giveth being and life to the world, which can give nothing at all to him, yet the world is finally for God, and not God for the world. The noblest and first being is still the end.

And the generated part of the world, which is not formally eternal, but both *oriri et interire*, is it that our dispute doth most concern, which the objection doth no whit invalidate.

Sect. 5. The same will of God, which was the free efficient, is the end of all his works *ad extra*.³

God's essence hath no efficient or final cause, but is the efficient and final cause of all things else; they proceeded from his power, his wisdom, and his good-will, and they bear the image of his power, wisdom, and good-will; and he loveth his own image in them, and loveth them as they bear his image, and loveth his image for himself; so that the act of his love to himself is necessary, though voluntary, and so is the act of his love to his image, and to all the goodness of the creature, while it is such: but he freely, and not necessarily, made and continueth the creature in his image, and needeth not the glass or image, being self-sufficient, so that his creature is the mediate object; his image on the creature is the ultimate, created object; his own perfection, to which that image relateth, is the *objectum simpliciter ultimum*: his complacency or love, is the *actus ultimus*; and that very act is the object of his precedent act of creation, or volition of the creatures: but all this is spoken according to the narrow, imperfect capacity of man, who conceiveth of God as having a *prius et posterius* in his acts, which is but respectively and denominatively from the order of the objects. In short, God's free-will is the beginning of his works, *ad extra*, and the complacency of that will in his works as good, in relation to his own perfections, is the end; and therefore, he is said to rest when he saw that all his works were good.⁴

selves; as when we call a man a good man, a good scholar, a good judge, &c.; and so doth evil signify on the contrary.

Bonum est quod sui ipsius gratia expetendum est. Aristot. Rhet. 1.

Bonum omnis originis et ortus finis est. Id. Metaph. l. 1. c. 3.

⁴ Maximum bonum maxime semper expetendum. Arist. l. Eth. c. 7. Duplex bonum est. Alterum quod absolute et

Sect. 6. Whatsoever is the fullest expression and glorifying demonstration of God in the creature, must needs be the chief created excellency.*

Because he loveth himself first, and the creature for himself; and seeing the creature hath all from him which is good and amiable in it, it must needs follow, that those parts are most amiable and best, which have most of the impression of the Creator's excellences on them; not that he hath greater perfections to imprint on one creature than another, but the impression of those perfections is much greater on one than on another.

Sect. 7. The happier, therefore, God will make any creature, the more will he communicate to it of the image and demonstration of his own goodness; and so will both love it the more, for his own image, and cause it to love him the more, which is the chief part of his image.

Sect. 8. The goodness of God is conceived of by our narrow minds, in three notions, as it were, in three degrees of altitude: the highest is, the infinite perfections of his essence as such: the second is, the infinite perfection of his will as such, which is called his holiness, and the fountain of morality: the third is, that one part of his will's perfection, which is his benignity to his creatures, which we call his goodness in a lower notion, as relative to ourselves, because he is inclined by it to do us good; this is his goodness in condescension.

Sect. 9. Though all this is but one in God, yet because our minds are fain to receive it as in several parts or notions, we may, therefore, not only distinguish them, but compare them, as the objects of our love.

Sect. 10. Man usually beginneth at the lowest, and loveth God first, for his benignity and love to us, before he riseth to the higher acts.

And this is not an irregular motion of a lapsed soul in its return to God, so be it we make haste in our ascent, and make no stay in these lower acts; otherwise it will be privatively sinful.

Sect. 11. Therefore, God multiplieth mercies upon man, that he might facilitate this first act of love by gratitude.

Not that these mercies being good to ourselves, should lead us to love God ultimately for ourselves; but they should help us first to love him for ourselves, as the immediate passage to a higher act of love, with which we must love him in and for himself, and ourselves for him.

Sect. 12. Therefore, God hath planted in our natures the principle of self-love, that he might suit our natures to the mercies of God, and make them sweet to us: not that we should arise to no higher an esteem of them; but that this sweetness in them, which respecteth ourselves, and is relished by self-love, should lead us to the fountain of perfect goodness from which they flow.

Our very senses and appetites are given us to this end, not that we should judge by no higher faculties, but that the delights of the palatable or sensible qualities in the creatures, by affecting the sense, might presently represent to the higher faculties,

the sweetness of infinite goodness to the soul; and so we might by all ascend to God.

Sect. 13. Those mercies, therefore, are the greatest, which reveal most of God, with the least impediments of our ascent unto him.¹

Sect. 14. Therefore his love most revealed and communicated, and his perfect goodness most manifested to the soul, is the greatest mercy: and all corporal mercies are to be estimated and desired, but as they subserve and conduce to these, and not as they are pleasing to our flesh or senses.²

Sect. 15. The perfect goodness of the will of God, though it contain benignity and mercy, yet is not to be measured by the good which he doth to us ourselves, or to any creature; but its highest excellency consisteth in its essential perfection, and the perfect love that God hath to himself, and in the conformity of his will to his most perfect wisdom, which knoweth what is to be willed *ad extra*; and in his complacency in all that is good as such.

When self-love so far blindeth us, as to make our interest the standard to judge of the goodness of God, we do but show that we are fallen from God unto ourselves, and that we are setting up ourselves above him, and debasing him below ourselves: as if we and our happiness were that ultimate end, and he and his goodness were the means, and had no other goodness but that of a means to us and our felicity.³ If he made us, he must needs have absolute propriety in us, and made us for himself. To measure his goodness by our own interest, is more unwise than to measure the sea in our hand, or the sun and all the orbs by our span. And to measure it by the interest of the universe, is to judge of that which is infinite by that which is finite; betwixt which there is no proportion. As God is infinitely better than the world, so he is infinitely more amiable, and therefore must infinitely more love himself than all the world; and, therefore, so to do, is infinite excellency and perfection in his will. But the outgoing of his will to the creature by way of causative volition, is free; and conducted by that wisdom, which knoweth what is fit, and what degrees of communication are most eligible to God. God is perfect without his works; he had wanted nothing if he had never made them. He will not herein do all that he is simply able to do, but all that his wisdom seeth fittest to be done. He was as good before he made the world, as since; and those that think he caused it eternally, must confess him, in order of nature, to be first perfect in himself, and to have more goodness than all which he communicateth to the world. He was as good before this present generation of men on earth had any being: he is as good before he bringeth us to the heavenly glory, as he will be after; though before he did not so much good to us. It is no diminution of his goodness, to say, that he made millions of toads, and flies, and spiders, whom he could have made men if he had pleased; or to say, that he made millions of men, whom he could have made angels; or that he made not every clod or stone a star or sun; or that he suffereth men to be tormented by

per se bonum sit; alterum quod alicui bono sit et usui. Arist. Eth. l. 7. c. 12. Veteres probe summum bonum definiunt, id ad quod omnia referuntur. Arist. Eth. l. 1. c. 1.

¹ It is a saying of Pliny's, that as pearls, though they lie in the bottom of the sea, are yet much nearer kin to heaven, as their splendour and excellency show; so a godly and generous soul hath more dependence on heaven, whence it cometh, than on earth, where it abideth.

² Bonum summum est animi operatio secundum virtutem optimam et perfectissimam in vita perfecta. Aristot. Rhet. l. 1.

³ Tria sunt genera bonorum; maxima animi, secunda corporis; externa tertia. Cicero 3. Tuscul. Nihil bonum nisi

quod honestum; nihil malum nisi quod turpe. Cicero Att. l. 10.

⁴ If a man must love his country better than himself, then God much more, and then self is not to be highest in our love. Respublica nomen universæ civitatis est, pro qua mori, et cui nos totos dare, et in qua omnia nostra ponere, et quasi consecrare debemus. Cicero 2. de Leg. Laudandus est is qui mortem appetit pro republica, qui doceat patriam esse chariorem nobis, quam nosmetipsos: estque illa vox inhumana et scelerata eorum, qui negant se recusare, quo minus ipsis mortuis terrarum omnium deflagratio consequatur. Cicero 3. de Fin.

each other's cruelty, or by such diseases as the stone and strangury, convulsions, epilepsies, &c.; or that men at last must die, and their bodies rot and turn to dust. That these things are done, is past dispute; and that God is good is past dispute: and, therefore, that all this is consistent with this goodness, is past dispute; and consequently that his goodness is not to be measured by so low a thing as human or any creature interest.*

If you say, that all this is hurtful to the individuals, but not to the universe, to which it is better that there be a mixture of evil with good, than that every part had a perfection in itself; I answer:

1. It seemeth, then, that the good which you measure God's goodness by, is not the interest of any individual creature, at least, that is in this lower world. For you confess, that the good which would make it happy, is given to it limitedly, and with mixtures of permitted or inflicted evil; and that God could have given them more of that goodness, if he would; God could have freed them from pain and misery; yea, and have given the ignorant more knowledge, and honesty, and grace. So that it is not our interest that is the measure of his goodness; and if so, what is it that you call the universal interest. Surely, the universality of rational creatures hath no being but in the individuals; and if it be not the welfare of the individuals which is the measure, then is it not any interest or welfare of the universe, which is of the same kind; and for the insensible creatures, they feel neither good nor hurt, and, therefore, by your measure, should be none of the universe, whose interest is the measure. Therefore, it must be somewhat above the sensible interest of any, or all the individuals, which you call the *bonum universalis*; and that can be nothing else but that state and order of the universe, in which it is conformable to the idea of the divine intellect, and to the volition of the divine will, and so is fittest for him to take complacency in, as being the measure and reasons of his own volitions and operations, which he fetcheth not *aliunde*, or at least which are unknown to such as we. No doubt but it is more for the happiness of the individuals, that every dust, and stone, and fly, and beast, and man were an angel; but it is not so.

2. And surely they that believe the evil of sin, and that God could have kept it out of the world, and saved the individuals from it, will confess that man's interest is not the measure of God's goodness, especially considering what consequents also follow sin, both here and hereafter.

3. And as to this lower part of the universe, how many nations of the earth are drowned in woeful ignorance and ungodliness! how few are the wise, and good, and peaceable! when God could have sent them learning, and teachers, and means of reformation, and have blessed all this means to their deliverance. So that the far greater part of this lower world hath not so much good as God could give them; and the infirmities of the best do cause their dolorous complaints.

* It was the erroneous reasoning of the philosophers, to prove the world eternal, that *optimum et pulchrum*, God and the world, must be inseparable; and so conclude the being of that, which their fancies think best to be; (as Ammonius argueth with Zachar. Mitilen. ;) whereby they might as well prove (as Zach. telleth Ammon.) that Plato and Aristotle were from eternity, and must never die. It is foolish to reason against sense and experience, or to deny that which is, because we think that it should be otherwise.

† Colta telleth Velleius, that Epicurus, by making God careless of the affairs of man, Sustulerit omnem funditus religionem: quid est enim cur Deos ab hominibus colendos dicat, cum Dei non modo hominibus non consulant, sed omnino nihil curant, nihil agant? At est eorum eximia quamdam præstansque natura, ut ea debeat ipsa per se ad se colendam

It is certain that God is infinitely good, and that all his works also are good in their degree; but withal, it is certain that God in himself is the simple, primitive good, and that created goodness principally consisteth in conformity to his will, which is the standard and measure of it.

Sec. 16. God, as considered in the infinite perfections of his nature and his will, is most amiable, and the object of our highest love.

Sec. 17. But he is not known by us in those perfections, as seen in themselves immediately, but as demonstrated and glorified expressively in his works, in which he shineth to us in his goodness.

Sec. 18. His works, therefore, are made for the apt revealing of himself, as amiable to the intelligent part of his creation.†

They are the book in which he hath appointed us to read, and the glass in which he hath appointed us, with admiration, to behold the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator; and in which we may see that he is not only our chief Benefactor, but the ultimate object of our love, and so the end of all our motions.

Sec. 19. This third relation of God to us as our chief good, efficiently and finally, is the highest and most perfective to us, but is not separated from the former two, but they are all marvellously conjunct, and concur in the production of most of the subsequent effects of God's providence.

As the elements are conjunct, but not confounded in mixed bodies, and in themselves are easily to be distinguished, where they are not divided, and their effects sometimes also distinct, but usually mixed, as are the causes; so is it in the case of these three great relations, though God's propriety extend further than his government, because inanimates and brutes are capable of one, and not of the other; yet, as to the rational creatures, they are, in reality, of the same extent. God is, as to right, the Owner and Ruler of all the world, and also their real Benefactor, and, *quoad debitum*, their ultimate end. But as to consent on their parts, none but the godly give up themselves to him in any one of these relations. In order of nature, God is first our Owner, and then our Ruler, and our chief good or end. His work, in the first relation, is arbitrary disposal of us; his work, in the second, is to govern us; and, in the third, attraction and felicitating. But he so disposeth of us, as never to cross his rules of government; and so governeth us, as never to cross his absolute propriety, and attracteth and felicitateth us in consent with his premiant act of government; and all sweetly and wonderfully conspire the perfection of his works.

Sec. 20. All these relations are oft summed up in one name, which principally importeth the last, which is the perfective relation, but truly includeth both the former; and that is, that God is our Father.‡

As the rational soul doth ever include the sensitive and vegetative faculties, so doth God's fatherly relation elicit sapientem. (This reason is not denied, but the goodness of God's nature proved by his doing good.) Quæ porro pietas ei debetur, a quo nihil acceperis? Aut quid omnino, cujus nullum meritum sit, ei debere potest? Est enim Pietas Justitia adversus Deos: cum quibus quid potest nobis esse juris, cum homine nulla cum Deo sit communitas? sanctitas est scientia colendorum Deorum: qui quamobrem colendi sint non intelligi, nullo nec accepto ab iis, nec sperato bono. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 1. p. 32.

§ Epicurus vero ex animis hominum extraxit radicibus religionem, cum Diis immortabilibus et opem et gratiam sustulerit. Cum enim et præstantissimam naturam Dei dicat esse, negat idem esse in Deo gratiam: tollit id quod maxime proprium est optimæ præstantissimæque nature. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 1. p. 33, 34. Quæ enim potest esse sanctitas, si Dei

tion to us include his dominion and government. A father is thus a kind of image of God in this relation: for, 1. He hath a certain propriety in his children. 2. He is, by nature, their rightful governor. 3. He is their benefactor, for they are beholden to him for their being and well-being. Nature causeth him to love them, and bindeth them again to love him; and the title "Our Father which art in heaven," includeth all these divine relations to us, but especially expresses the love and graciousness of God to us.

Object. But I must go against the sense of most of the world, if I take God to be infinitely or perfectly good; for *operari sequitur esse*, he that is perfectly good will perfectly do good. But do we not see and feel what you said before. The world is but as a wilderness, and the life of man a misery. We come into the world in weakness, and in a case in which we cannot help ourselves, but are a pity and trouble to others. We are their trouble that breed us and bring us up. We are vexed with unsatisfied desires, with troubling passions, with tormenting pains, and languishing weakness, and enemies' malice; with poverty and care; with losses and crosses, and shame and grief; with hard labour and studies; with the injuries and spectacles of a bedlam world, and with fears of death, and death at last. Our enemies are our trouble, our friends are our trouble; our rulers are our trouble; and our inferiors, children, and servants are our trouble; our possessions are our trouble, and so are our wants. And is all this the effect of perfect goodness? And the poor brutes seem more miserable than we: they labour, and hunger, and die at last to serve our will: we beat them, use them and abuse them at our pleasure: and all the inanimates have no sense of any good; and, which is worst of all, the world is like a dungeon of ignorance, like an hospital of mad-men for folly and distractedness, like a band of robbers for injury and violence, like tigers for cruelty, like snarling dogs for contention, and in a word, like hell for wickedness. What else sets the world together by the ears in wars and bloodshed in all generations? What maketh peace-makers the most neglected men? What maketh virtue and piety the mark of persecution and of common scorn? How small a part of the world hath knowledge or piety! And you tell us of a hell for most at last. Is all this the fruit of perfect goodness? These thoughts have seriously troubled some.

Ansio. He that will ever come to knowledge, must begin at the first, fundamental truths, and in his inquiry proceed to lesser superstructures, and reduce uncertainties and difficulties to those points which are sure and plain, and not cast away the plainest certain truths, because they overtake some difficulties beyond them. The true method of inquiry is, that we first try whether there be a God that is perfectly good or not: if this be once proved beyond all controversy, then all that followeth is certainly reconcilable to it; for truth and truth is not contradictory. Now, that God is perfectly good hath been fully proved before: he that giveth to all the world,

both heaven, and earth, and all the orbs, all that good, whether natural, gracious, or glorious, which they possess, is certainly himself better than all the world, for he cannot give more goodness than he hath: this is not to be denied by any man of reason, therefore it is proved that God is perfectly good. Besides, his perfections must needs be proportionable: we know that he is eternal, as is unquestionably demonstrated; we see by the wonderful frame of nature, that he is omnipotent and omniscient; and then it must needs be, that his goodness must be commensurate with the rest.^{*}

Therefore, to come back again upon every consequent which you understand not, and to deny a fundamental principle, which hath been undeniably demonstrated; this is but to resolve that you will not know. By this course you may deny any demonstrated truth in mathematics, when you meet with difficulties among the superstructed consequents.

Let us, therefore, methodically proceed. We have proved that God is the cause of all the goodness in the world, in heaven and earth, and therefore must needs be best himself. And it is certain, that all the sins and calamities which you mention are in the world, and that the creature hath all those imperfections; therefore, it is certain that these two verities are consistent, whatever difficulty appeareth to you in the reconciling them. Thus far there is no matter of doubt. And next we are, therefore, certain, that the measure of God's goodness is not to be taken from the creature's interest. And yet we know that his goodness inclineth him to communicate goodness and felicity to his creatures; for all the good in the world is from him. It remaineth, therefore, that he is good, necessarily and perfectly; and that he doth all well, whatsoever he doth; and that there is in the creature a higher goodness than its own felicity, even the image of God's power, wisdom, and goodness, in which his holiness and justice have their place. And that this goodness of the universe, which consisteth in the glorious appearances of God in it, and the suitableness of all to his will and wisdom, includeth all things, except sin, which are contained in your objection; and that punishment of sinners, though it be *malum physicum* to them, is a moral good, and glorifieth God's justice and holiness; and even the permission of sin itself is good, though the sin be bad. And yet that God will also glorify that part of his goodness which consisteth in benignity; for he hath an *amor beneficentie*, of which the creature only is the object; but of his *amor complacentie* he himself is the chief object, and the creature but the secondary, so far as it participateth of goodness; and complacency is the essential act of love. Think but what a wonderful fabric he hath made of all the orbs, composed into one world: and can you possibly have narrow thoughts of his goodness? He hath placed more physical goodness in the nature of one silly bird, or fly, or worm, than human wit is able to find out; much more in plants, in beasts, in men, in sea and land, in the sun, and fixed stars, and planets:

humana non curant. Id. ibid. Utinam istam caliditatem hominibus Dii ne dedissent; qua per pauci bene utuntur; qui tamen ipsi a male utentibus opprimuntur; innumerales autem improbe utuntur: ut donum hoc divinum rationis et consilii, ad fraudem hominibus non ad bonitatem, impertitum esse videatur: sed trgetis, hominum esse istam culpam, non Deorum.—*Resp.* At, si medicus sciat eum ægrotum, qui jussum esse vinum sumere, meracius sumpturum statimque perituro, magna sit in culpa. Sic vestra ista pervidentia reprehendenda, quæ rationem dederit iis, quos sciverit ea perverse et improbe usuros. Non intelligi quid intersit, utrum nemo fit sapiens, an nemo esse possit. Debeant dii quidem bonos efficere, siquidem hominum generi consulant; sin id minus, bonis quidem consulere debeant. Cotta in Cicer. de Nat. Deor. l. 3. p. 105, 106.

^{*} If God's making man a free agent be not against his goodness, then the sin which a free agent committeth is no impeachment of God's goodness: At verum prius, ergo—The reasons why God made man with free-will, the ancient writers commonly render to the infidels. Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexand. Arnobius, Lactantius, Eusebius, Tatianus, Origen, &c. Vid. Zachar. Mitylen. Disput. pag. 364. B. P. Græca Lat. tom. 1. Siquidem anima regalem majestatem ostendit, nullius dominio subjecta, et propriæ potestatis, tanquam imago Dei, communia cum archetypo quodam habens. Greg. Nyssen. citat. etiam in Cæsarij, Dial. 3. The ancients commonly make the freedom of the will, as well as rationality, to be God's natural image on the soul. See especially the full discourse of Nemesius, de Natur. Hom. cap. 39—41. Lege Pennotti Propugnacul. librt.

our understandings are not acquainted with the thousandth thousandth thousandth part of the physical goodness which he hath put into his creatures: there may be more of the wonderful skill, and power, and goodness of God, laid out on one of those stars that seem smallest to our sight, than millions of human intellects, if united, were able to comprehend. And who knoweth the number, any more than the magnitude and excellency, of those stars? What man can once look up towards the firmament in a star-light night, or once read a treatise of astronomy, and then compare it with his geography, and compare those far more excellent orbs with this narrower and darker world we live in, and not be wrapt up into the astonishing admiration of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator? when the anatomizing of the body of one man or beast might wrap up any considerate man into Galen's admiration and praises of the Maker. And how many myriads of such bodies hath God created! and how much more excellent are the forms or souls, than any of those bodies! And how little know we how incomparably more excellent the nature of angels may be than ours! and what glorious beings may inhabit the more glorious orbs! And yet can you think meanly of the Creator's goodness?*

Oh, but you say that all these lower creatures have still the fore-mentioned sorrows and imperfections.

I answer you: 1. They were not made gods, but creatures, and therefore were not to be perfect. 2. It is the corrupt and blinded, sensual mind which crieth out, for want of sensible pleasure, and can see no goodness in any thing but this. But true reason telleth any man that hath it, that our sensible pleasure is a thing too low to be the highest excellency of the creature, and to be the ultimate end of God; and that the glory of the whole world, even the inanimate parts as well as the animate, showing the glory of the infinite Creator, is the excellency of the world. What, if the sun, and stars, and earth, and sea, the fire, and air, have no feeling; have they, therefore, no goodness but what is a means to the sensible delights of lower things? Hath a worm more goodness than the sun, if it have more feeling? These are the madnesses of sensual men. May not an excellent limner, watchmaker, or other artificer, make a picture, a watch, or musical instrument, merely for his own delight? And may he not delight in the excellency of it, though you imagine him to have no need of it, or of the delight? And what is the excellency of such a picture, but to be the full demonstration of the author's skill, in the most full representation of the thing resembled? Will you say, that he hath done no good, because he made not his picture sensible, and made not its pleasure his ultimate end? Those things which in particulars we call bad, are good, as they are parts of the universal frame; as many darkenings and shadowings in a picture may conduce to make it beautiful. The eye is a more excellent part of the body than a finger,

or a tooth; and yet it maketh to the perfection of the whole, that there be fingers and teeth, as well as eyes. So it doth to the perfection of the world, that there be men, and beasts, and plants, as well as angels; and poor men as well as rich, and sick men as well as sound, and pain as well as pleasure. Our narrow sight, that looketh but on a spot or parcel of God's work at once, doth judge according to the particular interest of that parcel; and so we would have no variety in the world, but every thing of that species which we think best. But God seeth all his works at once, *uno intuitu*, and therefore seeth what is best in reference to the glory of the universe, and seeth that variety is beautiful, and what each part should be, according to the office and order of its place.

And, 3. Doth not your own experience reprehend your own complaint, as guilty of contradiction? You would have all things fitted to your particular interest, or else you think God is not good enough to you; and may not every other creature say the same as justly as you? And then how would you have a horse to carry you, an ox to plough for you, a dog to hunt for you, a hare or partridge to be hunted? yea, a bit of flesh to nourish you? yea, or the fruit of trees and plants? yea, or the earth to bear you, or the air to breathe in, or the water to refresh you? for every one of these might expect to be advanced to be as high in sensual pleasure as you.

He that compareth, as aforesaid, the elements and orbs, which have no sense, with a worm that hath it, will think that sense hath blinded reason; when it is so overvalued as to be thought the most excellent thing, or a meet measure of the goodness of the Creator.

4. Most of the calamities of the rational creature which you mention, are sin, and the fruits of sin; and when man bringeth in sin, it is good that God should bring in punishment: it is an act of justice, and declareth his holiness, and warneth others. Therefore all your complaints against these penal evils, should be turned only against the sinner, and all should be turned to the praise of the righteous Governor of the world.†

5. And as for the sin itself, which hath depraved the world as foully as you describe it, it is none of the work of God at all. If you say, that he might have prevented it if he had pleased, I answer, He hath declared his detestation of it; as our Ruler he hath forbidden it. He deterreth men from it by his sorest threatenings; he allureth them from it by his riches promises of reward; he appointeth kings and magistrates, to suppress it by corporal penalties: this and much more he doth against it, and more he could do, which should prove effectual; but his wisdom saw it not meet, nor conducive to the glory of the universe, to make all moral agents of one size, any more than all natural agents, and therefore he made not man indefectible. Do you think that a rational creature with free-will, being the lord of its own acts, and a self-determining principle, to act

* Si quis omnia alia habeat, valetudinem, divitias, &c. sed malus ex confesso sit, improbus illum. Item si quis nihil habeat eorum quæ retulit, careat pecunia, clientum turba, avorum et proavorum serie, si ex confesso bonus sit, probas illum. Ergo hoc unum bonum hominis, quod qui habet, etiamsi alius destituitur, laudandus est; quod qui non habet, in omnium aliorum copia damnatur, ac rejicitur. Sen. Inter fines, si qui perfectus est, semper præcellit imperfectum. Perfectus porro est, quo admo, nullo amplius opus est. Arist. Mag. Mor. l. c. 3. et l. Rhet. c. 7. Finis est cujus gratia omnia comparantur. Majus bonum est finis, quam quod finis non est: id Met. 2. c. 2. Quod per se bonum est, suave vi et natura, id omne finis est. Nothing commoner in philosophy, than that publicæ salutis privata incolumitas

est postponenda. Therefore, self-love must not persuade us that there is nothing higher than our own good to be intended.

† Non quoniam mutabiles vires habemus, improbitatis nostræ culpa in Deum conferenda est. Nec enim in facultatibus sunt vitia, sed in habitibus. Habitus autem ex electione et voluntate sunt. Itaque nostra ipsorum electione et voluntate improbi evadimus, non natura sumus. Nemesius de Nat. Hom. c. 41. Homo est principium suarum operationum. Arist. 3. Eth. Nemo volens bonus et beatus est. Sen. Si divitias velis, rem bonam esse scias, nec omnino in te sitam. Si vero beati, id et bonum est et penes te. Opes enim fortuna ad tempus commodato dat: beatitudo autem a nostra voluntate procedit. Epictet.

without force, is not a thing which God may make and take delight in? as well as a watch-maker taketh delight to make a clock that shall go of itself, without his continued motion; and the longer he can make it go without him, and so the liker to himself, the more excellent he thinks his work. If God may make such a free agent, then is it no impeachment to his goodness, if it abuse its freedom unto sin; especially when he will overrule even that sin, so far as to bring good out of it by accident.

And, lastly, as for all the objections from sin and misery, against God's goodness, I answer you with these questions: Do you know what number the holy and glorious angels are, in comparison both of wicked men and devils; whether they may not be ten thousand to one? Do you know how many thousand fixed stars there are, besides planets? do you know whether they are all suns; and how much larger they are than the earth; and how much more glorious? Do you know whether they are all inhabited or not; when you see almost no place on earth uninhabited, not so much as water and air? Do you know whether those thousands of more glorious orbs, have not inhabitants answerable to their greatness and glory, beyond the inhabitants of this darker orb? Do you know whether sin and sorrow be not kept out there, and confined to this, and some few such obscurer receptacles? Do you know the degrees of holiness and glory which those superior inhabitants possess? And do you know that, all these things set together, the demonstration of God's goodness by the way of beneficence, is not ten thousand times beyond the demonstrations of it in the way of justice, and all the other sorrows that you complain of? Till you know all these, do not think yourselves meet, from your sensible troubles, to argue against that infinite goodness which demonstrateth itself so unquestionably to all, by all the goodness of the whole creation.^a

I may boldly, then, conclude that God is our Father, our chief Good, our chief Benefactor, and ultimate End.

And so that, *in sensu plenissimo*, there is a God: that word comprehending both the aforesaid trinity of principles in the unity of his essence, and the trinity of relations in the unity of the relation of our Creator.

CHAPTER XII.

III. OF MAN'S RELATION TO GOD, AS HE IS OUR FATHER, OR OUR CHIEF GOOD; AND OF OUR DUTY IN THAT RELATION.

SECT. I. God being to man, efficiently and finally, his chief, yea, his total Good, as is declared; it must needs follow, that man is, by immediate resultancy, related to him as his total beneficiary, and recipient of his benefits; and oweth him all that which goodness, conjunct with sovereignty and dominion, can oblige him to.

Whether all obligation, which is truly moral, to a duty, do arise from sovereignty and rule, and belong to us as subjects only in the nearest formal sense, or whether benefits simply, without any respect to government and subjection, may be said to oblige to

moral duty as such, is a question that I am not concerned to determine, as long as God is both Governor and Benefactor, and his government may give the formal, moral obligation, as his benefits provide the greatest materials of the duty: though this much I may say to it, that I cannot see but the duty of a beneficiary, as such, may be called moral, as well as the duty of a subject as such; and if it were supposed that two men were absolutely equals as to any subjection, and that one of them should, by kindness, exceedingly oblige the other, all will acknowledge ingratitude to be an unnatural thing; and why that vice may not be called properly moral in a rational, free agent, I am not yet convinced. You will say it is true; but that is because that both those men are subjects to God, whose law obligeth them both to gratitude, and therefore ingratitude is a sin only as against the law of God in nature: to which I reply, that I grant God's law of nature maketh ingratitude a sin; and I grant, that a law is properly the instrument of a governor as such; and so, as ingratitude is the violation of a law, it is only a sin against government as such. But I question whether, as love is somewhat different from wisdom and power, and as a benefactor and an attractive good hath the highest and a peculiar kind of obligation, so there be not something put by God into our nature, which, though it be not formally a law, yet is as obligatory, and as much, if not more than a law, which maketh it more than the duty of a subject to answer love and goodness with gratitude and love; so that if, *per impossibile*, you suppose that we had no other obligation to God but this of love and goodness, (or abstract this from the rest,) I question whether it be not most eminently moral, and whether the performance of it do not morally fit us for the highest benefits and felicity, and the violation of it merit not, morally, the rejections of our great Benefactor, and the withdrawing of all his favours to our undoing: but this controversy my cause is not much concerned in, as I have said, because the same God is our Sovereign also.

SECT. 2. The duty which we especially owe to God, in this highest relation, is love; which, as such, is above obedience as such.

The difference of understandings and wills requireth government and obedience, that the understanding and will of the superior may be a rule to the subjects: but love is a concord of wills; and so far as love hath caused a concord, there is no use for government by laws and penalties, and therefore the law is not made for a righteous man as such; that is, so far as love hath united his soul to virtue, and separated it from sin, he need not be constrained or restrained by any penal laws, any more than men need a law to command them to eat and drink, and preserve their lives, and forbear self-destruction. But so far as any man is unrighteous or ungodly, that is, hath a will to sin, or cross or averse to goodness, so far he needeth a penal law; which, therefore, all need while they remain imperfect.

Nature hath made love and goodness like the iron and the loadstone. The understanding doth not so ponderously incline to truth as the will doth naturally to good; for this being the perfect act of the soul, the whole inclination of nature goeth after it: therefore, love is the highest duty, or noblest act of the soul of man; the end and perfection of all the rest.^a

SECT. 3. The essential act of this love is compla-

^a Read Gassendi Phys. sect. 2. l. 1. c. 6. *sint ne celum et sidera habitabilia*? And Card. Nic. Cusanus, l. 2. de Doct. Ignor. 11. in Coroll. cited also ib. by Gassendus.

^b Seneca (Epist. 31.) saith, *Querendum est quod non fiat*

indies deterius; cui non possit obstari; quo nil melius possit optari. Quid hoc est? Animus sed hic rectus, bonus, magnus. Quid aliud voces, hunc, quem Deum in humano corpore hospitantem? Hic animus tam in equitem Romanum,

cency; or the pleasedness of the mind in a suitable good. But it hath divers effects, concomitants, and accidents, from whence it borroweth divers names.

Sect. 4. The love of benevolence, as it worketh towards the felicity of another, is the love of God to man, who needeth him; but not of man to God, who is above our benefits, and needeth nothing.

Sect. 5. Our love to God respecteth him either, 1. As our efficient; 2. Dirigent; 3. Or final Good; which hath accordingly concomitant duties.

Sect. 6. 1. Our love to God as our chief Good efficiently, containeth in it, 1. A willing, receiving love; 2. A thankful love, 3. A returning, devoted, serving love, which among men amounts to retribution.

Sect. 7. 1. An absolute, dependent beneficiary ought with full dependence on his total benefactor, to receive all his benefits with love and willingness.^b

An undervaluing of benefits, and demurring or rejecting them, is a great abuse and injury to a benefactor. Thus doth the ungodly world, against all the grace and greatest mercies of God: they know not the worth of them, and therefore despise them, and will not be entreated to accept them; but take them for intolerable injuries or troubles, as a sick stomach doth its physic and food, because they are against their fleshly appetites. An open heart to receive God's mercies with high esteem, besemeth such beneficiaries as we.

Sect. 8. 2. Thankfulness is that operation of love which the light of nature hath convinced all the world to be a duty; and scarce a man is to be found so brutish as to deny it: and our love to God should be more thankful than to all the world, because our receivings from him are much greater than from all.^c

Sect. 9. 3. Though we cannot requite God, true gratitude will devote the whole man to his service, will, and honour, and bring back his mercies to him for his use, so far as we are able.

Sect. 10. 11. Our love to our dirigent benefactor, is, 1. A fiducial love. 2. A love well pleased in his conduct. 3. A following love.

Though it belongeth to God chiefly as our sapiential Governor, to be the dirigent cause of our lives; yet he doth it also as our Benefactor, by a commixture of the effects of his relations.

Sect. 11. 1. So infinite and sure a Friend, is absolutely to be trusted, with a general confidence in the goodness of his nature, and a particular confidence in the promises or significations of his good-will.

Infinite Good cannot be willing to deceive or disappoint us: and if we absolutely trust him, it will abundantly conduce to our holiness and peace.

Sect. 12. 2. We must also love his conduct, his precepts, and his holy examples, and the very way itself in which he leadeth us.

All that is from him is good, and must be loved, both for itself and for him that it cometh from, and

for that which it leadeth to; all his instructions, helps, reproofs, and all his conducting means, should be amiable to us.

Sect. 13. 3. Love must make us cheerfully follow him in all the ways, which by precept or example he is pleased to lead us.

And so to follow him, as to love the tokens of his presence, and footsteps of his will, and all the signs of his approbation, and, with an heroic fortitude of love, to rejoice in sufferings, and venture upon dangers, and conquer difficulties for his sake.

Sect. 14. 111. Our love to God, as our final good, is, 1. A desiring love; 2. A seeking love; and, 3. A full, complacential, delighting love, which is the perfection of us and all the rest; and, accidentally, it is sometimes a mourning love.^d

Sect. 15. 1. Man being put *in via*, under the efficiency and conduct of love, to final love and goodness, hath his end to intend, and his means to use; and, therefore, love must needs work by desire.

Sect. 16. So far as a man is short of the thing desired, love will have some sense of want; and so far as we are crossed in our seekings, and frustrated in any of our hopes, it will be sorrowful.

Sect. 17. 2. Man being appointed to a course and life of means to his last end, must needs be employed in those means for the love of that end; and so the main work of this life is that of a desiring, seeking love.^e

Sect. 18. 3. The complacential, delighting love, hath three degrees; the first, in belief and hope; the second, in foretaste; and the third, in full, inflamed exercise.

Sect. 19. 1. The well-grounded hope of the foreseen vision and fruition of the infinite good, which is our end, must needs possess the considerate mind with a delight which is somewhat answerable to that hope.

Sect. 20. 2. When the soul doth not only hope for its future end, but also at present close with God, *sub ratione finis*, in the exercise of pure, complacential love, in prayer, praise, or contemplation, he hath some measure of fruition even *in via*, and a sensible foretaste of his future perfection, according to the degree of this his love.

There is a delight that cometh into the mind by the mere foresight and hope of what we shall be, and have, and do hereafter, and this cometh by the means of promise and evidence; and there is also a delight which cometh in upon the present exercise of love itself on God as present; when the soul, in the contemplation of his infinite goodness, is wrapt up in the pleasures of his love; and this is a degree of fruition of our end, before the perfect fruition of it: and, therefore, take notice, that there are these two ways of our comfort in this life. 1. *Explorativus juris*, the trial of our title. 2. *Exercitium amoris*, the feasting of the soul in the exercises of love.

quam inservum potest cadere; Quid est eques Romanus? Aut libertinus? Aut servus? Nomina ex ambitione, aut ex injuria nata, subsilire in cœlum ex angulo licet: exurge modo, et te dignum finge Deo; finges autem, non auro, non argento: non potest ex hac materia imago Dei exprimi similis. Plato saith, that man's end is, to be made like God. Laert. in Plat. Socrates said, that God was the best and most blessed; and the nearer any one came in likeness to him, so much was he the better and more blessed. Non potest temperantiam laudare, qui summum bonum ponit in voluptate. Cic.

^b Gratus sum; non ut alius mihi libentius præstet, priori irritatus exemplo; sed ut rem juvenudinisam faciam. Sen. Ep. 28.

^c Credamus itaque nihil esse gratio animo honestius. Omnes hoc urbes, omnes etiam ex barbaris regionibus gentes concla-
mabant: in tanta judiciorum diversitate, referendam bene-
merentibus gratiam, omnes uno ore affirmabant; in hoc dis-
cors turba consentiens. Senec. ib.

^d Bene meritis quin colas, nec exorari fas est, neque est excusatio difficultatis: neque sequum est tempore et dic memoriam beneficii definire. Cicero.

^e Vos, vos, appello, qui Mercurium, qui Platonem, Pythagoramque sectamini: vosque ceteros qui estis unius mentis, et per eadem vias placitorum inceditis unitate. Audetis ridere nos—Quid Plato vester nonne animo surgere suadet e terris, et circa Deum semper (quantum fieri potest) cogitatione ac mente versari? Audetis ridere nos quod animarum nostrarum provideamus salutem? Id est ipsi nobis? Quid enim sumus homines, nisi anime corporibus clause? Vos enim nonne omnes pro illarum geritis incolumitatis curas? Metus ille vos habet ne velut trabalibus clavibus affixi, corporibus hæreatis? Quid illi sibi velint secretarum artium ritus, quibus affandim nescio quas potestates, ut sint vobis placide, quibus ad sedes remaneant patrias obstacula impediunt? Arnob. adv. Gentes, lib. 2. p. 14.

Sect. 21. 3. The final, perfect act of love will not be *in via*, but when we have fully reached our end.

Sect. 22. This final act is not well expressed by the common word fruition, because it intimateth that we are the *finis cui* ourselves, and that our own enjoyment of God as our felicity, is the *finis ultimatissimus*, which is not true.

Sect. 23. Yet is fruition one ingredient into our end, because our final act of love is for ourselves, though not principally.

Sect. 24. All the difficulties, *de fine hominis*, are best resolved by understanding that it is *finis amantis*, and what that is. The nature of love is an inclination or desire of union or adhesion; and therefore it includeth the felicity of the lover, together with the attractive excellency of the object, and is both *gratia amantis* and *amati simul*. But when the lover is infinitely above the object, the lover is the chief end, for his own complacency, though the object have the benefit: and when the object is infinitely better than the lover, the object must be incomparably the chief end, *cujus gratia potissimum*, though the lover, withal, intend his felicity in fruition.^f

Sect. 25. But if any soul be so far above self-love as to be drawn up in the fervours of holy love, in the mere contemplation of the infinite object, not thinking of its own felicity herein, its felicity will be never the less for not intending or remembering it.

Sect. 26. Therefore the final act of love hath no fitter name than love itself, or delightful adhesion to God, the infinite Good, with full complacency in him.*

Sect. 27. Though God must be loved as our Benefactor, yet the perfect goodness of his will and nature, as standing above all our interest or benefits, must be the principal reason and object of our love.

That we must love God more for himself than for ourselves, is thus proved: 1. That which is most amiable must be most loved; but God is most amiable and not we ourselves, therefore he must be loved above ourselves, and consequently, not for ourselves, but ourselves for him. The minor is soon proved. That which is most good is most amiable; but God is most good, *ergo*. And goodness is the proper object of love.^g

2. That which the soul most loveth, it doth most devote itself to, and adhere to, and rest in: but we must more devote ourselves to God, and adhere to him, and rest in him, than ourselves; *ergo*, we must love him more.

3. That which is an absolute good, and is dependent on nothing, must be absolutely loved for itself: but such is God; *ergo*. And that which is only a derivative, limited, dependent good, and not made ultimately for itself, is not to be loved ultimately for itself: but such is man; *ergo*.

4. That which is the fountain of all goodness and love must be the end of all: but that is God, and not man; *ergo*.

^f Magistri, Diis et parentibus, non potest reddi æquivalens. Aristot. 9. Ethic. Laus et gratiarum actio debetur danti, non accipienti. Aristot. 4. Ethic.

^g Qui sancti? qui religionem colentes? nisi qui meritam Diis immortalibus gratiam, justis honoribus, memori mente persolvunt? Cicero, pro Plancio.

^h If we must love good men for themselves, much more God. Ubi beneficium si nemo alterius causa benigne facit. Ubi gratius, si non eum ipsum cui reserunt gratiam, ipsi cernunt grati? Ubi illa sancta amicitia, si non ipse amicus per se amatur, toto pectore? qui etiam deserendus et abijciendus est, desperatis emolumentis et fructibus? quo quid potest dici inhumanus? Cicero de Leg. l. p. 227.

ⁱ Justitia nihil expetit præmii, nihil pretii: per se igitur expeditur: eademque omnium virtutum causa atque sententia est: atque etiam si emolumentis, non suapte natura virtus expetit, una erit virtus, quæ malitia rectissime dicitur. Ut enim quisque ad suum commodum refert maxime quæcumque

5. To love God ultimately for ourselves is to deify ourselves, and take down God into the order of a means, that is, of a creature.

Sect. 28. Having proved that God must be loved above ourselves, we need no other proof that not we, but God, must be our ultimate end.¹

Sect. 29. Because we here see not God intuitively, but in his works, we are bound, with fervent desire, to study and contemplate them, and therein to feast our love in beholding and tasting of his love and goodness.

As a man will look on the pictures, the letters, the works of his absent friend, and retain the image of him in his heart; so God, though not absent, yet unseen, expresseth himself to us in all his works, that we may studiously there behold, admire, and love him.

Sect. 30. Therefore God's works must be more valued and studied, as they are the glass representing the image of his perfections, and showing us his chief, essential amiableness, than as they are beneficial and useful to us, and so show us only his benignity to us.

Sect. 31. Yet must self-love, and sense itself, and the sensible sweetness and experience of mercies, be improved to our easier taste of God's essential goodness, and we must rise up from the lower to the higher objects; and this is our chief use of sensible benefits.^k

Doubtless, as the soul, while it dwelleth with flesh, doth receive its objects by the mediation of sense, so God hath purposely put such variety of sensible delicacies into the creatures, that by every sight, and smell, and hearing, and touch, and taste, our souls might receive a report of the sweetness of God, whose goodness all proceed from: and therefore this is the life which we should labour in continually, to see God's goodness in every lovely sight, and to taste God's goodness in every pleasant taste, and to smell it in every pleasant odour, and to hear it in every lovely word or sound; that the motion may pass on clearly without stop, from the senses to the mind and will, and we may never be so blockish as to gaze on the glass, and not see the image in it; or to gaze on the image, and never consider whose it is; or to read the book of the creation, and mark nothing but the words and letters, and never mind the sense and meaning. A philosopher, and yet an atheist, or ungodly, is a monster; one that most readeth the book of nature, and least understandeth or feel-eth the meaning of it.

Sect. 32. Therefore, God daily reneweth his mercies to us, that the variety and freshness of them, producing renewed delight, may renew our lively feelings of his love and goodness, and so may carry us on in love, without cessations and declinings.

Our natures are so apt to lose the sense of a good that is grown ordinary and common, that God, by our renewed necessities, and the renewed supplies, and variety of mercies, doth cure this defect.

agit, ita minime est vir bonus: ut qui virtutem præmio metiuntur, nullam virtutem nisi malitiam putant. Cicero de Leg. l. p. 227.

^k Nihil homini metuendum, nisi ne felicitatem excludat. Solon in Laert. p. 31. Summo bono constituto in philosophia, constituta sunt omnia: nam cæteris in rebus sive prætermisum, sive ignoratum est quippiam, non plus incommodi, quam quanti quæque earum rerum est, in quibus neglectum est aliquid. Summum autem bonum si ignoretur, vivendi rationem ignorari necesse est: ex quo tantus error consequitur, ut quem in portum se recipiant, scire non possunt. Cognitis autem rerum finibus (bonorum et malorum) inventa vitæ via est conformatioque omnium officiorum. Piso in Cicer. de Finib. lib. 5. pag. 182. Decrescere summum bonum non potest. Mortalia eminent, cadunt, deteruntur, crescunt, exhauriuntur, implentur. Divinorum una natura est. Senec. Epist. 66. p. 644, 655.

Sect. 33. Those, therefore, that turn God's mercies to the gratifying of their sensitive appetites and lusts, and forget him, and offend him the more, and love him the less, do forfeit his mercies by their inhuman and irrational ingratitude and abuse. Which is the sin of all proud, covetous, voluptuous persons; the ambitious, fornicators, gluttons, drunkards, and lovers of sports, recreations, idleness, or any pleasure, as it turneth them from God.

Sect. 34. Above all other sin, we should most take heed of the inordinate love of any creature, for itself, or for our carnal self alone, because it is most contrary to our love to God, which is our highest work and duty.¹

Sect. 35. Those mercies of God are most to be valued, desired, and sought, which show us most of God himself, or most help up our love to him.

Sect. 36. We must love both our natural selves and neighbours, the bad as well as the good, with a love of benevolence, desiring our own good and theirs: but, at the same time, we must hate ourselves and them, so far as wicked, with the hatred of displacency; and, with the love of complacency, must only so far love ourselves or others, as the image of divine goodness is in us or them.

I speak not of the mere natural passion of the parent to the child, which is common to man and beast; nor of the exercises of love in outward acts, for those may be directed by God's commands to go more to one, as a wicked child, that hath less true amiableness in him. But all holy love must be suited to the measures of the truest object.

Sect. 37. The love of God should be with all our soul, and with all our might; not limited, suppressed, or neglected, but be the most serious, predominant action of our souls.²

How easy a matter is it to prove holiness to be naturally man's greatest duty, when love to God, which is the sum of it, is so easily proved to be so. All the reason in the world that is not corrupted, but is reason indeed, must confess, without any tergiversation, that it is the greatest and most unquestionable duty of man to love God above all, yea, with all our heart, and soul, and might: and he that doth so shall never be numbered by him with the ungodly, for those are inconsistent.

Sect. 38. The exercises of love to God in complacency, desire, seeking, &c. should be the chief employment of our thoughts.³

For the thoughts are the exercise of a commanded faculty, which must be under the power of our will, and the ultimate end, and the exercises of love to it, should daily govern them; and what a man loveth most, usually he will think of with his most practical, powerful thoughts, if not with the most frequent.

Sect. 39. The love of God should employ our tongues in the proclaiming of his praise and benefits, and expressing our own admiration and affection, to kindle the like in the souls of others.⁴

For the same God who is so amiable, hath given us our speech with the rest of his benefits, and given it us purposely to declare his praise. Reason telleth

us, that we have no higher, worthier, or better employment for our tongues; and that we should use them to the best. The tongues of men are adorned with language for charitable and pious communication, that they may be fit to affect the hearts of others, and to kindle in them that sacred fire which is kindled in themselves; therefore that tongue which is silent to its Maker's praise, and declareth not the goodness, and wisdom, and power of the Lord, and doth not divulge the notice of his benefits, condemneth itself, and the heart that should employ it, as neglecting the greatest duty it was made for.

Sect. 40. The lives of God's beneficiaries should be employed to his praise and pleasure, and should be the streaming effects of inward love; and all his mercies should be improved to his service, from a thankful heart.

All this hath the fullest testimony of reason, according to the rules of proportion and common right. To whom should we live, but to him from whom and by whom we live? What but our ultimate end should be principally intended, and sought, through our whole lives? A creature that hath all from God, should in love and gratitude bring back all to him; and thus we make it more our own.

Sect. 41. This life of love should be the chiefest delight and pleasure of our souls, which all other pleasure should subserve, and all be abhorred which contradiceth it.⁵

Nothing is easier confessed by all, than the desirableness of delight and pleasure; and the most excellent object, which must be most beloved, must be our chief delight: for love itself is a delighting act, unless some stop do turn it aside into fears and sorrows. Nothing can itself be so delectable as God, the chiefest Good; and no employment so delectable as loving him.

This, therefore, should be our work and our recreation, our labour and our pleasure, our food and feast. Other delights are lawful and good, so far as they further these delights of holy love, by carrying up our hearts to the original and end of all our mercies and delights. But nothing is so injurious to God and us as that which corrupteth our minds with sensuality, and becometh our pleasure instead of God.

Sect. 42. The sense of the present imperfection of our love, should make us long to know God more, and to love him and delight in him, and praise him in perfection to the utmost extent of our capacities.⁶

If it be so good to love God, then must the highest degree of it be best: and reason teacheth us, when we feel how weak our knowledge and love is, to long for more; yea, for perfection.

Sect. 43. Thus hath reason showed us the end and highest felicity of man, in his highest duty: to know God, to love him and delight in him, in the fullest perfection, and to be loved by him, and be fully pleasing to him, as herein bearing his image, is the felicity and ultimate end of man. Love is man's final act, excited by the fullest knowledge; and God, so beheld and enjoyed in his love to us, is the final object. And here the soul must seek its rest.⁷

¹ *Cœlestia semper spectato; illa humana contemnito. Cic. Somn. Scipi.*

² *Templum mentis amo, non marmoris, aurea in illo. Fundamenta: manet fides structura nivali, confurgit pietate nitens, tegit ardua culmen. Justitia intenus spargit sola pietas rubenti Flore, pudicitia pudor alius, et atria servat. Hæc domus apta mihi est, hæc me pulcherrima sedes. Accipit, æterno coelestique hospite digna. Prudent. Quicquid boni egeris in Deos refer. Bias in Laert.*

³ *When the oracle of Delphos adjudged the Tripes to the wisest, it was sent to Thales, and from him to another, till it came to Solon, who sent it to the oracle, saying, None is wiser than God. Laert. in Thalete. So should we all send back to God the glory and praise of all good which is ascribed to us.*

⁴ *Numen divinum omni modo, omni tempore ipse cole, juxta leges patrias, et ut ali colant eique. Dion. l. 52.*

⁵ *Aristippus rogatus aliquando, quid haberet exitium philosophi? Si omnes inquit, leges intereant, æquabiliter vivimus. Laert. Oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore. Hor.*

⁶ *Read Seneca, (de vita beata,) fully proving, against the Epicureans, that wealth, honour, and pleasure are not man's felicity, because they make him not better, or best.*

⁷ *Sursum animum vocant initia sua; erit autem illic, etiam antequam hac custodia exolvatur, si vitia sua deseruit, purusque ac lenis in cogitationes divinas emicuit. Senec. Ep. 80. Tutum iter est, jucundum ad, ad quod natura te instruit. Dedit tibi illa que si non deserueris, par Deo consurgens. Parem autem Deo te pecunia non facit, &c. Senec. Ep. 13.*

Object. But, *quæ supra nos nihil ad nos.* God, indeed, is near to angels; but he hath made them our benefactors, and they have committed it to inferior causes. There must be suitableness as well as excellency to win love: we find no suitableness between our hearts and God. And, therefore, we believe not that we were made for any such employment. And we see that the far greatest part of mankind are as averse to this life of holiness as ourselves; and, therefore, we cannot think but that it is quite above the nature of man, and not the work and end which he was made for.

Ans. 1. Whether God have made angels our rulers or benefactors, or what love or honour we owe them as his instruments, is nothing to our present business; for if it be granted that he thus useth them, it is most certain that he is nevertheless himself our benefactor, and nevertheless near us. What nearness to us they have, we are much uncertain; but that he himself is our total benefactor, and always with us, as near to us as we are to ourselves, is past all question, and proved before.

2. There neither is, nor can be, any object so suitable for our love as God; he hath all goodness in him, and all in the creature is derived from him, and dependeth on him; and he hath given us all that ever we ourselves received, and must give us all that ever we shall receive hereafter. He is all-sufficient for the supply of all our wants, and granting all our just desires, and making us perfect. All that he doth for us, he doth in love, as an intellectual free agent; and he is still present with us, upholding us, and giving us the very love which he demandeth; and he created us for himself, to be his own, and gave us these faculties to know and love him. And can any then be a more suitable object of our love?

3. Do you not find that your understandings have a suitableness or inclination to truth and knowledge, and would you not know the best and greatest things? and know the cause of all the wonderful effects which you see? And what is this but to know God? And do you not find that your wills have a suitableness to good as such in the general? and to your own felicity? And do you not know that it should not be unnatural to any man to love that best, which is best, and especially which is best for him; and to love him best who is his greatest benefactor, and most worthy of his love in all respects? And can you doubt whether God be most worthy of your love? All this is plain and sure. And will men's averseness to the love of God then disprove it? It is natural for man to desire knowledge, as that which perfecteth his understanding; and yet boys are averse to learn their books, because they are slothful, and are diverted by the love of play. What if your servants be averse and slothful to your service; doth it follow that it is not their duty, or that you hired them not for it? What if your wife and children be averse to love you, is it therefore none of their duty so to do? Rebels are averse to obey their governors, and yet it is their duty to obey them. If your child, or any one that is most beholden to you, should be averse to love and gratitude to you, as thousands

are to their parents and benefactors, will it follow that nature obliged them not to it?

4. What can you think is suitable to your love, if God be not? is it lust, or play, or meat, and drink, and ease? A swine hath a nature as suitable to these as you. Is it only to deal ingenuously and honourably in providing for the flesh, and maintaining the fuel of these sensualities, by buildings, trading, manufactures, ornaments, and arts? All this is but to have a reason to serve your sense, and so the swinish part still shall be the chief; for that which is the chief and ruling object with you doth show which is the chief and regnant faculty. If sensual objects be the chief, then sense is the chief faculty with you. And if you had the greatest wit in the world, and used it only to serve your guts, and throats, and lusts, in a more effectual and ingenious way than any other men could do, this were but to be an ingenious beast, or to have an intellect bound in service to your bellies. And can you think that things so little satisfying, and so quickly perishing, are more suitable objects for your love than God?

5. What say you to all them that are otherwise minded, and that take the love of God for their work and happiness? They find a suitableness in God to their highest esteem and love; and are they not as fit judges for the affirmative as you for the negative?

Object. They do but force themselves to some acts of fancy.

Ans. You see that they are such acts as are the more serious and prevalent in their lives, and can make them lay by other pleasures, and spend their days in seeking God, and lay down their lives in the exercise and hopes of love. And that it is you that follow fancy, and they that follow solid reason, is evident in the reason of your several ways. That world which you set above God, is at last called vanity by all that try it: reason will not finally justify your choice; but I have here showed you undeniable reason for their choice and love; and therefore it is they that know what they do, and obey the law of nature, which you obliterate and contradict.

Object. But we see the creature, but God we see not, and we find it not natural to us to love that which we do not see.

Ans. Is not reason a nobler faculty than sight? If it be, why should it not more rule you and dispose of you? Shall no subjects honour and obey their king but those that see him? You can love your money, and land, and friends when they are out of sight.

Object. But these are things visible in their nature.

Ans. They are so much the more vile, and less amiable.^a Your own souls are invisible, will you not therefore love them? You never saw the life, or form, of any plant or living wight: you see the beauty of your roses, and many other flowers, but you see not the life and form within, which causeth all that beauty and variety, which yet must be more excellent than the effect. Can you doubt whether all things which appear here to your sight have an invisible cause and Maker? Or can you think him less amiable, because he is invisible, that is, more excellent?

^a Quod si poena, si metus supplicii, non ipsa turpitudine, deterret ab injuriosa, facinorosaque vita, nemo est injustus: at incauti potius habendi sunt improbi: callidi, non boni sunt, qui utilitate tantum, non ipso honesto, ut boni viri sint moventur. Cicer. de Leg. l. i. p. 389. Complent bona corporis beatissimum vitam; sed ita ut sine illis possit beata vita existere. Ita enim parvæ et exigue sunt istæ accessiones bonorum, ut sicut stellæ in radio solis, sic istæ in virtutum splendore, ne cernantur quidem. Atque hæc ut vere dicitur parva esse ad beate vivendum momenta ista corporis commodorum, sic nimis violentum est, nulla esse dicere. Qui enim

sic disputant, oblitri mihi videntur quæ ipsi egerint principia nature. Tribuendum est his aliquid, dummodo quantum tribuendum sit intelligas. Piso in Cicerone de Finib. l. 5. p. 202.

^b Unum vero nomen Aristoteles declaravit, esse usum virtutis in vita sancta et integra. Heysch. Illustr. in Aristot.

^c Piso ubi supra, in Cic. saith, that all the difference in this between the Stoics and the Peripatetics and Academics is but this, Whether corporal things shall be called no good at all, or only such little goods, as to be next to none, pag. 202, 203. To the shame of those nominal christians, who know no greater good than they.

6. In a word, it is most evident, that all this averseness of men's hearts to the love of God is their sin and pravity; and the unsuitableness of their nature is, because they are vitiated with sensuality, and deceived by sensible things; a disease to be cured, and not defended. Their sin will not prove the contrary no duty.

7. And yet, while we are in flesh, though God be not visible to us, his works are, and is in them (the frame of the world) that he hath revealed and exposed himself to our love; it is in this visible glass that we must see his image, and in that image must love him: and if we will love any goodness, we must love his; for all is his, and as his should be loved by us.

CHAPTER XIII.

EXPERIMENTS OF THE DIFFICULTY OF ALL THIS DUTY, AND WHAT IT WILL COST A MAN THAT WILL LIVE THIS HOLY LIFE.

HITHERTO I have proved that there is a God, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Creator, and consequently the Owner, the Ruler, and the Father, or chief Good of man; and that man, as his creature, is absolutely his own, and therefore should resign himself, as his own, to his disposal; and that he is absolutely his subject, and, therefore, should most exactly and diligently obey him; and I have showed particularly wherein: also, that man is his total beneficiary, and made to love him, as his chief Good and End; and therefore should totally devote himself to him, in gratitude and love, and desire him, seek him, and delight in him above all the world, and live in his praises and continual service.^a All this is fully proved to be man's duty. And now let us see on what terms he standeth in the world for the performance of it.

Sect. 1. There is in the present disposition of man a great averseness to such a life of resignation, obedience, and love to God, as is before described, even when he cannot deny it to be his duty, and to be the best, most honourable, and most felicitating life.

Too sad experience confirmeth this. The bad are so averse, that they will not be persuaded to it; the godly have such a mixture of averseness, as findeth the matter of continual conflict. It is this averseness which serveth instead of arguments against it, or which is a *pondus* to the very judgment, and maketh it so hard to believe any arguments which go against so strong a contrary inclination.

Sect. 2. We find the senses of men are grown masterly and inordinate, and are too eagerly set upon their objects, and hold down the mind from rising higher, and cause it to adhere to things terrene.

^a Si quis est hoc robore animi atque hac indole virtutis, ac continentia, ut respiciat omnes voluptates, omnesque vitæ suæ cursum labore corporis, atque in animi contentione conficiat, quem non quies, non remissio, non æquilibrium studii, non ludi, non convivia delectant, nihil in vita expetendum putet, nisi quod est cum laude et honore conjunctum; hunc, mea sententia, divinis quibusdam bonis instructum atque ornatum puto. Cic. pro. Cæl. Male de me loquuntur, sed mali: moveret, si de me Marc. Cato, si Lælius sapiens, si duo Scipiones ista loquerentur. Nunc malis displicere, laudare est. Sen. Videturne summa inprobitate usus non sine summa esse ratione. Nec scena solum referta est his sceleribus, sed multo vita communis pone majoribus. Sentit domus unius cujusque, sentit forum, sentit curia, campus

So that man's life now is like that of the brutes; it is things of the same nature that he valueth and adhereth to, and most men live to no higher ends but to enjoy their sensual pleasure while they may.

Sect. 3. We find that reason in most men is so debilitated, that it cannot potently reduce itself into action, nor see that practically which speculatively it confesseth, nor clearly and powerfully observe those perfections of God in his works, nor those duties of man, which we are convinced to be true; but, by inconsiderateness and dull apprehensions, is almost as no reason to them, and falleth down before their sensuality.

Sect. 4. Hereupon men grow as strangers unto God, and have no thoughts of him but dark, and dull, and ineffectual.

Sect. 5. The world is full of allurements to the flesh, and those mercies which should raise the mind to God, are made the food of this sensuality, and the greatest means to keep it from him.

Sense is irrational, and fasteneth on its object, and when reason faileth in its office, there we are left like dogs gnawing upon a carrion, and in greediness fighting for it with each other, when we have separated the creature from God in our minds, and so deprived it of its life and beauty, which fitted it for another use. And when every place and state of life hath such baits as these, which hourly are alluring a mind so weakly fortified against them, no wonder if they do prevail.

Sect. 6. Education, custom, and ill example confirm these vicious habits with the most, and much increase them.^b

Sect. 7. The best have some of this inordinate sensuality and weakness of reason, and are imperfect in virtue, and are tempted by the world, as well as others.

Sect. 8. Therefore no man can live to God according to his certain duty, who will not deny the desires of his flesh, and bring it into subjection, and live in vigilancy and daily conflict against its lusts.

Object. But the appetite of meat, and drink, and sleep, and ease, and venery, and sport, and pleasure, and gain, and honour is natural to us, and that which is natural is no vice, nor to be denied or destroyed.

Ans. It is natural to have the appetite, but it is the disease of nature that this appetite is inordinate, and no otherwise natural than the leprosy is to those to whom it is propagated by their parents; but is it natural to you to have lust and appetite, and is it not natural to you to have reason to moderate and rule them? If not, it is natural to you to be brutes, and not natural to you to be men. What is more natural to man than to be rational? Is it not his essential form? And whether is reason or appetite, think you, naturally made to be the predominant faculty? Should the horse rule the rider, or the rider the horse? The soul and body are much like the rider and the horse; bethink you which should naturally rule.

Sect. 9. The inordinacy of the fleshly appetite and socii, provincia, ut quemadmodum ratione recte fiat, sic ratione peccetur: alterum et a paucis et raro alterum et sæpe et a pluribus: ut salius fuerit nullum omnino nobis a diis datum esse rationem, quam tanta cum pernicie datam. Itæ Cotta contra Deos in Cic. de Natur. Deor. 3. p. 111.

^b Vir bonus nec cito ferri, nec intelligi potest: nam ille alter fortasse Phœnix anno quingentesimo nascitur. Nec est mirum, ex intervallo magna generat: mediocritia et in turbam nascensia sæpe fortuna producit: sed qui scitiam quid esset vir bonus, nondum se esse credere, fortasse etiam ferri non posse desperaret. Sen. Ep. 42. Diogenes said, he found good children at Lacædæmon, but good men no where in all Greece.

fantasy, maketh it a continual pain to the flesh to be restrained and denied.^c

As it is to a headstrong, wilful horse to be governed, the more inordinate the appetite is, the more it is pained by denial and restraint.

Sect. 10. The far greater part of the world do live an ungodly, sensual life, and the interest of the flesh is predominant in them.

Sad experience puts this quite out of controversy.

Sect. 11. Usually the more riches and fulness of all provisions for the flesh men possess, the more sensual and vicious they are.

It is not always so; but that it is usually so, we need no proof but the knowledge of the world; nor need we take it from Christ only as a point of faith, that it is hard for a rich man to enter into heaven; and reason telleth us, that when the love of the world above God is the mortal sin, those are most in danger of it, to whom the world appeareth most lovely; and they that have most temptations are in the greatest danger to miscarry.

Sect. 12. The rich are commonly the rulers of the world, who have the liberties, estates, and lives of others much in their power.

I never yet knew or heard of that place where the poor long ruled.

Sect. 13. Commonly, the more averse men are to godliness, and the more prone to sensuality, the less can they endure those that would persuade them to godliness from their sensual lives, or that give them the example of a holy, self-denying life.

For as it seemeth intolerable to them to leave their sensuality, and to betake themselves to a contrary life, which they are so averse to, so they take him as an enemy to them, that would draw them to it, and are furious against him, as a hungry dog against him that would take away his carrion. Experience puts this past all doubt (of which more anon).

Sect. 14. Hence it cometh to pass, that in all parts of the world, the fore-described life of godliness is the matter of the common hatred, scorn, and cruel persecution of the sensual and ungodly.^d

The more exactly any man shall set himself to obey God, the more he crosses the lusts and carnal interests of the wicked, and the more he commonly suffereth in the world. So full of malice and prejudice is the world against such faithful subjects of God, that they slander them, and make them seem the most odious sort of men. And so unreasonable are they, and unjust, that the fullest evidence for their justification doth but seem to aggravate their faults, and nothing is so great a crime as their highest virtues. Or if their justification be undeniable, they rage the more, because they are hindered from making them suffer as deeply in their names as in their bodies. These things are no more questionable than the wars of Alexander or Cæsar, the world having longer proof, and fuller evidence, of them.

Sect. 15. And, ordinarily, God himself so ordereth

^c *Rari quippe boni; numero vix sunt totidem quot Thebarum portæ, vel divitis ostia Nilii.* Juven. *Quæ ego scio, populus non probat.* Quæ probat populus, ego nescio. Sen. Ep. 29. *Imperitia in omnibus majori ex parte dominatur, et multitudo verborum.* Cleobulus in Laert. Offendit te superbus contemptu, dives contumelia, petulans injuria, lividus malignitate, pugna contentione, ventosus et mendax vanitate? Non feres a suspensio timeri, a pertinace vinci, a delicato fastidiri. Sen. de Ira, l. 3. c. 8. *Prestat cum paucis bonis adversus malos omnes, quam cum multis malis adversus paucos pugnare.* Antisthenes in Laert. l. 6. c. 1.

^d Seneca Epist. 87. scribit, *Tam necessarium fuisse Romano populo nasci Catonem quam Scipionem: alter enim cum hostibus nostris, alter cum moribus bellum gessit.* And if a Cato was at war with the manners of the world,

it, that his faithfulest subjects shall be the deepest sufferers in this life.

Sect. 16. Therefore, self-denial, mortification, contempt of the world, and patience under manifold sufferings from God and man, are necessary to all who will be faithful to God, in the unquestionable duties before described.

It is tried friendship and obedience which is most valuable; and unwholesome pleasures, though preferred by the foolish patient, are forbidden by our wise physician, that they hinder not our health, and greater pleasures.

Sect. 17. Therefore, if worldly, fleshly pleasures were our end and chief good, the best men would have the smallest measure of them.

Object. But you restrain man further than God restraineth him, and bind him to more than God bindeth him to, and make superstition to seem his duty, and then raise these consequences from such premises.

Answ. What I mean by sin and duty I have so fully opened before, and proved to be such by the light of reason, that this objection hath no place. Even the sober heathens, the Greek philosophers, and Roman worthies, found and confessed all this to be true. If there be any thing in the life before described, which all sound reason doth not justify and command, let him that is able manifest so much; if not, it is no superstition^e to live as a man that is governed by God, and led by reason, and to do that which all our faculties were made for. And for austerities, I have pleaded for none which is not become needful to our own preservation and felicity; as a patient will endure a strict diet, and exercise, and blood-letting, and bitter physic, for his health. It is not any affected, unprofitable austerities that I plead for, but those which are for our good, and fit us for our duty, and keep the flesh from rebelling against reason, and keep man from living like a beast; even less than many of the philosophers plead for; and he that useth but this much which is needful, will find it both opposed, as unsufferable by the world, and murmured against by his suffering and displeased flesh; and that the soul cannot do its duty, but at a considerable cost and trouble to the body. Though there may be an evil masked and cunningly moderated, which men call goodness, which may be had at a cheaper rate. But saith Seneca truly, *Non est bonitas, pessimi esse meliorem.*

CHAPTER XIV.

THAT THERE IS A LIFE OF RETRIBUTION AFTER THIS.

To know whether there be a life after this for men to receive rewards or punishments in, is a matter of much more will a true saint, that is more fully acquainted with sacred verity.

^e *Qui totos dies precabantur et immolabant, ut sui liberi sibi superstites essent, superstitiosi sunt appellati; quod nomen patuit postea latius: qui autem omnia quæ ad cultum Deorum pertinerent, diligenter pertractarent, et tanquam relegerent; sunt dicti religiosi ex relegendo, ut elegantes ex eligendo, a diligendo diligentes, ex intelligendo intelligentes: superstitiosi et religiosi, alterum vitii nomen, alterum laudis.* Cicero de Nat. Deor. lib. 2. p. 73, 74. *Ardua res hæc est opibus non tradere mores.* Martialis. Pittaci dictum est, *Perdificile est esse bonum.* Branson. All Cicero's books de *Finit.* show the worthlessness of pleasure, in comparison of virtue.

the greatest importance to mankind to be fully resolved in; upon which depends our comforts and our religion, and without which we know not what to expect, to hope for, or to fear, nor what to intend and seek after through our lives, nor how to order our hearts or actions.^a

This, therefore, I shall inquire into by the help of reason and natural evidence, as one that would not be deceived, or deceive, in so great a matter; and I shall pass by those arguments which are commonly fetched from the soul's immateriality, and independence upon matter, and other such like, which are commonly to be found in physics and metaphysics, as being not such as my present method leadeth me to, and shall make use of such as are the necessary consensaries of the certain truths already proved.

Object. But whatever rationalities may be drawn from the divine attributes, to prove a future state, yet, it depending wholly on the divine will, and the divine will being absolutely free, we can have no rational inducements to bring us to any sufficient knowledge of it, but by a clear revelation of the divine will.

Answ. Is the law of nature no clear revelation of God's will; or is it a law without any rewards or penalties? It depended on God's will whether man should be his subject or no, obliged to obey him; but doth it follow, therefore, that it cannot be proved? By making him a rational free agent, and sociable, placed among occasions of good and evil, God did reveal that it was his will that man should be his subject, and obey him. One action of God doth oft reveal his will concerning another. Those attributes of God which signify his relation to us do reveal much of his will concerning what he will do with us in those relations: and though his will be free, his perfections consist not with falsehood and mutability. If, in freedom, you include indeterminateness, then, when we prove the determination of it *ad unum*, you will plead no longer that it is free; any more than it is yet free whether he will make the world.

Sec. 1. I. He that is the most righteous Governor of the world, making a just difference, by rewards and punishments, between the obedient and the wicked, which yet he maketh not in this life, will certainly make it after this life: but God is the most righteous Governor of the world, making a just difference, by rewards and punishments, between the obedient and the wicked, which yet he maketh not in this life; therefore he will make it after this life.^b

That God is the Governor of the world, in a proper sense, by laws and moral government, is proved; and that he is righteous, is contained in the perfection of his nature: to deny either of these, is to deny him to be God. That his laws of nature have not only precepts of duty, but sanctions of reward and punishment, is also proved; and further may be, thus: 1. If there be no rewards or punishments, there is no judgment or execution; but there is judg-

ment and execution; for they are parts of government; *ergo*. 2. Without rewards and punishments, precepts would be vain to such as us, and uneffectual as to their ends; but God hath not made his laws in vain; *ergo*.

Object. Governors use not to give men rewards for their obedience: subjects must obey without reward.

Answ. It is not the name, but the thing that we inquire of. Call it a benefit, if you had rather: all government is upheld by rewards and punishment. Reward is either that which is common to all obedient subjects, or such as is specially proper to some. All subjects that are faithful have title to protection, and approbation, and justification against all false accusations, and to their share in that peace and felicity of the commonwealth which is the end of the government; and some commonwealths having far greater felicities than others, accordingly the subjects of them have their right and part: and this is the common reward or benefit of obedience and fidelity. Besides which, some great exploits are usually rewarded with some special premium. In human kingdoms, as such, the end is no higher than the beginning: temporal governors give but temporal rewards. The felicities of the kingdom, which are the ends of government, as they are from man, are but temporal; and our share in them is all our reward from man: but the original and end of the kingdom of God are higher, and of further prospect: the benefits of fidelity are greater, as shall be further proved.

But let it be noted, that this objection saith nothing against a life of punishment. Governors never leave their precepts without this sanction; and he that believeth future punishment will easily believe a future reward.

Let it also be noted, that paternal government hath, evermore, rewards in the strictest sense; that is, a special favour and kindness showed to the child that is specially obedient: and so the rest according to their measures. But the kingdom of God is a paternal kingdom, as is proved. That God will make, in his retributions, a just difference between the good and bad, is proved from his justice in government. If his laws make no difference, then men are left at liberty to keep or break them; nor can it rationally be expected that they should be kept; nor could he be said so much as to love, or approve, or justify the obedient more than the rebellious; but so unholy a nature, and so indifferent between sin and duty, and so unwise and unjust in governing, is not to be called God: either he justly differenceth, or he doth not govern.^c

That God maketh not a sufficient, differinging retribution in this life is the complaint of some, and the confession of almost all the world: the bad are commonly the greatest, and the lords and oppressors of the just. The Turks, the Tartarians, the Muscovites, the Persians, the Mogul, and more such brutish monarchs, who use the people as the slaves of

^a Senec. Consol. ad Marciam: Cum tempus adveniret quo se mundus renovaturus,—omni flagrante materia uno igne, quicquid nunc ex disposito lucet, ardebit.—Nos quoque faciles animas, et æterna sortite, cum Deo visum erit, iterum ista moliri.—Felicem filium tuum Marcia, qui ista (mortuus) jam novit.

Due sunt viæ, duplicesque cursus animorum e corpore exeuntium: nam qui se vitis humanis contaminarunt, et libidinis se tradiderunt; iis devium quoddam iter est, seculum a consilio Deorum. Qui autem se integros castosque servarunt, quibusque fuit minima cum corporibus contagio, suntque in corporibus humanis vitam imitati Deorum; iis ad illos a quibus sunt profecti, facile patet reditus. Socrates in Cicer. Tuscul. 1.

^b Qui recte et honeste curriculum vivendi a natura datum confecerit, ad astra facile revertetur. Non qui aut immoderate, aut intemperanter vixerit. Cic. de Univ. Improb-

bene esse non potest. Cic. Par. Impii apud inferos penas lunt. Cic. 1. de Legib. Impiis apud inferos sunt penas præparatæ. Cic. 1. de invent. Sic habeto, te non esse mortalem, sed corpus hoc. Cic. Som. Scip. Cicero saith, that their worshipping of Hercules, and other heroes, doth imply, that animi omnium sunt immortales, sed bonorum divini. Cic. 2. de Leg. Bonorum mentes mihi divina atque æternæ videntur, et ex hominum vita ad Deorum religionem sanctimoniamque migrare. Idem. Deorum providentia mundus administratur, iidemque consulunt rebus humanis, neque solum universis, verum etiam singulis. Cic. 1. de Divinat.

^c Persuasum hoc sit a principio hominibus, Dominos esse omnium rerum ac moderatores Deos; eaque quæ gerantur, eorum geri ditione atque numine. Et qualis quisque sit, quid agat, quid in se admittat, qua mente, qua pietate colat religionem, intueri, priusquam et impiorum habere rationem. Cic. de Leg. 2.

their pride and lust, do take up the far greatest part of the earth. Few places are so good, where goodness exposeth not men to sufferings from the rabble of the vulgar, if not from the governors. Slanders and abuses are the common lot of those that will differ from the carnal, wild, rebellious rout. And poverty, pain, sickness, and death, do come alike to all. The sensual, that have wit enough so far to bridle their lusts as to preserve their health, do usually live longer than more obedient men: and they deny themselves none of those fleshly pleasures, which the obedient do continually abstain from.

Object. But do you not, ordinarily, say, that vice bringeth its punishment with it in its natural effects; and obedience its reward? Is not the life of a glutton and drunkard punished by poverty, and shame, and sickness? And is not godliness a pleasure in itself? If it be our highest end and happiness to love God, and please him; then, sure, the beginnings of it here must have more good than all the pleasures of sin: and so God maketh a sufficient difference here.

Ans. Some vices that are sottishly managed, do bring poverty, shame, and sickness; but that may easily be avoided by a vicious wit. Gluttony and drunkenness may fall short of sicknesses. Fornication, and adultery, and incest, may be managed with greater craft. Pride, and ambition, may attain dominion and wealth. Theft may be hid, and cheating and fraud may make men rich, and free from the pinching wants, and cares, and the temptations to discontent and contention, of the poor. Malice may delight itself in secret revenges, in poisonings, murderings, and such like, without any worldly hurt to the transgressor. A Tiberius, a Nero, a Caligula, a Domitian, a Commodus, a Heliogabalus, a Sardanapalus, may be on the throne, when a Socrates, a Seneca, a Cicero, a Cato, a Demosthenes is put to death; yea, when a Paul or Peter, an Ignatius, a Cyrian, are sacrificed to their bloody rage.

Yet it is true, that all this while they want the dignity and comfort of the just; but while they value it not, and feel not the want of it, they take it not for a punishment, but choose it as a felicity.

And as for the present rewards of virtue, to speak impartially, I verily think that if there were no life to come, virtue and holiness were rationally more eligible: but that is much because God is an end above ourselves. And for our own content, in many, holiness would give the mind more pleasure, than all fleshly pleasure and worldly greatness could counterpoise. But with many others, whose afflictions are very heavy, and pains and poverty very great, and who are grievously tormented by cruel persecutors; and, perhaps, a melancholy constitution may forbid them much delight; it is hard to say, that if they durst let loose themselves to all sin, which maketh for their fleshly interest, their pleasure would not be much greater. While the soul is in flesh, it unavoidably partaketh of the pain or pleasure of the flesh. Therefore, the torment of the stone, or strangury, or of a rack, or strappado, will reach the soul; and the operations of the soul being in and by the body, a tormented body will hinder those contemplations which should feed our joy, and also hinder the joy of those contemplations. Most christians enjoy little comfort in holiness, through the very cares of this life, and the weakness of grace, and power of corruptions, and doubts and fears which do attend them; much less would they have much comfort, if they were here tormented, and miserable in body, and had no hope of another life. In some sense, we may say, that heaven is begun on earth, because holiness is begun. But the heaven

on earth is the hope and reflection of the heaven indeed, and is soon gone if that be gone, as the light here ceaseth when the sun is set. God seen and loved in a glass doth more differ, as to us, from God as seen and loved in the intuition of his glory, than the heart of man is now able to conceive. The difference may be well called specifiical as to our actions; yea, transcendently such. Let any man in torment without any hope of heaven be judge.

And though honesty, without the pleasure and comforts of it, be still better and more eligible, yet while man's reason and virtue are so weak, and his sense and appetite so strong, and his body hath so much power upon his mind, it is very few that the mere love of virtue would prevail with, if that virtue were never to come to a higher degree than this.

It is undoubtedly true, that the delights of holiness are incomparably more desirable, as we have them in this life, than kingdoms and all the pleasures of the flesh; but that is, principally, because that this life is the passage to a better, and hath relation to so glorious a reward. The least forethought of future blessedness may weigh down all the riches and pleasures of the world; but take away the respect to the life to come, and weak man would meet with no such comforts.

It is true, also, that virtue and piety is most desirable, even for itself; but that is, especially, as it will be itself indeed, in a life of fuller perfection than this; for here it is so weak, and clogged with so many corruptions and infirmities, that the comfort of it is little perceived: but as a child in infancy hath less pleasure than a brute, for all his reason; and as young scholars for a time do meet with more trouble than pleasure in their learning, and half-witted artists are often more inconvenient than none; and no one would much seek after arts and learning, for all its excellency, if they had no hopes to ascend above that troublesome, smattering degree; even so in the present case, though the least virtue be in itself more valuable than all sensual pleasure, yet, considered as good to us, we should never be able to prefer it, if we had not hopes of a higher measure than most of the truly virtuous and obedient do here attain.

Either it is fleshly, worldly pleasure, or it is the pleasing and enjoying of God in holiness and love, which is man's ultimate end. If it be the former, then certainly the sensual and wicked are in a better condition than the obedient; for they have much more of that kind of delight, while the best are oft tormented and persecuted by their cruelty; but if it be the latter, then it is sure to be enjoyed hereafter, seeing we have here so small a measure, and also find that all the virtue and holiness of this life consisteth much more in desire and seeking, than in delightful enjoying; and our delights are, for the most part, the effects of hope of what we shall possess hereafter, more than of the sense of our present happiness.^d

There is no righteous governor on earth that will suffer, if he can help it, his disobedient subjects to persecute those that most carefully obey him, and to make them a common scorn, and to imprison them, torment them, burn them at stakes, or banish them; and then say, That their obedience is, in its own nature, so much better than disobedience, that it is reward enough of itself. It is not the work of a ruler, only to see that no man be a loser by him, or his service, in point of commutative justice; but to see that by distributive justice, such a difference be made between the obedient and disobedient, as the differ-

^d Animus est ingeneratus a Deo, ex quo vere vel agnatio nobis cum cœlestibus vel genus vel stirps appellari potest. Cic. l. de Leg.

ence of their actions do require, in order to the ends of government. Justice giveth every one his due; mercy, itself, when it remitteth a penalty, doth it for the same ends, and upon such reasonable considerations of repentance, confession, satisfaction, reparation, according to power, that it may be called a just mercy. God is such a lover of holiness, that he will in his government manifest that love, and such a hater of sin, that he will signify his hatred of it to the sinner.*

Moreover, the body itself is part of the man, and that part which hath no small interest in the sin. It seemeth, therefore, unjust that the bodies and sensitive powers of the disobedient, should have all kind of pleasures, and the bodies and sense of the obedient have the pain of fasting, self-denial, persecutions, cruelties, and no further judgment to make a more equal retribution.†

In a word, I think there are few that compare the life of an emperor of Turkey or Tartary, or any wicked, sensual worldling, with the life of many a thousand persecuted and tormented saints, but will confess, that no distributive justice doth make in this life so sufficient a difference, as may make men know the justice of the governor, the desirableness of a holy state, or the danger of the contrary. It was the observation of this which made most of the atheists of the world think that there was no God, or that he exercised no moral government over men; and that made even the innocent often to stagger, and tempted them to think their labours and sufferings were all in vain, till they looked before them to the end.*

And if God's justice make not a sufficient difference here, it is certain that there is another life where he will do it; because, else, he should not be just, his laws would be delusory, and his government would be defective, and successful only by deceit.

Object. God is not obliged to do justice to men any more than to any other creatures: he suffereth the dog to kill the hare, the deer, and the innocent sheep; the kite to kill the harmless doves and chickens; the ravenous birds, and beasts, and fishes to devour and live upon the rest; and man upon all; and he is not bound to do them justice.

Ans. The brutes are no subjects capable of moral government; and, consequently, of propriety, right or wrong. God, that made them incapable of government, thereby declared that he intended them not for it. Let no man here play with ambiguities, and say, That God governeth all the creatures. The word government is taken equivocally, when it is applied to a dead or brutish subject, a ship, a coach, a horse, a dog, and meaneth not the same thing which we discourse of; it is moral government by laws and judgment which we treat of. When God had made man a governable creature, he thereby declared his will, to be himself his governor, which is all the obligation that God is capable of as to actions, *ad extra*.

* Quum Pompeio res infelicer cederent, et ad Cæsarem inclinaret victoria, Cato dicebat, in rebus divinis multum esse caliginis; quod Pompeio præter jus agenti fuissent omnia prospera; causam reipublicæ tuenti nihil succederet. Plutarch. in Catone.

† Plato dicebat, Deum nullo uspiam modo injustum esse sed plane justissimum: nec ei similis inveniri posse quicquam, quam qui inter nos justissimus est. In Theæt.

* How like a christian was that of Anaxagoras, in Laert.

p. 85. Hic non modo generis gloria et opibus, verum animi quæque magnitudine clarissimus fuit: quippe qui universum patrimonium suis sponte concessit. Quo cum ab eis insinularetur negligentia. Quid ergo, inquit, nonne vos ista curatis? Deinde ab eis profectus, ad speculandum verum naturam se contulit, rei et publicæ et privæ omnino negligens; adeo ut cuidam se ita curantem, nullane tibi patriæ cura est? Dixit, mihi vero patriæ cura est, et quidem summa; digitum in cælum intendens. Bene merenti, bene profuerit; male merenti par erit. Plaut. *Τὸν ἀγαθὸν ἀγαθὰ ποιεῖ*, dic-

He, therefore, that made the rational world his kingdom, did thereby engage himself to govern them in justice; there is, therefore, no comparison between the case of men and brutes, who never were subjects, but utensils, in his kingdom.

Sec. 2. II. If there were no retribution in the life to come, the secret sins and duties of the heart and life would be under no sufficient government: but the secret sins and duties of the heart and life are under a sufficient government; therefore, there is a retribution in the life to come.‡

This argument is a particular instance to clear the former general argument: the major is proved by experience. The heart is the fountain of good and evil. Men cannot see it, and therefore pretend not to govern it, or make laws for it: if they did, it would be all in vain. The heart may be guilty of atheism, blasphemy, idolatry, malice, contrivements and desires of treason, murder, incest, adultery, fraud, oppression, and all the villany in the world, and no man can know or punish it; and God doth not do it, ordinarily, in this life, with any sufficient act of justice. So, also, all those sins which men are but able to hide, as secret murders, treasons, revenge, slanders, fraud, &c. do escape all punishment from man. And God hath no observable, ordinary course of outward justice in this world, but what he exerciseth by men, though, extraordinarily, he sometimes otherwise interpose: and how easy and ordinary it is for subtle men to do much wickedness, and never be discovered, needs no proof. The like we may say, in some measure, of those secret duties of heart and life, which have neither reward nor notice in this life; and, if observed, are usually turned into matter of reproach.

The minor needeth no more proof, when we have proved already that God is our Governor. It is certain that the secret acts of heart and life are as much under his government as the open, and therefore shall have equal retribution.

Sec. 3. III. If there were no life of retribution after this, the sins of the great ones and rulers of the world, and all others that by strength could make their part good, would be under no sufficient justice; but the sins, even of the greatest and strongest, are under sufficient justice; therefore, there is a life of retribution after this.

The major is clear by experience; the sins of all the sovereigns of the earth are rarely under sufficient justice in this life. If there were no punishment hereafter, what justice would be done upon a Tamerlane, a Bajazet, a Mahomed, a Dionysius, an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Marius, a Sylla, a Sertorius, and many hundred such, for all the innocent blood which they have shed for their pride and self-exalting? What justice would be done on kings, and emperors, and states, that have none above them,

tum Cleobuli. Phociliidis. *Μὴ κακὸν εὐ ἐρῆς στείπειν ἰσὺν ἐστὶν ἐνὶ πόντῳ*. Qui indignum honore afficiunt, stultitia opinionem habent. Cicero.

‡ Qui largiuntur indignis ea quæ dignis conferri debebant, tria committunt absurda. nam et ipsi jacturam faciunt, et in bonos contumeliosus aut, et malos roborant, materia vitiorum suppeditata. Antoin. Stultissimum est estimare omnia justa esse quæ scita sint in populorum institutis, aut legibus. Etiamne si quæ sint Tyrannorum leges, si 30 illi Athenienses leges imponere vellent? Aut si omnes Athenienses delatarentur tyrannicis legibus, non idcirco hæc leges justæ haberentur? Nihil credo magis illa quam interrex noster tulit, ut dictator quem vellet civium, indicta causa, impune posset occidere. Est enim unum jus quo devincta est hominum societas, &c. Cic. de Leg. l. p. 225. Idem undique in infernum descendus est; said Anaxagoras to one that lamented that he must die in a strange country. Laert. in Anaxag.

for all their lusts and filthiness, their intemperance and sensuality, their oppression and cruelty? I know that God doth sometimes punish them by rebels, or by other princes, or by sickness in this life; but that is no ordinary course of justice, and therefore not sufficient to its ends. Ordinarily, all things here come alike to all; and what justice would be done upon any rebels or robbers that are but strong enough to bear it out? or upon any that raise unrighteous wars, and burn, and murder, and destroy countries and cities, and are worse than plagues to all places where they come, and worse than mad dogs and bears to others? If they do but conquer, instead of punishment for all this villany, they go away here with wealth and glory.¹

The minor is past question: therefore, certainly, there is another life, where conquering, rewarded, prospering, domineering sin shall have its proper punishment.

Sect. 4. IV. If God rule not man by the hopes and fears of certain good and evil hereafter, he ruleth him not according to his nature: but God doth rule man according to his nature; *ergo*.

The minor needeth no proof: the major is proved by experience. The nature of man is to be most moved with the hopes and fears of good and evil after death, otherwise death itself would comparatively seem nothing to us. No other creature hath such hopes and fears. If you ask, how I can tell that? I answer, as I can tell that a tree doth not hear, and a stone doth not feel or see, because there is no appearance of such a sense, whose nature is to make itself manifest by its evidences where it is. Brutes show a fear of death, and love of life, but of nothing further; of which there is evidence enough to quiet a mind that seeketh after truth, though not to silence a prattling caviller. This will be further improved under that which followeth.

Sect. 5. V. If the world cannot be governed according to its nature and God's laws, without the hopes and fears of good and evil after death, then the objects of such hopes and fears is certain truth. But the antecedent is true; therefore, so is the consequent.

That the nature of man requireth a moral government, and not only a physical motion, is already proved. Physical motion only determineth the agent to act, and produceth the act itself *quoad eventum*. Moral government doth institute for the subject a *debitum agendi et habendi*, and judgeth him accordingly.² If there were no government but physical motion, there were no *debitum* in the world, neither *officii*, *premi*, *vel pœnæ*, *vel jus possidendi*, *vel injuria*; no right or wrong: for physical motion doth equally produce the act in perjury, murder, treason, adultery, as in good deeds; and it never produceth an act which eventually never is. Therefore, there should be nothing a duty but what cometh to pass, if physical motion were all the government. Government, then, there must be: and what God requireth of all by nature, I have showed before. Now, that there is a moral impossibility of the performance of this in any sincerity, so as to intimate any laudable government of the world, I shall further prove:

I. If, according to the present temper of man, there be no motives, which would ever prove suffi-

cient to resist all the temptations of this life, to keep us in true obedience and love to God unto the end, without the hopes and fears of good and evil after death; then cannot the world be governed according to God's laws, without such hopes and fears of futurity. But the antecedent is true; *ergo*, so is the consequent.

If God had prescribed man a course of duty in his laws, as to obey and love him upon terms of fleshly suffering, and had not given man such motives as might rationally prevail for the performance, his laws had been all in vain. He that hath made holiness our indispensable duty, hath certainly left us motives and rational helps to perform it. But so many and great are the temptations of this life, and so strong is our sense, and so great are the sufferings of the obedient, that in this our imperfection we could never go through them without the motives which are fetched from another life.³ 1. It would weaken the hands of the best, as to their duty; it would imbolden them to sin; it would give victory to all strong temptations. Let every reader but consult with his own soul, and though it be granted that virtue should be chosen for its own sake, how dear soever it may cost, yet let him without lying say, what he thinketh he should be and do in case of temptations, if he knew that he had no life to live but this. I am not sure, but I will freely confess what I think most, that now are honest, would be and do. First, they would observe how little difference God maketh between the obedient and disobedient in his providence, and how ordinarily his present judgments are not much to be feared. And hence they would think, that he maketh no great matter of it, what they either are or do; and so their very love of virtue would be much debilitated: nay, the sufferings of the virtuous would tempt them to think that it is no very desirable way. And though still they would have something within them, which would tell them, that honesty, and temperance, and piety are good, yet the natural love of themselves is so deeply planted in them, and so powerful, that in most great temptations it would prevail. They would venture upon lying and perjury, rather than lose their liberty, or livelihood, or reputation. They would do any thing which the rulers bid them, or any one that is stronger than they, rather than suffer much for their innocence. I think they would not scramble much for riches, or high places, because a quiet life best pleaseth them; but if they had a fancy to any delightful seat, or pleasant accommodation, they would stretch their consciences hard to get it: and to escape poverty, and suffering, and death, they would do I know not what. And if their interest required them to do another mischief, in order to the public good, for revenge I suppose them not much inclined to, they would be as Brutuses, and would be confident of the success of subtle and concealed enterprises; they would no further resist any great temptation, to please their appetites in meats and drinks, or their flesh in lust, or ease, and sports, and gaming, and such vain pastimes, than some other carnal interest contradicting, did forbid them. And though naturally some men prefer knowledge before all worldly pleasures, yet, considering how short a time

erexit, et ad cœli quasi cognationis domicilique pristini conspectum excitavit. Tum speciem ita formavit oris, ut in ea penitus reconditis moribus effingeret. Cic. 1. de Legib.

² Piso, (in Cic. de Fin. 1. 5. p. 199.) speaking of corporal and sensitive good, saith, Quibus tantum præstat mentis excellens perfectio, ut vix cogitari possit quid intersit. So that the perfection of the mind is the perfection of the man.

³ Ex ipsa vita discedimus tanquam ex hospitio, non tanquam ex domo: commorandi enim nobis natura diversorium, non habitandi domum dedit. Cic. in Cat. Maj.

¹ Næ illi falsi sunt qui diversissimas res pariter expectant, voluptatem et præmia virtutis. Salust. Ut ex barba capillos detonsos negligimus; ita ille divinus animus egressurus, quo receptaculum suum confecerat, igitur illud exurat, an feræ distrahaunt, an terra contegat, non magis putat ad se pertinere, quam secundinas ad editum infantem. Sen. Ep. 93. Maximum est argumentum naturam ipsam de immortalitate animorum tacite judicare, quod omnibus curæ sint, et maxime quidem, quæ post mortem futura sunt. Cic. Cum natura cæteros animantes abjecisset, ad pastum, solum hominem

they should be the better for it, and how many toil some hours they must lay out for it, they would rather let it go, and take up with the ease and pleasure of the flesh. This, I fear, would be their life: for when all the comforts of this life of flesh are laid in the one end of the balance, what should weigh them down but something greater? So that if some little restraint of villany might be made by lower motives, I appeal to the conscience of the reader, whether he thinks that the fore-proved duties of resignation, obedience, and love to God above all, would ever be performed, by any considerable number at least, if they knew that they had no life to live but this.

2. Yea, no tolerable government at all could be kept up: I speak not of God's physical motion by omnipotency. For, 1. The rulers of the world, that have none above them, would have little or no restraint, and their examples would form the people to all abomination. If they feared insurrections, they would oppress them the more, to disable them; and what a world must it be, when lust is the law to all the governors! And the people would have nothing but the hopes and fears of temporal good or evil, to restrain them from any treason, or rebellion, or villany. And all those that princes cannot please, would plot, revenge, or play their game another way; and subtle men would think it easy to poison or murder secretly princes and nobles, and any enemy that stood in the way of their own designs, if once they were out of fear of a life to come.^a

3. And all secret villany would be committed without fear; secret adulteries, theft, lying, perjury, and common honesty could not be maintained; for every man's self-interest would be his law, and prevail against all the principles of honesty. And all that men would strive for, would be either to strengthen themselves in their wickedness, that they might be out of fear of human justice, or else to hide it from the cognizance of man. Thus would the world be turned into a resemblance of hell, and men be as much worse than wild beasts, as their natures are better which are corrupted; and all would be in wickedness and confusion, without the hopes and fears of another life.^b

Object. But in all this you argue against experience. Hath there not been government and order kept up among heathens? And is there not a government at this day in all the kingdoms and commonwealths throughout the world?

Ans. In all this I speak according to experience. For, 1. Almost all the world believe a life to come; all the christians, all the Mahometans, and all the Jews, and almost all, or most of the known idolaters and heathens: their very idolatry intimateth this, when they number their deceased heroes with their gods. And though the power of this belief is debilitated with the most, and, therefore, piety and virtue proportionably perish; yet that common, dull

belief of it which they have, being in a business of unspeakable consequence, doth restrain them so far as they are restrained.

2. Those that believe it not are yet in an uncertainty; and the possibility of rewards and punishments hereafter, keepeth up much of the order that is left.

3. Those few countries which believe that there is no life to come, or rather those persons in some countries, do proportionably increase or excel in wickedness. They give up themselves to sensuality and lusts, to pride, and covetousness, and revenge, and cruelty; and are usually worse than others, as their belief is worse. What maketh cannibals more savage than other people? What made a Nero, a Heliogabalus, &c. such swine? What made Rome itself at that pass, that Seneca saith, more died by poison of servants' hands, and secret murders, than by kings, even in days of such great and common cruelty. All was, because men's consciences were from under the hopes and fears of another life; and if all were so, then all would live accordingly.

But it is another kind of life which the law of God in nature doth enjoin us; it is another kind of life which I before proved to be all men's duty: and whether the world have sufficient means and motives to such a life, and could be governed but like men, without the hopes and fears of futurity, let sober and considerate reason judge?

Object. Can it be any worse than it is already? What vice or villany doth not every where abound, for all the belief of a life to come!^c

Ans. If it be so bad for all that belief, what would it be without? If the enervating of it by the lusts of the flesh do loose the reins, and leave the world in so much wickedness, what would it be, if their hopes and fears of another life were gone? Now men have a secret witness in their breasts, which checketh and restraineth them: now they have kings and rulers, who, having some belief of a life to come, do form their laws accordingly, and govern the common people with some respect to that belief. Now, there are many, through the mercy of God, who are serious in that belief, and live accordingly; who are instructors, restraints, and examples to the rest. And from these is that order which is kept up in the world. But if all were as those few, that have overcome this belief, the world would be a wilderness of savage beasts; and would be so full of impiety, villany, perfidiousness, bloodiness, and all confusion, that we should think it a greater sign of goodness in God to destroy it, than to continue it; and should think of his government according to the effects, or should hardly believe he governed it at all.

I come now to prove the consequence of the major proposition, that the object of those hopes and fears are certain truths, which are so necessary to the government of the world; and this needeth no other proof but this.

^a Atque haud scio an pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam et societas humani generis et una excellentissima virtus justitia tollatur. Cic. de Nat. Deor. p. 4. Pietas est fundamentum omnium virtutum. Cic. pro. Plan. Zenophon reporteth Cyrus as saying, If all my familiars were endued with piety to God, they would do less evil to one another, and to me, l. 8. Pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam et societas humani generis, et una excellentissima virtus justitia, tollatur necesse est. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 1. Lento gradu ad vindictam sui, divina procedit ira: tarditaremque supplicii gravitate compensat. Valer. Max. de Dionys. l. 1. c. 2. Nam quid faciet is homo in tenebris, qui nihil timet nisi testem vel judicem? Quid in deserto loco natus cum multo auro spoliare possit imbecillum atque solum? &c. Cic. de Leg. l. 1. p. 224.

^b A fortnight after the writing of this, London was burnt.

^c Qui nihil alterius causa facit, et metitur suis commodis

omnia, videtis credo quid sit acturus—si negabit illi vitam erepturum, et aurum ablaturum, non quod turpe judicet, sed quod metuat ne emanet, id est, ne malum habeat. Cic. ibid. Thaleis dicta (in Laert.) sunt, Animas esse immortales. Antiquissimum omnium entium Deus: ingenitus enim est: Pulcherrimum mundus: a Deo enim factus: Maximum locus: caput enim omnia: Velocissimum mens; nam per universa discurrit, &c. Stoici dicunt esse demones quibus insit hominum miseratione, inspectores rerum humanarum: heros quoque solutas corporibus sapientum animas. Laert. in Zenone.

^d Qui ea committit quae leges prohibent, et de quibus supplicia sunt, is ea multo magis committet, de quibus nullum supplicium est. Aristot. l. Rhet. *Object.* At non apud omnes proficiunt leges. *Resp.* Nec philosophia quidem: nec ideo inutilis et formandis animis inefficax est. Sen. Ep. 95.

If God can govern the world without a course of deceit and lying, then the objects of these necessary hopes and fears are true: but God can govern the world without a course of deceit and lying; *ergo*.

The major is evident, because, to govern by the hopes and fears of falsehoods, or things that are not, (when those hopes and fears are not only of God, but made necessary to government,) is to govern by deceit and lying; or if it had not been by falsehood uttered, but falsehood permitted, the minor is certain.

For if God cannot govern without such a course of deceit, it is either for want of power, or of wisdom, or of goodness, that is, holiness and benignity of will: but the Omnipotent wanteth not power, and the Omniscient wanteth not wisdom, to find out true and suitable means; and he that is *optimus*, wanteth neither holiness to love truth and hate falsehood, nor benignity to love his creature, and therefore needeth no such means.

And he that believeth that God himself doth govern the world by a cheat, even by the hopes and fears of fictions, will sure think it best to imitate his God, and to govern, and trade, and live accordingly.⁹

This argument was a *necessitate ad ordinem*; the next shall be only from God's actual government.

SECT. 6. VI. If God do, *de facto*, govern the world by the hopes and fears of good and evil in another life, then the object of those hopes and fears is certain: but God doth, *de facto*, so govern; *ergo*.

The major is proved as before: for that which proved that God can govern without falsehood, proved also that he doth govern without it. It belongeth only to the impotent, the ignorant, or the bad to use such means.

Object. May not a parent or physician honestly deceive a child or patient for his recovery to health? why, then, may not God do so?

Ans. 1. They do it through insufficiency, to attain their end by a better means; but the Omnipotent and Omniscient hath no such insufficiency. 2. They may not lie or utter any untruth to do it, though they may hide some truth by words which he is apt to mistake; but if the world be governed by such hopes and fears of futurity, it is hard to think whence they should fetch the object, but from some divine revelation in nature. 3. A whole course of government of all the rational world, by so sorry an instrument as deceit and falsehood, is more inconsistent with the nature and perfections of God, than a particular act of deceit, in a work of necessity and charity, is with the nature of imperfect man.

The minor is proved in the answer to the last objections, and by the common experience of the world.

Object. How little do the hopes and fears of another world do with the most! Do you not see that fleshly interest ruleth them, and therefore they are what the great ones would have them be who can help or hurt them?

Ans. 1. I have proved how much worse it would be, if that restraint which these hopes and fears make were taken off. 2. That this restraint is general in all nations almost of the earth, though the preva-

lency of sin do much enfeeble it. 3. That rulers themselves are under some of these restraints, in their law-making and judgment. Though fleshly interest much prevail against it, there are some remnants of secret hopes or fears in the consciences of sinners, which keep up so much good as is yet left, and keep men from those villainies, in which they might hope to escape all sufferings from men.

SECT. 7. VII. If God himself kindle in the best of men desires to know him, love him, and enjoy him perfectly hereafter, then such desires shall attain their end: but God himself doth kindle such desires in the best of men; *ergo*, and consequently, there is such a life to come.

Here, 1. I must prove that the best men have such desires. 2. That God kindleth them. 3. That, therefore, he will satisfy them.

1. And for the first, the consciences of all good men are my witnesses, whose desires to know God better, to love him and please him more, and to enjoy his love, is as the very pulse and breath of their souls. For this they groan, and pray, and seek; for this they labour, wait, and suffer. If you could help them to more of the knowledge and love of God, you would satisfy them more than to give them all the wealth and honours of the world. Their religious lives, their labours, prayers, contemplations, and sufferings prove all this, and show for what they long and live.

Object. But this is caused by the power of a deluded fantasy, which seeketh after that which is not to be had. What, if you fall in love with the sun: will it prove that you must be loved by it, see it, and enjoy it, in the life to come?

Ans. 1. To the similitude: either the sun is a rational free agent, or not: if it be, it is either the chief agent, or a dependent instrument; if it were the first, as it is not, I should owe myself totally to it, in the exercise of all the powers given me, as is aforesaid; and if it gave me such desires, I might suppose it was not in vain. But if it give me nothing but as an instrument or dependent cause, I owe it nothing but in subserviency to the first cause; but, in such subserviency, if God had commanded me to love and honour it, as a lover of mankind, and a rational benefactor, and had placed any of my duty or felicity in seeking perfection in that love and honour, I should obey him, and expect an answerable benefit; but if it be no intelligent agent, or I cannot know that it is so, then I can owe it no other respect but what is due to a natural instrument of God.

2. To the matter: that these desires are not from a deluded fantasy, but the work of God, I prove; 1. In that I have fully proved them already to be our duty, by the law of nature; to love God with all the heart and might, and consequently to desire to love him, and please him, and enjoy him in perfection, that is, in the utmost of our capacity, is a proved duty. 2. In that the best men are the possessors of it; and the more all other virtues and obedience do abound, the more this aboundeth. And the more any are vicious, impious, sensual, worldly, the less they have of these desires after God. 3. They increase in the use of

⁹ Utiles esse has opiniones quis neget, cum intelligat quam multa firmentur jurejurando: quante salutis sint federa religionis; quam multos divini supplicii metus, a scelere revocaret? quamque sancta sit societas civium, inter ipsos Deis immortalibus interpositis, tum iudicibus, tum testibus. Cic. de Leg. l. 2. p. 236, 237. Nisi Deus istis te corporis custodiis liberaverit, ad celum aditus patere non potest. Cic. Somo. Scip. Laertius saith of Bion Borist, That he had learned of impious Theodorus to deny God in his health; but, falling into unhealthiness, he repented of his sin against God. Ac siquidem id dogma tuum perstitisset, merito dicendus esset sensisse ut visum fuisset, etsi male visum esset. At nunc

tamen longo morbo tabescens, ac mori partimescens, qui Deos non esse dixerat, phanum non viderat, mortalibus qui illudabat veris dum Deis immolarent.—Peccavi, dixit, delictis parcite.—Stultus, qui mercede voluerit Deos esse. Quasi tunc Deii essent, quum illos Bion demum esse arbitraretur.

For as the sun is not seen without the sun, nor the air heard without the air; but the eye that is full of the light seeth the light, and the ear full of air heareth the resounding air; so God is not known without God: but a mind full of God only is lifted up to God, so far as illustrated with the light of God, he knoweth God, and inflamed with the heat of God, he thirsteth after him. Fic. c. 2. p. 15.

holy means appointed by God, and they decay by evil means. All sin is against it, and all obedience doth promote it. 4. It is found most suitable to the tendency of our faculties, as their only perfection; the only true advancement of reason, and rectitude and felicity of the will. If it be not by God, that the love and desires of God are kindled in us, then no good is to be ascribed unto God; for we have here no greater good.

Now, that God will satisfy these desires is proved, in that he maketh nothing in vain, nor kindleth any such desires as shall deceive them, and make all their lives a mere delusion. Yea, and do this by the very best of men. None of this is consistent with the perfections of God.^a

Sect. 8. VIII. If there were no life of retribution after this, obedience to God would be finally men's loss and ruin; but obedience to God shall not finally be men's loss and ruin; *ergo*, there is another life.

The major is proved before; however it would be best in point of honesty, it would be worst to thousands in point of personal utility. Even to all those, that, forsaking all the sinful pleasures of this world, do conflict with their flesh, and keep it under, and suffer the loss of all outward comforts by the cruelty of persecutors, and it may be, through melancholy or weak fears, have little comfort from God instead of them; and at last, perhaps, be tormented and put to death by cruelty. Few will think this desirable for itself.

And that our obedience to God shall not be men's final loss and ruin needeth no proof but this; that he hath made our self-love a principle inseparable from our nature, and maketh use of it in the government of the world; and commandeth nothing but what is finally for our good; and so conjoineth the pleasing of him and our own felicity inseparably in our end. His regiment is paternal; his glory which he seeketh by us is the glory of his goodness communicated and accumulated on us. This, taken in with the wisdom and goodness of his nature, will tell any man, that, to be a loser finally by our obedience to God, is a thing that no man need to fear; he doth not serve himself upon us to our hurt; nor command us that which will undo us. He neither wanteth power, wisdom, nor goodness, to make us gainers by our duty. It is the desire of natural justice in all, *ut bonis bene fit, et malis male*: if I find but any duty commanded me by God, my conscience, and my sense of the divine perfections, will not give me leave to think that I shall ever prove finally a loser by performing it, though he had never made me any promise of reward; so far the law of nature hath a kind of promise in it, that if he do but say, Do this, I will not doubt but the doing of it is for my good. And if he bid me but use any means to my own happiness, I should blaspheme, if I suspected it would tend to my loss and misery, and was made my snare.

Sect. 9. IX. The highest love and obedience to

God is never a work of imprudence or folly, nor ever to be repented of: but such they would be to many, if there were no life to come; *ergo*.

By imprudence and folly, I mean that course which tendeth to our own undoing, as aforesaid. No man shall ever have cause to repent of his fidelity to God, and say, I did foolishly in ruining myself by it. This argument being but a mere consectary of the former, I pass over.

Sect. 10. X. If no man living be certain that there is no future life of retribution, then it is certain that there is such a life: but no man living is certain that there is no such life; *ergo*, it is certain that there is.

The major is proved thus: if all men be in reason obliged to seek the happiness, and escape the punishments, of another life, before all the treasures and pleasures of this world, then it is certain that such a life of happiness and punishments there is; but if no man be certain that there is no such life, the bare probability or possibility that there is such, doth in reason oblige all men to seek it, above all the world; *ergo*, it is certain that such a life there is.

My argument is from our obligation to seek it before all, to the certain being of it. 1. That no man is certain that there is no life to come, I need not prove, as long as no man ever proved such an opinion, and the boldest atheists or infidels say no more, than that they think there is no other life; but all confess that they have no assurance of it.^b

If so, then, that the possibility or probability oblieth us to regard it in our hopes, fears, and endeavours before all this world, is evident from the incomparableness of them, or great disparity of the things. When most of the world think there is another life, and there is so much for it as we here lay down, and a few atheists say only, We do not believe it, or, It is not likely, though it be not a thing that we are certain of; now reason commandeth every man that loveth himself, to prefer it before all earthly things. Because we are fully certain, beyond all doubt, that all earthly things are of short duration, and will quickly leave us: and when they are gone, they are to us as if they had never been. They are a shadow, a dream, a something which is next to nothing. To say, it will shortly have an end, doth blot out the praise, and imbitter the pleasures, of all below. What the better are all generations past, for all the wealth and fleshly pleasures which they ever received in the world? These is no wise man but would prefer the least probability of attaining full felicity, and escaping death and torments, before the certainty of possessing a pin or a penny for an hour. The disparity is much greater between things temporal and everlasting, than any such similitude can reach. All the christians, and all the Mahometans, and most of the heathens of the world, do hold the immortality of the soul, and the perpetuity of the happiness or misery hereafter. The atheist is not sure of the contrary; and he is sure that a few years

^a It is a most improbable thing, that God would give up all the best men in the world to deceit, in so great a matter, and them that are the most faithful to the truth, and would save all the epicures, drunkards, fornicators, proud and perjured atheists, from this error, if it were an error to believe a life to come. *Θεόν σίβην, καὶ πάντα πράξεις εὐδίας*. Gr. Com. Supplicii facilis pius a Diis supplicans, quam qui scelestus est, invenit veniam sibi. Plaut. Rud. *Τὸν χρηστὸν εὖξει τῇ ἐπιμίλειαν καὶ Θεός*. *Εἰς πάντα Κείρον, καὶ τύχησιν ῥοπήν πείσαν*. Menand. Nec unquam bono quicquam mali evenire potest, nec vivo nec mortuo, nec res ejus a Diis negliguntur. Cic. Tuscul. 1.

^b Sicut non potest quicquam ignis propinquatione fieri frigidissimum, ita non potest homo quia solus haret Deo sapientissimo, beatissimoque stultissimus ex hoc, miserimusque

evadere: neque potest Deus, qui summa veritas et bonitas est, humanum genus, prolem suam decipere. Marsil. Ficin. de Rel. Christ. c. 1. p. 13. Aristot. hoc unum teneat, præter vitia atque virtutes, negavit rem esse ullam aut fugiendam, aut expectandam. Piso in Sic. de Fin. l. 5. p. 203. Ea paranda viatico, quæ cum naufragio simul enatarent; ait Antisthenes in Laert. l. 6. c. 1. Id ib. dixit, Eos qui cuperent immortales esse oportere pie vivere et juste. *Di boni!* quid est in hominis vita diu? Mihi ne diuturnam quidem quicquam videtur, in quo est aliud extremum. Cum enim id adventit, tum illud præterit, effluxit: tantum remanet, quod virtute et recte factis sit consecutus. Horæ quidem cedunt, et dies, et menses, et anni; nec præteritum tempus unquam revertitur, nec quid sequatur scire potest. Cic. Cat. Maj.

or hours will put an end to all his temporal pleasures, and equal those that lived here in pleasure and in pain: and, therefore, that at the worst, his loss or hazard of the pleasures of sin, for the hopes of eternal pleasure, is not a thing considerable. If those that dissent from him prove in the right, the sensualist is utterly undone for ever: he must live in endless pain and misery, and must lose an endless, unspeakable joy and glory which he might have possessed as well as others. But if he himself prove in the right, he gets nothing by it but the pleasing of inordinate concupiscence for a few years; and will die with as much emptiness of content as if he had lived in continual pain. Now this being the true case, no sober reason can deny, but that wisdom obligeth every man to labour for an uncertain, endless glory with angels, more than for the certain pleasures of the world, which are of so short continuance; and to do more to escape uncertain, everlasting misery, than a certain trouble to the flesh for so short a time: and thus a life of godliness, spent in seeking future happiness, and in escaping future punishment, is naturally made the duty of all men in the world.*

Object. But you seem here to forget that you had before made godliness to be a man's loss and undoing, if so be there were no life to come; when now you make the loss and hurt to be as nothing.

Ans. 1. I spoke before especially of those that suffer persecution for their fidelity: I speak here especially of all the multitude of the world, who get nothing but the pleasures of sin by their sensuality. 2. When I speak of all the pleasures, profits, and honours of this world, and life itself, as next to nothing, I do not say that they are simply nothing. They are nothing compared to everlasting joy or misery, but they are something to him that shall have no more. The ease and life of a poor bird or beast is naturally desirable to it. One of the best of christians said that "If in this life only we had hope in Christ, we were of all men most miserable:" and yet, that "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." There is no contradiction between these two; that these short-lived pleasures are not worth one thought in comparison of the life to come; and yet that they would be considerable, if there were no other to be had and hoped for.*

3. And now the consequence is proved in what is said before. If it should, by common reason and nature, be made all men's duty in the world, to seek to attain a happiness which is not to be attained, and to escape a misery which never was or will be unto any, and this with the chiefest care and labour of their lives, then the whole life of man should be vanity and a lie. Nature should have formed him for mere delusion; to tire him out in following that which is not. The world should not only be totally governed by deceit, but formed principally for such a life: and whereas, indeed, it is the worldling that pursueth vanity, and spendeth his life in a dream or show;

this opinion would make men's wisdom, and honesty, and piety, to be the vanity, dream, and show. But none of this can be imputed to the most wise and gracious God: he need not set up a false, deceitful hope or fear before his creatures, to keep them in obedience; nor hath he appointed their lives for so vain a work.

Sect. II. XI. If the perfection of man's faculties, to which nature formed him, be not attained in this life, then is there another life where it is to be attained. But the antecedent is true; *ergo*, so is the consequent.†

The reason of the consequence is, because God, who maketh nothing in vain, made not man in vain, nor his natural inclination to his own perfection. His will is signified by his works: as a man that makes a knife, or sword, or gun, or ship, doth tell you what he maketh it for, by the usefulness and form of it; so when God made man with faculties fitted to know him, and love him, he showed you that he made him for that use, and that therein he would employ him.

Object. It would perfect the wit of a brute if it were raised as high as a man; and yet it followeth not that so it shall be.

Ans. I deny the antecedent: it would not perfect him in his kind, but make him another thing of another kind. Man is more than a perfect brute, and a brute is not an imperfect man: but I speak of perfecting man in his own kind, according to his nature.

Object. A chicken hath a desire to live to full maturity, and yet you kill it before: and grass and plants may be cut down before they come to perfection.

Ans. I speak in my argument of the species of man, and the objection speaketh only of some individuals. If there be no higher stature for any chicken or plant to grow up to, then that is the state of its perfection. Its natural inclination to a perfecter state doth show that nature formed it for a perfecter state, and that such a state there is to be attained, however by accident it may be killed or cut down before it do attain it, which never befalleth all the kind, but some individuals. So I confess that by ill accidents, by sin, men may fall short of their natural perfections. But nature's inclination sheweth that there is such a state.*

And the antecedent is manifest, 1. In our nature; 2. In all men's experience.

1. We feel in our natures a capacity of knowing all that of God which I have before laid down, and that it is improbable by further light to know much more. We feel that our hearts are capable of loving him, and of delighting in the contemplation of the glory of his perfections. And we find all other things so far below the tendency of our faculties, and the contentment of our minds, that we know that this is it that we were made for, and this is the proper use that our understandings and wills were given us for. 2. And we find that we attain not any such perfection in this life as we are capable of, and

* Nemini explicatum potest esse, quomodo sese habiturum sit corpus, non dico ad annum, sed ad vesperum. Cic. 2. de Fin. Saith Plutarch, (de Tranquil. Anim.) Alexander wept because he was not lord of the world; when Crates, having but a wallet and a thread-bare cloak, spent his whole life in mirth and joy, as if it had been a continual festival day.

* Plato dixit finem esse, Deo similem fieri. Virtutem sufficere quidem ad bene beateque vivendum; ceterum instrumentis indigere, corporis, bonis, robore, sanitate, integritate sensuum et cæteris id genus: exterioribus item, puta opibus, &c. Laert. in Platone. Arbitratur et Deos humana cernere atque curare—et demones esse. Porro in Dialogis Justitiam, divinam legem arbitraturs esse, ut ad juste agendum potentius suaderet, ne post mortem poenas improbi luerent. Id. Ibid.

† Abeunt omnia unde orta sunt. Cic. Cato Maj. Boni viri sunt Deorum simulachra. Diogen. in Laert. Surely if the world was made for man, then man was made for more than the world. Du-Plessis Verit. Christ. Relig. Prefat.

* Senec. (Ep. 73. p. (mibi) 673.) saith, Miraris hominem ad Deos ire? Deus ad homines venit: immo (quod proprius est) in homines venit: nulla sine Deo mens bona est: semina in corporibus humanis divina dispersa sunt; quæ si bonus cultor excipit, similia origini prodeunt; et paria his ex quibus orta sunt, surgunt: si malus, non aliter quam humus sterilis ac palustris, necat; ac deinde creat purgamenta profrugibus. Beata vita est conveniens naturæ suæ: quæ non aliter contingere potest, quam si primum sana mens est, et in perpetua possessione sanitatis suæ. Senec. de Vita Beat. cap. 3.

do desire ; but that our increase of virtue and holiness is an increase of our desires after more ; and the better any man is, the more he still desireth to be better ; and the more he knoweth, and loveth, and delighteth in God, the more he desireth it in a far higher degree. And even of our knowledge of nature we find, that the more we know, the more we would know ; and that he that knoweth the effect, would naturally fain know the cause ; and that when he knoweth the nearer cause, he would know the cause of that, and so know the first cause, God himself. And the little that we here attain to of knowledge, love, and delight, is far short of the perfection in the same kind which our faculties incline unto.

SECT. 12. XII. Another illustration, or confirming argument, may be gathered from the great disparity which God hath made between men and beasts.^a If God had intended us for no more knowledge and fruition of himself hereafter than the beasts have, then he would have given us no more capacity, desire, or obligation to seek it than the beasts have : but he hath given us more capacity, desire, and obligation to seek it ; *ergo*.

A beast hath no knowledge that there is a God ; no thoughts of a life to come ; no desire to know God, or love him, or enjoy him ; no obligation to take care for another life, or to provide for it, or once to consider whether there be any such or not, because he is not made for any life but this : and if God had made man for no more, he would have disposed and obliged him no further. We have an understanding to know it, and thoughts, and hopes, and fears, and cares about it, which are not all in vain ; and we are plainly in reason obliged to this, and more than we do, and that obligation is not vain.^b

SECT. 13. XIII. If there were no life of retribution hereafter, man were more vain and miserable than the brutes by far, and his reason would but more delude him and torment him : but the consequent is absurd ; *ergo*, so is the antecedent.

The major is easily proved by our great experience ; for the world consisteth partly of men that believe another life, and partly of them that do not ; and reason maketh them both the more miserable. For the former sort, which is the most of the world, their reason telleth them that it is their duty to labour for a happiness hereafter, and to fear and prevent a future misery ; and so their expectation would be their mere delusion, and their lives would be all spent and ordered in delusion : like a company of men that should run up and down to prepare for a transplantation into the moon, and should cut down timber to build there, and provide a stock of cattle to store the ground there, and buy and sell lands there : such would be the life of man in preparing for another world : and he would be under a double calamity ; one, by all this fruitless labour, and another by his fear of future misery, if his labour by temptations should be frustrate, and he should miscarry. To have reason to lead a man in such a delusory life, and to torment him with the fears of what may befall him after death, is sure to be by

reason more unhappy than the beasts, that have none of this.^c

And for the atheists, they are more unhappy too, so far as they are rational and considerate. For they have no more happiness than the beasts to comfort them, while they look for none hereafter ; and they have, in all the way, the foresight of their end. They foreknow their great probability of sickness, and painful, tormenting diseases. They foreknow the certainty of their death : they know how all their sport and pleasure will end, and leave them in dolour ; and how their corpses must be rotting, and turn to dust. They foresee abundance of crosses in their way ; they are troubled with cares for the time to come. A beast hath none of this foreknowledge, and none of the forethoughts of pain or dying, but only fearfully flyeth from a present danger.^d Moreover, the poor atheist, having no certainty of the truth of his own opinion, (that there is no other life,) is oft haunted with fears of it, and especially when approaching death doth awaken both his reason and his fears. He then thinks, Oh what if there should be another world, where I must live in misery for my sin ! In despite of himself, some such fears will haunt him. Judge, then, whether the use of reason be not to make man a more deluded and tormented creature than the brutes, if so be there were no life after this ?

But this cannot stand with the methods of our Creator, to give us so great an excellency of nature, to make us more vain and unhappy than the beasts. When he maketh a creature capable and fit for higher things, he declareth that he intendeth him for higher things.

Object. But even here we have a higher kind of work and pleasure than the brutes. We rule them, and they serve us : we dwell in cities and societies, and make provision for the time to come.

Ans. Those brutes that dwell in woods and deserts serve us not ; and our ruling them is a small addition to our felicity : pride itself can take little pleasure in being the master of dogs and cats. Rule doth but add to care and trouble : *cæteris paribus*, it is an easier life to be ruled than to rule. And if we take away their lives, it is no more than we must undergo ourselves. And the violent death which we put them to, hath usually less pain than our languishing age, and sickness, and natural death. And it is as pleasant to a bird to dwell in her nest, as to us to dwell in cities and palaces ; and they sing as merrily in their way of converse, as we in our troublesome kingdoms and societies. If present pleasure be the highest of our hopes, they seem to have as much as we ; or if there be any difference, it is counterbalanced by the twentyfold more cares, and fears, and labours, and mental troubles, which we are more liable to : and our knowledge doth but increase our sorrow, of which next.

SECT. 14. XIV. If there were no life of retribution, the wiser any man were, the more miserable would he be, and knowledge would be their plague, and ignorance the way to their greatest pleasure : but the consequence is absurd ; *ergo*, so is the antecedent.^e

labores exantlavisset, tum incideret in mortis malum sempiternum. Cic. l. 1. Tusc.

^c Mors iis terribilis est, quorum cum vita omnia extinguuntur. Cic. Parad. l. Read Cic. (l. 3. de Nat. Deor.) where Cotta would prove, that God did man a mischief by making him rational.

^d Thus man, who is the perfectest of animals, should be the most imperfect ; and he that is the wisest should be the most deluded.

^e Dicunt Stoici malum, impium esse et sine Deo ; quod datu ratione accipitur ; sive quod Deo contrarius dicatur, sive quod asperrum Deum : id tamen malis omnibus non

^a Nullum est animal præter hominem quod habet ullam notitiam Dei. Cic. l. 1. de Leg.

^b Dii immortales sparserunt animos in corpora humana, ut essent qui terras tuerentur, quique cælestem ordinem contemplant, imitari eum, vite modo et constantia. Cic. Cat. Maj.

^c Ex terra sunt homines, non ut incolæ et habitatores, sed quasi spectatores superarum rerum atque cælestium : quarum spectaculum ad nullum aliud animalium genus pertinet. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 2. Non temere, nec fortuito, sati et creati sumus : sed profecto fuit quedam vis, quæ generi consuleret humano : nec id gigneret aut aleret, quod cum omnes

The reason of the consequence is manifest in what is said: the ignorant have nothing to disturb them in their sensual delights. The liker to beasts they can be, to eat, and drink, and play, and satisfy every lust, and never think of a reckoning, or of death itself, the more uninterrupted would be their delights; the forethoughts of death, or any change, would not disturb them. Their folly, which maketh them overvalue all the matters of the flesh, would increase their pleasure and felicity. For things delight men as they are esteemed, rather than as indeed they are. But the more wise and knowing men would always see vanity and vexation written upon all the treasures and pleasures of the world; and in the midst of their delights would foresee death coming to cut them off, and bring them to a dolorous end. So that, undoubtedly, the most knowing would be the most miserable; and though nature delight in knowing much, it would but let in an inundation of vexatious passions on the mind.

But knowledge is so great a gift of God, and ignorance so great a blemish unto nature, that it is not by sober reason to be believed, that so noble a gift should be given us as a plague, and so great a plague and shame of nature as ignorance is should be a blessing or felicity.

SECT. 15. XV. If the kings and temporal governors of the world do extend their rewards and punishments, as far as to temporal prosperity and adversity, life and death, in respect to the present ends of government, and this justly; then is it meet and just that the universal King extend his benefits and punishments much further, for good or evil, as they have respect unto his own laws and honour: but the antecedent is true; *ergo*, so is the consequent.

Kings justly take away men's lives for treason. They that look but to the present temporal good or hurt of the commonwealth, do think that no temporal punishment or reward can be too great for some crimes, and for some achievements: read but the statute books, and this will be soon found.

And that the offences which are against the Infinite Majesty deserve, incomparably, sorer punishments than any against men as such, is past all question; as, also, that love, and fidelity, and duty to God, are incomparably more laudable.

SECT. 16. XVI. If there were no life of retribution after this, it would follow, that man is more to be feared and obeyed than God, and so hath the far greater and higher hand in the moral government of the world: but the consequent is absurd and blasphemous; *ergo*, so is the antecedent.

The argument is clear, and past all contradiction. The reason of the major or consequence, is because, though God can destroy any wicked man at his pleasure, yet all the world's experience sheweth us, that ordinarily in this life he doth no such things. If a strange judgment overtake some wicked

man, it is an unusual thing, and next to a miracle; and, usually, all things come alike to all; the good and the bad die of the same disease; the deceitful and the wicked prosper in the world as much as others; if either suffer more, usually it is the best. "*Vidētis quam prospera navigatio a Diis datur sacrilegis*," saith Dionysius. Thunderbolts strike so few, that it is scarce rational much to fear them: if one fall under some extraordinary judgment, many hundreds escape.^a

But, on the other side, kings and states do, ordinarily, do execution on those that displease them and break their laws. The case of a Daniel is so rare, that it would be no rule to direct a rational course by: if the king should forbid me praying, as he did Daniel, or command me to worship his image, as he did the other three witnesses, reason and self-preservation would require me to obey him; for it is ten to one but he would execute his wrath on me, and it is a hundred to one God would not deliver me here. God suffered thirty or forty thousand to be murdered at once, by the French massacre, under Charles IX.; he suffered two hundred thousand to be murdered by the Irish papists; he suffered many to be burned in Queen Mary's days; he suffered yet greater havoc to be made of the poor Waldenses and Albigenses; he suffered most cruel, inhuman torments and death upon thousands of innocent persons, to change the new-planted religion in Japan. He, therefore, that careth for his life and peace, will think it far safer to venture on the present executions of God than of his king, or enemy, or any one that is strong enough to ruin him. If I lived under the Turkish empire, and were commanded to deny Christ, and to renounce my baptism, and to subscribe that my baptismal vow doth not oblige me, or any way to lie, or be perjured, or sin against God, self-preservation would bid me, Venture on the sin, for it is a hundred to one but God will spare thee; and it is a hundred to one but that the prince will punish and destroy thee if thou obey him not. How few, that knew there were no life to come, would not rather venture to please a tyrant, or a robber, than God, and more fear to displease them; and would not by perjury, or any commanded villany, save himself from their fury and cruelty; and would not study more to flatter and humour them, than to obey their God?^b and so man should have the chief government of the world, while man's rewards and punishments were so much more notable than God's: man would be feared and obeyed before God; that is, man would be taken for our god. These things are clear, undeniable truths. If there were no life to come, self-love and reason would make man more obedient to man than God, and so make gods of flesh and blood; but whether this be the tendency of the government of God let reason judge.^c

SECT. 17. XVII. A very probable argument may be

his life: but that is not the common temper of mankind. Alta spectare si voles, atque hanc sedem et æternam domum contueri, neque sermionibus vulgi te dederis, nec in præmiis humanis spem posueris rerum tuiarum; suis te illecebris oportet ipsa virtus trahat ad verum decus. Cicero in Somn. Scip.

^a The very doubting of the life to come maketh multitudes take this course in our age; preferring that which they have in hand before that which they suppose uncertain.

^b Rursus vero si animæ lethi adeunt januas (Epicurius sententia definitur) nec sic causa est competens cur expeti philosophia debeat, etiamsi verum est, purgari has animas, atque ab omni puras vitiositate præstari: nam si communiter obeunt, non tantum est erroris maximi, verum stolidæ cæcitatibus, frangere ingenitos appetitus, cohibere in angustias vitam, nihil indulgere nature, non quod cupidines iusserint et instigarent facere, cum nulla te præmia tanti laboris expectent, cum dies mortis advenerit, et corporalibus fueris vinculis exolutus. Arnob. adv. Gentes, l. 2.

convenire: pios autem et religiosos esse sapientes: peritos enim esse divini juris omnes. Porro pietatem scientiam esse divini cultus: Diis item eos sacrificia facturos, castosque futuros: quippe ea quæ in Deos admittuntur peccata detestari, diisque charas ac gratos fore, quod sancti iustique in rebus divinis sint: solos vero sacerdotes esse sapientes, &c. Laert. in Zenone. (How christian-like is all this spoken!) Nec enim tantum mali est peccare principem (quanquam hoc magnum per seipsum malum) quantum illud, quod permulti imitatores principum existunt. Nam licet videtur, si velis replicare memoriam temporum, qualescunque summi civitatis viri fuerint talem civitatem fuisse: quæcunque mutatio morum in principibus extiterit, eandem in populo secururam. Cic. de Leg. 3. p. 262.

^c Laert. (in Timon) saith, that Philarchus the historian reporteth of Praylus the philosopher, that he was of so constant a mind, that he suffered himself to be unjustly executed as a traitor, and would not use one word of supplication for

fetched from the number and quality of intellectual spirits. He that looketh to the vast, and numerous, and glorious orbs which are above him, and thinks of the glorious receptacles of a more glorious sort of creatures, and then considereth that we are intellectual agents, made to love and honour God as well as they; and considers further, both the benignity of God and the communion which those other orbs have with us, will think it probable that we are in progress towards perfection; and that we that are so like them may be capable of their happiness.

Sect. 18. XVIII. If in this life God have little of the praise and glory of his works, from those whom he created for it, but, contrarily, be much dishonoured by them, then there is another life in which he will be more honoured by them: but the antecedent is true; *ergo*, so is the consequent.

What a glorious fabric hath God set man to contemplate; and how little of it is here known! so that philosophy is found to be but a searching and wrangling about things which no man reacheth, and yet an inquisitive desire we have; and, therefore, sure there is a state in which these works of God shall be better known of us, and God shall have the honour of them more than now. His laws also prescribe us excellent duties, and his servants are very excellent persons, according to his own description: but our infirmities, our errors or divisions, our mis-carriages and scandals, do so dishonour him and his ways, that the glory of them is much obscured, and blasphemers reproach him to his face, and godliness, which the law of nature teacheth, is derided as a foolish thing, and as the mere effect of superstitious fear. Now though all this doth no hurt to God, yet he is capable of wrong who is incapable of hurt; and it is not to be believed that he will finally put up with all this at his creatures' hands, and never vindicate his honour, or never more show the glory of his grace, his image, his justice, and judgments, than he now doth.

Sect. 19. XIX. The constant testimony of conscience in all men, that have not mastered reason by sensuality, and the common consent of all that are worthy to be called men, in all ages and countries upon earth, doth show that the life to come is a truth which is naturally revealed, and most sure.¹

Sect. 20. XX. The enemy of souls doth (against his will) give man a fourfold reason to judge, that there is a life of reward and punishment hereafter, viz. 1. By compacts with witches; 2. By apparitions; 3. By satanical possessions; 4. By all kinds of subtle, impudate temptations, which evidence themselves.

1. Though some are very incredulous about witches, yet to a full inquiry the evidence is past question, that multitudes of such there be. Though many are wronged, and some may be thought so foolish or melancholy as not to know what they say against themselves, yet against such numerous and various instances these exceptions do but confirm the general truth, that such there are. I have said so much of them in two other writings,² that I shall now say no more but this: That those judges ordinarily condemn them to die, who themselves have been most incredulous of such things; that so great numbers were condemned in Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex, about twenty years ago, that left the business past all doubt to the judges, auditors, and reverend minist-

ters, (yet living,) who were purposely sent with them for the fuller inquisition. That the testimonies are so numerous, and, beyond exception, recorded in many volumes written on this subject, by the Malleus Malificorum, Bodin, Remigius, and other judges who condemned them, that I owe no man any further proof than to desire him to read the foresaid writings; wherein he shall find men and women, gentlemen, scholars, doctors of divinity, of several qualities and tempers, all confessedly guilty, and put to death for this odious sin; and he shall find what compacts they made with the devil, promising him their souls or their service, and renouncing their covenant with God: all which doth more than intimate, that men have souls to save or lose, and that there is an enemy of souls, who is most solicitous to destroy them; or else to what end would all this be? When people are in wrath and malice, desirous of revenge, or in great discontents, or too eagerly desirous after over-hasty knowledge in any needless speculation, the devil hath the advantage to appear to them, and offer them his help, and draw them into some contract with him (implicit, at least, if not explicit): I have myself been too incredulous of these things, till cogent evidence constrained my belief. Though it belong not to us to give account why Satan doth it, or why upon no more, or why God permitteth it, yet that so it is, in point of fact, it cannot be rationally denied; and, therefore, we have so much sensible evidence, that there is a happiness and misery after this life, which the devil believeth, though atheists do not.

2. And though some are as incredulous of apparitions, yet evidence hath confuted all incredulity. I could make mention of many; but, for the notoriety, I will mention but two, which it is easy to be satisfied about:

The one is the apparition, in the shape of Colonel Bowen, in Glamorganshire, to his wife and family, speaking, walking before them, laying hold of them, hurting them in time of prayer (the man himself then living from his wife, in Ireland, being one that from sect to sect had proceeded to infidelity, if not to atheism; and, upon the hearing of it, came over, but durst not go to the place). The thing I have by me described largely, and attested by learned, godly ministers that were at the place; and is famous, past contradiction.³

2. But (to name no more) he that will read a small book called, "The devil of Mascon," written by Mr. Perreaud, and published by Dr. Peter Moulin, will see an instance past all question. The devil did there for many months together, at certain hours of the day, hold discourse with the inhabitants, and publicly disputed with a papist that challenged him, and when he had done, turned him, and cast him down so violently, that he went home distracted. He would sing, and jest, and talk familiarly with them as they do with one another. He would answer them questions about things done at a distance; and would carry things up and down before them, and yet never seen in any shape. All this was done in the house of the said Mr. Perreaud, a reverend faithful minister of the protestant church, in the hearing of persons of both professions, papists and protestants, that ordinarily came in, for above three months, at Mascon, a city of France, and at last, upon earnest prayer, it ceased. Mr. Perreaud's piety and honesty was well

¹ Plato oft saith, that the wicked are punished after death. Antisthenes (7. tome) had a book, *De his quæ sunt apud inferos*. Laert. l. 6. c. 1.

² Saints' Rest, part 2; and Unreasonableness of Infidelity. By the doctrine of idols, false gods that were sometimes men, and their sacrifices, the devil confesseth a life to come.

³ In Ireland it was testified by the oaths of many witnesses, that after the protestants had been murdered at Portdown-Bridge, a long time together a spectrum appeared in the river, like a person naked, standing in the water up to the middle, and crying, Revenge, revenge! See Dr. Jones's and Sir John Temple's Books.

known and attested to me by the right honourable the Earl of Orrery, now lord president of Munster in Ireland, and attested to the world by his most learned, worthy, honourable brother Mr. Robert Boyle, in an epistle before the book; neither of them persons apt to be over-credulous of such unusual things, yet both fully satisfied of the truth of this story by Mr. Perreaud's own narratives, with whom they were very familiar.

See the other testimonies cited in my *Saints' Rest*, part 2.

Quest. But how doth this signify that there is any future state for man?

Ans. 1. Commonly, these apparitions do expressly refer to some sin or duty which are regardable in order to a further life. Sometimes they come to terrify murderers, or other great offenders; and sometimes the devil hath killed men outright, which yet were no more painful than another death, if it fetched not their souls into a greater misery: sometimes they are used to tempt people to sin, to witchcraft, to revenge, to idolatry and superstition (to which use they are common among many of the Indians). And all this intimateth some further hurt which sin doth men after this present life, which they take not here for their pain, but their pleasure.

2. Many of these apparitions say, that they are the souls of such and such persons that have lived here: if it be so, then the question is granted. And whether it be so I suppose is to us uncertain; for why a condemned soul may not appear as well as Satan, notwithstanding that both of them are in that state of misery which is called hell, I yet could never hear any sure proof. But, because this is uncertain, 3. At least it sheweth us, that these evil spirits are near us, and able to molest us, and therefore are ordinarily restrained, and that their natures are not, as to any elevation, so distant from ours, but that a converse there may be; and therefore that it is very probable, that when the souls of the wicked are separated from their bodies, they shall be such as they, or have more converse with them; and that the good spirits shall be the companions of the souls of men that here were not far unlike themselves. When we perceive that we live among such invisible spirits, it is the easier to believe that we shall live with such of them hereafter as we are most like.

3. I may add to these the instance of satanical possessions;^m for though many diseases may have of themselves very terrible and strange effects, yet that the devil, I mean some evil spirit, doth operate in many, is past all contradiction. Some will speak languages which they never learned; some will tell things done far off; some will have force and actions which are beyond their proper, natural ability. Most great physicians, how incredulous soever, have been forced to confess these things; and abundance of them have written particular instances.

And the manner of their transportations, their horrid blasphemies against God, with other carriages, do commonly intimate a life to come, and a desire that Satan hath to dishonour God, and destroy the souls of men as well as their bodies.

4. And, lastly, the temptations and suggestions of Satan, yea, and oft his external, contrived snares, are such as frequently give men a palpable discovery of his agency, that there is indeed some evil spirit

that doth all this to the hurt of souls. Were there no such tempter, it were scarce credible that such horrid, inhuman villanies should ever be perpetrated by a rational nature, as histories credibly report, and as in this age our eyes have seen. That men should ever, even against their own apparent interest, be carried on obstinately to the last, in a wilful course of such sins as seem to have little or nothing to invite men to them, but a delight in doing hurt and mischief in the world. Whence is it that some men feel such violent, importunate suggestions to evil in their minds, that they have no rest from them; but which way soever they go, they are haunted with them till they have committed it, and then haunted as much to hang themselves in desperation? Whence is it that all opportunities are so strangely fitted to a sinner's turn, to accommodate him in his desires and designs; and that such wonderful, successive trains of impediments are set in the way of almost any man that intendeth any great good work in the world? I have, among men of my own acquaintance, observed such admirable frustrations of many designed, excellent works, by such strange, unexpected means, and such variety of them, and so powerfully carried on, as hath of itself convinced me, that there is a most vehement, invisible malice permitted by God to resist mankind, and to militate against all good in the world. Let a man have any evil design, and he may carry it on usually with less resistance. Let him have any work of the greatest natural importance, which tendeth to no great benefit of mankind, and he may go on with it without any extraordinary impediment. But let him have any great design for common good, in things that tend to destroy sin, to heal divisions, to revive charity, to increase virtue, to save men's souls,ⁿ yea, or to the public common felicity, and his impediments shall be so multifarious, so far-fetched, so subtle, incessant, and, in despite of all his care and resolution, usually so successful, that he shall seem to himself to be like a man that is held fast hand and foot, while he seeth no one touch him; or that seeth a hundred blocks brought and cast before him in his way, while he seeth no one do it. Yea, and usually the greatest attempts to do good shall turn to the clean contrary, even to destroy the good which was intended, and drive it much further off. How many countries, cities, churches, families, who have set themselves upon some great reformation, have at first seen no difficulties almost in their way! And when they have attempted it, they have been like a man that is wrestling with a spirit. Though he see not what it is that holdeth him, when he hath long sweated, and chafed, and tired himself, he is fain to give over; yea, leave behind him some odious scandal, or terrible example, to frighten all others from ever meddling with the like again. I have known that done which men call a miracle, a sudden deliverance in an hour, from the most strange and terrible disease, while, by fasting and prayer, men were present begging the deliverance. And presently, the devil hath drawn the persons into such a scandalous sin, that God had none of the honour of the deliverance, nor could any for shame make mention of it, but it turned to the greater dishonour of piety and prayer, though the wonder was past doubt. I have known men wonderfully enlightened and delivered from courses of error and schism, and being men of ex-

Christ and Satan, about knowledge and ignorance in the world, and how marvellously Satan keepeth the gospel from the infidel world, and locketh up the Scriptures in an unknown tongue among the papists, and hindereth preachers in all the world; will see that there is certainly a kingdom of darkness, and a kingdom of light, which strive for souls.

^m See what I have cited, *Saints' Rest*, part 2. cap. 7.

ⁿ Polybius often noteth, that many excellent men have attempted great and excellent works, but very few have ever been so happy as to perform them; and of those that have gone a little way, but few have finished them.

^o He that did but well study the plain strife between

traordinary worth and parts, have been very like to have proved the recovery of abundance more; and they have been so unresistibly carried into some particular errors on the contrary extreme, that all the hopes of their doing good have turned to the hardening of others in their schism, while they saw those errors, and judged accordingly of all the reasons of their change. But especially to hinder the successes of godly magistrates and ministers in their reformings, and their writings for the winning of souls, it were endless to show the strange, unexpected difficulties which occur, and lamentably frustrate the most laudable attempts. Nay, I have known divers men that have had resolute designs but to build an alms-house or a school-house, or to settle some public, charitable work, that when all things seemed ready, and no difficulty appeared, have been hindered in despite of the best of their endeavours, all their days, or many years: yea, men that purposed but to put it in their wills to do some considerable work of charity, have been so delayed, hindered, and disappointed, that they were never able to effect their ends. By all which it is very perceivable to an observing mind, that there is a working, invisible enemy still seeking to destroy all godliness, and to hinder men's salvation.

Perhaps you will say, That if this be so, you make the devil to be stronger than God, and to be the governor of the world; or to be more in hatred to godliness than God is in love with it.

I answer, No; but it appeareth that his enmity to it is implacable, and that he militateth against God and man's felicity, and that sin hath so far brought this lower world under God's displeasure, that he hath, in a great measure, forsaken it, and left it to the will of Satan. Yet hath he his holy seed and kingdom here, and the purposes of his grace shall never be frustrated, nor the gates of hell prevail against his church; and if he may forsake hell totally, as to his felicitating presence, he may also penally forsake earth as to the greater number; whilst, for aught we know, he may have thousands of orbs of better inhabitants, which have not so forfeited his love, nor are so forsaken by him.

I have been the larger in proving a life to come, of retribution to the good and bad, because all religion doth depend upon it, and I have myself been more assaulted with temptations to doubt of this, than of christianity itself, though this have more of natural evidence. And I have set down nothing that I am able, rationally, to confute myself, though every truth is liable to some snarling exceptions of half-witted and contentious men. No man that confesseth a life to come can question the necessity of a holy life; but I have thought meet, first to prove that a holy life is our unquestionable duty, as the *prius cognitum*, and thence to prove the certainty of the future state; for, indeed, though God hath not hid from us the matter of our reward and punishment, hopes and fears, yet hath he made our duty plainer in the main, and proposed it first to our knowledge and consideration.^a The eternity of the future state I have not here gone about to prove, because I reserve it for a fitter place, and need the help of more than natural light for such a task. But that it shall be of so much weight and duration, as shall suffice to the full

execution of justice, and to set all straight that seemed crooked in God's present government, this nature itself doth fully testify.

Three sorts of men will read what I have written: 1. Some few (and but very few) of those whose consciences are so bloody in the guilt of their debauchery, that they take it for their interest to hope that there is no life but this: 2. Those whose faith and holiness have made the world to come to be their interest, happiness, hope, desire, and only joy: 3. Those that only understand, in general, that it is the highest interest of human nature, that there be a full felicity hereafter; and see it a most desirable thing, though they know not whether it be to be expected or not. The first sort, I may fear, are under such a curse of God, as that he may leave their wills to master their belief, as their lusts have mastered their wills, and lest they be forsaken of God, to think that true which their wicked hearts desire were true; and that the haters of God and a holy life, should be left to dream that there is no God, nor future, happy life.^b

The second sort have both light, experience, and desire, and therefore will easily believe.

The third sort are they whose necessities are great, and yet conjunct with hope of some success. Though bare interest should command no man's understanding, because a thing may be desirable which is neither certain nor possible; yet I must needs say, that reason and self-love should make any man, that is not resolved in wickedness, exceeding glad to hear of any hopes, much more of certainty, of a life of angelical happiness and joy, to be possessed when this is ended. And, therefore, the inquiry should be exceedingly, willingly, and studiously endeavoured. I shall conclude this point with a few serious questions to those that deny a future life of retribution.^c

Quest. 1. Whether he that taketh a man to be but an ingenious kind of beast, can take it ill to be esteemed as a beast? May I not expect that he should live like a beast, who thinketh that he shall die like a beast? Is such a man fit to be trusted any further in human converse, than his present fleshly interest obligeth him? May I not justly suppose that he liveth in the practice of fornication, adultery, lying, perjury, hypocrisy, murder, treachery, theft, deceit, or any other villany, as oft as his interest tells him he should do it? What is a sufficient or likely motive to restrain that man, or make him just, who believes not any life after this? It seemeth to me a wrong to him in his own profession, to call him an honest man.

2. If you think yourselves but ingenious beasts, why should you not be content to be used as beasts? A beast is not capable of true propriety, right or wrong; he that can master him, doth him no wrong, if he work him, or fleece him, or take away his life. Why may not they that can master you, use you like pack-horses, or slaves, and beat you, and take away your lives?^d

3. Would you be only yourselves of this mind, or would you have all others of it? If yourselves only, why envy you the truth, as you suppose, to others? If all others, what security shall kings have of their lives, or subjects of their lives or liberties? What

^a *Virtutis merces ac finis optimum quiddam est, divinum et beatum. Arist. 1. Eth. c. 9. Virtutum omnium jucundæ non sunt actiones, nisi quatenus finis copulatus conjunctusque acciscitur. Id. 3. Eth. c. 9. Virtus extollit hominem et super astra mortales collocat; nec ea quæ bona aut mala vocantur, aut cupit nimis, aut expavescit. Sen. Ep. 88.*

^b *Tria sunt quæ ex animæ providentiâ accipiunt corpus animalis; ut quæ ut decore vivat, et ut immortalitas illi successione queratur. Macrob. 7. Sat.*

^c *Animarum originem manare de cælo, inter recte philosophantes indubitatè constat esse sententiâ. Et animæ dum corpore utitur hæc est perfecta sapientiâ, ut unde orta sit, de quo fonte venerit, recognoscant. Macrob. sup. Somn. Scip. l. 1. c. 9.*

^d *Maximum argumentum est, naturam ipsam de immortalitate animorum tacitum judicare, quod omnibus curæ sunt, et maxime quidem, quæ post mortem futura sunt. Cic. Tusc. Qu. l. 1. p. 220.*

trust can you put in wife, or child, or servant, or any man that you converse with? Will you not quickly feel the effects of their opinions? Had you not rather that the enemy who would murder you, the thief who would rob you, the liar that would deceive you, did believe a judgment and life of retribution, than not?

4. If there be no life after this, what business have you for your reason, and all your noble faculties, and time, that is worthy of a man, or that is not like children's games, or puppet-plays? What have you to do in the world, that hath any weight in the trial, any content or comfort in the review, or will give solid comfort to a dying man? Were it not better lie down and sleep out our days, than waste them all in dreaming waking? Oh, what a silly worm were man! what should he find to do with his understanding? Take off the poise of his ultimate end, and all his rational motions must stand still, and only the brutish motion must go on, and reason must drudge in the captivity of its service.¹

But these questions, and more such, I put more home in my book, called "A Saint or a Brute." If conscience tell you, that you can put no trust in your friend, your wife, your servant, or your neighbour; if they believe that there is no life but this; surely the same conscience may tell you, that then the thing is true, and that the God of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, hath better means enough than deceits and lies to rule the world by.

Hear what the conscience of the epicure saith, in Cicero Academ. (quest. l. 4. p. (mih) 44.) *Quis enim potest, cum existimet a Deo se curari, non et dies, et noctes, divinum munus horrere, &c.* It is true of the guilty; but what greater joy to the upright, godly, faithful soul.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE INTRINSIC EVIL OF SIN, AND OF THE PERPETUAL PUNISHMENT DUE TO THE SINNER, BY THE UNDOUBTED LAW OF NATURE.

SECT. 1. It seemed good to the most wise Creator, to give man, with reason, a liberty of will, by which he is a kind of first cause of its own determination in comparative moral acts; though he hold the power in full dependence upon God, and perform each act as an act *in genere* by the influx of his Maker, and do all under his perfect government. And these great principles in his nature, his power, his reason, and his free, self-determining will, are the image of God, in which, as man, he was created, which advanced by the perfections of fortitude, wisdom, and moral goodness, are also in holiness the image of God's perfections.²

When a man deliberateth whether he shall do this sin or not, as lie or murder, he cannot act in general without God, but that he chooseth this act rather than another, may be without any more of God than his giving and maintaining his free-choosing power, and his universal influx before mentioned, and his

setting him among such objects as he acteth upon. Neither do those objects, nor any physical, efficient motion of God, or any creature besides himself, determine his will effectually to choose the evil and refuse the good. It is not true, that nothing undetermined can determine itself to act; this is but to deny God's natural image on the will of man. The will cannot determine itself without the conduct of an intellect, and without an object *in esse cognito*, or without divine sustentation and universal influx; but it can determine itself to the moral species, which is but the mode of action to this, rather than that in the comparative proposal, without any pre-determining efficient, for such none of the former are.

And God having made such a self-determining creature, took delight to govern him according to his nature, by the sapiential, moral means of laws. Of what he doth more to cause good than evil, and other such incident questions, I must now put them off, to a fitter place.³

SECT. 2. God planted in man's mind a natural inclination to truth and goodness and to his own felicity, and an aversion to falsehood, and to evil, and to his own misery and hurt, that these, lying deeper than his liberty of choice, might be a *pondus* to his motions, and help him the more easily and stedfastly to obey, and to adhere to and prosecute his proposed happiness and end.

SECT. 3. Accordingly, God formed his holy law with a perfect fitness to these faculties and inclinations, furnishing it wholly with truth and goodness, and fitting all things in it to the benefit of man, as is proved before.

SECT. 4. This law had a sufficient promulgation, being legible on the face of the whole creation, within our view, and especially on the nature of man himself, from whence his duty did result.

SECT. 5. And God was pleased to make as legible, the most rational, powerful motives to love and obedience, that can be imagined by man; that no tempter might possibly bid the ten-thousandth part so much for our love and obedience as he had bid, and assured us of himself.

SECT. 6. From all this, it is most evident that God made us not sinners, though he made us men; but that man, being defective, abused his liberty, and turned from God, and brought corruption and misery upon himself.⁴

SECT. 7. He that will understand God's justice aright, must consider of these forty intrinsic evils that are in sin, which nature itself declareth.

1. In its formal nature, it is the violation of a perfect, righteous law.

2. It is a contempt or denial of God's governing authority over us.

3. It is the usurping of the government of ourselves, which we denied to God.

4. It is a denial or contempt of the wisdom of God, as if he had erred in the making of his laws, and knew not so well what is just and meet and good for us, as we ourselves, and were not wise enough to govern a lump of animated clay.⁵

5. It is an exalting our folly into the throne of the divine wisdom, as if we had more wisdom than he that made us, and knew better what is just and

animum ut Dominum et imperantem obedienti præfecit corpori. Cic. de Univers.

¹ Casta placent superis; pura cum mente venite,

Et manibus puris sumite fontis aquam. Tibul.

Pone Deos, et quæ tangenda sacra profanas;
Non bene calestes impia dextra colit. Ovid.

² Animi morbi perniciosiores, pluresque quam corporis.

Cic. 3. Tuscul.

³ The Athenians punished not only the total violation of a law, but even of a clause or part of a law.

¹ Platonici dicunt, Beatum esse hominem fruentem Deo; non sicut corpore, vel seipso fruitur animus, aut sicut amicus amico; sed sicut luce oculis. August. de Civ. Dei.

² Ad hoc anima conjuncta corpori est, ut fruat scientiis et virtutibus: si autem cum fervore magno se invenerit, benigne recipietur a suo creatore; si autem secus, relegabitur ad inferna. Plat. in Tim. Animus recte solus liber, nec dominationi cujusquam parens, nec obediens cupiditati. Recte victus, cujus etiam corpus constringatur, animo tamen vincula injici nulla possunt. Cic. 3. de Finib. Deus

meet, and what is fit or good for ourselves, and could correct God's laws, and make ourselves a better rule.

6. It is a denial or contempt of the goodness of God, as if he had ensnared us by his law, and envied our happiness, and forbade us that which would do us good, and put us upon that which will do us hurt, and so would seduce us into calamity, and were an enemy to our welfare.

7. It is a preferring our naughtiness before his goodness, as if we could do better in regulating ourselves than God, and could make a better choice for ourselves than his laws have made; and as if our wills were fitter than God's to be the rule of good and evil.^e

8. It is a denial or contempt of his holiness and purity, which is as contrary to sin as health to sickness; as if by our deeds we would persuade the world, that God is as Satan, a lover of sin, and an enemy to himself and holiness.

9. It is a denial or contempt of God's propriety, as if we were not his own, and he had not power to dispose of us as he list; or it is a robbing him of the use and service of that which is absolutely his own.

10. It is a claiming of propriety in ourselves, as if we were at our own disposal, and might do with ourselves and our faculties as we list.

11. It is a belying or contempt of the great and gracious promises of God, and of the wonderful mercy which he manifesteth in them, by which he doth bind and allure us to obedience, as if he did not mean as he speaketh, or would not make good his word to the obedient.

12. It is a falsifying or contempt of his dreadful threatenings, as if he did not intend any execution of them, but made them only as a deceitful terror to frighten men from sin, for want of better means.

13. It is a denial or contempt of the dreadful, future judgment of God, as if he would never call men to any account, nor judge them according to his laws.

14. It is a denying the veracity of God, as if he were a liar and deceiver, and did not intend the things which he speaketh; as if his precepts were but a false pretension, and he were, indeed, indifferent what he did, and were not to be believed in his predictions, promises, or threats.

15. It is a contempt of all the mercies, even of this life, which flesh itself doth overvalue; as if protection, provision, deliverances, comforts, were not so much to be regarded as our concupiscence, or were not of weight enough to bind us to obey so merciful a God, and as if ingratitude were no crime.

16. It is a contempt of those castigatory afflictions, by which God driveth men from sin, by giving them a taste of the bitterness of its fruits.

17. It is a contempt of all the examples of his mercy and his judgment upon others, by which he hath showed us how good he is, and how just a punisher of sin.

18. It is a contempt of all the inward motions and strivings of God, which sinners oft feel persuading them to forbear their sins, and to seek after God.

19. It is a contempt of conscience, which beareth witness for God against their sins.

20. It is a contempt of all the instruction and advice of wise and good men, who are required, by God

and nature, to warn men, and dissuade them from their sins.

21. It is a contempt of the example of all obedient virtuous persons, whose lives instruct them and reprove them.

22. It is a contempt of virtue itself, which is contrary to sin, and whose proper worth commandeth love.

23. It is a contempt of God's omnipresence, when we will sin in his very presence; and of his omniscience, when we will sin when we know that he seeth it.

24. It is a contempt of the greatness and almightiness of God, when a silly worm dare sin against him, who upholdeth the world, and can do justice on him in a moment; as if we could make good our part against him.

25. It is a contempt of the attractive goodness of God, by which he is man's End and Happiness; as if all the goodness and love of God were not enough to counterpoise the base and brutish pleasures of sin, and to drive the rational soul to God. (It was his efficient goodness which I spoke of before.)

26. And thus it declareth, that we are so far void of love to God; for love is desirous to please.

27. It is a setting up the sordid creature for our end; as if it were more attractive and amiable than God, and fitter to content and delight the soul.

28. It is a contempt of all that glorious happiness of the life to come, which God hath warranted the righteous to expect; as if it were not all so good as the defiling, transitory pleasures of sin, and would not recompense us for all that we can do or suffer for God.

29. It is the silencing and laying by our reason by inconsiderateness, or the perverting and abusing of it by error, in the greatest matters, for which it was given us; and so it is a voluntary drunkenness or madness, in the things of God and our felicity.

30. It is a setting up our senses and appetite above our reason, and making ourselves in use as beasts, by setting up the lower bestial faculties to rule.

31. It is the deformity, monstrosity, disorder, sickness, and abuse of a noble creature, whom God made, in our measure, like himself, and so a contemptuous defacing of his image.^f

32. It is a robbing God of that glory of his holiness, which should shine forth in our hearts and lives; and of that complacency which he would take in our love, obedience, perfection, and felicity.

33. It is the perverting and moral destruction, not only of our own faculties, (which were made for God,) but of all the world which is within our reach; turning all that against God and our happiness, which was given us for them: yea, it is worse than casting them all away, while we use them contrary to their nature, against their Owner and their End.

34. It is thus a breach in the moral order and harmony of the world, and as much as in us lieth, the destroying of the world; as the dislocation or rejection of some parts of a clock or watch is a disordering of the whole, and as a wound to the hand or foot is a wrong to the body; and it is a wound to every society where it is committed, and an injury to every individual who is tempted or afflicted by it.^g

35. It is a contradicting of our own professions, confessions, understandings, and promises to God.

^e Piso (in Cic. de Fin. l. 5. p. 203.) saith of the Epicureans, Quin etiam ipsi voluptuarii diverticula quarant, et virtutes habeant in ore toties dicit, &c.; which sheweth that virtue was commended even by the voluptuous.

^f Minus malum est feritas et immanitas quam vitium, etsi terribilior. Arist. 7. Eth. c. 6.

^g Nil peccat oculi, si non animus oculis imperet. Sen.

Omne animi vitium tanto conspectus in se crimen habet, quantum major qui peccat habetur. Juv. Omnino ex alto genere impotentia est, ex alio vitium: vitium enim omne suae culpe ignarum est, non ignara impotentia. Arist. 7. Eth. c. 8. Vitia nostra voluntate necesse est suscipi. Ib. 3. Eth. c. 5. Quae crimini dantur vitia in nostra potestate sunt. Ib. 3. Eth. c. 5.

36. It is a preferring of an inch of hasty time before the durable life to come, and things that we know are of short continuance, before those of which we can see no end.

37. It is the preferring of a corruptible flesh and its pleasure, before the soul, which is more noble and durable.

38. It is an unmercifulness and inhuman cruelty to ourselves, not only defiling soul and body, but casting them on the displeasure and punishing justice of their great and terrible Creator.

39. It is the gratifying of the malicious tempter, the enemy of God, and of our souls; the doing his will, and receiving his image instead of God's.

40. And all this is done voluntarily, without constraint, by a rational, free agent, in the open light, and for a thing of nought. Besides what christians only can discern, all this the light of nature doth reveal to be in the malignity of sin.

Sect. 8. Sin being certainly no better a thing than is here described, it is most certain that it deserveth punishment.

Sect. 9. And reason telleth us, that God being the Governor of the world, and perfect government being his perfect work and glory in that relation, it is not meet that in such a divine and perfect government so odious an evil be put up, and such contempt of God and all that is good be passed by, without such execution of his laws as is sufficient to demonstrate the justice of the Governor, and to vindicate his laws and authority from contempt. Nor that it be pardoned on any terms, but such as shall sufficiently attain the ends of perfect government.^b

The ends of punishment are, 1. To do justice, and fulfil the law and truth of the lawgiver. 2. To vindicate the honour of the Governor from contempt and treason. 3. To prevent further evil from the same offender. 4. To be a terror to others, and to prevent the hurt that impunity would encourage them to. 5. And if it be but merely castigatory, it may be for the good of the sinner himself; but in purely vindictive punishment, it is the governor and society that are the end.

1. It is true, that as the immediate sense of the precept, e. g. "Thou shalt do no murder," is not, *de eventu*, it shall not come to pass, but *de debito*, thy duty is to forbear it. So, also, the immediate sense of the penal part is not *de eventu*, e. g. if thou murder, thou shalt be put to death, but *de debito*, death shall be thy due, thou shalt be *reus mortis*: so that if it do *non evenire*, it is not presently a falsehood. But it is as true, that when the sovereign makes a law, he thereby declareth that this law is a rule of righteousness, that it is *norma officii et iudicii*; that the subject must do according to it, and expect to be done by according to it; that it is the instrument of government. Therefore these two things are declared by it. 1. That ordinarily judgment and execution shall pass according to it. 2. That it shall never be extraordinarily dispensed with by sovereignty but upon terms which as well declare the justice of the governor, and discourage offenders from contempt, and are as fit to preserve the common good, and the honour of the sovereign. So that thus far a law doth assert also the event; which I put to prevent objections, and to show that truth and

justice require the ordinary execution of just and necessary laws.¹

2. And should they be ordinarily dispensed with, it would intimate that the ruler did he knew not what in making them; that he repented of them as unjust, or oversaw himself in them, or foresaw not inconveniences, or was not able to see them executed. It would, also, make him seem a deceiver, that affrighted subjects with that which he never intended to do; which omnipotency, omniscience, and perfect goodness, cannot do, whatever impotent, ignorant, bad men may do.^k

3. And the offender must be disabled, when penitency sheweth not the change of his heart, that he do so no more; and, therefore, death is ordinarily inflicted.

4. And, especially, offences must be prevented, and the honour of the sovereign and safety of the people be preserved. If laws be not executed, they and the lawgiver will be despised, others will be let loose, and invited to do evil; and no man's right will have any security by the law; therefore, it is a principle in politics, that *pœna debetur reipublicæ*; it is the commonwealth to which the punishment of offenders is due; that is, it is a means which the ruler oweth them for their security: and Cato was wont to say, *Se malle pro collato beneficio nullam reportare gratiam, quam pro maleficio perpetrato non dare penam.* (Plutar. Apoth. Rom.) He had rather miss of thanks for his kindnesses and gifts, than of punishment for his faults; and was wont to say, that *Magistratus qui maleficos prohibere possent, et tamen impunitate donarent, lapidibus obruendos esse, ut Reipub. perniciosissimos.* A hundred such sayings are in Cicero: (Offic. 3.) *Quotusquisque reperietur qui impunitate proposita abstinere possit injuria. Impunitas peccandi maxima est illecebra*; (De Natur. Deor. 3.) *Nec domus, nec Respubl. stare potest, si in ea nec recte factis premia extent ulla, nec supplicia peccatis*; (In Verrem 5.) *Est utilius unius improbi supplicia multorum improbarent coercere, quam propter multos improbos unum parcere*; (Offic. 1.) *Non satis est eum qui lacerasset, injuriæ suæ pœnitere; ut ipse nequid tale posthac committat, et ceteri sint ad injurias tardiores.* This is the common sense of all that know what it is to govern.

Object. But God is so good, that all his punishments tend at last to the sinner's good, and are merely castigatory.

Ans. God is so wise, that he knoweth better than we what is good and fittest to be done; and God is so good, that for the honour of his government, and holiness, and goodness, he expresseth his hatred of sin, to the final ruin of the sinners; and he is so wise and good, that he will not spare the offender, when the penalty is necessary to the good of the innocent, to prevent their falls. The objection is a surmise not only groundless, but notoriously false.

Sect. 10. He that would know how far punishment is necessary to the ends of government, must first know how far the penal law itself is necessary; for the first and chiefest benefit to the commonwealth is from the law, and the next from the execution.

The first benefit is to constrain men to duty, and to restrain them from doing ill.¹ This is done immediately by the fear of punishment, with the ex-

and "More Reasons," &c. p. 93, 94; and of this book, p. 64, 232, and 253, 254. *Noxæ* par pœna esto, ut in suo vitio quisque plectatur. Cic. de Leg.

^k *Injusti iudicis est bene agentem non remunerare, et negligentem non corrigere. Sen. de Benef. Turpe quid ausurus, te, sine teste, time. Auson. Veterem ferendo injuriam, invitas novam.* Gell. Noc. Attic. 1. 18.

¹ All laws were made for these two causes; both that no

^b *Sceleris etiam pœna tristic, et præter eos eventus qui sequuntur, per se maxima est.* Cic. 2. de Leg.

¹ Ἄγει το θεῖον τῶν κακῶν πρὸς τὴν δικήν. Θεὸς δὲ οὐκ ἐδίδου τῶν κακῶν ὑδαμινεῖν. Καὶ ζῶν ὁ φάνους, καὶ ζῶντων κολάζεται. Menand. Nemo malus felix. Juv. Malo benefacere tantundem esse periculum, quantum bono malefacere. Plaut. Pen. See also the advertisement before the "Unreasonableness of Infidelity;" and in the book itself, P. I. p. 53, &c.;

pectation of the benefit; this fear of punishment is to be caused by the rational expectation of it, if they do offend; this expectation is to be caused by the commination of the law. When the law saith, He that sinneth shall suffer, the subject avoideth sin for fear of suffering; therefore, the subject must believe that the lawgiver meaneth as he speaketh, even to govern and judge in justice according to that law; and he that can but make the subject believe, that the governor doth but affright men with a lie, and meaneth not to execute his penalties, shall easily make his laws of none effect, and turn loose offenders to presumptuous disobedience; therefore, the fore-belief of execution is necessary to the efficacy of the law, which, else, is but a mawkin to affright away birds, and fit to work on none but fools: and if it be so necessary a duty to the subject, to believe that the law shall be the *norma iudicii*, and shall be executed, then in our present case it is certainly true; for God cannot lie, nor make it the duty of the world to believe a lie, nor need so vile a means to keep the world in order: so that it is most evident, that if the law be necessary, the execution of it is ordinarily necessary; and either the execution, or some means as effectual to the ends of government, is ever necessary.

Sect. 11. Therefore, he that would know what degree of punishment it is meet and just for God to execute, must first know what degree it is meet for him to threaten, or make due by law; or rather how much he hath made due: because, what God should do, is best known by what he actually doth.

If a temporal, short, or small measure of penalty be sufficient to be threatened in the law, for the present attaining of the ends of government, then such a punishment is sufficient in the execution; but if the threatening of an endless punishment in another world be little enough, *in suo genere*, to prevail now with subjects for order and obedience, then the execution will be, therefore, necessary by consequence.

Sect. 12. It followeth not therefore that punishment or rewards must cease, if the ends be passed in natural existence; because moral means may in time be after their end, to which they were appointed to operate *in esse cognito*; and that penalty which is perpetuated may be a means to the ends already attained; that is, the threatenings, and the expectation of them; and then the honour of the ruler's veracity and justice bindeth him to the execution.^m

Sect. 13. Whatever reward or punishment is annexed to sin by the law, is offered with the duty and sin to the subject's choosing or refusing; and no man is in danger of any punishment, but he that chooseth it in itself, or in its annexed cause. And he that will have it, or will have that which he is

man might be suffered to do that which is unjust, and that transgressions being punished, the rest might be made better. Demosth. Or. 2. cont. Aristot. It is your part, who are judges, to preserve the laws, and to make them strong and valid: for it is by the benefit of these that good men are better than the bad. Id. ib. Or. 1. The government is useless which hath not nerves and force against the wicked and injurious, and in which pardon and the request of friends can do more than the laws. Id. Or. de fals. Leg. Let no man be thought of so great authority, as to escape unpunished, if he break the laws. Id. 3. Olynth. Punienti peccatis tres esse causas existimatum est. 1. Cum adhibetur poena castigandi et emendandi gratia; ut is qui deliquit attentior fiat correctione. 2. Quum dignitas ejus autoritasque in quem peccatur tendit, ne prætermissa animadversione contemptum ei pariat. 3. Propter exemplum ut ceteri metu poenæ terreatur. Gell. l. 6.

^m In iudicando vel corrigendo hæc est lex ut aut eum quem punit emendet, aut poena ejus ceteros meliores reddat; aut sublatis malis securiores ceteri vivant. Sen. de Clem.

ⁿ Animas vero ex hac vita cum delictorum sordibus rece-

told by God is annexed to it, (especially if it be deliberately and obstinately to the last,) hath none to blame of cruelty towards him, but himself, nor any thing to complain of but his wilful choice.

Object. But it were easy with God to confirm man's will so, that the threatening of a temporal punishment might have ruled him.

Answe. It is easy with God to make every man an angel, and every beast or worm a man: but if his wisdom think meet, below men to make such inferior things as beasts; and below angels, or confirmed souls, to make so low a rank of creatures as men, that have reason, and undetermined and unconformed free wills; what are we, that we should expostulate with him for making them no better, nor ruling them in our way?

Sect. 14. Sin doth unquestionably deserve a natural death, and annihilation.

This all men grant, that believe God is our Governor, and that there is any such thing as his laws, and man's sins. If treason against a king deserve death, much more rebellion and sin against God. Life and being is God's free gift. If he take it away from the innocent, he taketh but his own; therefore, there can be no doubt but he may take it away from the guilty, who abuse it.ⁿ

Sect. 15. If such a penalty were inflicted, God is not bound to restore that sinner to being again whom he hath annihilated (if it be not a contradiction). And then this penal privation would be everlasting; therefore, an endless privation of being and all mercies is the sinner's due.

All this I know of no man that doth deny.

Sect. 16. God is not bound thus to annihilate the sinner, but may continue all his natural being, and leave him under the deserved privation of well-being, depriving him of all other mercies.

This is undeniable; that it is in God's choice whether he will take away his being itself, or only all the mercies which are necessary to his well-being: for he that had nothing before but by free gift, may be deprived of any thing which was none of his own, if he forfeit it by abuse. Nay, we live upon such continued emanation from God, as the beams from the sun, that it is but God's stopping of his streams of bounty, and we perish, without any other taking away of mercies from us.

Sect. 17. Nature teacheth men to choose a great deal of tolerable pain and misery, rather than not be at all; even so much as will not utterly weigh down the love of life, and of vital operations.^o

I say not, as some, that the greatest torment or misery is more eligible, or less odious, than annihilation; but it is certain, that a great deal is. We see abundance, however the Roman and Greek philosophers scorned it as baseness, who are blind, or dentes, æquandas his qui in abruptum ex alto præcipitque delapsi sunt, unde nunquam sit facultas resurgendi. Ideo utendum est concessis vitæ spatiis, ut sit perfectæ purgationis major facultas. Macrobi. de Sonn. Scip. l. 1. c. 13.

^o Sua quæque fraud, et suis error maxime vexat, suum quæque scelus agitat, æmentiaque afficit, sua mala cogitationes conscientiaque animi terrent. He sunt impis assidue domesticæque furæ, quæ dies noctesque ponas a sceleratissimis repetunt. Cic. pro Rosc. Improbis nunquam sinit eum respirare, nunquam quiescere. Cic. de Fin. Impiis poenas lunt, non tam iudicii, quam angore conscientiæ, fraudisque cruciatur. Id. 2. de Leg. Animi conscientia improbi semper cruciatur, tum etiam poenæ timore. Id. 2. de Fin. Impis apud inferos sunt poenæ præparatæ. Id. l. de Leg. Hic gemine æternum portæ, quarum altera dura

Semper lege patens, populos regesque receptat. V. Flac. 1. Claud. 2. Ruf. de inferis ita loquitur.

Huc post emerit mortalæ seculæ vitam Deveniunt, ubi nulla manent discrimina fati Nullus honor, vanoque exutum nomina Regem Perturbat plebeius egens—

lame, or in grievous pains of the gout and stone, and many that are in miserable poverty, begging their bread, or toiling from morning to night like horses, and yet seldom taste a pleasant bit, but join distracting cares with labours; and yet they are all unwilling to die. Custom hath made their misery tolerable, and they had rather continue so for ever than be annihilated. If, then, God may annihilate even the innocent, (supposing he had not promised the contrary,) then may he lay all that pain, and care, and labour on them, which they would themselves prefer before annihilation. For it is no wrong to one that hath his reason and liberty, to give him his own choice.

Sect. 18. It is just with God to lay more misery on a sinner, than on one that never deserved ill; and to lay more on him for his sin, than he would choose himself, before annihilation.

Whether God may, without injustice, inflict more misery on the innocent, than he would himself prefer before annihilation, some make a question, and deny it. For my part, I see no great difficulty in the question.

But it is nothing to that which I am proving: it is not God's usage of the innocent, but of the guilty, which we are speaking of; and that he may make them more miserable who deserve it, than his bounty made them before any guilt, or than a just man would choose to be, rather than be annihilated, I see no reason at all to doubt. Penalty is involuntary; and no man ever said, that it was unjust to lay more upon a malefactor than he himself was willing of, and would choose before a condition, which without his fault he might have been put into.^p

So then we have already proved, 1. That God may punish a man everlastingly; 2. And with a greater penalty than annihilation.

Sect. 19. God may leave a sinner his being, and in particular) deprive him of his favour, and all the joys and blessedness which he refused by his sinning.

Sect. 20. And he may justly withhold from him those corporal mercies, (meat, drink, honour, pleasure, health, ease, &c.) which he overvalued and abused, and preferred before God and greater blessings.

All this I think no man doth deny, that acknowledgeth a God.

Sect. 21. He that is continued in his natural being, and is deprived of God's favour, and of his future happiness for ever, and understandeth what it is that he hath lost, and is also deprived of all those natural benefits which he desired, must needs be under continual pain of sense, as well as of loss; for all this want must needs be felt.

Sect. 22. He that in all this misery of loss and sense doth remember how it was that he came to it, and how base a thing he preferred before his God and his felicity, and for how vile a price he sold his hopes of the life to come, and how odiously he abused God by sin, (as it is before described,) cannot choose

but have a continual torment of conscience, and heart-gnawing repentance in himself.^q

Sect. 23. He that is under utter despair of ever coming out of this condition, will thereby have his torment yet more increased.

All these are natural, undeniable consequents.

Sect. 24. A body united to so miserable a self-tormenting, forsaken soul, cannot have any peace and quietness, seeing it is the soul by which the body liveth, and hath its chiefest peace or pains.

Sect. 25. Thus sin doth both as a natural and as a moral meritorious cause, bring on dissatisfaction, grief, vexation, desertion by God, and privation of felicity and peace.

Sect. 26. For as long as a sinner is impenitent and unsanctified, that is, loveth not God as God, nor is recovered from his carnal mind and sin, it is both morally and naturally impossible that he should be blessed, or enjoy God.

For, as it is only God that can, efficiently, make happy, because nothing worketh but by him; and so sin meritoriously undoeth the sinner, by making him unfit for favour, and making him an object of displacence and justice; so it is only God that finally can make happy, all things being but means to him, and unfit of themselves to give rest to the inquisitive, seeking mind: and God is enjoyed only by love, and the sense of his love and goodness; therefore, the soul that loveth not God, and is not suited to the delightful fruition of him, can no more enjoy him than a blind man can enjoy the light, or an ox feast with a man.

Sect. 27. He that is under this punishment and despair, will be yet further removed from the love of God, and so from all capacity of happiness; for he cannot love a God who, he knoweth, will for ever, by penal justice, make him miserable.

He that would not love a God who aboundeth in mercy to him in the day of mercy, will never love him, when he seeth that he is his enemy, and hath shut him for ever out of mercy and out of hope.

Sect. 28. God is not bound to sanctify the mind and will of such a self-destroying sinner, who hath turned away himself from God and happiness.^r

And without a renewed mind it is morally and naturally impossible that he should be happy. He that would not use the mercy that would have saved him in the day of mercy, cannot require another life of mercy and trial, when this is lost and cast away; nor can require the further helps of grace.

Sect. 29. If sin as sin have all the malignity and demerit before proved, much more the aggravated sins of many; and most of all, a life of wickedness, which is spent in enmity against God and godliness, and in a course of sensuality and rebellion, with the obstinate, impenitent rejecting of all the counsel, calls, and mercies which would reclaim the sinner; and this to the last breath.^s

It hath before been manifested, that all wilful sin hath this malignity in it; that, in effect, it denieth

Sed nemo ad id sero venit, unde nunquam

Cum semel venit potuit reverti. Id. ibid.

^p Nihil est miserius quam animus hominis conscius, &c. Plaut. Jam adierit tempus, cum se etiam ipse oderit. Plaut. Bac.

^q — Nam quis

Peccandi finem posuit sibi, quando recepit.

Erectum semel attrita de fronte ruborem?

^r Quisquam hominum est quem tu contentum videris uno Flagitio? Juven. 3.

In omni injuria permultum interest, utrum perturbatione aliqua animi quæ plerumque brevis est, an consulte fiat: leviora enim sunt ea, quæ repente aliquo motu accidunt, quam ea quæ præmeditata et preparata inferuntur. Cic. 3. Offic.

^p Facinorum mala flagellantur a conscientia cui plurimum tormentorum est, eo quod perpetua illam sollicitudo urget ac verberat. Sen. Ep. 97. Conscientia aliud agere non patitur, ac subinde respicere ad se cogit. Dat penas qui metuunt. Sen. Ep. 105.

^q Facinorosa conscientia instar ulceris in corpore, penitentiam relinquit in anima lancinantem jugiter ac pervellentem. Plut. de Tranquill. Maxima est factæ injuriæ pena fecisse: nec nequam gravius afficitur, quam qui ad supplicium penitentiae trahitur. Sen. de Ira, l. 3. c. 29. It is one of Pythagoras's sayings, that a bad man suffereth more by the scourge of his own conscience, than one that is beaten with rods, and chastised in his body. Stob. Serm. 24.

Quod quisque fecit, patitur: autorem scelus

Repetit, suoque premitur exemplo nocens.

Sen. Her. fur.

that there is a God, or pulleth him down as much as in the sinner lieth, and it setteth up the devil in his stead, and calleth him God, or maketh God to be such a one as the devil is; and also maketh an idol of the sinner himself: for it denieth God's power, wisdom, goodness, propriety, sovereignty, and love, his truth, and holiness, and justice; and maketh him, on the contrary, impotent, unwise, bad, envious, unholly, false, unjust, and one that hath no authority to rule us; with much more the like.

But a life of enmity, rebellion, and final impenitency, which is the case of all that perish, much more deserveth whatever human nature can undergo.

Sect. 30. He that consenteth not to God's government is a rebel, and deserveth accordingly; and he that consenteth to it, consenteth to his laws, and consequently to the penalty threatened: and therefore if he break them he suffereth by his own consent, and therefore cannot complain of wrong.

All that understand God's government and laws, and consent to them, are not only under the obligation of governing power, but also of their own consent; and it is justly supposed that they consented on good and rational grounds, not knowing where they could be better; on hopes of the benefits of the government and the reward, they necessarily consented to the penalties.

Sect. 31. He that never consenteth to the law, and yet is under the obligation of it, hath life and death, the blessing and the curse, felicity and misery, set before him in the law: felicity is annexed to obedience, and misery to disobedience; and the law-giver telleth us, that accordingly he will judge and execute, and he offereth every man his choice. He, therefore, that after this doth choose the sin which misery is annexed to, doth choose the misery, and refuse the happiness; and, therefore, it is no wrong to cast him into misery, though everlasting; as long as he hath nothing but what he chose, and loseth nothing but what he rejected, and that with wilful obstinacy to the very last.^a

A sinner in this case hath nothing but blasphemy to say against the justice of his Maker: for what can he say? He cannot say that his Maker had not authority to make this law, for his authority was absolute. He cannot say that it was too cruel, hard, and unjust a law; for it was made but to deter him, and such as he, from such sin, to which he had no greater temptations than the toyish vanities of a fleshly life. And he himself hath declared by the event, that the law was not terrible enough to deter him. If it would not serve against so small and poor a bait, he himself doth justify the terrible-ness of it by his contempt. God saith, I threaten hell to thee, to keep thee from sin: the sinner saith by his life and practice, The threatening of hell is not enough to keep me from sin. And shall the same man say, when execution cometh, it is too great? No sinner shall suffer any thing but what he chose himself, in the causes of it. If he say, I did not believe that God was in good earnest, and would do as he said; this is but to blaspheme, and say, I took God for a liar, and deceiver, and a bad, and unwise, and impotent governor. If he say, I did not know that sin, even final impenitency in an ungodly life, deserved so ill, common reason, and all the world,

will rise up against him; and the light of nature will show him to his face, that all the forty points of malignity were in sin, which I mentioned before; and therefore that the law of nature had a sufficient promulgation.*

Having thus showed what punishment God may inflict without the least imputation of injustice, let us next inquire of reason what he will inflict.

Sect. 32. When it is at God's choice whether he will annihilate a sinner, or let him live in misery, reason telleth us, that the latter is more suitable to the ends of government; because the living offender will not only be still a spectacle in the eyes of others, as a man hanged up in chains, but will also confess his folly and sin, and his conscience will justify his Judge, and so God's justice will be more glorious and useful to its ends.

That which is not, is not seen nor heard; the annihilated are out of sight; and the mind of man is apt to think of a state of annihilation, as that which is a state of rest, or ease, and feeleth no harm, and so is not terrible enough, as shall be further said anon. The living sufferer, therefore, is rationally the fittest monument of God's justice.

Sect. 33. It must reasonably be expected, that a soul, which is made apt to perpetual duration, should perpetually endure; and that the soul enduring, the misery also should endure, seeing it was due by the law of nature, as is proved.

Perpetual duration is necessary to no creature, their beings being but contingent, and dependent on the will of God; but perpetual duration of a dependent being is certain, when the first being doth declare his will that it shall be so; and the natural way by which God declareth his will concerning the use of any thing, is by the nature and usefulness of it, because he maketh all things wisely, and nothing in vain. Therefore when he maketh the nature of an angel, or spiritual being, apt to perpetual duration, as being not mixed of separable principles, nor corruptible, he thereby declareth his will for its duration, because he gave it not that durable nature in vain.

Two arguments, therefore, I now offer, to prove that man's soul is of perpetual duration: 1. Because it is such in its operations, and, therefore, in its essence, as the superior spirits are, which are so durable: for they are but intelligences and free agents; fitted to love God, and delight in him, and praise him; and so is man. 2. Because, as is fully proved before, it is made to be happy in another life: and that proveth that it dieth not with the body: and that proveth that its nature is incorruptible: and that proveth that it shall be perpetual, unless any sin should forfeit its being, by way of penal deprivation: and that is improbable, both because God hath fitter ways of punishment, and intimeth in its incorruptible nature, that this is not his intent, and because the state of future reward is like to be a confirmed state.

Sect. 34. Experience telleth the world, that so great is the folly and obduracy of man, and the force of present, sensual allurements, that nothing less than a perpetual misery, worse than annihilation, is rationally sufficient to be the penalty of that law, which is the instrument of governing the world,

peranter vixerit, eum secundum ortus in figuram muliebrem transferret, et si ne tum quidem finem vitiorum faciet, (as he is less likely,) gravius etiam iactabitur, et in suis moribus similissimas figuras pcedum daturum transferretur. Neque malorum terminum prius aspiciet, quam illam sequi cepit conversionem, quam habuit in se, &c.—cum ad primam et optimam conversionem pervenerit. Cic. de Universit. p. (mibi) 358.

^a Volenti non fit injuria. Neque enim civitas in seditione beata esse potest, nec in discordia dominorum domus: quo minus animus a seipso dissidens, secumque discordans, gustare partem ullam liquidæ voluptatis, et dîbere potest. Torquatus Epicuri in Cic. de Fin. l. 1. p. 86.

^b It is an odd fiction of Cicero, that men for sin shall be turned into women: Atque ille qui recte et honeste curriculum vivendi a natura datum conferret, ad illud astrum, quod cum aptus fuerit revertetur: qui autem immoderate et intem-

and therefore it is certain, that so much is in the law, and so much shall be executed.

Those thieves and murderers that have confirmed their infidelity, and overcome all the expectations of another world, will as boldly venture their lives to rob and kill, as if they were of little worth; yea, when they know that they must die, how desperately go they to the gallows, and how little make they of their lives! It is true, as was aforesaid, that nature abhorreth death; but we see among soldiers, that he that at first is timorous, when he hath been used awhile to kill men, or to see them killed by thousands, groweth senseless, almost regardless of his life, and will make, as it were, a jest of death; and when it is so ordinary a thing with men to kill birds, and fishes, and beasts, for their daily food and pleasure, why should they not easily bear their own, if they look for nothing after death? A beast loveth his life as well as we, and our death is no more painful than theirs, and we should have as much courage as a beast; especially, men that live a poor and miserable life on earth, would little fear that death which endeth it; and so human government itself would be in vain. He that would have an instrument to revenge him on his enemy, to kill his governor, or do any villany in the world, if it were not for fear of another world, might find enough among poor villains, that, by misery or melancholy, are weary of their lives; at least, as long as they run but a hazard, like a soldier in fight, and may possibly escape by craft, or flight, or friends, or strength, what wickedness will they not commit? What prince so just that hath not some rebellious subjects, or some enemy that seeks his life? what man so good that is not maliced by some? Who hath money or an estate, which one or other doth not desire; and if there were nothing but death and annihilation to restrain men, what prince, what person, had any security of his life or estate? If a rogue once grow but sensual and idle, he will deliberately resolve, I will venture my life to live in pleasure, rather than live in certain toil and misery; a short life and a sweet is better than a longer which is miserable, and must end at last. We see, if once men be persuaded that they shall die like beasts, that they are not much troubled at it, because they think that when they have no being, they shall have no fear, nor care, nor grief, nor trouble, nor pain, nor want; and though right improved reason, which hath higher expectations, makes a greater matter of the loss of them, yet sensual men so brutify themselves, that they grow contented with the felicity of a brute, and are not much troubled that they have no more. Annihilation, therefore, certainly is a penalty utterly insufficient even to keep any common order in the world, as I proved before; and therefore it is certain, that the penalty inflicted hereafter will be greater than annihilation; and if so, it must contain, with the being of the creature, a suffering worse than the loss of being.⁷

Sect. 35. The belief of a hell, or endless punishment, being that which, *de facto*, the restraint of the

⁷ Magna est peccandi illecebrea spes impunitatis. Cic. pro Mil. The light of nature taught men, that God would not accept the sacrifices of the wicked, much less admit them to his glory. Donis impii ne placare Deos audeant, Platonem audiant, qui vetat dubitare qua sit mente futurus Deus, cum vir nemo bonus ad improbo se donari velit. Cic. de Leg. l. 2. p. 224. The Epicurean confessed, Quod si qui satis opibus hominum sibi contra conscientiam septi esse et muniti videntur, Deorum tamen numen horreat, easque ipsas sollicitudines, quibus animi noctes diesque exeduntur, a Diis supplicii causa importare putant. Cic. de Leg. l. 1. p. 84. Nullum conscium peccatorum tuorum, magis timeris quam temetipsum; alium enim potes effugere, te autem nunquam. Nequitia ipsa est sui pœna. Sen.

obedient part of the world, and that which proveth too weak with the disobedient part; it thence followeth, that a hell or endless punishment will be inflicted.²

The reasons I have given before, 1. Because that experience sheweth that the threatening of hell is necessary in the law; therefore itself is necessary in the execution. 2. Because God doth not govern the world by deceit.

Sect. 36. God will inflict more punishment for the final rejection of his government, than kings do for treason and rebellion against themselves.

There is no proportion between God and man, and between a fault against God and against man; therefore, if racks, torments, and death be justly inflicted for treason against a king, much more may be expected for rebellion against God.

Object. But men's sins do God no hurt, as they do the king.

Answ. They do wrong, where they do no hurt. It is not for want of malignity in sin, but through the perfections of God, that they do not hurt him; but they displease him, and injure him; and they hurt the world and the sinner himself, who is not his own. A child is to be corrected for many faults which do his father no harm. It is not hurting God that is the cause that sin is punished.

Object. But God is merciful as well as just.

Answ. True; and therefore he showed mercy to sinners in the day of mercy; and it is for the contempt and abuse of mercy that he condemneth them: if the mercy abused had been less, the sin and punishment had been less. A merciful king and judge will hang a murderer or traitor; mercy to the good requirereth punishment of the bad. God's attributes are not contrary; he is merciful to the due objects of mercy, and hath penal justice for the objects of that justice.

Object. But after this life the ends of punishment cease, therefore, so will the punishment; for there will be none in the next world to be warned by it, nor any further sin to be restrained, unless it be a castigatory purgatory for the sinner himself.

Answ. I have proved that the law was necessary to the government of this world; and if it was necessary that God say, Everlasting death shall be the wages of sin, then his truth and justice make the execution necessary afterwards.³

2. When this life is ended, we look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness: and the penalties of the sinners of this world may be a means of that righteousness of the next; as the punishment of the devils is a warning to us, and proposed to us for our terror and restraint.

3. How little know we whether thousands of the orbs which we see are not inhabited; and whether the penalties of earthly sinners may not be a warning to any of those superior worlds. God hath not acquainted us with all the uses that he can make of sinners' punishments; and, therefore, when nature telleth us what is due, it is folly to say it will not be, because God hath no use for it.

² Peccati dolor et maximus et æternus est. Cic. Att. II. Itaque non ob ea solum incommoda quæ eveniunt improbis, fugiendum improbitatem putamus; sed multo etiam magis, quod cujus in animo versatur, nunquam sinit eum respirare, nunquam quiescere; inquit Torquatus Epicureus in Cic. de Fin. l. 1. p. 85.

³ Ut fulmina paucorum periculo cadunt, omnium metu; sic animadversiones magnarum potestatum, terrent latius quam nocent. Sen. Solon's counsel for the felicity of the commonwealth was, Ut boni præmiis invitentur, et mali poenis coercantur. Cic. ad Brut. Oderunt peccare mali formidine pœnæ. Hor.

Object. But hell is a cruelty which expresseth tyranny rather than wise justice.

Ans. That is but the voice of folly, partiality, and guilt; every thief that is hanged is likely enough to think the same of his own punishment and judge. If you think it such a cruelty, why was not the threatening of it enough to govern you, and to counterpoise a feather, the trifles of sordid, fleshly pleasure? Why did you choose it, in the choice of sin? Were you not told of it, and was not life and death offered to your choice? Would you choose that which you think it is cruelty to inflict? Who is it that is cruel to you but yourselves? Why will you now be so cruel to your own souls, and then call God cruel for giving you your choice? O, sinners, as you are wise, as you are men, as ever you care what becometh of you for ever, have mercy upon yourselves, and do not refuse, and obstinately refuse, the mercy of God, and then call him unmerciful. Have pity on your own souls. Be not so cruel against yourselves as to run into endless misery for nothing, and then think to lay the blame on God. God calleth now to you in your sin and wilfulness, and entreateth you to have mercy on yourselves, and then he will have mercy on you in the day of your distress; but if you will not hear him, but will have none of his mercy now, wonder not if in vain you cry to him for it then.

Object. But I would not so use an enemy of my own.

Ans. 1. He doth not deserve it, for you are not gods. 2. You are not governors of the world, and so his fault respecteth not any such law and judgment of yours, by which the world must be governed. 3. Nor have you the wisdom and justice of God, to do that which is right to all. Yet are you not bound yourselves to take complacency in the evil of your enemy, but to use just means to bring him to a better mind and state.

Sec. 37. The sum of all here proved is, that all sin deserveth endless misery, and naturally induceth to it; and that all ungodly, impenitent souls shall certainly undergo it; and that none can be saved from this misery, but by turning to God, and being saved from their sins.²

CHAPTER XVI.

OF THE PRESENT SINFUL AND MISERABLE STATE OF THIS WORLD.

SECT. 1. Though all men may know all this beforehand to be their duty, and sin to be so evil, and to deserve such punishment, yet none do live perfectly without sin, according to the law of nature.³

I have heard but of few that pretend to such perfection, and those few have confuted their own pre-

² Dat ille veniam facile, cui venia est opus. Sen. Agam. Audetis ridere nos, cum Gebennas dicimus et inextinguibiles ignes, in quos animas deijci ab eorum hostibus cognovimus? Quid Plauto vester in volumine de animæ immortalitate? Nonne Acherontem, nonne Stygem, &c. nominat? In quibus animas asseverat volvi, mergi, exuri? Nec ejus autoritas plurimum a veritate declinat? Quamvis enim vir lenis et benevolæ voluntatis inhumanum esse crediderit capitales animas sententia condemnare; non est tamen ab omni suspicatio, jactans in flumina torrentia flammam globos, et cænosus voraginis tetra. Arnob. adv. Gent. l. 2. p. 14.

³ Bias (in Laert.) inquit, Ita amandum quasi simus habituri: Plurimos enim esse malos: et though Cicero (in Læli.) says, That it is a sentence, Sapiente plane indigna, it is his mistake of the sense of it; for it is true, that in well-

tences, and been the furthest from it of many others; and, therefore, this I have no need to prove.

Sec. 2. The greatest part of the world do bend their minds and lives to the satisfying of their flesh, and live in ungodliness, intemperance, and unrighteousness, neglecting God and future happiness, and that holy life which is the way thereto.

This being a matter of public or common fact, doth need no other proof than acquaintance with the people of the world.

Sec. 3. Yea, there is an averseness and enmity in them, to the life which God in nature doth prescribe them, and a strong inclination to a fleshly life.

There needeth no other proof of this than the wonderful difficulty which we find in persuading men to change their lives, to live to God, and to forsake their sensuality and worldliness; and the abundance of reason and labour that is lost upon them, when we cannot so much as make them willing.

Sec. 4. It is evident in the effect, that much of this cometh with us into the world.

1. How else should it be so universal as it is? How should it be found in all sorts of constitutions and complexions, and in every country and age till now? 2. How should it work so early in children as commonly it doth? 3. How cometh it to prevail against the best education, helps, and means? Certainly, all of us feel from our childhood too much of the truth of this.

Sec. 5. This natural pravity is quickly increased by the advantage of sensuality, which is active before reason cometh to any power of resistance, and so getteth stronger possession by custom, and groweth to a confirmed habit.⁵

Sec. 6. And if vicious education by vicious parents be added, and bad company second that, and the vulgar course or ruler's countenance concur, the corrupt inclination is quickly more radicated, and next to a nature.

Sec. 7. Many so far prevail against the light and law of nature, as to grow strange to God and to themselves, to their end and their work; even to doubt whether there be a God, or whether they have any other life to live, and whether holiness be good and necessary, and sin be bad, and deserve any punishment.⁶

Sec. 8. There is a great deal of sottish unteachableness on the minds and wills of men, which hindereth their conviction and reformation.⁷

Sec. 9. There is a great deal of senseless stupidity and hard-heartedness on men, which maketh them sleepily neglect the greatest things which they are convinced of.

Sec. 10. There is in most a marvellous inconsiderateness, as if they had not their reason awake to use; so that they will not soberly and seriously think of the things which deepest concern them.

Sec. 11. Most men are so taken up with the concerns of their bodies, that their minds are preoccupied, and made unfit for higher things.⁸

All this is proved, if we walk but in the world with open eyes.

Sec. 12. The love of the world and fleshly plea-grounded friendship we must avoid suspicion, which is all that Cicero pleads for: but yet we must know men to be men, and mutable; and all just love is not well-grounded, intimate friendship.

⁵ In uno annulo omnes boni principes possunt insculpi, inquit quidam in Vopisc. Aurel.
⁶ Seneca saith, that a good man is a phoenix, born once in five hundred years. Ep. 42.

⁷ Lucian (in Tim.) inq. Boni possessio est, quæ haud facile inveniri potest; ut quæ jamdudum e vita concesserit: Adeo obscura et pusilla, ut illam vel Lynceus vix dum inveniat.

⁸ Diogenes crying, O homines adeste! when a crowd came about him, drove them away, saying, Homines vocavi, non sterquilinia.

sure is so powerful in the most, that they love not the holy law of God, which forbiddeth them that sensuality, and commandeth them a holy and temperate life.^f

They are like children that cry for what they love, and will not be restrained by telling them that it is unwholesome. Reason signifieth nothing with them, as long as sense and appetite gainsay it. They are angry with all that crosseth their appetites, though it be to save their lives. The sense is become the predominant power in them, and reason is dethroned, and hath left its power. Therefore, God's law is unacceptable and hateful to these brutish people; because it is quite against their inclination, and that which the flesh doth call their interest and good.

Sec. 13. Therefore they love not those who press them to the obedience of this law, which is so ungrateful to them; and who condemn their sin by the holiness of their lives; and that awaken their guilty consciences, by the serious mention of the retributions of the life to come.

All this is bitter to the taste, and the reasonable-ness, necessity, and future benefits, are things that they are much insensible of.

Sec. 14. Therefore, they love not God himself; as he is holy, and governeth them by a holy law, which is so much against their inclinations; as he forbiddeth them all their sinful pleasure, and threateneth damnation to them if they rebel, especially as his justice will execute this; indeed, their aversion from God, in these respects, is no less than a hating him as God.

Sec. 15. These vices, working continually in men's hearts, do fill them with deceiving thoughts, and distracting passions, and unquietness, and engage them in self-troubling ways, and deprive them of the comforts of the love of God, and of a holy life, and of the well-grounded hope of future blessedness.

Though they have such a present pleasure as prevaileth with them, it bringeth speedy smart and trouble: just like the pleasure of scratching to a man that hath the itch, which is quickly recompensed with smart if he go deep; or like the pleasure of drinking cold water to a man in a fever, or a dropsy, which increaseth the disease. Sin is their sickness, and corrupteth their appetites, and though it have its proper pleasure, it depriveth them of the pleasures and benefits of health.^g

Sec. 16. These vices, also, so deprave men's minds, making every wicked man to be principally for himself and for his lusts, that they are commonly distracted with envy, malice, contention, persecutions, the fruits of pride, and covetousness, and sensuality; and these diseases are still troubling them, till they work their ruin where they do prevail.^h

Sec. 17. The same vices set kingdoms and other commonwealths together in bloody wars, and cause men to study to destroy one another, and glory in the success; and fill the world with rapine and violence by sea and land, and make it seem as necessary

to their own preservation, to kill one another, as their enemies, as to kill toads and serpents, wolves and tigers, and much more; and, with much more care, and cost, and industry is it done.

Sec. 18. If any wise or charitable persons would heal these vices, and reconcile these contentions, and persuade persons and nations to a holy, sober, peaceable course, they are commonly hated and persecuted; they seldom succeed, nor can their counsel be heard, through the multitude and fury of the vicious, whose folly and violence bear down all.ⁱ

Sec. 19. And God himself doth give the sinful world a taste of his displeasure by painful sickness, consuming plagues, famines, poverty, and many the like calamities which fall upon mankind.^k

Sec. 20. But his sorest judgments are the forsaking of men's souls, and leaving them in all this folly and disorder, this sin and misery, to destroy themselves.

The principal mercies and punishments of this life are found on the souls of men themselves. The greatest present reward of obedience is, when God doth more illuminate the mind, and send in more of his celestial beams, and shed abroad his love upon the heart, and fill it with the love of goodness, and delight it in himself, and confirm the will against temptations. And the greatest punishment is, when God, in displeasure for men's disobedience, doth withdraw this grace, and leave men to themselves, that they that love not his grace should be without it, and follow their foolish, self-destroying lusts.^l

Sec. 21. God cannot pardon an incapable subject, nor any, but on terms consistent with the honour of his justice, laws, and government; nor is there any that can deliver a sinner from his punishment, upon any other terms whatsoever.

Sec. 22. The conclusion is, that the sin and misery of mankind in general is great and lamentable, and their recovery a work of exceeding difficulty.

Object. All this sheweth, that man's nature was not made for a holy life, nor for a world to come, else their averseness to it would not be so great and common.

Ans. This is fully answered before: it is proved, that nature and reason do fully bear witness against his wickedness, and declare his obligations to a better life, and his capacity of higher things; and that all this is his rebellion against nature and reason. And it no more proveth your conclusion, than your children's or servant's averseness to obedience, peace, and labour, proveth that these are not their duty; or subjects' rebellion, proveth that they are not obliged to be loyal.^m

Object. But it is incredible that God should thus far forsake his own creation.

Ans. 1. There is no disputing against the light of the sun, and the experience of all the world: it is a thing visible and undeniable, that this case they are *de facto* in, and, therefore, that thus far they are forsaken: it is no wisdom to say, That is not, which

^f Aristippus being asked, Quid esset admirandum in vita? answered, Vir probus et moderatus? quoniam etsi inter multos improbos agat, non tamen pervertitur. Stob. Hence, was Diogenes' searching Athens with a lantern, to find a man. And when Themistocles had a farm to sell, he bid the cryer tell it, as its great commendation, That there was an honest neighbour dwelt near it: intimating the paucity of such.

^g Ut Scarabæi et vultures unguentis offenduntur; ita non omnibus placent optima. Plutarch.

Vir bonus et sapiens qualem vix reperit unum. Millibus e cunctis hominum consultus Apollo, &c. Virgil.

^h Vitis nostra que amamus defendimus; et malum ea excusare quam excutere. Sen. Ep. 117.

ⁱ Absurdum est putare eum qui ab aliquibus ex bono malus

fuerit factus, eundem ab illis iterum ex malo bonum fieri posse. Dion. Hal. 11.

^k Ubi divitiæ honori sunt, et eas gloria, imperium, potentia comitantur, hebescere virtus, paupertas probro haberi, innocentia pro malevolentia duci incipit. Sallust. in Catilin.

^l Elian (var. Hist. l. 13), saith, That Theodota, a whore, told Socrates that he could draw away none of her followers, but she could draw away his at her pleasure: and he answered, Non mirum: tu siquidem ad delivum tramitem omnes rapis; ego vero ad virtutem cogo, ad quam arduus plerisque insolitus est ascensus.

^m Animi morbi sunt cupiditates immensæ, inanes, divitiarum, gloriæ, dominationis, libidinosarum etiam voluptatum accedunt ægritudines, molestiæ, mærores, quæ animos excedunt conficiuntque curis. Cic. 1. de Finib. In naturalibus desideris pauci non peccant. Aristot. 3. Eth.

all the world seeth to be so, because we think it unmeet that it should be so. 2. Is it incredible that God doth further than this forsake the wicked in the world of punishment? If he may further forsake hell, he may thus far forsake earth, upon their great provocations. We have no certainty of it, but it is not at all unlikely that the innumerable fixed stars and planets are inhabited orbs, who have dwellers answerable to their nature and pre-eminence; and if God do totally forsake hell, as to his mercy; and, next to hell, do much forsake a sinful earth, that is likeliest and nearest unto hell, and do glorify his more abundant mercy upon the more holy and happy inhabitants of all, or almost all, the other orbs, what matter of discontent should this be to us? 3. But God hath not left this dark and wicked earth itself without all remedy, as shall be further showed."

Read Cicero's third book *De Nat. Deor.* and you will see, in Cotta's speech, that the notoriously depraved reason of man, and the prevalency and prosperity of wickedness, was the great argument of the atheists against God and providence; which they thought unanswerable, because they looked no further than this life, and did not foresee the time of full, universal justice. And whereas Cotta saith, "That if there be a God, he should have made most men good, and prevented all the evil in the world, and not only punish men when it is done;" I shall answer that among the objections of the second part: and I before showed, how little reason men have to expect that God should make every man as good as he could make him, or make man indefectible; or to argue from man's sin against God's goodness: the free Creator, Lord, and Benefactor, may vary his creatures and benefits as he seeth meet, and may be proved good, though he make not man angelical, and though he permit his sin, and punish him for sinning.^o

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT NATURAL LIGHT DECLARETH OF THE MERCY OF GOD TO SINNERS, AND OF THE MEANS AND HOPES OF MAN'S RECOVERY.

SECT. 1. Notwithstanding all this fore-mentioned sin, and guilt, and misery of man, and justice of God, experience assureth all the earth, that great mercy is still continued to them, and that they have to do with a most merciful God.^a

Men's lives are continued even while they sin; patience endureth them; time is vouchsafed them; food, and raiment, and friends, and habitations, and health, and ease, and liberty is given them; the sun sendeth them its moving influence, its light and heat; the earth supporteth them, and affordeth them fruit, and maintenance, and pleasure; the clouds yield them rain, the air breath, and the sea itself is not unkind and incommodious to them. Beasts, birds, and fishes, and all inferior creatures, serve them; and yet much more mercy they receive from God.^b

Sect. 2. It is, therefore, manifest, that God dealeth not with the sinful world according to the utmost rigour of justice, nor punisheth them as much as they deserve.

For all these mercies they have forfeited, and deserved to be deprived of them.

Object. But it is no mercy, which hardeneth them in sin, and endeth in misery; it is rather a punishment, as to give cold water to a man in a fever.

Ans. If it hardened them of its own nature, and not merely by their abuse, and if it ended in misery by the designment of the giver, and the tendency of the gift, then were it, as you say, no mercy, but a plague. But it is mercy which, in its nature, and by the donor's will, hath a fitness and tendency to men's recovery, and to prevent their misery, and they are commanded and entreated accordingly to use it; and are warned of the danger of abuse.

Object. But God knoweth, when he giveth it them, that they will so abuse it.

Ans. God's foreknowledge, or omniscience, is his perfection, and will you argue from thence against

^a God only can recover lapsed man. *Nemo magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit.* Cicero de *Nat. Deor.* 2. Of the paucity of the good, and the abounding of wickedness, almost all poets, orators, philosophers, and historians openly complain.

^b Pauci quos æquus amavit. Jupiter aut ardens avexit ad æthera virtus. In vitia alter alterum tradimus: quomodo ad salutem revocari potest, quem nullus retrahit, et populus impellit? Senec. Ep. 29. Scrupus vitæ et contactu nocent, et in pro:ium quemque transiliunt. Id. de Tranq. vit.

Nam vitium nemo sine nascitur; optimus ille Qui minimis urgetur. Horat. l. 1. Ser. 3. Unicusque dedit vitium natura creato. Propert. Quid ulcus leviter tangam? Omnes mali sumus. Senec. Si cupis bonus fieri, primum crede quod malus sis.

Epictet. Enchir. Novi ego hoc seculum moribus quibus sit: malus bonus malum esse vult ut sit sui similis: turbant, miscent, mores mali, rapax, avarus, invidus; sacrum profanum, publicum privatum habent: Hiulca genes: Hæc ego doleo: hæc sunt quæ excruciant; hæc diæ noctesque tibi canto ut caveas. Plaut.

Nisi enim talis (mala) esset natura hominum, non anteponerent vindictam sanctitati et lucrum justitiæ, invidentes alienæ potentiæ non lædenti. Sed volunt homines vindictæ cupiditate communes leges dissolvere, &c. Thucid. l. 3.

Sed et boni, dicetis, sunt in rebus humanis; viri sapientes, justi, inculpati.—Res. Sint licet peronesti, fuerintque laudabiles,—sed audire deprecium, quod sint aut fuerint numero,—Unus, duo, tres,—centum certe numero diffiniti.—At genus humanum non ex pauculis bonis, sed ex cæteris omnibus æstimari convenit, ponderari. In toto enim

pars est, non totum in parte.—Et quoniam isti sunt, dicite? Philosophi credo, qui se esse solos sapientissimos autumant.—Nempe illi qui cum suis quotidie cupiditatibus pugnant.—Qui ne in vitia proritari facultatis possint aliquis instantu, patrimonium et divitias fugiunt, ne causas sibi afferant lapsus. Quod cum faciunt et curant, apertissime animæ esse indicant labiles, et induritate ad vitia proclives. Nostra autem sententia, quod id bonum natura est, quæ emendari neque corrigi se possit: Immo ipsum debet, quid sit malum nescire, si generis forma cujusque in sua cogitata integritate perstare.—Qui luctatur animorum ingenitas corrigere pravitates, is apertissime monstrat imperfectum se esse, qualemvis omni et pervicacia contendat. Arnob. adv. Gentes, lib. 2. in *Actuatur.* Bib. Pat. Tom. 1. pag. 20.

^a Crede mihi miseria celestia numina parcent.

Næc semper læsos et sine fine premunt. Ov. 3. de Pont. ^b When Piso (in Cicero) seeketh after the Summum Bonum, he proceedeth by these steps; 1. Omnem naturam eas sui conservatricem. Neminem esse qui ipse se oderit. 2. Neminem esse qui quomodo se habeat, nihil sua censeat interesse. 3. Hominem e corpore et animo constare, primasque animi partes esse, et secundas corporis. 4. Animum aliquid agere semper, neque ulla conditione quietem sempiternam posse pati. 5. Bona esse quæ naturæ conveniunt, easque perficiunt. 6. Animi duo genera esse virtutum; 1. Naturales, viz. Docilitas, memoria, ingenium. 2. Voluntarias, quæ in voluntate posita magis proprio nomine virtutes appellantur. 7. In prima Classe maxime excellens, considerationem et cognitionem celestium. 8. Virtutes autem voluntatis esse præstantissimas. 9. Et ita concludit, Virtutem esse maxime expetendam. This is the sum of the lib. 5. de Finib.

his mercy? His foreknowledge of men's sin and misery causeth them not. What if he foreknew them not? Were it any praise to him to be ignorant? and yet the mercy would be but the same. If you will not be reconciled to God's ways, till he cease to be omniscient, or till he prevent all the sin and misery which he foreknoweth, you will perish in your enmity, and he will easily justify his mercy against such accusations.

Object. But God could give men so much more grace, as to prevent men's sin and misery, if he would.

Ans. True; he is not unable: and so he could make every clod a tree, and every tree a beast, and every beast a man, and every man an angel, as I said before: but must he, therefore, do it?

Here note, that it is one thing to say of any punishment, This is so deserved, that God may inflict it if he please, without injustice; yea, and thereby demonstrate his justice; and another thing to say, This is so due, that God must, or will inflict it, if he will be just, unless a compensation be made to justice. It is of the first sort that I am now speaking; for God may have variety of times, and measures, and kinds of punishments, which he may use at his own choice, and yet not leave the sin unpunished finally: but whether he properly dispense with any law, which is determinate as to the penalty, I am not now to speak, it being not pertinent to this place and subject.

Sect. 3. Therefore, God doth, in some sort and measure, pardon sin to the generality of mankind, while he remitteth some measure of the deserved punishment.

To remit or forgive the punishment is so far to forgive the sin; for forgiveness, as to execution, is but *non punire*, proceeding from commiseration or mercy. And it is certain, by all the mercy bestowed on them, that God remitteth something of the punishment, which in law and justice he might inflict. Though this be not a total pardon, it is not, therefore, none at all.

Sect. 4. The goodness of God's nature, with this universal experience of the world, possesseth all men's minds with this apprehension of God, that he is gracious, merciful, long-suffering, and ready to forgive a capable subject, upon terms consistent with his truth and honour, and the common good.

It is true, that self-love and self-flattery do cause men to think of the mercy of God, as indulgent to their lusts, and suitable to their fleshly desires; and, therefore, their conceits are none of the measure of his mercy: but yet it may be perceived, that this foresaid conception of God, as merciful, and ready to forgive a capable subject, is warranted by the soberest reason, and is not bred by sin and error; for the wiser, and better, and less sinful any is, the more he is inclined to such thoughts of God, as of a part of his perfection.^c

Sect. 5. This apprehension is increased in mankind, by God's obliging us to forgive one another.

For though it doth not follow, that God must forgive all that which he bindeth us to forgive, for the reasons before expressed, yet we must believe that the laws of God proceed from that wisdom and goodness which is his perfection, and that they bear the

image of them; and that the obeying of them tendeth to form us more to his image ourselves, and to make us holy as he is holy; and, therefore, that this command of God to man, to be merciful and forgive, doth intimate to us, that mercy and forgiveness are agreeable and pleasing unto God.

Sect. 6. God cannot cast away from his love, and from felicity, any soul which truly loveth him above all, and which so repenteth of his sin as to turn to God in holiness of heart and life.^d

Here seemeth to arise before us a considerable difficulty. That God can find in his heart to damn one that truly loveth him, and is sanctified, is incredible; because, 1. Then God's own image should be in hell, and a saint be damned; 2. Because then the creature should be readier to love God, than God to love him; 3. Then a soul in hell should have holy desires, prayers, praises, and other acts of love; 4. And a soul capable of the glorifying mercy of God should miss of it. This, therefore, is not to be believed; for God cannot but take complacency in them that love him, and bear his image; and those will be happy that God takes complacency in.

And yet, on the other side, Do not the sins of them that love God deserve death and misery, according to his law; and might he not inflict that on men which they deserve? Doth not justice require punishment on them, that yet sin not away the love of God, nor a state of holiness? To this, some answer, That all those that consist with love and holiness are venial sins, which deserve only temporal chastisement, and not perpetual misery. I rather answer, 1. That all sin, considered in itself, abstracted from the cause which counterbalanceth it and procureth pardoning mercy, doth deserve perpetual misery; and, therefore, so do the sins of the best in themselves considered; but that grace which causeth their sanctification, and their love to God, doth, conjunctly, cause the pardon of their sins; so that God will not deal with such as in rigour they deserve. 2. And if the sin of any that love God should provoke him to cast them into hell, it followeth not, that one that loveth God *in sensu composito*, should be damned; for God hath an order in his punishments; and, first, he would withdraw his grace from such a one and leave him to himself, and then he will no longer love God; and so it is not a lover of God that would be damned.^e

Sect. 7. The sinful world is not so far forsaken of God, as to be shut up under desperation, and utter impossibility of recovery and salvation.

For if that were so, they were not *in via*, or under an obligation to use any means, or accept of any mercy, in order to their recovery; nor could they rationally do it, or be persuaded to it. There is no means to be used where there is no end to be attained, and no hope of success.

Sect. 8. The light of nature, and the foresaid dealings of God with men, continuing them under his government, *in via*, and manifold mercies, helps, and means, do generally persuade the consciences of men that there are certain duties required of them, and certain means to be used by them, in order to procure their recovery and salvation, and to escape the misery deserved.^f

tur: est enim humanum peccare, sed belluinum in errore perseverare. Cicero in Vatin.

^c Penitenti optimus est portus, mutatio consilii. Cicero Phil. l. 2. Beatus est cui vel in senectute contigerit, ut sapientiam, verasque opiniones consequi possit. Cicero de Fin. Read Cato's speech in Cicero de Finib. (l. 3.) That the principle of self-love and preservation is the seed of virtue; and how every thing abhorreth its own hurt and destruction.

^f Scelerum ac bene ponit, eradenda cupidinis, prava sunt elementa. Hor.

^c Sape levant penas, ereptaque lumina reddunt.

Cum bene peccati penitusse vident. Ovid. l. de Pont.

Disensio ab aliis; a te reconciliatio incipiat: cum ignoscis tibi beneficium tuum tempera, ut non ignoretur videris, sed absolvere; quia gravissimum pene genus est, contumeliosa venia. Senec.

Pulchrum est vitam donare petenti statim. Theb.

^d Nec est templo ara, nec ex humana natura misericordia tollenda est; inquit Phocion, in Stobæo. Facilius iis ignoscitur, qui non perseverare, sed ab errato se revocare moluntur.

He that shall deny this will turn the earth into a hell; he will teach men to forbear all means and duties which tend to their conversion, pardon, and salvation, and to justify themselves in it, and desperately give over all religion, and begin the horrors and language of the damned.

Sect. 9. The very command of God, to use his appointed means for men's recovery, doth imply that it shall not be in vain; and doth not only show a possibility, but so great a hopefulness of the success to the obedient, as may encourage them cheerfully to undertake it, and carry it through.^a

No man that is wise and merciful will appoint his subject a course of means to be used for a thing impossible to be got; or will say, Labour thus all thy life for it, but thou shalt be never the nearer it if thou do. If such an omniscient physician do but bid me use such means for my cure and health, I may take his command for half a promise, if I obey.

Sect. 10. Conscience doth bear witness against impenitent sinners, that the cause of their sin and the hinderance of their recovery is in themselves; and that God is not unwilling to forgive and save them, if they were but meet for forgiveness and salvation.^b

Even now, men's consciences take God's part against themselves, and tell them, That the infinite good, that communicateth all the goodness to the creature which it hath, is not so likely to be the cause of so odious a thing as sin, nor of man's destruction, as he himself. If I see a sheep lie torn in the highway, I will sooner suspect a wolf than a lamb to be the cause, if I see them both stand by. And if I see a child drowned in scalding water, I will sooner suspect that he fell in by folly and heedlessness himself, than that his mother wilfully cast him in. Is not silly, naughty man, much liker to be the cause of sin and misery, than the wise and gracious God? Much more hereafter will the sinner's conscience justify God.

Sect. 11. God hath planted in the common nature of mankind an inseparable inclination to truth as truth, and to good as good, and a love to themselves, and a desire to be happy, and a lothness to be miserable; together with some reverence and honour of God, till they have extinguished the belief of his being; and a hatred and horror of the devil, while they believe he is: all which are a fit stock to plant reforming truths in, and principles fit to be improved for men's conversion, and the excitation and improvement of them is much of that recovering work.^c

Sect. 12. Frequent and deep consideration being a great means of man's recovery, by improving the truth which he considereth, and restoring reason to the throne, it is a great advantage to man that he is naturally a reasoning and thoughtful creature, his intellect being propense to activity and knowledge.

Sect. 13. And it is his great advantage, that his frequent and great afflictions have a great tendency to awake his reason to consideration, and to bring it to the heart and make it effectual.

And, consequently, that God casteth us into such a sea and wilderness of troubles, that we should have these quickening monitors still at hand.

Sect. 14. And it is man's great advantage for his recovery, that vanity and vexation are so legibly written on all things here below; and that frustrated expectations, and unsatisfied minds, and the foreknowledge of the end of all, and bodily pains which find no ease, with multitudes of bitter experiences, do so abundantly help him to escape the snare (the love) of present things.^d

For all men that perish are condemned for loving the creature above the Creator: and, therefore, such a world, which appeareth so evidently to be vain, and empty, and deceitful, and vexatious, and which all men know will turn them off at last with as little comfort as if they had never seen a day of pleasure in it: I say, such a world, one would think, should give us an antidote against its own deceit, and sufficiently wean us from its inordinate love. At least, this is a very great advantage.

Sect. 15. It is also a common and great advantage for man's recovery, that his life here is so short, and his death so certain, as that reason must needs tell him, that the pleasures of sin are also short, and that he should always live as parting with this world, and ready to enter into another.^e

The nearness of things maketh them to work on the mind of man the more powerfully: distant things, though sure and great, do hardly awaken the mind to their reception and due consideration. If men lived six hundred or a thousand years in the world, it were no wonder if covetousness, and carnality, and security, made them like devils, and worse than wild beasts to one another: but when men cannot choose but know that they must certainly and shortly see the end of all that ever this world will do for them, and are never sure of another hour; this is so great a help to sober consideration, and conversion, that it must be monstrous stupidity and brutishness that must overcome it.

Sect. 16. It is also a great advantage for man's conversion, that all the world revealeth God to him, and every thing telleth him of the power, and wisdom, and goodness, and love of God, and of his constant presence; and so sheweth him an object which should as easily overpower all sensual objects, which would seduce his soul, as a mountain will weigh down a feather.^f

Though we see not God, (which would sure put an end to the controversy whether we should be sensual or holy,) yet while we have a glass as big

^a Omnibus natura dedit fundamenta semenque virtutum. Sen. Ep. 110.

^b Homines ad Deos nulla re proprius accedunt, quam salutem hominibus dando. Nihil habet fortuna majus quam ut possit; nec natura melius quam ut velit, servare. Cicero pro Ligario. Notitia peccati, initium salutis. Sen. c. Saith Epictetus, As our parents deliver us to schoolmasters to be nurtured, so God delivereth us to our consciences, whose nurture is not to be contemned.

^c Nemo adeo ferus est, ut non miscerere possit.

^d Si modo culturæ patientem commodet aures. Hor. Ep. 1.

^e Miserrum te esse judico, qui nunquam fueris miser: Traxisti sine adversario vitam: Opus est ad sui notitiam experimento. Quid quisque possit non nisi tentando didicit. Sen. de Pro. Non omnino Diis exosos esse, qui in hac vita cum ærumnarum varietate luctantur; sed esse arcanas causas, &c. Macrobi. 1. 1. Saturn.

^f Rem patris modicam et mediocri bile ferendam Si flectas oculos majora ad crimina. Juven.

^g Quotidie morimur, quotidie enim demitur aliqua pars vitæ:

Et tunc quoque cum crescimus vita decrescit. Hunc ipsum quem agimus diem, cum morte dividimus. Sen. Ep. 24. Natura nihil hominibus brevitate vitæ præstitit melius. Id. Nihil æque cito proficiet ad temperantiam omnium rerum, quam frequens cogitatio brevis ævi et hujus incerti. Quicquid facis respice ad mortem. Sen. Ep. 25.

^m Magna pars peccatorum tollitur, si peccati testis adstat. Sen. What then may the presence of God do? Clemens Alexand. was positive in it, that philosophy was blessed to the saving of many heathens who obeyed it. Tunc est consummata infelicitas, ubi turpia non solum delectant, sed etiam placent: et desinit esse remedium locus, ubi quæ fuerant vitia, mores fiunt. Sen. Prov. At morbi perniciosiores pluresque sunt animi quam corporis.—Qui vero probari potest, ut sibi mederi animus non possit, cum ipse medicinam corporis animus invenierit? Cumque omnes qui corpore se curari passi sunt, non continuo convalescant: Animi autem qui se sanari voluerint, præceptisque sapientum paruerint, sine ulla dubitatione sanantur. Cic. Tusc. 1. 3. p. 270.

as all the world, which doth continually represent him to us, one would think that no reasonable creature should so much overlook him, as to be carried from him with the trifles of this world.

Sect. 17. Men that have not only the foresaid obligations to holiness, justice, and sobriety in their natures, but also all these hopes and helps, and means of their recovery from sin to God, and yet frustrate all, and continue in ungodliness, unrighteousness, or intemperance, impenitently to the end, are utterly destitute of all just excuse why God should not punish them with endless misery, which is the case of all that perish.

Sect. 18. All men shall be judged by the law which was given them of God to live by.

For it is the same law which is *regula officii et judicii*: God will not condemn men for not believing a truth which mediately or immediately was never revealed to them, and which they had no means to know. Nor for not obeying a law which was never promulgated to them, or they could not come to be acquainted with: physical impossibilities are not the matter of crimes, or of condemnation.

Sect. 19. If any persons are brought by these means alone to repent unfeignedly of an ungodly, uncharitable, and intemperate life, and to love God unfeignedly as their God, above all; and to live a

holy, obedient life; God will not condemn such persons, though they want a supernatural revelation of his will. (As I showed before, sect. 6.)

Sect. 20. When sinners stand at many degrees distant from God and a holy life, and mercy would draw them nearer him by degrees, they that have help and mercy sufficient, in *suo genere*, to have drawn them nearer God, and refused to obey it, do forfeit the further helps of mercy, and may justly perish and be forsaken by him; though their help was not immediately sufficient to all the further degrees of duty which they were to do.*

These things are clear in their proper light. I stand not to prove, because I would not be unnecessarily tedious to the reader.

And so much of godliness, or religion, as revealed by natural light.

Object. But all heathens and infidels find not all this in the book of nature, which you say is there.

Ans. I speak not of what men do see, but what they may see, if they will improve their reason. All this is undeniably legible in the book of nature; but the infant, the idiot, the illiterate, the scholar, the smatterer, the doctor, the considerate, the inconsiderate, the sensual, the blinded, and the willing, diligent inquirer do not equally see and read that which is written in the same characters to all.

PART II.

OF CHRISTIANITY AND SUPERNATURAL REVELATION.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE GREAT NEED OF A CLEARER LIGHT, OR FULLER REVELATION OF THE WILL OF GOD, THAN ALL THAT HATH BEEN OPENED BEFORE.

WHILST I resolved upon a deep and faithful search into the grounds of all religion, and a review and trial of all that I had myself believed, I thought meet first to pass by persons, and shut up my books, and with retired reason to read the book of nature only; and what I have there found, I have justly told you in the former part, purposely omitting all that might be controverted by any considerable, sober reason, that I might neither stop myself nor my reader in the way; and that I might not deceive myself with plausible consequences of unsound or questionable antecedents; nor discourage my reader by the casting of some doubtful passages in his way, which might tempt him to question all the rest. For I know what a deal of handsome structure may fall through the falseness of some one of the supports, which seemed to stand a great way out of sight. And I have been wearied myself with subtle discourses of learned men, who, in a long series of *ergos*, have thought that they have left all sure behind them, when a few false suppositions were the

life of all. And I know that he who interposeth any doubtful things, doth raise a diffidence in the reader's mind, which maketh him suspect that the ground he standeth on is not firm, and whether all that he readeth be not mere uncertain things. Therefore, leaving things controvertible for a fitter place and time, I have thus far taken up so much as is plain and sure, which I find of more importance and usefulness to my own information and confirmation, than any of those controvertible points would be, if I could never so certainly determine them.*

And now, having perused the book of nature, I shall cast up the account, and try what is yet wanting, and look abroad into the opinions of others in the world, and search whence that which is yet wanting may be most fully, and safely, and certainly supplied.

Sect. 1. And first, when I look throughout the world, I find that though all the evidence aforesaid, for the necessity of a holy, virtuous life, be unquestionable in *natura rerum*, yet most of the world ob-

the soul, which they distinguish from its diseases and corruption.

* Nullus unquam a mortali semine vir absolute bonus nascetur. Dion. Hal. l. 2. Truth delivered by the halves, will be lamely practised. Ideo peccamus, quia de partibus vite omnes deliberamus; de toto nemo deliberat. Sen.

* Sunt enim ingenis nostris semina innata virtutum, quae si adolescere liceret, ipsa nos ad beatam vitam natura perduceret. Nunc autem simul ac editi sumus in lucem, in omni continuo pravitate versamur, &c. Cic. 3. Tuscul. N. B. That when philosophers say, that all is good which nature teacheth, &c. they mean by nature, the true and sound constitution of

serve it not, or discern but little of it, nor much regard the light without, or the secret witness of their consciences within.

Natural light or evidence is so unsuccessful in the world, that it loudly telleth us, something is yet wanting, whatever it is. We can discern what it is which is necessary to man's happiness, but we can hardly discern whether *de facto*, any considerable number, at best, do by the teaching of nature alone attain it. When we inquire into the writings of the best of the philosophers, we find so little evidence of real holiness, that is, of the foresaid resignation, subjection, and love to God as God, that it leaveth us much in doubt whether indeed they were holy themselves or not, and whether they made the knowledge, love, obedience, and praise of God, the end and business of their lives. However, there is too great evidence, that the world lieth in darkness and wickedness, where there is no more than natural light.

Sect. 2. I find therefore that the discovery of the will of God, concerning our duty and our end, called, The law of nature, is a matter of very great difficulty, to them that have no supernatural light to help them.

Though all this is legible in nature, which I have thence transcribed; yet if I had not had another teacher, I know not whether ever I should have found it there. Nature is now a very hard book; when I have learnt it by my teacher's help, I can tell partly what is there; but at the first perusal, I could not understand it. It requireth a great deal of time, and study, and help to understand that which, when we do understand it, is as plain to us as the highway.

Sect. 3. Thence it must needs follow, that it will be but few that will attain to understand the necessary parts of the law of nature aright, by that means alone; and the multitude will be left in darkness still.^b

The common people have not leisure for so deep and long a search into nature as a few philosophers made, nor are they disposed to it; and though reason obligeth them, in so necessary a case, to break through all difficulties, they have not so full use of their reason as to do it.

Object. But as christian teachers do instruct the people in that which they cannot have leisure to search out themselves; so, why may not philosophers, who have leisure for the search, instruct the people quickly, who have not leisure to find out the truth without instruction.

Ans. Much might be done, if all men did their best; but, 1. The difficulty is such, that the learned themselves are lamentably imperfect and unsatisfied, as I shall further show. 2. Though the vulgar cannot search out the truth without help, yet it is necessary that by help they come to see with their own eyes, and rest not in a human belief alone, especially when their teachers are of so many minds, that they know not which of them to believe. To learn the truth, in its proper evidence, is very hard to them that have no more than the light of nature.

Object. But what difficulty is there in these few precepts, that all men may not easily learn them?

^b What difficulties the wisest heathens find about God's prospering the wicked, and afflicting the good, and how dark were they about the life to come! Therefore, Seneca's wise and good man was a phoenix. Sine doctrina si quid bene dicitur, adjuvante natura, tamen id quia fortuito fit, semper paratum esse non potest. Cic. Deor. Etsi ingenius magnis predicti quidam, dicendi copiam sine ratione consequuntur, ars tamen duz certior est quam natura. Aliud enim est poterat more verva fundero, aliud, ea quae dicas ratione et arte distinguere. Cicero de Fin. 4.

^c You may perceive the heathen's gratitude to God, by

"Thou shalt love God above all, and repent of sin, and set thy heart upon the life to come, and love thy neighbour as thyself," &c."

Ans. There is no difficulty in learning these words; but, 1. There is great difficulty in learning to understand the sense and certain truth of that which is contained in them; to know what God is, so far as is necessary to our obedience and love; and to know what it is in him which is so amiable, and to know that there is a life to come, and what it is; and to know what is God's will, and so what is duty; and what is the sin which we must repent of; these are more difficult. Generals are soon named, but it is a particular understanding which is necessary to practice. 2. And it is hard to see that certainty and attractive goodness in these things, as may draw the mind to the practical embracements of them, from the love of other things; an obscure, doubtful, wavering apprehension, is not strong enough to change the heart and life.

Sect. 4. These difficulties, in the mere natural way of revelation, will fill the learned world with controversies; and those controversies will breed and feed contentions, and eat out the heart of practical godliness, and make all religion seem an uncertain or unnecessary thing.

This is undoubtedly proved, 1. In the reason of the thing; 2. And in all the world's experience. So numerous were the controversies among philosophers, so various their sects, so common their contentions, that the world despised them, and all religion for their sakes, and looked on most of them but as mountebanks that set up for gain, or to get disciples, or to show their wit: practical piety died in their hands.

Object. This is a consequent not to be avoided, because no way hath so resolved difficulties as to put an end to controversies and sects.

Ans. Certainly, clearness is more desirable than obscurity, and concord and unity than division, therefore it concerneth us to inquire how this mischief may be amended, which is it that I am now about.

Sect. 5. These difficulties also make it so long a work to learn God's will by the light of nature only, that the time of their youth, and oft of their lives, is slipped away before men can come to know why they lived.

It is true, that it is their own fault that causeth all these inconveniences; but it is as true that their disease doth need a cure, for which it concerneth them to seek out. The life of man is held upon a constant uncertainty, and no man is sure to live another year; and therefore we have need of precepts so plain as may be easily and quickly learnt, that we may be always ready, if death shall call us to an account. I confess that what I have transcribed from nature is very plain there, to one that already understandeth it; but whether the diseased blindness of the world do not need yet something plainer, let experience determine.

Sect. 6. That which would be sufficient for a sound understanding and will, is not sufficient to a darkened, diseased mind and heart, such as experience telleth us is found throughout the world.^d

these words of Cotta. (In Cic. de Nat. Deor. 3. p. 109.) Num quis quod bonus vir esset, gratias Diis egit unquam? At quod dives, quod honoratus, quod incolumus. Jovenique optimum maximum ob eas res appellant, non quod nos justos, temperatos, sapientes efficiat, sed quod salvos, incolumes, opulentos, copiosos. Judicium hoc omnium mortalium, fortunam a Deo petendam, a seipso sumendam esse sapientiam.

^d Parvulus nobis natura dedit igniculos quos celeriter in aliis moribus opinionibusque depravatis scilicet restringimus, ut nusquam natura lumen appareat: Nunc autem simulque editi in lucem et suscepti sumus, in omni continuo pravitate

To true reason which is at liberty, and not enthralled by sensuality and error, the light of nature might have a sufficiency to lead men up to the love of God, and a life of holiness; but experience telleth us that the reason of the world is darkened, and captivated by sensuality, and that few men can well use their own faculties; and such eyes need spectacles, such cripples need crutches, yea, such diseases call for a physician. Prove once that the world is not diseased, and then we will confess that their natural food may serve the turn, without any other diet or physic.

Sect. 7. When I have by natural reason silenced all my doubts about the life to come, I yet find in myself an uncouth, unsatisfactory kind of apprehension of my future state, till I look to supernatural evidence, which I perceive is from a double cause. 1. Because a soul in flesh would fain have such apprehension as participateth of sense. 2. And we are so conscious of our ignorance that we are apt still to suspect our own understandings, even when we have nothing to say against the conclusion.

What I have said in the first part of this book doth so fully satisfy my reason, as that I have nothing to say against it, which I cannot easily discern to be unsound; and yet for all that, when I think of another world, by the help of this natural light alone, I am rather amazed than satisfied, and am ready to think all this seemeth true, and I have nothing of weight to say against it; but, alas! how poor and uncertain a thing is man's understanding! How many are deceived in things that seem as undeniable to them! How know I what one particular may be unseen by me which would change my judgment, and better inform me in all the rest? If I could but see the world which I believe, or at least but speak with one who had been there, or gave me sensible evidence of his veracity, it would much confirm me. Sense hath got so much mastery in the soul, that we have much ado to take any apprehension for sure and satisfactory, which hath not some great correspondency with sense. This is not well; but it is a disease which sheweth the need of a physician, and of some other satisfying light.

Sect. 8. While we are thus stopped in our way by tediousness, difficulty, and a subjective uncertainty about the end and duty of man, the flesh is still active, and sin increaseth and gets advantage, and present things are still in their deceiving power; and so the soul groweth worse and worse.

Sect. 9. The soul being thus vitiated and perverted by sin, is so partial, slothful, negligent, unwilling, superficial, deceitful, and biassed in its studies, that if the evidences of life everlasting be full and clear, and satisfying to others, it will overlook them, or not perceive their certainty.*

Sect. 10. Though it be most evident, by common experience, that the nature of man is lamentably depraved, and that sin doth overspread the world;

yet how it entered, and when, or which of our progenitors was the first transgressor and cause, no natural light doth fully or satisfactorily acquaint me.

Sect. 11. And though nature tell me that God cannot damn or hate a soul that truly loveth him, and is sanctified, yet doth it not show me a means that is likely considerably to prevail to sanctify souls, and turn them from the love of present, transitory things, to the love of God and life eternal.

Though there be in nature the discovery of sufficient reasons and motives to do it, where reason is not in captivity; yet how unlikely they are to prevail with others, both reason and experience fully testify.[†]

Sect. 12. And whereas God's special mercy and grace is necessary to so great a change and cure, and this grace is forfeited by sin, and every sin deserveth more punishment, and this sin and punishment must be so far forgiven before God can give us that grace which we have forfeited; nature doth not satisfactorily teach me how God is so far reconciled to man, or how the forgiveness of sin may be by us so far procured.[‡]

Sect. 13. And whereas I see at once in the world, both the abounding of sin, which deserveth damnation, and the abounding of mercy to those that are under such deserts; I am not satisfied, by the light of nature, how God is so far reconciled, and the ends of government and justice attained, as to deal with the world so contrary to its deserts.

Sect. 14. And while I am in this doubt of God's reconciliation, I am ready still to fear, lest present forbearance and mercy be but a reprieve, and will end at last in greater misery; however, I find it hard, if not impossible, to come to any certainty of actual pardon and salvation.

Sect. 15. And while I am thus uncertain of pardon and the love of God, it must needs make it an insuperable difficulty to me, to love God above myself and all things: for to love a God that I think will damn me, or most probably may do it, for aught I know, is a thing that man can hardly do.

Sect. 16. And therefore I cannot see how the guilty world can be sanctified, or brought to forsake the sin and vanities which they love, as long as God, whom they must turn to by love, doth seem so unwilling to them.[§]

Sect. 17. And every temptation from present pleasure, commodity, or honour, will be like to prevail, while the love of God, and the happiness to come, are so dark and doubtful, to guilty, misgiving, ignorant souls.

Sect. 18. Nor can I see by nature how a sinner can live comfortably in the world, for want of clearer assurance of his future happiness.

For if he do but say, as poor Seneca, Cicero, and others such, It is most like that there is another life for us, but we are not sure, it will both abate their comfort in the forethoughts of it, and tempt them to venture upon present pleasure, for fear of

versamur, ut pene cum lacte nutricis errorem sulsisse videamur: cum vero parentibus redditi, deinde magistris traditi sumus, tum ita variis imbuiumur erroribus, ut vanitati veritas, et opinionio confirmate natura ipsa cedat. Cic. 3. Tusc. Multis signis natura declarat quid velit: obsurdissimum tamen nescio quo modo, nec ea quæ ab ea moventur audimus. Cic. Læli. Si tales nos natura genuisset, ut eam ipsam intueri, et perspicere, equæ optima duce cursum vite conficere possemus: haud esset sane quod quisquam rationem et doctrinam requireret cum natura sufficeret. Nunc vero, &c. Cic. 3. Tusc. Quicquid infimum et ingentium est, lenitior arte, non vincitur. Sen.

* O curvæ in terris animæ, et cælestium inanes!
Quid juvat hæc, templis nostros immittere mores?
Et bona Diis ex hac scelerata ducere pulpa? Persius.
Non bove mactato cælestia numina gaudet:
Sed quæ præstanta est, et sine teste fides. Ovid. Ep. 19.

† Omne nefas, omnemque mali purgamine causam
Credebant nostri tollere posse senes, &c.
Ah! nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina cædis
Fulmine tolli posse putatis aqua. Ovid. 2. Fast.
‡ Multa miser metui, quia feci multa provere. Idem.
In malis sperare bonum, nisi innocens nemo solet. Sen.
§ Turpe est quicquam mali perpetrare; bene autem agere nullo periculo proposito, multorum est: id vero proprium boni viri est, etiam cum periculo suo honestatem in agnitem sequi. Plut. in Mario.
At mens ibi conscia facti
Præmetuens, adhibet stimulos, terretque flagellis:
Nec videt interea qui terminus esse malorum
Possit, nec qui sit pensarum dominus finis.
Atque eadem metuît magis hæc in morte gravescant.
Lucret. 3.

losing all. And if they were never so confident of the life to come, and had no assurance of their own part in it, as not knowing whether their sins be pardoned, still their comfort in it would be small. And the world can give them no more than is proportionable to so small and momentary a thing.

Sect. 19. Nor do I see in nature any full and suitable support against the pain and fears of sufferings and death, while men doubt of that which should support them.

Sect. 20. I must therefore conclude that the light and law of nature, which was suitable to uncorrupted reason and will, and to an undepraved mind, is too insufficient to the corrupted, vitiated, guilty world, and that there is a necessity of some recovering, medicinal revelation.

Which forced the very heathens to fly to oracles, idols, sacrifices, and religious propitiations of the gods, there being scarce any nation which had not some such thing, though they used them, not only uneffectually, but to the increase of their sin and strengthening their presumption, as too many poor ignorant christians now do their masses and other such formalities and superstitions. But as Arnobius saith, (*Adv. Gentes*, l. 7.) *Crescit enim multitudo peccantium; cum redimendi peccati spes datur: et facile iur ad culpas, ubi est venalis ignoscendum gratia.* He that hopeth to purchase forgiveness with money, or sacrifices, or ways of cost, will strive rather to be rich than to be innocent.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE SEVERAL RELIGIONS WHICH ARE IN THE WORLD.

HAVING finished my inquiries into the state and book of nature, I found it my duty to inquire what other men thought in the world, and what were the reasons of their several beliefs, that if they knew more than I had discovered, by what means soever, I might become partaker of it.

Sect. 1. And, first, I find that all the world, except those called heathens, are conscious of the necessity of supernatural revelation; yea, the heathens themselves have some common apprehension of it.

Sect. 2. Four sorts of religions I find only considerable upon earth; the mere naturalists, called commonly heathens and idolaters, the Jews, the Mahometans, and the christians. The heathens, by their oracles, augurs, and auspices, confess the necessity of some supernatural light; and the very religion of all the rest consisteth in it.

Sect. 3. I. As for the heathens, I find this much good among them; that some of them have had a very great care of their souls; and many have used exceeding industry in seeking after knowledge, especially in the mysteries of the works of God; and

some of them have bent their minds higher to know God, and the invisible worlds; that they commonly thought that there is a life of retribution after death, and among the wisest of them, the sum of that is to be found, though confusedly, which I have laid down in the first part of this book.

Especially in Seneca, Cicero, Plutarch, Plato, Plotinus, Jamblicus, Proclus, Porphyry, Julian the apostate, Antoninus, Epictetus, Arrian, &c.: and for their learning and wisdom, and moral virtues, the christian bishops carried themselves respectfully to many of them, as Basil to Libanius, &c. And in their days many of their philosophers were honoured by the christian emperors, or at least by the inferior magistrates and christian people, who judged that so great worth deserved honour, and that the confession of so much truth deserved answerable love, especially Aedesius, Julianus, Cappadox, Proeresius, Maximus, Libanius, Acacius, Chrysanthus, &c.; and the christians ever since have made great use of their writings in their schools, especially of Aristotle's and Plato's, with their followers'.^a

Sect. 4. And I find that the idolatry of the wisest of them was not so foolish as that of the vulgar, but they thought that the universe was one animated world, and that the universal soul was the only absolute, sovereign God, whom they described much like as christians do; and that the sun, and stars, and earth, and each particular orb, was an individual animal, part of the universal world; and, besides the universal, had each one a subordinate, particular soul, which they worshipped as a subordinate, particular deity, as some christians do the angels: and their images they set up for such representations, by which they thought these gods delighted to be remembered, and instrumentally to exercise their virtues for the help of earthly mortals.

Sect. 5. I find that, except these philosophers, and very few more, the generality of the heathens were and are foolish idolaters, and ignorant, sensual, brutish men.^b

At this day, through the world, they are that sort of men that are likeliest unto beasts, except some few at Siam, China, the Indian Bannians, the Japonians, the Ethnic Persians, and a few more. The greatest deformity of nature is among them; the least of sound knowledge, true policy, civility, and piety, is among them; abominable wickedness doth no where so much abound. So that if the doctrine and judgment of these may be judged of by the effect, it is most insufficient to heal the diseased world, and reduce man to holiness, sobriety, and honesty.

Sect. 6. I find, that those few among the heathens, who attain to more knowledge in the things which concern man's duty and happiness than the rest, do commonly destroy all again by the mixture of some dotages and impious conceits.^c

The *literati* in China excel in many things, but besides abundance of ignorance in philosophy, they destroy all, by denying the immortality of the soul, and affirming rewards and punishments to be only in

^a Eunapius saith, that Constantine so honoured Sopater the philosopher, that he made him usually sit by him on the same bench. Sure the philosophers were falsely reported to Theoph. Antioch. ad Autol. (l. 2. p. 137.) when he saith, that Zeno, Diogenes, and Cleanthes' books, do teach to eat man's flesh, and fathers to be roasted and eaten by the children, and sacrificed by them, &c. Belying one another hath been the devil's means to destroy charity on earth.

^b Sed nescio quomodo, nil tam absurde dici potest, quod non dicatur ab aliquo philosophorum. Cic. Divin. 2. p. 188.

^c Sed hac eadem num censes apud eos ipsos valere, nisi admodum paucos a quibus inventa, disputata, conscripta sunt? Quotus enim quisque philosophorum invenitur, qui sit

ita moratus, ita animo ac vita constitutus, ut ratio postulat? Qui disciplinam suam, non ostentationem scientie, sed legem vite putet? Qui obtinere ipse sibi, et decretis suis pareat? Videre licet alios tanta levitate et jactatione, ut si fuerit non didicisse melius, alios pecunie cupidos, glorie nonnullos, multos libidinum servos: Ut eum eorum vita mirabiliter pugnet oratio; quod quidem mihi videtur turpissimum. Ut enim si grammaticum se professus quispiam barbare loquatur, aut si absurde canat is, qui se haberi vellet musicum; hoc turpius sit, quod in eo ipso peccet, cuius profectur scientiam. Sic philosophus in ratione vite peccans, hoc turpius est, quod in officio, cuius magister esse velit, labitur, atque vite professus, delinquit in vita. Cic. Tuscul. l. 2. p. 252.

this life, or but a little longer: at least, none but the souls of the good, say some of them, survive. And though they confess one God, they give him no solemn worship. Their sect, called Sciequia, or Siacca, is very clear for the unity of the Godhead, the joys of heaven, and the torments of hell, with some umbrage of the Trinity, &c. But they blot out all with their Pythagorean fopperies, affirming these souls which were in joy or misery, after a certain space, to be sent again into bodies, and so to continue through frequent changes to eternity, to say nothing of the wickedness of their lives. Their third sect, called Lauri, is not worth the naming; as being composed of fopperies, and sorceries, and impostures. All the Japonian sects, also, make the world to be eternal, and souls to be perpetuated through infinite transmigrations. The Siameses, who seem the best of all, and nearest to christians, have many fopperies, and worship the devil for fear, as they do God for love. The Indian Bramenes, or Bannians, also, have the Pythagorean errors, and place their piety in redeeming brutes, because they have souls which sometimes were human. The Persians, dispersed in India, who confess God, and heaven, and hell, yet think that these are but of a thousand years' duration. And it is above a thousand years since they believed that the world should continue but a thousand years, and then souls be released from hell, and a new world made.

SECT. 7. Their great darkness and uncertainties appear by the innumerable sects and differences which are among them; which are incomparably more numerous than all that are found in all parties in the world besides.

I need not tell you of the two hundred and eighty-eight sects or opinions, *de summo bono*, which Varro said was in his days. The difference which you may find in Laertius, Hesechius, and others, between the cynics, peripatetics, academics, stoics, sceptics, Epicureans, &c. with all their subdivisions, are enough. In Japan, the twelve sects have their subdivisions. In China, the three general sects have so many subdivisions, that Varenus saith of them, *Singuli fontes labentibus paulatim seculis, a fraudum magistris in tot mæandros derivati sunt, ut sub triplici nomine trecentæ mihi sectæ inter se discrepantes numerari posse videantur: sed et hæ quotidianis incrementis augentur, et in pejor ruunt.* Petrus Texeira saith of the Indians, *In regno Gazeratensi varii sunt ritus et sectæ incolarum, et quod mirum, vix familiam inventas in qua omnes cœgruant: alii comedunt carnem, alii nequam; alii comedunt quidem, sed non mactant animalia: alii nonnulla tantum animalia comedunt; alii tantum pisces; alii tantum lac et herbas, &c.* Johan. a Twist. saith of the Indian Bramenes, *Numerantur sectæ præcipui nominis octoginta tres: sed præter has minus illustrium magna est multitudo, ita ut singulæ familie peculiarem fere foveant religionem.* It were endless to speak of all the sects in Africa and America; to say nothing of the beastly part of them in Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, that is, Soldania, and the islands of cannibals, who know no God, nor government, nor civility, some of them. They are not only of as many minds as countries, but of a multitude of sects in one and the same country.

SECT. 8. I find not myself called or enabled to judge all these people, as to their final state, but only to say, that if any of them have a holy heart and life in the true love of God, they shall be saved;

^a (In to. 4. Bib. Pat.) Extat liber Hieronymi a Sancta Fide, ex Judæo christiani, contra Judæos et Talmud, qui ut dicit approbatio 5000, Judæos ad fidem convertit. (P. 742,

but, without this, no form of religion will save any man, be it ever so right.

SECT. 9. But I find it to be my duty to love them for all the good which is in them, and all that is true and good in their religion I will embrace; and because it is so defective, to look further, and try what I can learn from others.

There is so much lovely in a Cato, Cicero, Seneca, Antonine, Epictetus, Plutarch, &c. in the religions of Siam, in the dispersed Persian Ethnics, in India; in the Bramans or Bannians of India; in the Bonzii of Japan, and divers others in China and elsewhere, that it obligeth us not only to love them benevolently, but with much complacency. And as I will learn from nature itself what I can, so also from these students of nature. I will take up nothing merely on their trust, nor reject any doctrine merely because it is theirs; but all that is true and good in their religions, as far as I can discern it, shall be part of mine; and, because I find them so dark and bad, I will betake me for further information to those that trust to supernatural revelation, which are Jews, Mahometans, and the christians, of which I shall next consider apart.

SECT. 10. II. As to the religion of the Jews, I need not say much of it by itself; the positive part of their doctrine being confessed by the christians and Mahometans to be of divine revelation; and the negative part, their denying of Christ, is to be tried in the trial of christianity.^d

The reasons which are brought for the christian religion, if sound, will prove the Old Testament, which the Jews believe; it being part of the christian's sacred book; and the same reasons will confute the Jews' rejection of Jesus Christ. I take that, therefore, to be the fittest place to treat of this subject when I come to the proofs of the christian faith. I oppose not what they have from God; I must prove that to be of God, which they deny.

SECT. 11. III. In the religion of the Mahometans I find much good; viz. a confession of one only God, and most of the natural parts of religion; a vehement opposition to all idolatry; a testimony to the veracity of Moses, and of Christ; that Christ is the word of God, and a great prophet; and the writings of the apostles true: all this, therefore, where christianity is approved, must be embraced.

And there is no doubt but God hath made use of Mahomet as a great scourge to the idolaters of the world, as well as to the christians who had abused their sacred privileges and blessings: wherever his religion doth prevail, he casteth down images, and filth men's minds with a hatred of idols, and all conceit of multitude of gods, and bringeth men to worship one God alone, and doth that by the sword in this, which the preaching of the gospel had not done in many obstinate nations of idolaters.

SECT. 12. But withal I find a man exalted as the chief of prophets, without any such proof as a wise man should be moved with; and an Alkoran written by him below the rates of common reason, being a rhapsody of nonsense and confusion; and many false and impious doctrines introduced; and a tyrannical empire and religion twisted, and both erected, propagated, and maintained, by irrational, tyrannical means: all which discharge my reason from the entertainment of this religion.^e

I. That Mahomet was so great, or any prophet, is neither confirmed by any true, credible miracle, nor by any eminency of wisdom or holiness, in which

&c.) De Mahometis Origine, &c. vid. fragm. ex Anastas. Hist. Eccl. in B. P. Gr. Lat. to. 2. p. 289, &c.

^e Vid. Theodori Abucare Opuscul. Mahumetem non esse ex Deo, &c. Et Euthymii Zigaben. Moamethica.

he excelled other men; nor any thing else which reason can judge to be a divine attestation. The contrary is sufficiently apparent in the irrationality of his Alkoran; there is no true learning nor excellency in it, but such as might be expected among men of the more incult wits and barbarous education; there is nothing delivered methodically or rationally, with any evidence of solid understanding; there is nothing but the most nauseous repetition, a hundred times over, of many simple, incoherent speeches, in the dialect of a drunken man; sometimes against idolaters, and sometimes against christians, for calling Christ God; which, all set together, seem not to contain, in the whole Alkoran, so much solid, useful sense and reason, as one leaf of some of those philosophers whom he opposeth, however his time had delivered him from their idolatry, and caused him more to approach the christian faith.

2. And who can think it any probable sign, that he is the prophet of truth, whose kingdom is of this world, erected by the sword; who barbarously suppresseth all rational inquiry into his doctrine, and all disputes against it, all true learning and rational helps, to advance and improve the intellect of man; and who teacheth men to fight and kill for their religion: certainly, the kingdom of darkness is not the kingdom of God, but of the devil; and the friend of ignorance is no friend to truth, to God, nor to mankind; and it is a sign of a bad cause, that it cannot endure the light. If it be of God, why dare they not soberly prove it to us, and hear what we have to object against it, that truth, by the search, may have the victory; if beasts had a religion, it would be such as this.

3. Moreover, they have doctrines of polygamy, and of a sensual kind of heaven, and of murdering men, to increase their kingdoms, and many the like; which being contrary to the light of nature, and unto certain, common truths, do prove that the prophet and his doctrine are not of God.

4. And his full attestation to Moses and Christ, as the true prophets of God, doth prove himself, a false prophet who so much contradicteth them, and rageth against christians as a blood-thirsty enemy, when he hath given so full a testimony to Christ; the particulars of which I shall show anon.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION: AND FIRST, WHAT IT IS.

SECT. I. IV. The last sort of religion to be inquired into, is christianity; in which, by the providence of God, I was educated, and at first received it by a human faith, upon the word and reverence of my parents and teachers, being unable in my childhood, rationally, to try its grounds and evidences.^a

I shall declare to the reader just in what order I have received the christian religion, that the inquiry being the more clear and particular, the satisfaction may be the greater; and it being primarily for my own use that I draw up these papers, I find it convenient to remember what is past, and to in-

sert the transcript of my own experiences, that I may fully try whether I have gone rationally and faithfully to work or not. I confess, that I took my religion at first upon my parents' word; and who could expect that in my childhood I should be able to prove its grounds? But whether God owned that method of reception by any of his inward light and operations, and whether the efficacy of the smallest beams be any proof of the truth of the christian faith, I leave to the reader, and shall myself only declare the naked history in truth.

Sect. 2. In this religion (received defectively both as to matter and grounds) I found a power even in my childhood, to awe my soul, and check my sin and folly, and make me careful of my salvation, and to make me love and honour true wisdom and holiness of life.

Sect. 3. But when I grew up to fuller use of reason, and more distinctly understood what I had generally and darkly received, the power of it did more surprise my mind, and bring me to deeper consideration of spiritual and everlasting things; it humbled me in the sense of my sin and its deserts, and made me think more sensibly of a Saviour; it resolved me for more exact obedience to God, and increased my love to God; and increased my love to persons and things, sermons, writings, prayers, conference, which relished of plain, resolved godliness.

Sect. 4. In all this time I never doubted of the truth of this religion; partly retaining my first, human belief, and partly awed and convinced by the intrinsic evidence of its proper subject, end, and manner; and being taken up about the humbling and reforming study of myself.

Sect. 5. At last, having for many years laboured to compose my mind and life to the principles of this religion, I grew up to see more difficulties in it than I saw before; and partly by temptations, and partly by an inquisitive mind, which was wounded with uncertainties, and could not contemptuously or carelessly cast off the doubts which I was not able to resolve, I resumed afresh the whole inquiry, and resolved to make as faithful a search into the nature and grounds of this religion as if I had never been baptized into it.

The first thing I studied was the matter of christianity, What it is? And the next was the evidence and certainty of it; of which I shall speak distinctly.

Sect. 6. The christian religion is to be considered, 1. In itself, as delivered by God; 2. In its reception and practice, by men professing it. In itself it is perfect, but not so easily discernible by a stranger; in the practisers it is imperfect here in this life, but more discernible by men that cannot so quickly understand the principles; and more forcibly constraineth them to perceive its holiness and worth, where it is indeed sincerely practised; and is most dishonoured and misunderstood through the wickedness of hypocrites who profess it.

As the impress on the wax doth make the image more discernible than the sculpture on the seal; but the sculpture is true and perfect, when many accidents may render the impressed image imperfect and faulty; so is it in this case.^b To a diligent inquirer, christianity is best known in its principles delivered by Christ the Author of it; and, indeed, is no otherwise perfectly known, because it is no where else perfectly to be seen: but yet it is much more

^a What the christian religion is, judge not by the intruded opinions of any sect, but by the ancient creeds and summaries, which elsewhere I have recited out of Tertullian and other ancients; and which you may find recited or referred to in Usher and Vossius, de Symb. See the description of the christian faith in Proclus ad Armenios, De fide in Bib.

Pat. Gracolat. to. l. p. 311. Also the Catechism of Junilius Africanus, De Part. Div. Legis. Et Hermenopol. De Fide Orthod.

^b Leg. Julian. Toletan, cont. Judeos. Et Rabbi Samuel. Marochiani de adventu Messie.

visible and taking with unskilful, superficial observers, in the professors' lives; for they can discern the good or evil of an action, who perceive not the nature of the rule and precepts. The vital form in the rose-tree is the most excellent part; but the beauty and sweetness of the rose is more easily discerned. Effects are most sensible, but causes are most excellent; and yet in some respects the practice of religion is more excellent than the precepts, inasmuch as the precepts are means to practice; for the end is more excellent than the means as such. A poor man can easier perceive the worth of charity in the person that clothe, and feedeth, and relieveth him, than the worth of a treatise or sermon of charity. Subjects easily perceive the worth of a wise, and holy, and just, and merciful king or magistrate, in his actual government, who are not much taken with the precepts which require yet more perfection: and among all descriptions, historical narratives, like Xenophon's "Cyrus," do take most with them. Doubtless, if ever the professors of christianity should live according to their own profession, they would thereby overcome the opposition of the world, and propagate their religion with greatest success through all the earth.

Because no man can well judge of the truth of a doctrine till he first know what it is, I think it here necessary to open the true nature of the christian religion, and tell men truly what it is: partly, because I perceive that abundance that profess it hypocritically, by the mere power of education, laws and custom of their country, do not understand it, and then are the easier tempted to neglect or contemn it, or forsake it, if strongly tempted to it; even to forsake that which, indeed, they never truly received: and because it is possible some aliens to christianity may peruse these lines. Otherwise, were I to speak only to those that already understand it, I might spare this description.

Sect. 7. The christian religion containeth two parts: 1. All theological verities which are of natural revelation: 2. Much more which is supernatural revealed. The supernatural revelation is said in it to be partly written by God, partly delivered by angels, partly by inspired prophets and apostles, and partly by Jesus Christ himself in person.

Sect. 8. The supernatural revelation reciteth most of the natural, because the searching of the great book of nature is a long and difficult work for the now corrupted, dark, and slothful mind of the common sort of men.

Sect. 9. These supernatural revelations are all contained, 1. Most copiously in a book called, The Holy Bible; or Canonical Scriptures. 2. More summarily and contractedly, in three forms, called, The Belief, The Lord's Prayer, and The Ten Commandments. 3. And most briefly and summarily, in a Sacramental Covenant: this last containeth all the essential parts most briefly; and the second somewhat fuller explaineth them; and the first, the holy Scriptures, containeth also all the integral parts, or the whole frame.

Sect. 10. Some of the present professors of the christian religion do differ about the authority of some few writings, called Apocrypha, whether they are to be numbered with the canonical books of God, or not; but those few containing in them no considerable points of doctrine different from the rest,

the controversy doth not very much concern the substance or doctrinal matter of their religion.

Sect. 11. The sacred Scriptures are written very much historically, the doctrines being interspersed with the history.

Sect. 12. This sacred volume containeth two parts: the first, called The Old Testament, containing the history of the creation, and of the deluge, and of the Jewish nation till after their captivity; as also their law, and prophets. The second, called The New Testament, containing the history of the birth, and life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ; the sending of his apostles; the giving of the Holy Ghost; the course of their ministry and miracles; with the sum of the doctrine preached first by Christ, and then by them, and certain epistles of theirs to divers churches and persons, more fully opening all that doctrine.

Sect. 13. The sum of the history of the Old Testament is this: That in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, with all things in them: viz. That having first made the intellectual, superior part of the world, and the matter of the elementary world in an unformed mass, he did, the first day, distinguish or form the active element of fire, and caused it to give light: the second day, he separated the rarified, passive element, called air, expanding it from the earth upwards, to be a separation and medium of action between the superior and inferior parts. The third day he separated the rest of the passive element, earth and water, into their proper place, and set their bounds; and made individual plants, with their specific forms and virtue of generation. The fourth day he made the sun, moon, and stars, for luminaries to the earth; either then forming them, or then appointing them to that office, but not revealing their other uses, which are nothing to us. The fifth day he made fishes and birds, with the power of generation. The sixth day he made the terrestrial animals, and man, with the like generative power. And the seventh day he appointed to be a sabbath of rest, on which he would be solemnly worshipped by mankind as our Creator. Having made one man and one woman, in his own image, that is, with intellects, free-will, and executive power, in wisdom, holiness, and aptitude to obey him, and with dominion over the sensitive, and vegetative, and inanimate creatures; he placed them in a garden of pleasure, wherein were two sacramental trees, one called, the tree of life, and the other, the tree of knowledge of good and evil: and (besides the law of nature) he tried him only with this positive prohibition, that he should not eat of the tree of knowledge: whereupon the devil,^d who before this was fallen from his first state of innocency and felicity, took occasion to persuade the woman that God's threatening was not true; that he meant not as he spoke; that he knew man was capable of greater knowledge, but envied him that happiness; and that the eating of that fruit was not the way to death as God had threatened, but to knowledge and exaltation: whereupon the woman seeing the beauty of the fruit, and desiring knowledge, believed the devil, and did eat of that which God forbade. The sin being so heinous for a new-made, rational creature, to believe that God was false and bad, a liar and envious, which is indeed the nature of the devil, and to depart from his love and obedience for so small a matter, God did, in

^c Gen. i.

^d Cæsarius (Dialog. 3. Q. 122.) thinketh that Adam was forty days in paradise, and that, therefore, Lent is kept, to show our hungering after paradise. But that is a singular fancy. And after he changed it, upon some old men's tradition, to a longer time. (Gen. ii. and iii.) Transtulit

Deus hominem in Paradisum, ei unidque occasiones suggerens ut cresceret, et perfectus redderetur, et declaratus tandem Deus, in astra ascenderet. Mediam etenim conditionem obtinuit homo; nec totus mortalis, nec totus immortalis existens; verum utriusque exitit particeps. Theoph. Antio. ad Autol. l. 1. p. 129.

justice, presently sentence the offenders to punishment: yet would not so lose his new-made creature, nor cast off mankind, by the full execution of his deserved punishment; but he resolved to commit the recovery and conduct of mankind to a Redeemer, who should better perform the work of salvation than the first man, Adam, had done the work of adhesion and obedience. This Saviour is the Eternal Wisdom and Word of God, who was in due time to assume the nature of man, and in the mean time to stay the stroke of justice, and to be the invisible Lawgiver and Guide of souls, communicating such measures of mercy, light, and spirit, for their recovery, as he saw fit. (Of whom, more anon.) So that, henceforward, God did no longer govern man as a spotless, innocent creature, by the mere law of entire nature; but as a lapsed, guilty, depraved creature, who must be pardoned, reconciled, and renewed, and have laws and means made suitable to his corrupted, miserable state. Hereupon, God published the promise of a Saviour, to be sent in due time: * who should confound the devil that had accused God of falsehood, and of envying the good of man, and had by lying murdered mankind; and should overcome all his deceits and power, and rescue God's injured honour, and the souls of sinners, and bring them safe to the everlasting blessedness which they were made for. Thus God, as man's Redeemer, and not only as his Creator, governeth him. He taught Adam first to worship him now by sacrifice, both in acknowledgment of the Creator, and to teach him to believe in and expect the Redeemer, who, in his assumed humanity, was to become a sacrifice for sin. This worship by sacrifice Adam taught his two sons, Cain and Abel, who were the early instances, types, and beginnings of the two sorts of persons which thenceforward would be in the world; viz. the holy seed of Christ, and the wicked seed of Satan. Cain, the elder, (as corruption now is before regeneration, offering the fruits of his land only to his Creator; and Abel, the younger, sacrificing the firstlings of his flock of sheep to his Redeemer, with a purified mind; God rejected the offering of Cain, and accepted the sacrifice of Abel: whereupon Cain, in imitation of the devil, envied his brother, and in envy slew him,^f to foretell the world what the corrupted nature of man would prove, and how malignant it would be against the sanctified, and what the holy seed that are accepted of God must look for in this world, for the hope of an everlasting blessedness with God. After this, God's patience waited on mankind, not executing the threatened death upon their bodies till they had lived seven, or eight, or nine hundred years a piece: * which mercy was abused to their greater sin, the length of their lives occasioning their excessive sensuality, worldliness, and contempt of God and life eternal, so that the number of the holy seed was at last so small, and the wickedness of mankind so great, that God resolved to drown the world. Only righteous Noah and his family (eight persons) he saved in an ark, which he directed him to make for the preservation of himself, and the species of aerial and terrestrial animals.^h After which flood, the earth was peopled in time from Noah, to whom God gave precepts of piety and justice, which by tradition came down to his posterity through the world.ⁱ But still the greater part did corrupt their ways, and followed Satan, and the holy seed was the smaller part: of whom Abraham, being exemplary in holiness and righteousness, with his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob, God did, in special appro-

bation of their righteousness, renew his gracious covenant with them, and enlarge it with the addition of many temporal blessings and special privileges to their posterity after them; promising that they should possess the land of Canaan, and be to him a peculiar people above all the people of the earth.^k The children of Jacob, being afterwards by a famine removed into Egypt, there multiplied to a great people. The king of Egypt, therefore, oppressed them, and used them as slaves, to make his brick, by cruel impositions: till at last God raised them up Moses for a deliverer, to whom God committed his message to the king, and to whom he gave power to work miracles for their deliverance, and whom he made their captain to lead them out of Egypt towards the promised land. Ten times did Moses, with Aaron his brother, go to Pharaoh the king in vain, though each time they wrought public miracles to convince him, till at last, when God had in a night destroyed all the first-born in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh did unwillingly let the seed of Jacob (or Israel) go; but, repenting quickly, he pursued after them with his host, and overtook them just at the Red sea; where God wrought a miracle, opening the sea, which the Israelites passed through on dry ground, but the king, with his host, who were hardened to pursue them, were all drowned by the return of the waters, when the Israelites were over. Then Moses led them on in the wilderness, towards the promised land; but the great difficulties of the wilderness tempted them to murmuring against him that had brought them thither, and to unbelief against God, as if he could not have provided for them. This provoked God to kill many thousands of them by plagues and serpents, and to delay them forty years in that wilderness, before he gave them the land of promise: so that only two which came out of Egypt (Caleb and Joshua) did live to enter it. But to confute their unbelief, God wrought many miracles for them in this wilderness; he caused the rocks to give them water; he fed them with manna from above; their shoes and clothes did not wear in forty years. In this wilderness Moses received from God a law, by which they were to be governed. In mount Sinai, in flames of fire, with terrible thunder, God appeared so far to Moses, as to speak to him, and instruct him in all that he would have him to do: he gave him the chief part of his law in two tables of stone, containing ten commandments, engraven thereon by God himself (or by angelical ministrations): the rest he instructed him in by word of voice. Moses was made their captain, and Aaron their high priest, and all the forms of God's worship settled, with abundance of laws for sacrifices and ceremonies, to typify the sacrifice and reign of Christ. When Moses and Aaron were dead in the wilderness, God chose Joshua, Moses' servant, to be their captain, who led them into Canaan, and miraculously conquered all the inhabitants, and settled Israel in possession of the land.^l There they long remained under the government of a chieftain, called a judge, successively chosen by God himself,^m till at last they mutinied against that form of government, and desired a king like other nations.ⁿ Whereupon, God gave them a bad king in displeasure; but next him he chose David, a king of great and exemplary holiness, in whom God delighted, and made his kingdom hereditary. To David he gave a son of extraordinary wisdom, who by God's appointment built the famous temple at Jerusalem; yet did this Solomon, by the temptation of his wives, to gratify them, set up idolatry also in the land. Which so provoked

* Gen. iii. 15.

^f Gen. iv.^g Gen. v.^h Gen. vi. and vii.ⁱ Gen. viii. ix. x. and xi.^k Gen. xii. to the end of the book.^l Exod. and Numb.^m Josh. and Judg.ⁿ 1 Sam.

God, that he resolved to rend ten tribes of the twelve out of his son's hand: which accordingly was done, and they revolted and chose a king of their own, and only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin adhered to the posterity of Solomon. The wise sentences of Solomon, and the psalms of David, are here inserted in the Bible. The reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel are afterwards described; the wickedness and idolatry of most of their successive kings and people; till God, being so much provoked by them, gave them up into captivity. Here is also inserted many books of the prophecies of those prophets which God sent from time to time, to call them from their sins, and warn them of his foretold judgments: and lastly, here is contained some of the history of their state in captivity, and the return of the Jews by the favour of Cyrus; where in a tributary state they remained in expectation of the promised Messiah or Christ. Thus far is the history of the Old Testament.¹

The Jews, being too sensible of their captivities and tributes, and too desirous of temporal greatness and dominion, expected that the Messiah should restore their kingdom to its ancient splendour, and should subdue the gentile nations to them: and to this sense they expounded all those passages in their prophets, which were spoken and meant of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, as the Saviour of souls; which prejudiced them against the Messiah when he came; so that, though they looked and longed for his coming, yet when he came they knew him not to be the Christ, but hated him, and persecuted him, as the prophets had foretold: the fulness of time being come, in which God would send the promised Redeemer, the Eternal Wisdom and Word of God, the second in the Trinity, assumed a human soul and body, and was conceived in the womb of a virgin, by the Holy Spirit of God, without man's concurrence. His birth was celebrated by prophecies, and apparitions, and applause of angels, and other wonders. A star appearing over the place, led some astronomers out of the east to worship him in the cradle; which Herod the king being informed of, and that they called him the King of the Jews, he caused all the infants in that country to be killed, that he might not escape; but, by the warning of an angel, Jesus was carried into Egypt, where he remained till the death of Herod. At twelve years old he disputed with the doctors in the temple: in this time rose a prophet called John, who told them that the kingdom of the Messiah was at hand, and called the people to repentance, that they might be prepared for him, and baptized all that professed repentance into the present expectation of the Saviour.² About the thirtieth year of his age, Jesus resolved to enter upon the solemn performance of his undertaken work. And, first, he went to John to be baptized by him, the captains being to wear the same colours with the soldiers. When John had baptized him, he declared him to be the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world; and when he was baptized, and prayed, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended, in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him; and a voice came from heaven, which said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." The first thing that Jesus did, after his baptism, was, when he had fasted forty days and nights, to expose himself to the utmost of Satan's temptations, who, thereupon, did divers ways assault him; but Jesus perfectly overcame the tempter, who had overcome the first man, Adam: thenceforth, he preached the glad tidings of salvation, and called men to

repentance, and, choosing twelve to be more constantly with him than the rest, and to be witnesses of his works and doctrine, he revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God; he went up and down with them, teaching the people, and working miracles, to confirm his doctrine; he told them, that he was sent from God, to reveal his will to lost mankind, for their recovery, and to bring them to a fuller knowledge of the unseen world, and the way thereto; and to be a Mediator and Reconciler between God and man, and to lay down his life as a sacrifice for sin; and that he would rise again from the dead the third day; and, in the mean time, to fulfil all righteousness, and give man an example of a perfect life; which, accordingly, he did: he never sinned in thought, word, or deed; he chose a poor, inferior condition of life, to teach men, by his example, to contemn the wealth and honours of this world, in comparison of the favour of God, and the hopes of immortality. He suffered patiently all indignities from men; he went up and down as the living image of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, doing miracles to manifest his power, and opening the doctrine of God to manifest his wisdom; and healing men's bodies, and seeking the salvation of their souls, to manifest his goodness and his love. Without any means, by his bare command, he immediately cured fevers, palsies, and all diseases, cast out devils, and raised the dead to life again; and so open, uncontrolled, and numerous were his miracles, as that all men might see that the omnipotent God did thereby bear witness to his word. Yet did not the greatest part of the Jews believe in him, for all these miracles, because he came not in worldly pomp to restore their kingdom and subdue the world; but they blasphemed his very miracles, and said, he did them by the power of the devil; and fearing lest his fame should bring envy and danger upon them from the Romans, who ruled over them, they were his most malicious persecutors themselves. The doctrine which he preached was not the unnecessary curiosities of philosophy, nor the subservient arts and sciences, which natural light revealeth, and which natural men can sufficiently teach: but it was to teach men to know God, and to know themselves, their sin, and danger, and how to be reconciled to God, and pardoned, and sanctified, and saved; how to live in holiness to God, and in love and righteousness to men, and in special amity and unity among themselves, who are his disciples; how to mortify sin, and to contemn the wealth and honours of the world, and to deny the flesh its hurtful desires and lusts; and how to suffer any thing that we shall be called to, for obedience to God, and the hopes of heaven; to tell us what shall be after death; how all men shall be judged, and what shall become both of soul and body to everlasting. But his great work was by the great demonstrations of the goodness and love of God to lost mankind, (in their free pardon and offered salvation,) to win up men's hearts to the love of God, and to raise their hopes and desires up to that blessed life, where they shall see his glory, and love him, and be beloved by him for ever. At last, when he had finished the work of his ministration in the flesh, he told his disciples of his approaching sufferings and resurrection, and instituted the sacrament of his body and blood in bread and wine, which he commandeth them to use, for the renewing of their covenant with him, and remembrance of him; and for the maintaining and signifying their communion with him and with each

¹ 1 Kings; 2 Kings; 1 Chron.; and 2 Chron.

² Ezra and Nehem.

³ Matt. i. ii. &c. Luke i. ii. &c. Vid. Procli Homitiam de Nativ. Christi, interpret. Peltano.

⁴ Matt. iv. and Luke iv.

other.* After this, his time being come, the Jews apprehended him; and though upon a word of his mouth, to show his power, they fell all to the ground; yet did they rise again and lay hands on him, and brought him before Pilate, the Roman governor, and vehemently urged him to crucify him, contrary to his own mind and conscience. They accused him of blasphemy, for saying he was the Son of God; of impiety, for saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rebuild it;" he meant his body: and of treason against Cæsar, for calling himself a king; though he told them that his kingdom was not worldly, but spiritual. Hereupon, they condemned him, and clothed him in purple, like a king, in scorn, and set a crown of thorns on his head, and put a reed for a sceptre into his hand, and led him about to be a derision; they covered his eyes, and smote him, and buffeted him, and bid him tell who struck him: at last, they nailed him upon a cross, and put him to open shame and death, betwixt two malefactors; of whom, one of them reviled him, and the other believed on him. They gave him gall and vinegar to drink. The soldiers pierced his side with a spear when he was dead. All his disciples forsook him and fled; Peter having before denied thrice that ever he knew him, when he was in danger. When he was dead, the earth trembled, the rocks and the vail of the temple rent, and darkness was upon the earth, though there was no natural eclipse, which made the captain of the soldiers say, "Verily this was the Son of God." When he was taken down from the cross, and laid in a stone sepulchre, they set a guard of soldiers to watch the grave, having a stone upon it, which they sealed; because he had foretold them that he would rise again. On the morning of the third day, being the first day of the week, an angel terrified the soldiers, and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it; and when his disciples came, they found that Jesus was not there, and the angel told them, that he was risen, and would appear to them: accordingly, he oft appeared to them; sometimes as they walked by the way, and once as they were fishing, but usually when they were assembled together. Thomas, who was one of them, being absent at his first appearance to the rest, told them he would not believe it, unless he saw the print of the nails, and might put his finger into his wounded side. The next first day of the week, when they were assembled, Jesus appeared to them, the doors being shut, and called Thomas, and bade him put his fingers into his side, and view the prints of the nails in his hands and feet, and not be faithless but believing. After this he oft appeared to them, and once to above five hundred brethren at once. He earnestly pressed Peter to show the love that he bare to himself, by the feeding of his flock. He instructed his apostles in the matters of their employment. He gave them commission to go into all the world, and preach the gospel, and gave them the tenor of the new covenant of grace, and made them the rulers of his church, requiring them by baptism solemnly to enter all into his covenant who consent to the terms of it, and to assure them of pardon by his blood, and of salvation if they persevere. He required them to teach his disciples to observe all things which he had commanded them, and promised them that he would be with them, by his Spirit, and grace, and powerful defence, to the end of the world. And when he had been seen of them forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, being assembled with them, he commanded them not to depart from Jeru-

salem, but wait till the Holy Spirit came down upon them, which he had promised them:[†] but they, being tainted with some of the worldly expectations of the Jews, and thinking that he who could rise from the dead would sure now make himself and his followers glorious in the world, began to ask him whether he would at this time restore the kingdom to Israel; but he answered them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father hath put into his own power; but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses to me both at Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth." And when he had said this, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly towards heaven, as he went up, two men stood by them in white apparel, and said, Why gaze ye up to heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Upon this they returned to Jerusalem, and continued together till ten days after. As they were all together, both the apostles and all the rest of the disciples, suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and the likeness of fiery, cloven tongues sat on them all, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.[‡] By this they were enabled both to preach to people of several languages, and to work other miracles to confirm their doctrine; so that, from this time forward, the Holy Spirit, which Christ sent down upon believers, was his great Witness and Agent in the world, and procured the belief and entertainment of the gospel wheresoever it came; for by this extraordinary reception of the Spirit, the apostles themselves were much fuller instructed in the doctrine of salvation than they were before, notwithstanding their long converse with Christ in person, it being his pleasure to illuminate them by supernatural infusion, that it might appear to be no contrived design to deceive the world. And they were enabled to preach the word with power, and by this Spirit were infallibly guided in the performance of the work of their commissions, to settle Christ's church in a holy order, and to leave on record the doctrine which he had commanded them to teach: also, they themselves did heal the sick, and cast out devils, and prophesy, and by the laying on of their hands the same Holy Spirit was ordinarily given to others that believed: so that christians had all one gift or other of that Spirit, by which they convinced and converted a great part of the world in a short time: and all that were sincere had the gift of sanctification, and were regenerate by the Spirit, as well as by baptismal water, and had the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which was given them. A holy and heavenly mind and life, with mortification, contempt of the world, self-denial, patience, and love to one another, and to all men, was the constant badge of all Christ's followers. The first sermon that Peter preached did convert three thousand of those sinful Jews that had crucified Christ. And after that many thousands of them more were converted.[§] One of their bloody persecutors, Saul, a Pharisee, that had been one of the murderers of the first martyr, Stephen, and had haled many of them to prisons, as he was going on this business was struck down by the highway, a light from heaven shining round about him, and a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who

* Vid. Microlog. de Eccles. observ. cap. 23.

† All this is written by the four evangelists.

‡ Acts i.

* Acts ii.

‡ Acts ii. and iii.

art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man: and so Saul was led blind to Damascus, where one Ananias had a vision, commanding him to baptize him, and his eyes were opened.^a This convert, called Paul, did henceforward preach the gospel of Christ, from country to country, in Syria, in Asia, and at Rome, and a great part of the world, in marvellous, unwearied labours and sufferings, abuses, and imprisonments, converting multitudes, and planting churches in many great cities and countries, and working abundance of miracles where he went. His history is laid down in part of the New Testament: there are also many of his epistles, to Rome, to Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon, and the Hebrews, as is supposed: there are also the epistles of Peter, James, John, and Jude; with the Revelation of John, containing many mysterious prophecies. A eunuch, who was of great power, under the queen of Ethiopia, was converted by Philip, and carried the gospel into his country. The rest of the apostles, and other disciples, carried it abroad a great part of the world, especially in the Roman empire: and though every where they met with opposition and persecution, yet, by the power of the Holy Ghost appearing in their holiness, languages, and miracles, they prevailed and planted abundance of churches, of which the most populous were at Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria: and though they were all dispersed abroad the world, and out of the reach of mutual converse, yet did they never disagree in their doctrine in the smallest point; but proceeded through sufferings in unity and holiness, in the work of saving souls, till most of them were put to death for the sake of Christ, having left the churches under the government of their several pastors, according to the will of Christ.^a

This is the abstract of the history of the holy Scriptures.

SECT. 14. The sum of the doctrine of christianity is contained in these articles following, consisting of three general heads: I. Things to be known and believed. II. Things to be willed, and desired, and hoped. III. Things to be done.

I. 1. There is one only God in essence, in three essential principles,—power, understanding, and will; or omnipotency, omniscience, and goodness; in three subsistences or persons,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who is a mind, or Spirit, and therefore is most simple, incorruptible, immortal, impassionate, invisible, intangible, &c.; and is indivisible, eternal, immense, necessary, independent, self-sufficient, immutable, absolute, and infinite in all perfections: is the principal efficient, dirigent, and

final Cause of all the world: the Creator of all, and therefore our absolute Owner, our supreme Ruler, and our total Benefactor, and chief Good and End.^b

2. God made man for himself; not to supply any want of his own, but for the pleasing of his own will and love, in the glory of his perfections, shining forth in his works: in his own image; that is, with vital power, understanding, and free-will, able, wise, and good, with dominion over the inferior creatures, as being in subordination to God, their Owner, their Governor, and their Benefactor and End. And he bound him by the law of his nature to adhere to God, his Maker; by resignation, devotion, and submission to him as his Owner; by believing, honouring, and obeying him as his Ruler; and by loving him, trusting and seeking him, delighting in him, thanksgiving to him, and praising him, as his grand Benefactor, chief Good, and ultimate End, to exercise charity and justice to each other; and to govern all his inferior faculties by reason according to his Maker's will, that he so might please him, and be happy in his love: and, to try him, he particularly forbade him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.^c

3. Man being tempted by Satan to break this law of God, did believe the tempter, who promised him impunity, and advancement in knowledge, and who accused God as false in his threatening, and as envying man this great advancement; and so, by wilful sinning against him, he fell from God, and his uprightness and happiness, under the displeasure of God, the penalty of his law, and the power of Satan; and hence we are all conceived in sin, averse to good, and prone to evil, and condemnation is passed upon all, and no mere creature is able to deliver us.^d

4. God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son to be their Redeemer, who, being the eternal Wisdom and Word of God, and so truly God, and one in essence with the Father, did assume our nature, and became man, being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, and born of her, and called Jesus Christ; who, being holy and without all sin, did conquer the tempter and the world, fulfilling all righteousness. He enacted and preached the law or covenant of grace, confirming his doctrine by abundant, uncontrolled miracles: contemning the world, he exposed himself to the malice, and fury, and contempt of sinners, and gave up himself a sacrifice for our sins, and a ransom for us, in suffering death on a cross, to reconcile us to God. He was buried, and went, in soul, to the souls departed; and the third day he arose again, having conquered death; and, after forty days, having instructed and authorized his apostles in their office, he ascended up into heaven in their sight, where he remaineth glorified, and is Lord of all; the Chief Priest, and Prophet, and King of his church, interceding for us, teaching and governing us by his Spirit, ministers, and word.^e

5. The new law and covenant which Christ hath procured, made, and sealed, by his blood, his sacra-

^a Acts ix. 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6; Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 John v. 7; 1 Tim. i. 17; Psal. cxxxix. 7—9; cxlvii. 5; Isa. xl. 17; 1 Tim. vi. 16; Mal. iii. 6; Jam. i. 17; Neh. ix. 6; Rev. iv. 8; xv. 3; Exod. cxxiii. 6, 7; Ezek. xviii. 4; Psal. xlvii. 7; cxix. 68; cxlv. 9.

^a Acts per tot.

^b 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6; Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 John v. 7; 1 Tim. i. 17; Psal. cxxxix. 7—9; cxlvii. 5; Isa. xl. 17; 1 Tim. vi. 16; Mal. iii. 6; Jam. i. 17; Neh. ix. 6; Rev. iv. 8; xv. 3; Exod. cxxiii. 6, 7; Ezek. xviii. 4; Psal. xlvii. 7; cxix. 68; cxlv. 9.

^c Prov. xvi. 4; Gen. i. 26; Deut. xxx. 19; Col. iii. 10; Eccles. vi. 29; Psal. viii. 5, 6; Mark xii. 30, 33; Deut. vi. 5; x. 12; i. 32; Gen. ii. 16, 17; Rom. vi. 23. See an exposition of the Creed briefly in Isidor. De Eccles. Offic. l. 2. c. 23. p. 222. Of the original of the Creed, see Vossius De Symbol. and Parker De Descensu ad Inferos. Of the several Creeds of the eastern and western churches, see Usher, De Symbolis.

^d Gen. iii. 1; John viii. 44; Rom. v. 12, 17, 18; Gen. iii.

16, 17; Rom. iii. 9, 19, 23; vi. 23; Acts xvi. 18; Eph. ii. 2; Heb. ii. 14; Psal. li. 5; Rom. v. 12; Eph. ii. 2, 3, 5; Isa. xlviii. 4; Job xiv. 4; xxv. 4; Gen. vi. 5; Hos. xi. 7; Rom. v. 18, 19; Rom. v. 6, 10; Acts iv. 12.

^e John iii. 16, 17; iv. 42; 1 John ii. 2; Rom. ix. 5; John x. 30; 1 Tim. ii. 5; Heb. ii. 14, 16; Luke i. 27, 31, 35; Matt. i. 20, 21; Heb. iv. 15; Matt. iv. 1; Heb. vii. 25; Matt. iii. 15; Acts ii. 22; Heb. ii. 3, 4; i. 26; x. 12; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Eph. ii. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4; Luke xxiii. 43; Psal. xvi. 10; 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19; 2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. ii. 14; Acts ii. 24, 29; iii. 13; Rom. ix. 5; Heb. vii. 24; Acts ii. 36; x. 36; Heb. viii. 2; x. 21; Acts iii. 23; v. 31; Heb. vii. 25; Rom. viii. 34; Eph. iv. 8, 11—13; Rom. viii. 9; 1 Thess. v. 12.

ments, and his Spirit, is this : That to all them who, by true repentance and faith, do forsake the flesh, the world, and the devil, and give up themselves to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, he will give himself in these relations, and take them as his reconciled children, pardoning their sins, and giving them his grace, and title to everlasting happiness, and will glorify all that thus persevere ; but will condemn the unbelievers, impenitent, and ungodly, to everlasting punishment. This covenant he hath commanded his ministers to proclaim and offer to all the world, and to baptize all that consent thereunto, to invest them sacramentally in all these benefits, and enter them into his holy catholic church.^f

6. The Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, did first inspire and guide the prophets, apostles, and evangelists, that they might truly and fully reveal the doctrine of Christ, and deliver it in Scripture to the church, as the rule of our faith and life ; and by abundance of evident, uncontrolled miracles and gifts, to be the great witness of Christ, and of the truth of his holy word.^g

7. Where the gospel is made known, the Holy Spirit doth by it illuminate the minds of such as shall be saved, and opening and softening their hearts, doth draw them to believe in Christ, and turneth them from the power of Satan unto God ; whereupon they are joined to Christ the Head, and into the holy catholic church, which is his body, consisting of all true believers, and are freely justified and made the sons of God, and a sanctified, peculiar people unto him, and do love him above all, and serve him sincerely in holiness and righteousness, loving and desiring the communion of saints, overcoming the flesh, the world, and the devil, and living in hope of the coming of Christ, and of everlasting life.^h

8. At death, the souls of the justified go to happiness with Christ, and the souls of the wicked to misery ; and at the end of this world the Lord Jesus Christ will come again, and will raise the bodies of all men from the dead, and will judge all the world, according to the good or evil which they have done ; and the righteous shall go into everlasting life, where they shall see God's glory, and, being perfected in holiness, shall love, and praise, and please him perfectly, and be loved by him for evermore, and the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment with the devil.ⁱ

II. According to this belief, we do, deliberately and seriously, by unfeigned consent of will, take this one God, the infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for our only God, our reconciled Father, our Saviour, and our Sanctifier, and resolvedly give up ourselves to him accord-

ingly ; entering into his church, under the hands of his ministers, by the solemnization of this covenant, in the sacrament of baptism. And in prosecution of this covenant, we proceed to stir up our desires, by daily prayer to God, in the name of Christ, by the help of the Holy Spirit, in the order following : 1. We desire the glorifying and hallowing of the name of God, that he may be known, and loved, and honoured by the world, and may be well pleased in us, and we may delight in him, which is our ultimate end. 2. That his kingdom of grace may be enlarged, and his kingdom of glory, as to the perfected church of the sanctified, may come ; that mankind may more universally subject themselves to God, their Creator and Redeemer, and be saved by him. 3. That this earth, which is grown too like to hell, may be made liker to the holy ones in heaven, by a holy conformity to God's will, and obedience to all his laws, denying and mortifying their own fleshly desires, wills, and minds. 4. That our natures may have necessary support, protection, and provision, in our daily service of God, and passage through this world, with which we ought to be content. 5. That all our sins may be forgiven us, through our Redeemer, as we ourselves are ready to pardon wrongs : 6. That we may be kept from temptations, and delivered from sin and misery, from Satan, from wicked men, and from ourselves ; concluding our prayers with the joyful praises of God, our heavenly Father, acknowledging his kingdom, power, and glory, for ever.^k

III. The laws of christian practice are these : 1. That our souls do firmly adhere to God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, by faith, love, confidence, and delight ; that we seek him by desire, obedience, and hope ; meditating on himself, his word, and works of creation, redemption, and sanctification, of death, judgment, heaven, and hell ; exercising repentance, and mortifying sin, especially atheism, unbelief, and unholiness, hardness of heart, disobedience, and unthankfulness, pride, worldiness, and flesh-pleasing ; examining our hearts, about our graces, our duties, and our sins ; watchfully governing our thoughts, affections, passions, senses, appetites, words, and outward actions ; resisting temptations, and serving God with all our faculties, and glorifying him in our hearts, our speeches, and our lives.^l

2. That we worship God according to his holiness, and his word, in spirit and truth, and not with fopperies and imagery, according to our own devices, which may dishonour him, and lead us to idolatry.

3. That we ever use his name with special reverence, especially in appealing to him by an oath ; abhorring profaneness, perjury, and breach of vows and covenants to God.

Matt. xxv. ; xiii. 41—43 ; 2 Tim. iv. 8, 18 ; 2 Thess. i. 8—10 ; ii. 12 ; John xvii. 24.

^k Luke xv. 21 ; Acts ii. 37 ; iii. 19 ; Rom. viii. 13 ; Luke xiv. 33 ; 1 Thess. i. 9 ; Exod. xx. 3 ; Deut. xxvi. 17 ; Josh. xiv. 16, 26 ; 2 Cor. vii. 5 ; John xvii. 3 ; 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18 ; 1 John i. 3 ; Eph. iv. 5, 6 ; John xiv. 6 ; Luke v. 14 ; xiv. 26 ; Acts ix. 6 ; Rom. vi. 13, 16 ; Luke xix. 27 ; John iii. 10 ; Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Eph. ii. 18, 22 ; i. 13, 14, 18 ; Rom. viii. 9, 13, 16, 26 ; 1 Cor. ii. 10 ; Eph. ii. 18, 22 ; iii. 5, 16 ; 2 Cor. i. 22 ; v. 5 ; Isa. xlv. 3—5 ; Rom. ix. 6. See the Lord's Prayer.

^l The Ten Commandments. Jude 21 ; Gal. v. 22 ; Luke x. 27 ; 1 Tim. iv. 7 ; Isa. lxiv. 7 ; Acts xxiv. 16 ; Col. iii. 5 ; Rom. viii. 13 ; Heb. iii. 11, 13 ; Matt. xv. 18, 19 ; Luke x. 15 ; Rom. xiii. 13, 14 ; 1 Cor. iii. 18 ; 2 Pet. i. 10 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 5 ; Gal. vi. 3, 4 ; Psal. iv. 4 ; civ. 34 ; i. 2 ; cxix. 97, 99 ; Gen. xxiv. 63 ; Eph. iii. 18, 19 ; Psal. xc. 12 ; Luke xii. 32 ; 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12 ; Luke xxi. 36 ; Psal. cxli. 1 ; 1 Cor. x. 16 ; Psal. xxxix. 1 ; Prov. iv. 23 ; Eph. vi. 10, 19 ; 1 Pet. v. 9 ; Jam. iv. 7 ; Psal. xxiv. 3 ; cxlv. 2 ; 1 Thess. iii. 17 ; Phil. iv. 6.

^f Heb. ix. 15 ; John i. 12 ; iii. 16 ; Acts xvi. 18 ; Gal. v. 6 ; Acts ix. 18 ; iii. 19 ; xx. 21 ; Rom. viii. i. 13 ; Mark iv. 12 ; Rom. viii. 16, 17 ; Gal. iv. 6 ; John iii. 24 ; 1 Cor. vi. 17 ; Rom. viii. 9 ; Eph. ii. 18, 22 ; Rev. ii. ; iii. ; Col. i. 22, 23 ; Heb. iv. 1 ; Mark xvi. 16 ; John xiii. 3, 5, 36 ; Heb. xii. 14 ; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9 ; ii. 12 ; Luke xiii. 3 ; Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Mark xvi. 15, 16 ; 2 Cor. v. 19 ; John vi. 37 ; x. 28, 29.

^g John xiv. 26 ; xv. 26 ; 1 Pet. i. 10—12 ; 2 Pet. i. 21 ; 2 Tim. iii. 16 ; John xvi. 13 ; Eph. iii. 3, 5 ; ii. 20 ; Isa. viii. 20 ; Rev. xxii. 18, 19 ; 1 Tim. vi. 14 ; Luke xvi. 29, 31 ; Acts ii. 22 ; v. 32 ; xix. 11, 19 ; Heb. ii. 3, 4 ; Gal. iii. 1—3 ; John xiv. 12 ; iii. 2 ; 1 Cor. xiv.

^h Acts xvii. 17, 18 ; Rom. viii. 9—11 ; Acts xvi. 14 ; John

ⁱ vi. 44 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 26 ; Gal. v. 22 ; Col. ii. 11, 19 ; Eph. v. 30—32 ; iii. 17 ; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27 ; Rom. iii. 24 ; iv. 24 ; John i. 12 ; Tit. ii. 14 ; Rom. v. 5 ; Matt. x. 37 ; 1 Cor. v. 11 ; Luke i. 75 ; 1 John iii. 14 ; 1 Pet. i. 22 ; Acts xxiv. 2 ; Gal. v. 17, 24 ; 1 John ii. 15 ; 1 Cor. i. 7 ; 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12 ; Tit. i. 2 ; iii. 7 ; Luke xxiii. 43 ; xvi. 22 ; 2 Cor. v. 1, 8 ; Phil. i. 23 ; 2 Pet. iii. 19 ; Luke xvi. 28 ; Acts i. 11.

^k 1 Cor. xv. ; John v. 22, 29 ; Matt. xxv. ; 2 Cor. v. 10 ;

4. That we meet in holy assemblies for his more solemn worship; where the pastors teach his word to their flocks, and lead them in prayer and praise to God, administer the sacrament of communion, and are the guides of the church in holy things; whom the people must hear, obey, and honour; especially the Lord's day must be thus spent in holiness.^m

5. That parents educate their children in the knowledge and fear of God, and in obedience of his laws; and that princes, masters, and all superiors, govern in holiness and justice, for the glory of God, and the common good, according to his laws; and that children love, honour, and obey their parents, and all subjects their rulers, in due subordination unto God.ⁿ

6. That we do nothing against our neighbour's life, or bodily welfare, but carefully preserve it as our own.^o

7. That no man defile his neighbour's wife, or commit fornication; but preserve our own and others' chastity in thought, word, and deed.^p

8. That we wrong not another in his estate, by stealing, fraud, or any other means; but preserve our neighbour's estate as our own.^q

9. That we pervert not justice by false witness, or otherwise; nor wrong our neighbour in his name, by slanders, backbiting, or reproach; that we lie not, but speak the truth in love, and preserve our neighbour's right and honour as our own.^r

10. That we be not selfish, setting up ourselves and our own, against our neighbour and his good, desiring to draw from him unto ourselves; but that we love our neighbour as ourselves, desiring his welfare as our own; doing to others as, regularly, we would have them do to us; forbearing, and forgiving one another; loving even our enemies, and doing good to all, according to our power, both for their bodies and their souls.^s

This is the substance of the christian religion.

Sect. 15. II. The sum, or abstract, of the christian religion, is contained in three short forms; the first, called the Creed, containing the matter of the christian belief; the second, called the Lord's Prayer, containing the matter of christian desire and hope; the third called the law, or decalogue, containing the sum of moral duties; which are as followeth.

The Belief.

1. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; 2. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried, descended to hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come again to judge the quick and the dead: 3. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of

sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come: thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

The Ten Commandments.

God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.^a

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

4. *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

5. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6. Thou shalt not kill.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8. Thou shalt not steal.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Sect. 16. The ten commandments are summed up by Christ into these two: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and might; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Sect. 17. These commandments, being first delivered to the Jews, are continued by Christ as the sum of the law of nature; only, instead of deliver-

^m John iv. 23, 24; Matt. xv. 9; Isa. i. 13; Deut. vi. 13; x. 20; Jer. iv. 2; xii. 16; Jam. v. 12; Acts ii. 42; vi. 2; xx. 7, 28, 30, 31, 36; 1 Cor. xiv. 16, 26; Jam. v. 14; Phil. i. 4; 1 Cor. xi. 34; x. 16; Heb. vii. 7; Rev. i. 10; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

ⁿ Eph. vi. 4, 9; Deut. vi. 11, 12; Dan. vi. 10; Acts x. 30; Psal. ci.; 1 Sam. ii. 23, 29; Gen. xviii. 18; Josh. xxiv. 15; Col. iii. 20, 22; Deut. xxi. 18.

^o Matt. v. 21—23, 25, 28, 39.

^p Matt. v. 27—30.

^q 1 Thess. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 28.

^r Prov. xix. 5, 9; xxi. 28; Rom. xiii. 9; Rev. xvi. 19; xxiv. 17; Prov. xvii. 23; xxxi. 5; Col. iii. 9; Prov. xii. 22; vii. 17; xiii. 9.

^s Rom. vii. 7; xiii. 4; Matt. xix. 19; xxii. 36; Luke xiv. 22, 23; Jam. ii. 8; iii. 13; 1 Cor. xiii.; Matt. vii. 12; Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13; 1 John iv. 16; Rom. xiii. 9; † Thess.

iv. 9; 1 Pet. i. 22; iii. 8; ii. 17; Gal. vi. 10; Eph. ii. 10; Tit. ii. 14.

^a Hades, of which read Bishop Usher, in his Answer to the Jesuit's Challenge. De totis Scripturis, hæc brevium collecta sunt ab apostolis, ut quia plures credentium literas nesciunt, vel qui sciunt præoccupationibus seculi Scripturas legere non possunt, hæc corde retinentes habeant sibi sufficientem scientiam salutarem. Isidor. de Eccl. Offic. lib. 2. cap. 22. p. (in Bibl. Patr.) 222.

^b Exod. xx.; Deut. v.

^c De die septimo qui inter omnes mortales celebris est, magna apud plerosque ignorantia est. Hic enim dies qui ab Hebræis Sabbatum vocatur, Græce siquis interpretetur, Septimana, dicitur. Hoc nomine mortales omnes diem istum appellunt; at nominis causam nesciunt plerique. Theophil. Antioch. ad Autol. lib. 1. p. (mihi) 121. in B. P. Gr. L. T. 1.

ance of the Jews from Egypt, he hath made our redemption from sin and Satan, which was thereby typified, to be the fundamental motive; and he hath removed the memorial of the creation-rest, from the seventh-day sabbath, to be kept on the Lord's day, which is the first, with the commemoration of his resurrection, and our redemption, in the solemn worship of his holy assemblies.

Sect. 18. III. The briefest summary of the christian religion, containing the essentials only, is in the sacramental covenant of grace; wherein the penitent believer, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, doth solemnly give up himself to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as his only God, his Father, his Saviour, and his Sanctifier, engaging himself hereby to a holy life of resignation, obedience, and love, and receiving the pardon of all his sins, and title to the further helps of grace, to the favour of God and everlasting life. This covenant is first entered by the sacrament of baptism, and after renewed in our communion with the church, in the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.*

So that the christian religion is but faith in God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, producing the hope of life everlasting, and possessing us with the love of God and man: and all this expressed in the genuine fruits of patience, obedience, and praise to God, and works of charity and justice unto man.

Sect. 19. That all this religion might be the better understood, received, and practised by us, the Word of God came down into flesh, and gave us a perfect example of it in his most perfect life; in perfect holiness and innocency, conquering all temptations, contemning the honours, riches, and pleasures of the world; in perfect patience, and meekness, and condescension, and in the perfect love of God and man.[†]

When perfect doctrine is seconded by perfect exemplariness of life, there can be no greater light set before us to lead us out of our state of darkness into the everlasting light. And had it not been a pattern of holy power, wisdom, and goodness; of self-denial, obedience, and love; of patience, and of truth and prudence, and of contempt of all inferior things, even of life itself, for the love of God, and for life eternal, it would not have been a full exemplification of his doctrine, nor a perfect revelation of it to the world. Example bringeth doctrine near our senses, and thereby maketh it more clear and powerful.

Sect. 20. It is the undertaken office of Jesus Christ, to send the Holy Spirit into believers' minds, and to write out the substance of this law upon their hearts, and give them such holy and heavenly inclinations, that it may become as it were a natural law unto them, and they obey it with love, facility, and delight, though not in perfection till they arrive at the state of perfection.[‡]

So much to show what the christian religion is.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE NATURE AND PROPERTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

HAVING understood the matter and words of the christian religion, before I proceeded any further, I thought it meet to pass a judgment upon the nature, temperament, constitution, and properties of it. And therein I found that which must needs be a great preparative to belief.

Sect. 1. And first, I found that it is a most holy and spiritual religion, resolved into the most excellent principles and ends, glorifying God, and humbling man, and teaching us the most divine and heavenly life, in the love and patient service of our Creator.

1. It is most holy, for it calleth us up entirely unto God, and consisteth in our absolute dedication and devotedness to him. 2. It is most spiritual, leading us from things carnal and terrene; and being principally about the government of the soul, and placing all our felicity in things spiritual, and not in fleshly pleasures with the Epicureans and Mahometans, it teacheth us to worship God in a spiritual manner, and not either irrationally, toyishly, or irreverently; and it directeth our lives to a daily converse with God in holiness. 3. The principles of it are the three essentialities of God in unity, viz. the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; and the three grand relations of God to man, as founded in his three most famous works, viz. as our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Regenerator or Sanctifier; and the three great relations arising from creation, and also from redemption, viz., as he is our Owner, our Ruler, and our Benefactor, or chiefest Good and End. 4. The ends of the christian religion, I find, are proximately the saving of man from Satan and the justice of God; the sanctifying them to God, and purifying them from sin, the pardon of their sins, and the everlasting happiness of their souls, in the pleasing and fruition of God for ever. In a word, it is but the redeeming us from our carnal self, the world, and the devil, to the love and service of our Creator. 5. Nothing can be spoken more honourably of God in all his perfections, in the language of poor mortals, than what the christian religion speaketh of him. 6. And no religion so much humbleth man, by opening the malignity, both of his original and actual sin, and declaring the displeasure of God against it. 7. It teacheth us who once lived as without God in the world, to live wholly unto God, and to make nothing of all the world in comparison of him. 8. And it teacheth us to live upon the hopes of heaven, and fetch our motives and our comforts from it.^b

Sect. 2. I find that the christian religion is the most pure, and clean, and utterly opposite to all that is evil.

There is no virtue which it commendeth not, nor duty which it commandeth not, nor vice which it condemneth not, nor sin which it forbiddeth not.

The chief thing in it which occasioneth the rebel-

* Matt. xxviii. 19: Rom. viii. 1; vi. 4; 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22; Heb. vi. 2; Acts ii. 38, 41; Tit. iii. 5; 1 Cor. xi. De modo Baptizandi antiquo vide Walafridum Strabon. de reb. Eccles. c. 26. p. (Bibl. Pat.) 691. Et. Ivon. Carnol. serm. de sacram. Neophytorum, p. 767, 768, &c.

† John xiii. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 21.

‡ John iii. 5, 6; vii. 38, 39; Gal. iv. 6; v. 18, 25; Rom. viii. 9, 13; 2 Cor. iii. 3, 4; 1 Cor. vi. 11; ii. 10, 11; Jer. xxxi. 33; Psal. i. 2; 2 Pet. i. 4; John iv. 7; v. 4, 18.

* Nihil est ad defendendum Puritate tutius: nihil ad dicendum Veritate facilius. Inq. Ambros.

^b Nulla major ad amorem invitatio, quam praevenire amantem: et nimis durus est animus, qui si delectionem nolebat impendere, nolit rependere. August. de Cat. rud. In eo quod amat, aut non laboratur, aut labor amat. August. de san. Vid. Ad Divos adeunto caste; pietatem adhibent, opes amovendo: qui secus facit, Deus ipse vindex erit. Leges Rom. In Cic. de Leg. 2. p. 237. Significat probitatem Deo gratam esse, sumptum esse removendum. Ib. p. 239.

lion and displeasure of the world against it, is the purity and goodness of it, which is contrary to their sensual nature, and as physic to their licentious lives: would it indulge their vices, and give them leave to sin, they could endure it.^c

Sect. 3. Particularly it most vehemently condemneth the grand vices of pride, worldliness, and sensuality, and all their polluting and pernicious fruits.

1. No religion doth so much to teach men humility, and make pride appear an odious thing. It openeth the malignity of it, as it lifteth up the mind against God or man: it condemneth it as Satan's image; it giveth us a multitude of humbling precepts and motives, and secondeth them all with the strangest example of condescension and lowliness in Christ, that was ever presented to the view of man. Whereas, I find, even in the famousest of the Roman heathens, that a great deal of pride was taken for a virtue, and men were instructed and exhorted to be proud, under pretence of maintaining and vindicating their honour; and true humility was taken for disgraceful baseness, and men were driven from it by the scorn, not only of the vulgar, but of philosophers themselves.^d

2. And there is no religion that is fitted so much to the destruction of worldliness, or of the love of riches, as christianity is; for it teacheth men most effectually the vanity of the world; it appointeth them a holy life, so hateful to worldly men, as will occasion them to feel the vexation of the world; it openeth to them the hopes of a life so much better, as may teach them to take all the wealth and glory of this world for a shadow, a feather, or a dream. It condemneth worldly love, as the sin inconsistent with the love of God, and the certain mark of a drossy, unsanctified, miserable soul. It setteth before us such an example of Christ, as must needs shame worldliness with all true believers.^e

3. And for sensuality, it openeth the shame of its bestiality, and maketh the carnal mind and life to be enmity to God, and the contrary to that spiritual mind and life, which is the property of all that shall be saved: it strictly and vehemently condemneth all gluttony and excess of drink; all rioting and time-wasting, needless sports; all fornication, and ribald talk, and wanton carriage, words, or thoughts: whereas I find among heathens and Mahometans, that inordinate sensuality was much indulged; excess of eating and drinking was made a matter of no great blame; time-wasting plays were as little accused, as if man had no greater matter to do in the world, than to pass away time in some sensual or fantastical delight; either by fornication, or many wives at once, their lust was gratified; and so their minds were debased, polluted, and called down and made unfit for spiritual contemplation and a holy life. From whence, no doubt, it came to pass, that they were so dark about things spiritual and divine, and so overspread with errors about many plain and necessary things.

Sect. 4. There is no religion which so notably de-

^c Christianus nemo recte dicitur, nisi qui Christo moribus, prout valet, coequatur. Maxim. Christiani nomen frustra sortitur, qui Christum minime imitatur: quid enim tibi prodest vocari quod non es, et nomen usurpare alienum? Sed si Christianum te esse delectat, quæ Christianitatis sunt gere, et merito tibi Christiani nomen assume. August. de Vita Christiani.

^d Ille vere Christianus est, qui omnibus misericordiam facit, qui nulla omnino movetur injuria; qui alienum dolorem tanquam proprium sentit; cujus mensam pauper non ignorat; qui coram hominibus inglorius habetur, ut coram Deo et angelis gloriatur: qui terræa contemnit, ut possit habere cælestia; qui opprimi pauperem se præsentem non patitur, qui miseris subvenit, &c. August. de Vita Christi.

^e Omnis creatura cum bona sit, et bene potest amari, et

teeteth and disgraceth the sin of selfishness, or so effectually teacheth self-denial, as the christian religion doth.

It maketh man understand the nature of his corrupt, depraved state, that is a falling from God to self; and that his recovery lieth in returning from self to God. It sheweth him how selfishness is the principle of divisions, enmity, wrath, contentions, envy, malice, covetousness, injustice, oppression, wars, uncharitableness, and all the iniquity of the world: and, how self is the grand enemy of God and man, and of the public good and peace; and contrary to the love of God and our neighbour, and the commonwealth. It giveth us so many precepts for self-denial, as no other religion did ever mention, and such an example of it in Jesus Christ, as is the astonishment of men and angels; and, therefore, all other religions did in vain attempt the true purifying of heart and life, or the pacifying of the divided minds of men, while they let alone this sin of selfishness, or lightly touched it, which is the root and heart of all the rest.

Sect. 5. No religion doth so much reveal to us the nature of God, and his works for man, and relations to him, as the christian religion doth.

And, doubtless, that is the most excellent doctrine, which maketh known God most to man's mind; and that is the best religion, which bringeth man nearest to his Creator in love and purity. Few of the heathens knew God in his unity, and fewer in the trinity of his essential primalities: many questioned his particular providence and government; they knew not man's relation or duty to him; while they were distracted with the observance of a multitude of gods, they indeed had none. Though God be incomprehensible to us all, yet is there a great deal of the glory of his perfections revealed to us in the light of christianity, which we may seek in vain with any other sort of men.^f

Sect. 6. No religion doth so wonderfully open, and magnify, and reconcile God's justice and mercy to mankind, as christianity doth.

It sheweth how his justice is founded in his holiness and his governing relation; it justifieth it by opening the purity of his nature, the evil of sin, and the use of punishment to the right government of the world; and it magnifieth it by opening the dreadful and certainty of his penalties, and the sufferings of our Redeemer when he made himself a sacrifice for our sins. By the revelation of justice, sin, and misery, it revealeth the wonderful greatness of God's mercy; it openeth those operations and effects of it, which heathenism and Mahometanism are utter strangers to: they speak diminutively both of mercy and justice, and cannot tell how to make God merciful, without making him unjust; nor to make him just, without obscuring the glory of his mercy, which is peculiarly set forth in the work of redemption, and the covenant of grace, and promise of everlasting blessedness.

Sect. 7. The christian religion openeth many other male; bene scilicet ordine constituto, male ordine perturbato. August. de Civ. Dei. Omnium malorum affectuum principium est Philautia; finis autem Superbia: Philautia amor est, quo corpus complectimur, rationi non consentaneus. Hanc qui amputaverit, eadem opera, omnes affectus ex ea orientes abscidit. Maxim. de Charitat.

^f Sic intelligimus Deum, si possumus, quantum possumus; sine qualitate bonum, sine quantitate magnum, sine indigentia creatorem, sine situ præsentem, sine habitu omnia continentem, sine loco ubique totum, sine tempore sempiternum, sine ulla sui mutatione, mutabilia omnia facientem, nihilque patientem. Quisquis Deum ita cogitat, etsi nondum potest invenire quid sit, pie tamen cavet, quantum potest, aliquid de eo sentire quod non sit. August. de Trinit. l. 5. c. 1.

parts of holy doctrine, which are unknown to men that learned them not from thence.

Such as the doctrine of the creation, and the fall, and of original sin, and of justification, sanctification, adoption, and the right worshipping of God; of which mention is made before more distinctly.

Sect. 8. No religion can be more charitable; for it wholly consisteth in the love of God and one another, and in the means to kindle and maintain this love.

The whole law of Christ is fulfilled in love; even in loving God for himself above all, and our neighbours as ourselves for the sake of God; yea, our enemies, so far as there is any thing amiable in them. The end of all the commandments is love, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and unfeigned faith; and all christians are obliged to love each other with a pure heart, and fervently; yea, to show that love which they profess to Christ himself, by the loving of one another. How frequently and earnestly is this great duty pressed by Christ and his apostles! How great a stress doth he lay upon it! He maketh it the evidence of our love to God; he promiseth salvation to it; he forbiddeth selfishness, that it may not hinder it; he commandeth us to live in the constant expression of it, and to provoke one another to love and to good works; he hath made himself the most matchless and wonderful example of it; he hath told us, that according to men's charity, he will judge them at the last day. How dry and barren are all religions and writings, that we have ever come to the knowledge of in the world, in the point of love and the fruits of love, in comparison of the gospel of Jesus Christ.^a

Sect. 9. I find that the christian religion is most for unity and peace of any religion in the world; most vehemently commanding them, and appointing the fittest means for the attaining of them.

1. All christians are commanded to be of one mind, to think the same things, and speak the same things; and discord, and division, and contention is earnestly forbidden them, and condemned, and all occasions which may lead them thereunto. 2. And they have one Head and Centre, one God and Saviour, who is their common Governor, End, and Interest, in whom, therefore, they may all unite: when most others in the world do show a man no further end than self-preservation; and so while self is each man's end and interest, there are as many ends as men; and how then is it possible that such should have any true unity and concord? But to every true christian, the pleasing and glorifying of God, and the promoting of his kingdom for the salvation of the world, is above all self-interest whatsoever; and therefore in this they are all united: and though they all seek their own felicity and salvation, it is only in the seeking of this higher end; which is *finis amantis; sed creaturæ amantis Creatorum*; the end of a lover, which desireth unity, and respecteth both the lover and the beloved; but it is not the end of the love of equals, but of the creature to the Creator, who therefore preferreth his beloved before himself in his intentions. So that it is only this holy centring in God, that can ever make men all of a mind, and agree the disagreeing world: while self is every

man's end, they will have such constant contrariety of interests, that it will be impossible for them to agree; but covetousness, ambition, and sensuality, will keep them in factions, contentions, and wars continually. Moreover, it is christianity that most urgeth, and effectually giveth, a hearty love to one another, and teacheth them to love their neighbours as themselves, and to do as they would have others to do by them: and this is the true root and spring of concord. And it is christianity which most teacheth the forgiving of wrongs, and loving of enemies, and forbearing that revenge which heathens were wont to account an honour. And it is christianity which teacheth men to condemn all the riches and honours of the world, which is the bone that worldly dogs do fight for, and the great occasion of their strife: and it teacheth them to mortify all those vices, which feed men's divisions and contentions. So that if any man live as a christian, he must needs be a man of unity and peace. If you say, that the contrary appeareth in the practice of christians; I shall answer that, with the rest of the objections, by themselves: I shall only say now, that if this that I have laid down be certainly the doctrine of Christ, then it is as certain, that the contrary is contrary to christianity, and that, so far, such persons are no christians: it is hypocrites that take up the name of christians for worldly advantage, and are no christians indeed, who live thus contrary to the nature and precepts of christianity which they profess.^b

Sect. 10. The christian religion is most exactly just, in its rules and precepts, and vehemently condemneth all injustice, fraud, persecution, and oppression.

What juster rule can there be, than to suit all our actions to the perfect law of primitive justice, and to do as we would be done by? What more effectual principle of justice can there be, than charity and self-denial? To love all men for God, and to account our neighbour's welfare as our own? Bring all men to love their neighbours as themselves, and they will have little inclination to cruelty, oppression, fraud, or any other injuries. And when heaven is made the reward of justice and mercy, and hell the reward of injustice and cruelty, we have the greatest motives that human nature is capable of.

Sect. 11. The christian religion is the most excellent rule for order and government in the world, and for the peace of kingdoms and their stability; in that it prescribeth the only method of true government, and condemneth both impiety and tyranny in the governors, and all sedition and rebellion in the subjects.

1. It setteth government on the only foundation, the authority which men receive from God, and teacheth men to rule as the officers of the universal King, in due subordination to him; for his glory, and according to his laws; and letteth them know that they have no power but from God, and therefore none against him; and that they must be judged by him themselves for all their government; and that all oppression, tyranny, and persecution will be to their own confusion in the end. 2. It teacheth subjects to honour their superiors, and to obey them in all things, in which they disobey not God: and to

^a Rom. xiii. 9; 1 Tim. i. 5, 6, 14; 1 Thess. iv. 9; 1 John iv. 7, 8, and iii. 11, 14, 23. Sine charitate quomodo quis veram contritionem habere poterit, quomodo ergo peccatorum remissionem. Aug. Deus, qui hominem nudum fragilemque formavit, dedit ei præter cætera hæc pietatis affectum, ut homo hominem tueatur, diligit, foveat, contraque omnia pericula et accipiat, et præstet auxilium. Summum igitur inter se hominum vinculum, est humanitas; quod qui disrupit, nefarius et parricida existimandus est. Lactant. Inst. l. 6. c. 10.

^b Tale bonum est bonum pacis, ut in rebus creatis nil gratiosius soleat audiri, nil delectabilius concupisci, et nil utilius possideri; spiritus enim humanus, nunquam vivificat membra, nisi fuerint unita; sic Spiritus Sanctus nunquam vivificat ecclesie membra, nisi fuerint in pace unita. August. de Civ. Dei. Pax vera est concordiam habere cum moribus probis, et litigare cum vitis. Cassian. Nec inveniri potest forma expressior conversationis angelicæ, quam unitas socialis. Idem. in Psalm.

be patient under all oppressions; and to avoid all murmurings, tumults, and rebellions; and this for fear of God's condemnation. And certainly these are the most powerful means for peace; and for the happy order and government of societies.¹

Sect. 12. The christian religion greatly condemneth all fierceness, and impatience, and discontentedness; and requireth a meek and patient frame of mind, and therefore must needs conduce to the forementioned unity and peace.

Sect. 13. It is wholly for sincerity and uprightness of heart, and greatly condemneth all hypocrisy. It giveth laws for the very disposition of the mind, and for the government of the secretest thoughts, affections, and actions, and condemneth every sin which the world observeth not, or condemneth not.²

Sect. 14. I find that the christian religion is not fitted to any worldly designs, but only to the sanctifying of men's hearts and lives, and the saving of their souls. Christ did not contrive by dominion or riches to win the ungodly multitude to be his admirers, but by holy precepts and discipline to make his disciples good and happy.

Mahomet took the way of violence, and fleshly baits, and blind obedience, to bring in the multitude, and to advance a worldly kingdom: but Christ goeth the clean contrary way; he calleth men to a life of self-denial and patient suffering in the world; he calleth them to condemn the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, and to forsake all, even life itself, for him, and telleth them that they can on no lower terms than these be his disciples. He hath set up a discipline in his church, to cast out all drunkards, fornicators, covetous persons, railers, and other such scandalous sinners who are impenitent; and will have none in his true mystical church but such as are truly holy; nor any in his visible church, but such as are professed to be so. He turneth away all that come not up to his spiritual and holy terms; and he casteth out all that notoriously violate them, if they do not repent.³

Sect. 15. The christian religion containeth all things necessary to man's happiness, and taketh men off unprofitable speculations, and doth not overwhelm the minds of men with multitudes of needless things.

It is, for the most, things unnecessary, as well as uncertain, with which the philosophers have troubled the world. They have lost true wisdom in a wilderness of fruitless controversies. But christianity is a religion to make men holy and happy, and therefore it containeth these necessary, substantial precepts, which conduce hereunto: and it taketh men off unnecessary things, which else would take up their minds, and talk, and time, from things necessary: and so it is suited to the generality of men, and not only to a few that have nothing else to do but wander in a wilderness of vain speculations; and it is fitted to man's best and ultimate end, and not to a fantastical delight.⁴

Sect. 16. It tendeth to exalt the mind of man to the most high and heavenly elevation that it is capable of in this life.

¹ Ordo in ecclesia ita statuit, ut alii sint oves, alii vero pastores; ita ut hi imperent, illi vero obediant: sique hoc tanquam caput, illud pedes, illud manus; hoc oculi, illud vero alii corporis membrum, quod omnia recte inter se conveniant, commodumque tam ad prefectos, quam ad subditos redundet. Nazianz. Or. de Modest. in Disput.

² Simulata æquitas est duplex iniquitas. August. in Psal. 23.

³ Duas civitates duo faciunt amores: Jerusalem facit amor Dei; Babylonem facit amor seculi. Interroget igitur unusquisque se quid amet, et inveniet unde sit civis. August. in Psal. 64.

⁴ Multo facilius invenit Syderum conditionem humilis

For it teacheth men, as is aforesaid, to live in the spirit, upon the things above, in the continual love of God, and desires and endeavours for everlasting glory, than which man's mind hath nothing more high and honourable and excellent, to be employed about.

Sect. 17. It leadeth men to the joyfulest life that human nature is capable of on earth.

For it leadeth us to the assurance of the love of God, and of the pardon of all our sins, and of endless glory when we die; it assureth us, that we shall live for ever, in the sight of the glory of God, with Jesus Christ, and be like the angels, and be perfected in holiness and happiness, and be employed in the love and praises of God for evermore: it commandeth us to live in the foresight of these everlasting pleasures, and to keep the taste of them always upon our minds; and, in daily meditation on the love of God, to live in the daily returns of love, and to make this our continual feast and pleasure. And can the mind of man on earth have higher and greater delights than these?⁵

Sect. 18. The christian religion forbiddeth men no bodily pleasure, but that which hindereth their greater pleasure, and tendeth to their pain or sorrow; nor doth it deny them any earthly thing which is truly for their good.

Indeed, it taketh the brutish appetite and flesh to be an unfit judge of what is truly good and desirable for us; and it forbiddeth much which the flesh doth crave, because either it tendeth to the wrong of others, or the breach of order in the world; or to the corrupting of man's mind, and diverting it from things sublime and spiritual, or putting it out of relish with that which is our true felicity, or the way thereto. It is only on such accounts, and in such cases as these, that Christ forbiddeth us the pleasures of the flesh; and so will parents restrain the appetites of their children, and physicians of their patients, and every wise man will restrain his own, when present sensual pleasure tendeth to greater future pain. The satisfying delights of man can be no where but in the love of God, and in a heavenly life, and in the foresight of endless joys, and in the knowledge and means which lead to these; and the unwholesome, luscious pleasures of the flesh, do greatly tend to draw down the mind, and corrupt the affections, and dull our desires and endeavours towards these higher things: and, therefore, our Saviour doth strictlier here diet us, than is pleasing to diseased souls. But he loveth not our sorrows or pains, nor envieth us any desirable pleasure; he came not to torment us, but to save us from torment; if he forbid us any delight, it is because he would have us have better and more, which that would keep us from. If he teach us to deny our honour with men, it is but that we may have honour with God and angels. If he call us from our present wealth and profit, it is but to secure our everlasting riches, and prevent our loss. All his precepts are wholly fitted to our own good, though our good be not the highest, ultimate end, but the glory and pleasure of our Maker.⁶

pietas, quam Syderum ordinem superba curiositas. August. de Eclipsi. Doctrina Spiritus non curiositatem acuit, sed charitatem accendit. Bern. in Cant. O beata regio deliciarum! ad quam suspiro de valle lachrymarum; ubi sapientia sine ignorantia, ubi memoria sine oblivione, intellectus sine errore, ratio sine obscuritate fulgebit. Bernard.

⁵ Illud est verum ac summum gaudium, quod non de creatura, sed de creatore concipitur; quod cum acceperis, nemo tollet a te; cui aliunde comparata omnis jucunditas mæror est; omnis suavitas dolor est; omne dulce amarum est; omne quod delectare potest, molestum est. Bernard.

⁶ Nihil prodigæ satia est voluptati: semper famem patitur sui quæ alimentis perpetuis nescit impleri. Ambros. in Luke

Sect. 19. There cannot possibly be any higher motives to sincere piety and honesty given to the world, than the christian religion sets before them; even the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell, and all the pleasures and privileges of a holy life; and therefore it must needs be the powerful means to all that is truly good and happy.

Sect. 20. It strongest fortifieth the mind of man against the power of all temptations.

For, as it enervateth the temptation, by teaching us to mortify the lusts of the flesh, and to condemn the world, so it always counterpoiseth it with the authority of God, the joys of heaven, and the punishment of hell; which are, in the balance, against all the pleasures of sin, as a mountain is against a feather.

Sect. 21. It affordeth us the most powerful supports and comforts in every suffering, that we may bear it patiently and with joy.

For it assureth us of the love of God, and of the pardon of our greater sufferings; it sheweth us how to be gainers by all, and sheweth us the glory and joy which will be the end of all.

Sect. 22. It affordeth us the greatest cordials against the fears of death.

For it assureth us of endless happiness after death; and if a Socrates, or Cicero, or Seneca, could fetch any comfort from a doubtful conjecture of another life, what may a christian do, that hath an undoubted assurance of it, and also of the nature and greatness of the felicity which we there expect! And why should he fear dying, who looks to pass into endless pleasure? And, therefore, christianity conduceth not to pusillanimity, but to the greatest fortitude and nobleness of mind; for what should daunt him who is above the fears of sufferings and death.^p

Sect. 23. It containeth nothing which any man can rationally fear, can be any way a hinderance to his salvation.^q

This will be more cleared, when I have answered the objections against it.

Sect. 24. It containeth nothing that hath the least contrariety to any natural verity or law; but contrarily comprehendeth all the law of nature, as its first and principal part, and that in the most clear and legible character, superadding much more which naturalists know not.

So that, if there be any good in other religions, (as there is some in all,) it is all contained in the christian religion, with the addition of much more. There is no truth or goodness in the religion of the philosophers, the Platonists, the stoics, the Pythagorean Bannians in India, the bonzii in Japan, or those in Siam, China, Persia, or any other parts, or among the Mahometans or Jews, which is not contained in the doctrine and religion of the christians.

Sect. 25. Accordingly, it hath all the real evidence which the true parts of any other religion hath, with the addition of much more supernatural evidence.

For all that is justly called the law of nature, which is the first part of the christian religion, is evidenced by the light of nature: and this christians have as well as others. And all that is of true, supernatural revelation, they have above others by its proper evidence.

Sect. 26. The style of the sacred Scripture is plain, and therefore fit for all; and yet majestic and spiritual, suited to its high and noble ends.

Were it expressed in those terms of art, which the masters of each sect have devised to transmit their opinions to posterity by, they would be fit for none but those few, who, by acquaintance with such terms, esteem themselves, or are esteemed learned men: and yet the men of another sect might little understand them. For most new sect-masters in philosophy devised new terms, as well as new principles or opinions: though at Athens, where the principal sects were near together, the diversity was not so great as among them at a further distance, yet was there enough to trouble their disciples. He that understandeth Zoroaster and Trismegistus, may not understand Pythagoras; and he that understandeth him, may not understand his follower, Plato; and he that understandeth him, may not understand Aristotle: and so of Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Aristippus, Antisthenes, Zeno, Chrysippus, Heraclitus, Democritus, Pyrrho, Epicurus, with all the rest. And among christians themselves, the degenerated heretics and sectaries, that make their own opinions, do make also their own terms of art; so that if you compare the Valentinians, Basilidians, Apollinarians, &c. and our late Wigelians, Paracelsians, Rosicrucians, Behmenists, familists, libertines, quakers, &c. you shall find that he that seemeth to understand one sect, must learn, as it were, a new language, before he can understand the rest. So that if the Scripture must have been phrased according to philosophers' terms of art, who knoweth to which sect it must have been suited? And every day there riseth up a Campanella, a Thomas White, &c. who is reforming the old terms and arts, and making both new: so that nothing which is of universal use, as religion is, can be fitted to any such uncertain measure. Christ hath therefore dealt much better with the world, and spoken plainly the things which the simple and all must know, and yet spoken sublimely of things mysterious, heavenly, and sublime.^r

This is the true nature and character of christianity.

progreduuntur; nec nos multum a gravioribus negotiis abstrahunt, ut sibi servire cogunt. Proprie voluptates sunt quæ insunt, aut annexæ sunt cognitioni divini numinis, et scientiis, et virtutibus. Nemesius de Nat. Hom. cap. 18. de Volupt.

^r How excellently doth Seneca speak against a vain curiosity of speech, in divers of his epistles; and with what contempt and vehement indignation! This also is to be applied to the spirituality and plainness of the christian way of worship. In exordio nascentis ecclesie, non eo quo nunc modo vel ordine sacra celebrabantur missarum solemnitas; teste Gregorio, &c. Et fortasse primis temporibus, solius Pauli Epistolæ legebantur, postmodum intermixtæ aliæ lectiones sunt, &c. Berno Ab. Augiens. de quibus ad Missam pertin. c. 1. p. 698. Bib. Pat. Orationes autem quas collectas dicimus, a diversis auctoribus compositæ creduntur, a Gelasio præsule Romano, et beato Gregorio papa. Id. ibid. lege et Microlog. Eccles. observat. c. 12 et 13, et Hugo a S. Victore de Offic. in Romana Ecclesia, l. 2. c. 16. Una tantum dicitur collecta, nisi, &c.

6. Delectatio cædit et præterit, vulneravit et transit, miserum fecit et abiit, infelicem reddidit, et reliquit. Amb. Qui pro modica delectatione dat illud, pro quo Christus se tradidit, stultum Christum reputat mercatorem. Aug. Centum decies centum annos demus deliciis? Quanam erit ex his ad aternitatem compensatio? Chrys. de repar. laps. Ipse est Christianus, qui et in domo sua peregrinum se esse cognoscit. Patria nostra sursum est; ibi hospites non erimus. August. in Psal. 32. Delicatus es miles, si putas sine pugna te posse vincere: fortiter dimica, atrociter in prælio concerta, considera pactum, conditionem quam accessisti, militiam cui nomen dedisti. Ite enim quos miraris omnes pugnaverunt, vicerunt, triumpharunt. Chrysost.

^p Beati, qui habitant ibi, laudabant Deum in secula seculorum, Amen. Regnum Dei conceditur in prædestinatione, promittitur in vocatione, ostenditur in justificatione, percipitur in glorificatione. Bernard.

^q Illæ honestæ esse voluptates putendæ sunt, quæ non sunt impatiatæ dolori, nec penitendi causam afferunt, nec alio ullo detrimento afficiunt eos qui perfruuntur, nec ultra modum

CHAPTER V.

OF THE CONGRUITIES IN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,
WHICH MAKE IT THE MORE EASILY CREDIBLE, AND
ARE GREAT PREPARATIVES TO FAITH.

BECAUSE truth is never contrary to itself, nor agreeable with error, it is a way that reason teacheth all men, in the trying of any questioned point, to reduce it to those that are unquestionable, and see whether or no they accord with those; and to mark the unquestionable ends of religion, and try how it suiteth its means thereunto: and, therefore, men of all sober professions have their determinate principles and ends, by which they try such particular opinions,^a as christians do by their analogy of faith. And in this trial of christianity, I shall tell you what I find it.

SECT. I. I find in general, that there is an admirable concord between natural verity and the gospel of Christ; and that grace is medicinal to nature; and that where natural light endeth, supernatural beginneth; and that the superstructure which Christ hath built upon nature, is wonderfully adapted to its foundation.

This is made manifest in all the first part of this treatise. Reason, which is our nature, is not destroyed, but repaired, illuminated, elevated, and improved by the christian faith. Free-will, which is our nature, is made more excellently free by christianity. Self-love, which is our nature, is not destroyed, but improved by right conduct and help to our attainment of its ends. The natural part of religion is so far from being abrogated by christianity, that the latter doth but subserve the former. Christ is the way to God the Father: the duty which we owe by nature to our Creator, we owe him still; and Christ came to enable and teach us to perform it. The love of God our Creator with all our hearts is still our duty; and faith in Christ is but the means to the love of God, and the bellows to kindle that holy fire. The Redeemer came to recover us to our Creator: he taketh not the book of the creatures or nature out of our hands, but teacheth us better to read and use it. And so it is through all the rest.

SECT. 2. I find also that the state of this present world is exceeding suitable to the Scripture character of it; that it is exceeding evil, and a deluge of sin and misery, doth declare its great necessity of a Saviour, and sheweth it still to be a place unmeet to be the home and happiness of saints.^b

Of all the parts of God's creation, this earth doth seem to be next to hell: certainly, it is greatly defiled with sin, and overwhelmed with manifold calamities; and though God hath not totally forsaken it, nor turned away his mercy as he hath done from hell, yet is he much estranged from it; so that those who are not recovered by grace, are next to devils: and, alas! how numerous and considerable are they to denominate it, An evil world. Those that Christ calleth out of it, he sanctifieth, and maketh them

unlike the world; and his grace doth not give them a worldly felicity, nor settle them in a rest or kingdom here; but it saveth them from this world, as from a place of snares, and a company of cheaters, robbers, and murderers; and from a tempestuous sea, whose waves seem ready still to drown us.^c

I. I find it is a world of sin; II. And of temptation; III. And of calamity.

I. For sin, it is become, as it were, its nature, it liveth with men from the birth to the grave. It is an ignorant world, that wandereth in darkness; and yet a proud, self-conceited world, that will not be convinced of its ignorance; and is never more furiously confident, than when it is most deceived and most blind. Even natural wisdom is so rare, and folly hath the major vote and strength, that wise men are wearied with resisting folly, and ready in discouragement to leave the foolish world unto itself, as an incurable Bedlam: so fierce are fools against instruction, and so hard is it to make them know that they are ignorant, or to convince men of their mistakes and errors. The learner thinks his teacher doth; and he that hath but wit enough to distinguish him from a brute, is as confident as if he were a doctor. The learned themselves are for the most part but half-witted men, who either take up with lazy studies, or else have the disadvantage of incapable temperatures and wits, or of unhappy teachers, and false principles received by ill education, which keep out truth; so that they are but fited to trouble the world with their contentions, or deceive men by their errors: and yet have they not the acquaintance with their ignorance, which might make them learn of such as can instruct them; but if there be among many but one that is wiser than the rest, he is thought to be unfit to live among them if he will not deny his knowledge, and own their errors, and confess that modesty and order require that either the highest or the major vote are the masters of truth, and all is false that is against their opinions.^d

It is an atheistical, ungodly world, that knoweth not its Maker; or forgetteth, contemneth, and wilfully disobeyeth him, while in words it doth confess him: and yet a hypocritical world, that will speak honourably of God, and of virtue and piety, of justice and charity, while they are neglecting and rejecting them, and cannot endure the practice of that which their tongues commend. Almost all sorts will prefer the life to come in words, when, indeed, they utterly neglect it, and prefer the fleshly pleasures of this life; they cry out of the vanity and vexation of the world, and yet they set their hearts upon it, and love it better than God and the world to come. They will have some religion, to mock God, and deceive themselves, which shall go no deeper than the knee and tongue, in forms, or ceremonies, or a dissembled affection and profession. But to be devoted absolutely to God, in self-resignation, obedience, and love, how rare is it, even in them who cannot deny, but the law of nature itself doth primarily and undeniably oblige them to it! Their religion is but self-condemnation, while their tongues condemn their hearts and lives.^e

^a Deus est principium Effectivum in creatione, Reflectivum in redemptione, Perfectivum in sanctificatione. Joh. a Comibus Comp. Theolog. l. 4. c. 1.

^b Read chap. 16. with the citations.

^c Nam vitium nemo sine nascitur: optimus ille

Qui minimis urgetur. Horat.

The badness of the world occasioned the Manichees to think that God made it not; and Arnobius, with them to run into that error, to hold, that God made not man, which he so vehemently defendeth, lib. 2. Advers. Gentes; yet professing, that he who made us, and whence evil cometh, is a thing to us unknown.

^d Unicuique dedit vitium natura creato. Propert.

Sed quia cæcus inest vitium amor, omne futurum,

Despicitur, suadent brevem presentia fructum

Et ruit in vetitum damni securia lædita. Claud. 2. Eur.

Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, bimembri

Hoc monstrum puer, vel miranti sub aratro

Piscis inventis, et fœta comparo mule. Juven. Sat. 13.

^e He that will peruse that notable description of the state of mortals, and of souls in flesh, which Arnobius hath, Adv. Gentes, lib. 2. p. 18, 19. Annot. Bib. Pat. (too long to be transcribed), shall see the vanity and shame of this corrupted world expressed to the life.

It is a sensual, brutish world, and seemeth to have hired out their reason to the service of their appetites and lusts; gluttony, and excess of drink, and sports, and plays, and gaming, with pride, and wantonness, and fornication, and uncleanness, and worldly pomp, and the covetous gathering of provision for the flesh, to satisfy these lusts, is the business and pleasure of their lives; and if you tell them of reason, or the law of God, to take them off, you may almost as well think to reason a hungry dog from his carrion, or a lustful boar to forbear his lust.^a

And it is a selfish world, where every man is as an idol to himself, and affected to himself and his own interest, as if he were all the world; drawing all that he can from others, to fill his own insatiable desires; loving all men, and honouring, and esteeming, and praising them, according to the measure of their esteem of him, or their agreeableness to his opinions, ways, or interest. Self-love, self-conceit, self-esteem, self-will, and self-seeking, is the soul and business of the world; and, therefore, no wonder that it is a divided and contentious world, when it hath as many ends as men, and every man is for himself, and draweth his own way. No wonder that there is such variety of apprehensions, that no two men are in all things of a mind; and that the world is like a company of drunken men together by the ears, or of blind men fighting with they know not whom, and for they know not what; and that ignorant sects, and contentious wranglers, and furious fighters, are the bulky parts of it; and that striving who shall rule, or be greatest, or have his will, is the world's employment.

It is a dreaming and distracted world, that spend their days and cares for nothing; and are as serious in following a feather, and in the pursuit of that which they confess is vanity, and dying in their hands, as if, indeed, they knew it to be true felicity. They are like children, busy in hunting butterflies; or like boys at foot-ball, as eager in the pursuit, and in overturning one another, as if it were for their lives, or for some great, desirable prize; or like to a heap of ants, that gad about as busily, and make as much ado for sticks and dust, as if they were about some magnificent work. Thus doth the vain, deceived world lay out their thoughts and time upon impertinences, and talk and walk like so many noctambules in their sleep: they study, and care, and weep, and laugh, and labour, and fight, as men in a dream; and will hardly be persuaded but it is reality which they pursue, till death come and awake them. Like a stage-play, or a puppet-play, where all things seem to be what they are not, and all parties seem to do what they do not, and then depart, and are all disrobed and unmasked; such is the life of the most of this world, who spend their days in a serious jesting, and in a busy doing of nothing.

It is a malignant world, that hath an inbred, radicated enmity to all that virtue and goodness which they want; they are so captivated to their fleshly pleasures and worldly interests, that the first sight, approach, or motion, of reason, holiness, mortification, and self-denial, is met by them with heart-

rising, indignation, and opposition; in which their fury beareth down all argument, and neither giveth them leave considerably to use their own reason, or hearken to another's. There are few that are truly wise, and good, and heavenly, that escape their hatred and beastly rage; and when countries have thought to remedy this plague, by changing their forms of government, experience hath told them, that the vice and root of their calamity lieth in the blindness and wickedness of corrupted nature, which no form of government will cure; and that the doves, that are governed by hawks and kites, must be their prey, whether it be one, or many, that hath the sovereignty.^b

Yea, it is an unthankful world, that, in the exercise of this malignant cruelty, will begin with those that deserve best at their hands. He that would instruct them, and stop them in their sin, and save their souls, doth ordinarily make himself a prey; and they are not content to take away their lives, but they will, among their credulous rabble, take away the reputation of their honesty; and no wisdom or learning was ever so great, no innocence so unspotted, no honesty, justice, or charity so untainted, no holiness so venerable, that could ever privilege the owners from their rage, or make the possessors to escape their malice.^c Even Jesus Christ, that never committed sin, and that came into the world with the most matchless love, and to do them the greatest good, was yet prosecuted furiously to a shameful death; and not only so, but, in his humiliation his judgment was taken away, and he was condemned as an evil-doer, who was the greatest enemy to sin that ever was born into the world; he was accused of blasphemy, for calling himself the Son of God; of impiety, for talking of destroying the temple; and of treason, for saying he was a king. And his apostles, that went about the world to save men's souls, and proclaim to them the joyful tidings of salvation, had little better entertainment; wherever they came, bonds and afflictions did abide them; and if they had not been taught to rejoice in tribulations, they could have expected little joy on earth. And it was not only christians that were thus used, but honesty in the heathens as usually met with opposition and reproach, as Seneca himself doth oft complain: yea, how few have there been that have been famous for any excellency of wit or learning, or any addition to the world's understanding, but their reward hath been reproach, imprisonment, or death. Did Socrates die in his bed, or was he not murdered by the rage of wicked hypocrites? Plato durst not speak his mind, for fear of his master's reward. Aristippus left Athens, *ne bis peccaret in philosophiam*. Not only Solon, but most benefactors to any commonwealth, have suffered for their beneficence. Demosthenes, Cato, Cicero, Seneca, could none of them save their lives from fury, by their great learning or honesty.^d Yea, among nominal christians, he that told them of an antipodes, was excommunicated by the papal authority for a heretic; and a Savonarola, Arnoldus de Villa Nova, Paulus, Scaliger, &c. could not be wiser than

^a Nostri tantum qui Christiani vocamur nulla vobis cura est; finitis enim nos qui nihil mali patramus, immo omnium piissime justissimeque cum erga Deum tum imperium vestrum nos gerimus, exagitari, rapi, fugari, nomen dulcatque nostrum plerisque impugnantibus. Athenagor. Apolog. p. 1.

^b O ingratum et impium seculum! O in privatam perniciem incredibili pectoris obstinatione prouum! si aliquis ad vos medicus ex summotis venisset, et incognitis regionibus, medicamen pollicens, certatim blanditus, &c. Quænam est hæc feritas, quæ libido tam carnifex, inextinguibile bellum indicere nihil de te merito? Dilacerare si detur velle cum per viscera,

qui non modo nullum intulerit malum nulli, sed benignus hostibus, &c. Arnob. l. 1. in fine.

^c Prosperum ac felix scelus virtus vocatur. Qui nomen unquam sceleris errori dedit? sæpe error ingens sceleris obtinuit locum. Sen. Herc. fur.

^d Anaxarchum Democritum a Cyprio tyranno exanathematizatum accepimus: Zenonem Eleatem in tormentis necatum: quid dicam de Socrate, ejus mortis illichrymari soleo Platonem legens. Many more such instances hath Cotta in Cicero, De Nat. Deor. l. 3. p. 107, 108. Primusque de vitæ ratione disseruit Socrates, primusque philosophorum damnatus moritur. Laert. in Socrat. p. 92.

their neighbours, but to their cost : no, nor Arias Montanus himself. Campanella was fain, in prison, to compile his "New Philosophy;" and with the pleasure of his inventions, to bear the torments which were their sour sauce.^k Even Galileus, that discovered so many new orbs, and taught this world the way of clearer acquaintance with its neighbours, could not escape the reverend justice of the papalists, but must lie in a prison, as if *O sapientia* had been written on his doors; as the old woman cried out to Thales, when he fell into a ditch, while he was by his instrument taking the height of a star. And Sir Walter Raleigh could not save his head by his learned "History of the World," but must be one part of its history himself; nor yet by his great observation, how Antipater is taken for a bloody tyrant for killing Demosthenes, and how arts and learning have power to disgrace any man that doth evil to the famous masters of them. Peter Ramus, who had done so much in philosophy for the learned world, was required by a butcherly, barbarous murder, being one of the thirty or forty thousand that were so used in the French massacre; and many a holy person perished in the two hundred thousand murdered by the Irish. It were endless to instance the ungrateful cruelties of the world, and what entertainment it hath given to wise and godly men; even those whom it superstitiously adareth, when it hath murdered them.^m

And in all this wickedness, it is wilful, and stupid, and incorrigible; and ordinary means do little to the cure. Thus is it a sinful, evil world.

II. And it is a tempting world, that would make all bad as it is itself. Wherever the sanctifying truth of God doth come to illuminate and reform men, the world is presently up in arms against it; and fighting against that which would save men's souls, as if it were a plague or enemy that would destroy them. Princes think it is against their interest, and the people find that it is against their lusts; and so the sin of tyranny keepeth the gospel out of the greatest part of the world, and popular fury resisteth it where it cometh. The empires of the Turks, and Tartarian, and China, are sad instances of the success of tyranny against the means of men's salvation; and the empire of Japan hath given the world an instance of such unparalleled cruelty to that end, as maketh the persecutions of Nero and Dioclesian, and even the popish inquisition, and almost the massacres of Piedmont, France, and Ireland, to seem very merciful acts of charity. What rage, what inhuman fury hath been showed through all the world, to keep out knowledge, and keep the nations in their darkness and misery, and forbid relief! but for error and deceit, idolatry and superstition, how industriously are they propagated! Empire and arts, power and learning, are employed to deceive and undo the world; and though empire be God's ordinance, and arts his gifts, they are turned against him in the far greatest part of the earth, and Satan is served by them as if they had been or-

^k Campanella telleth us himself of his thirty years' cruel persecution and torments in the inquisition.

^l Hist. part I. l. 4. c. 3. sect. 6.

^m Judices non tam quid commiserit reus aliquis nostrum inquirunt, quam ipsi nomini tanquam certo sceleris illudant. Athenagor. ub. supr.

ⁿ Vitia de mercede sollicitant; Avaritia pecuniam promittit; Luxuria multas ac varias voluptates; Ambitio purpuram et plausum; et ex hoc potentiam et quicquid potentia ponit. Senec. Ep. 59. In vitia alter alterum trahimus. Quomodo ad salutem revocari potest, quem populus impellit, et nullus retrahit? Senec. Ep. 29. When just Aristides was made treasurer at Athens, though he most uprightly discharged his office, Themistocles accused him, and got him condemned as for bribery. But by the favour of some of the

dained by him; almost every country hath its proper opinions, and a religion fitted to resist religion. He that is an idolater, or a Mahometan, or infidel, would make more; and they that are against all serious religion, are as eager to make others of their mind as if it were a work of charity or commodity; and he that is endeavouring to undo souls, is as vehement in it as he that is endeavouring to save them. He that hath any passion or corrupt affection, is as inclinable to convey it to another as fire is to kindle fire, or one that hath the plague to infect his neighbour. Covetousness, ambition, voluptuousness, lust, and wrath and revenge, are all contagious. Rioters think it strange if we run not with them into all excess. The very noise of their impertinent talk and business, and the great ado that they make in doing nothing, is a great diverter of those that are about them, from serious business and sober consideration. They keep men so busy about their vanities, that they can find no leisure to remember that they are men, or to think what business they have in the world, nor where it is that they must dwell for ever; and when their folly and selfishness hath set them all together by the ears, they must needs draw or drive others into the fire of contention with them. They cry, Who is on my side! who! And he that will not be of one party or other, but will keep his peace, shall lose it by the enmity of all; and no man shall be taken for orthodox or honest, that will not be of that faction whose commendation he desireth; and when he hath humoured them, he shall go for a knave or a reproached person with all the rest. A peaceable man shall hardly find the peace which he desireth to himself; but it is ten to one but he loseth his labour, if he would make peace between others; especially, if he have an honest ambition, of extending that blessing to parties and countries, or any great and considerable numbers. If by tyranny and cruelty, by prisons, and torments, and death, they cannot affright men from honesty and the obedience of God, at least they will vex them in their way, and be as thorns and briers to them in this wilderness.ⁿ

III. And it is a calamitous, miserable world; it is void of the comforts of sacred illumination, and of the assured love of God, and of the exercise of wisdom or holiness. The delights of saints in loving God, and waiting for eternal life, are unknown to all the multitudes of the ungodly; they are confounded and lost in their ignorance and error, and tormented with their own passions, divisions, and contentions; their vices are part of their disquietment and pain, though pleasure be their intended end. It is a pitiful servitude that they are in to Satan, and an endless drudgery that they follow, in serving their covetousness, pride, and lust; and a tiresome task to care and labour, to make provision for their fleshly appetites and wills. They are led captive by Satan, to do his will; and yet in doing it they do their own, and are in love with their captivity, and glory in their chains. They are engaged, daily,

greatest he was delivered, and restored to his office for another year. The next year he did by connivance gratify all the pillagers of the commonwealth, that would grow rich by the common loss; and at the year's end they offered him the office again with great honour. But he refused it, and said, that their honour was a greater disgrace than their condemnation; for when he did well they condemned him, and when he gave way to the unjust, they honoured him. (Plutar.) When he was to be condemned by the popular vote, one came to him in the crowd, that could not write, and not knowing who he was, desired him to write his name to Aristides' condemnation; for he was resolved to give his voice against him, because he was called a righteous man. Aristides did as he desired, and wrote his name without discovering himself to him.

against God and mercy, against their happiness, and their friends that would procure it; and think him their enemy that would make them wiser. They go under the guilt of all this sin, and they have no assurance of pardon or deliverance; and God overtaketh them many times with bodily distresses here. Sickneses and pains consume men, and torment them; wars and plagues do send them by thousands out of the world, which they took for their felicity; fire and famine, piracy, and robbery, and fraud, impoverish them; the frustrations of their hope torment them; and yet, under all, they are hardened against God, and fall not out with their sin and folly, but with the justice of heaven, and with its instruments, or rather with all that beareth the image of the holiness of God. This is the visible condition of this world.

Object. If you say, How can all this stand with the infinite goodness of God? I have answered it before. It sheweth you that it is not this world, which is the great demonstration of the goodness or love of God, from whence we must take our estimate of it by the effects. If you will judge of the king's splendour, and bounty, and clemency, will you go seek for examples and demonstrations of it in a gaol, and at the gallows, or rather at the court? Hell is as the gallows, and earth is as the gaol. Measure not God's bounty and mercy by these. It is no sign of unmercifulness in God, that there are flies, and worms, and toads, and serpents, on earth as well as men; or that earth was not made as indefectible as heaven. And when men have drowned themselves in sin, it is no want of goodness in God, but it is goodness itself, which causeth the demonstrations of his justice on them. This world is not so much to all God's creation, as a wen or wart upon a man's body, is to the whole body; and if it were all forsaken of God, as it hath forsaken him, it were, proportionably, no more than the cutting off such a wart or wen. God hath many thousand, thousand, and thousand times more capacious regions, which it is like have more noble and blessed inhabitants: look to them, if you would see his love in its most glorious demonstration. Justice, also, must be demonstrated if men will sin; and if hell be quite forsaken, and earth, which is next it, be partly forsaken of the favour of God, for all that God may gloriously demonstrate his love to a thousand thousand-fold more subjects of the nobler regions, than he doth demonstrate his justice on in hell or earth. But these two things I gather for the confirmation of my faith. 1. That the sin and misery of the world is such that it groaneth for a Saviour; and when I hear of a physician sent from heaven, I easily believe it, when I see the woeful world mortally diseased, and gasping in its deep distress. The condition of the world is visibly so suitable to the whole office of Christ, and to the doctrine of the gospel, that I am driven to think that if God have mercy for it, some physician and extraordinary help shall be afforded it. And when I see none else but Jesus Christ, whom reason will allow me to believe is that Physician, it somewhat prepareth my mind to look towards him with hope.^o

2. And also, the evil of this present world is very suitable to the doctrine of Christ, when he telleth us

that he came not to settle us here in a state of prosperity, nor to make the world our rest or portion; but to save us from it, as our enemy and calamity, our danger, and our wilderness, and trouble, and to bring up our hearts first, and then ourselves to a better world, which he calleth us to seek and to make sure of: whereas, I find that most other religions, though they say something of a life hereafter, yet lead men to look for most or much of their felicity here, as consisting in the fruition of this world, which experience tells me is so miserable.

Sec. 3. Moreover, I find that the law of entire nature was no more suitable to nature in its integrity, than the law of grace revealed by Christ is suitable to us in our lapsed state; so that it may be called the law of nature lapsed and restorable, *naturæ lapsæ restauranda*.

Nature entire, and nature depraved, must have the same pattern and rule of perfection ultimately to be conformed to; because lapsed man must seek to return to his integrity. But lapsed or corrupted man doth, moreover, need another law, which shall first tend to his restoration from that lost and miserable state. And it was no more necessary to man in innocency, to have a suitable law for his preservation and confirmation, than it is to man in sin and guilt to have a law of grace for his pardon and recovery, and a course of means prescribed him for the healing of his soul, and for the escaping of the stroke of justice.^p The following particulars further open this.

Sec. 4. It seemeth very congruous to reason, that as monarchy is the perfectest sort of government, (which it is probable it is, even among the angels,) so mankind should have one universal head or monarch over them.

Kingdoms have their several monarchs; but there is surely a universal monarch over them all. We know that God is the primary Sovereign; but it is very probable to nature that there is a subordinate sovereign or general administrator under him. It is not only the Scriptures that speak of a prince of the devils, and of principalities, and powers, and thrones, and dominions among the happy spirits; and that talk of the angels that are princes of several kingdoms, Dan. x.; but even the philosophers, and most idolaters, have, from this apprehension, been drawn to the worship of such, as an inferior kind of deity. And if man must have a subordinate, universal king, it is meet that it be one that is also man; as angels and devils have principals of their own sort and nature, and not of others.

Sec. 5. It seemeth congruous to reason, that this head be one that is fitted to be our Captain General, himself to lead us by conduct, precept, and example, in our warfare against those devils, who also are said to have their prince and general.

As devils fight against us under a prince of their own nature, so it is congruous, that we fight against them under a prince of our own nature, who hath himself first conquered him, and will go on before us in the fight.^q

Sec. 6. It is congruous to reason, that lapsed man under the guilt of sin, and desert of punishment, who is unable to deliver himself, and unworthy of immediate access to God, should have a mediator

^o Saith Cicero, (laughing at Epicurus,) Ego summum dolorem, (summum dico, etiamsi decem atomis est major alius), non continuo dico esse brevem: multosque possem bonos viros nominare qui complures annos doloribus podagra crucientur maximis. Tuscul. l. 2. p. 263.

^p If any say that still perfect obedience is possible, I will not litigare de nomine, but say as Cicero, Ut nihil interest utrum nemo valeat, an nemo possit valere; sic non intelligo

quid intersit, utrum nemo sit sapiens an nemo esse possit. Cicer. de Nat. Deor. l. 3. p. 138. (mibi.) So I say of keeping the law perfectly.

^q Almost all the heathens in the world, who worshipped one God as chief, had their demi-gods, as their particular protectors, and favourers, or mediators; as intimating that man is conscious of the need of some mediator of access to the supreme Deity.

for his restoration and reconciliation with God, if any be found fit for so high an office.

Sect. 7. And it is congruous to reason, that this mediator be one in whom God doth condescend to man, and one in whom man may be encouraged to ascend to God, as to one that will forgive and save him; and one that hath made himself known to man, and also hath free access to God.

Sect. 8. It is congruous to reason, that lapsed, guilty, darkened sinners, that know so little of God, and of his will, and of their own concerns, and of the other world, should have a teacher sent from heaven, of greater authority and credit than an angel, to acquaint us with God and his will, and the life we are going to, more certainly and fully than would be done by nature only.

That this is very desirable, no man can doubt: how gladly would men receive a letter or book that dropped from heaven! or an angel that were sent thence to tell them what is there, and what they must for ever trust to! yea, if it were but one of their old acquaintance from the dead! But all this would leave them in uncertainty still, and they would be doubtful of the credit and truth of any such messenger; and therefore to have one of fuller authority, that shall confirm his word by unquestionable attestations, would very much satisfy men. I have proved, that nature itself revealeth to us a life of retribution after this, and that the immortality of souls may be proved without Scripture: but yet there is still a darkness and unacquaintedness, and, consequently, a doubting and questioning the certainty of it upon a carnal mind; and it would greatly satisfy such, if, besides mere reason, they had some proof which is more agreeable to a mind in flesh; and might either speak with some credible messenger who hath been in heaven, and fully knoweth all these matters; or at least might be certainly informed of his reports. And, indeed, to men who have fallen into such a dark depravedness of reason, and such strangers to God and heaven as mankind is, it is become needful that they have more than natural light, to show them the nature, the excellency, and certainty of the happiness to come, or else they are never like so to love and seek it, and prefer it before all earthly things, as is necessary to them that will attain it: for few men will seek with their utmost labour, or let go all other things, to attain a happiness which they are not well persuaded of the reality of. And though sound reason might well persuade them of it, yet reason is now become so blind, and unsound, and partial, and enslaved to the flesh, that it is not fit for such an office, according to our necessity, without some heavenly revelation.^r

Sect. 9. And it is exceeding congruous to man's necessity, who is fallen under the power and fears of death, as well as the doubts and estrangedness to the other world, that he that will save and heal us, do himself in our nature rise from the dead and ascend up into heaven, to give us thereby a visible demonstration, that indeed there is a resurrection, and a life to come, for us to look for.

Though God was not obliged to do thus much for us, yet reason telleth us, that if he will do it, it is very suitable to our necessities: for all the reason-

^r The most learned men of Greece and Rome, that saw by reason the immortality of the soul, the life to come, and the perfections of God, were yet so distrustful of their own reasons, that they spake of the life to come with great pauses of doubtfulness or darkness: and were many of them glad to run to oracles, and augurs, and aruspices, to try if they could get any additional light by supernatural revelation. How glad then would they have been of a certain teacher sent from heaven! Falsum est; pejores morimur quam nasci-

ings in the world do not satisfy in such things, so much as ocular demonstration: when we either see a man that is risen from the dead, or have certain testimony of it, it facilitateth the belief of our own resurrection: and he that is gone into heaven before us, assureth us that a heaven there is.

Sect. 10. When God in mercy would forgive and save a sinful people, it was very congruous to reason, that there should be some fit means provided, to demonstrate his holiness in his justice, and to vindicate the honour of his laws and government, and so to secure the ends of both.

For if God make a penal law, and execute it not, but let man sin with impunity, and do nothing which may deter him, nor demonstrate his justice, as much as the sinner's sufferings would do, it would tell the world, that he that gave them the law, and thereby told them that he would rule and judge them by it, did but deceive them, and meant not as he spake: and it would bring both the law and governor into contempt, and persuade men to sin without any fear: and he that was questioned for the second crime would say, I ventured, because I suffered not for the first. It was the devil's first way of tempting men to sin, to persuade mankind that God meant not as he spake in his threatening of their death; but that they should not die, though God had threatened it. And if God himself should by his actions say the same, it would tempt them more to sin than Satan could, as his credibility is greater. Therefore, he that is a governor must be just as well as merciful; and if God should have pardoned sinners, without such a sacrifice, or substitute means, as might preserve the honour of his law and government, and the future innocence of his subjects, as well as their punishment in the full sense of the law would have done, the consequents would have been such, as I will leave to your own judgments.^s

Sect. 11. And it was very congruous to reason, that so odious a thing as sin should be publicly condemned and put to shame although the sinner be forgiven; as it was done in the life and death of Christ.

For the purity of God is irreconcilable to sin, though not to the sinner; and therefore it was meet that the sin have all the public shame, though the sinner escape; and that God be not like weak, imperfect man, who cannot do good, without doing or encouraging evil.

Sect. 12. It is congruous to our condition, that seeing even the upright do renew their sins, their consciences should have some remedy for the renewal of their peace and comfort, that it sink them not into desperation; which is most suitably provided for them in Jesus Christ.

For when we were pardoned once, and again, and often, and yet shall sin, he that knoweth the desert of sin, and purity of God, will have need also to know of some stated, certain course of remedy.

Sect. 13. It was meet that the sinful world have not only a certain teacher, but also a perfect pattern before them of righteousness, love, self-denial, meekness, patience, contempt of lower things, &c. which is given us by Jesus Christ alone.

And therefore the gospel is written historically,

mur: Nostrium istud, non naturæ vitium est. Quid enim turpius quam in ipso lumine securitatis esse solitum. Senec.

^s Sæpe Jovem vidi cum jam sua mittere vellet Fulmina thure dato sustinuisse manum; At si negligitur, magnis injuria penis Solvitur. Ovid 5. Fast.

Dei injuriæ Deo curæ. Tacit. Annal. l. 1. Virtutum omnium excellentissima justitia. Ammian. Marcel. l. 20.

with doctrines intermixed, that we might have both perfect precepts and patterns.

Sect. 14. It was very congruous to a world universally lapsed, that God should make with it a new law and covenant of grace; and that this covenant should tender us the pardon of our sins, and be a conditional act of oblivion; and that sinners be not left to the mere law of perfect nature, which was to preserve that innocency which they have already lost.

To say, Thou shalt perfectly obey, to a man that hath already disobeyed, and is unfitted for perfect obedience, is no sufficient direction for his pardon and recovery. Perhaps you will say, that God's gracious nature is instead of a law of grace or promise. But though that be the spring of all our hopes, yet that cannot justly quiet the sinner of itself alone, because he is just as well as merciful, and justice hath its objects, and pardon dependeth on the free-will of God, which cannot be known to us without its proper signs. The devils may say that the nature of God is good and gracious, and so may any condemned malefactor say of a good and gracious judge and king; and yet that is but a slender reason to prove his impunity or pardon. All will confess, that absolute pardon of all men would be unbecoming a wise and righteous Governor. And if it must be conditional, who but God can tell what must be the condition? If you say, that nature telleth us, that converting repentance is the condition. I answer, 1. Nature telleth us, that God cannot damn a holy, loving soul, that hath his image; but yet it telleth us not, that this is the only or whole condition. 2. It is not such a repentance as lieth but in a frightened wish, that the sin had not been done, but such a one as consisteth in the change of the mind, and heart, and life, and containeth a hatred to the sin repented of, and a love to God and holiness. And we have as much need of a Saviour to help us to this repentance, as to help us to a pardon.

Sect. 15. It is very congruous to our miserable state, that the condition of this covenant of grace should be, on our part, the acknowledgment of our Benefactor, and the thankful acceptance of the benefit, and a hearty consent for the future to 'follow his conduct, and use his appointed means in order to our full recovery. Which is the condition of the christian covenant.

Sect. 16. Seeing man's fall was from his God unto himself, especially in point of love; and his real recovery must be, by bringing up his soul to the love of God again; and seeing a guilty, condemned sinner can hardly love that God, who in justice will damn and punish him; nothing can be more congruous and effectual to man's recovery to God, than that God should be represented to him as most amiable; that is, as one that is so willing to pardon and save him, as to do it by the most astonishing expressions of love, in such an agent, and pledge, and glass of love as Jesus Christ."

The whole design of Christ's incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession, is but to be the most wonderful and glorious declaration of the goodness and love of God to sinners. That as the great frame of the universe demonstrateth his power, so should the Redeemer be the demonstration of his love.

That we may see both the wise contrivances of his love, and at how dear a rate he is content to save us; that our lives may be employed in beholding and admiring the glory of his love, in this incomprehensible representation. That we may love him, as men that are fetched up from the very gates of hell, and from under the sentence of condemnation, and made by grace the heirs of life.

Sect. 17. Especially to have a quickening Head, who will give the spirit of grace to all his members, to change their hearts, and kindle this holy love within them, is most congruous to accomplish man's recovery.

So dark are our minds, and so bad our hearts, so strong are our lusts, and so many our temptations, that bare teaching would not serve our turn, without a spirit of light, and life, and love, to open our eyes, and turn our hearts, and make all outward means effectual.

Sect. 18. The commission of the gospel ministry to preach this gospel of pardon and salvation, and to baptize consenters, and gather and guide the church of Christ, with fatherly love, is also very congruous to the state of the world, with whom they have to do.

Sect. 19. It is congruous to the state of our trembling souls, that are conscious of their former guilt, and present unworthiness, that in all their prayers and worship of God, they should come to him in a name that is more worthy and acceptable than their own, and offer their services by a hand or intercessor so beloved of God.

Though an impious soul can never expect to be accepted with God upon the merits of another, yet a penitent soul, who is conscious of former wickedness, and continued faults, may hope for that mercy by grace through a Redeemer, of which he could have less hopes without one.

Sect. 20. It is congruous to their state, who have Satan their accuser, that they have a patron, a high priest, and justifier with God.

Not that God is in danger of being mistaken by false accusation, or to do us any injustice; but when our real guilt is before his face, (and the malice of Satan will seek thereupon to procure our damnation,) there must also be just reasons before him for our pardon; which it is the office of a Saviour to plead or to present, that is, to be God's instrument of our deliverance upon that account.

Sect. 21. It is exceeding congruous to our condition (of darkness and fear) to have a Head and Saviour in the possession of glory, to whom we may commend our departing souls at the time of death, and who will receive them to himself; that we may not tremble at the thoughts of death and of eternity.

For though the infinite goodness of God be our chief encouragement, yet seeing he is holy and just, and we are sinners, we have need of a mediate encouragement, and of such condescending love as is come near unto us, and hath taken up our nature already into heaven. A Saviour that hath been on earth in flesh, that hath died, and rose, and revived, and is now in the possession of blessedness, is a great imboldener of our thoughts, when we look towards another world; which else we should think of with more doubting, fearful, and unwilling minds. To have a friend gone before us, who is so powerful, so good, and hath made us his interest; to think that

¹ Religiosi sunt, qui facienda et vitanda discernunt. Macrobi. Saturn. 1. 3. Non votis neque supplicamentis muliebribus auxilia Deorum parantur; sed vigilando, agendo, bene consulendo, prospere cedunt omnia: ubi socordia te atque ignavia tradideris, nequequam Deos implores irati enim insensique sunt. Sallust. in Catilin.

² Mysterii opus et finem, sacrificari scilicet et sanctificari

fideles, ipse est solus qui peragit. De his autem preces sunt, orationes, et supplicationes sacerdotis. Illa enim sunt Domini, hac vero servi: Servator donat, sacerdos pro iis quæ data sunt gratias agit. Nicol. Cabasil. Liturg. Expos. c. 49. adversus eos qui dicunt sanctorum in sacro Mysterio, memoriam esse sacerdotis pro eis ad Deum supplicationem.

he is Lord of the world that we are going to, and hath undertaken to receive us to himself when we go hence, is a great reviving to our amazed, fearful, departing souls.*

Sect. 22. And it is very congruous to the case of an afflicted, persecuted people, who are misrepresented and slandered in this world, and suffer for the hopes of a better life, to have a Saviour who is the Judge of all the world, to justify them publicly before all, and to cause their righteousness to shine as the light, and to turn all their sufferings into endless joys.

Sect. 23. And it seemeth exceeding congruous to reason, seeing that the divine Essence is an inaccessible light, that we should for ever have a Mediator of fruition, as well as of acquisition, by whom the Deity may shine in communicated glory and love to us for evermore; and that God be for evermore eminently delighted and glorified in Him than in us, as he excelleth us in dignity and all perfections; even as in one sun, his power and glory are more demonstrated than in a world of worms.

Whether all these things be true or not, I am further to inquire; but I find now that they are very congruous to our condition and to reason; and that if they be so, no man can deny but that there is wonderful wisdom and love to man in the design and execution, and that it is to man a very desirable thing that it should be so: and therefore that we should be exceeding willing to find any sound proof that it is so indeed, though not with a willingness which shall corrupt and pervert our judgments by self-flattery, but such as will only excite them to the wise and sober examination of the case.†

The evidences of the verity we shall next inquire after.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE WITNESS OF JESUS CHRIST, OR THE DEMONSTRATIVE EVIDENCE OF HIS VERITY AND AUTHORITY.

THOUGH all that is said may be a reasonable preparative to faith, it is more cogent evidence which is necessary to convince us that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. That a man appearing like one of us is the eternal Word of God incarnate, is a thing which no man is bound to believe, without very sound evidence to prove it.‡ God hath made reason essential to our nature. It is not our weakness, but our natural excellency, and his image on our nature. Therefore, he never called us to renounce it, and to lay it by; for we have no way to know principles but by an intellectual discerning them in their proper evidence; and no way to know conclusions but by a rational discerning their necessary connexion to those principles. If God would have us know without

reason, he would not have made us reasonable creatures. Man hath no way of mental discerning or knowledge, but by understanding things in their proper evidence. To know without this, were to know without knowledge. Faith is an act, or species, of knowledge: it is so far from being contrary to reason, that it is but an act of cleared, elevated reason. It is not an act of immediate intuition of God or Jesus Christ himself, but a knowledge of the truth by the divine evidence of its certainty. They that wrangle against us for giving reason for our religion, seem to tell us that they have none for their own, or else reprehend us for being men. If they had to do with them who make God to be but the prime reason, would they say that faith is something above reason, and therefore something above God? I believe that our reason or intellection is far from being univocally the same thing with God's; but I believe that God is intellection, reason or wisdom *eminenter*, though not *formaliter*: and that though the name be first used to signify the lower derivative reason of man, yet we have no higher to express the wisdom of God by, or better notion to apprehend it by, than this which is its image. I conclude, therefore, that,

Sect. 1. The christian religion must be the most rational in the world, or that which hath the soundest reason for it, if it be the truest: and the proof of it must be by producing the evidences of its truth.

Sect. 2. The evidence which faith requireth is properly called evidence of credibility.

Sect. 3. When we speak of human faith, as such, credibility is somewhat short of proper certainty; but when we speak of divine faith, or a belief of God, evidence of credibility is evidence of certainty.

Sect. 4. The great witness of Jesus Christ, or the demonstrative evidence of his verity and authority, was the Holy Spirit.

Sect. 5. The word or doctrine of Jesus Christ hath four several infallible testimonies of God's Spirit, which, though each of them alone is convincing, yet, altogether, make up this one great evidence, that is, 1. Antecedently; 2. Constitutively, or inherently; 3. Concomitantly; and, 4. Subsequently. Of which I shall speak in course.

Sect. 6. I. Antecedently, the spirit of prophecy was a witness to Jesus Christ.‡

Under which I comprehend the prediction also of types. He that was many hundred years before, yea, from age to age, foretold to come as the Messiah or Saviour, by divine prediction of promises, prophecies, and types, is certainly the true Messiah, our Saviour. But Jesus Christ was so foretold: *ergo*—

1. For promises and prophecies, presently after the fall of Adam, God said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," Gen. iii. 15. As it is certain that it was Satan principally, and the serpent but instrumentally, that is spoken of as the deceiver of Eve; so it is as plain that it was Satan and his

* Perturbatione temporum eos etiam qui vero judicio nullius criminis convinci queunt, maximis involvi criminibus, haud est veri dissimile. Pachymer. l. 1.

† Q. Si divina Scripturæ probationibus sufficiunt, quid necessaria est religioni fides? R. Fides nostra super ratione quidem est, non tamen temerarie et irrationabiliter assumitur. Ea enim quæ ratio edocet, fides intelligit; et ubi ratio defecerit, fides præcurrit. Non enim utnunquam audita credimus, sed ea quæ ratio non improbat. Verum quod consequi ad plenum non potest, fidei prudentia confitemur. Junilius African. de Part. Div. Leg. l. 2. c. 30.

‡ Q. Unde probamus libros religionis nostræ divina esse inspiratione conscriptos? R. Ex multis, quorum primum est ipsius Scripturæ veritas; deinde ordo rerum, consonantia

præceptorum, modus locutionis sine ambitu, puritasque verborum. Additur conscribentium et prædicantium qualitas, quod divina homines, excelsa vates, infacundi subtilia, non nisi divino repleti Spiritu tradidissent. Tum prædicationis virtus, quam dum prædicaretur (licet a paucis despectis) obtinuit. Accedunt his rectificatione contrariorum, ut syllabarum vel philosophorum; expulsio adversariorum, utilitas consequentium, exitus eorum quas per acceptationes, et figuras, et prædicationes, quæ prædicta sunt ad postremum; miracula jugiter facta, donec Scriptura ipsa susciperetur a gentibus. De qua hoc nunc ad proximum miraculum sufficit, quod ab omnibus sapientia cognoscitur. Junilius African. de Part. Div. Leg. l. 2. c. 29.

§ Heb. x. 15; 1 Pet. i. 10; 2 Pet. i. 19, 20.

wicked followers principally, and the serpent and his seed only, as the instruments that are here meant in the condemnation: and that it is the seed of the woman, by an excellency so called, that is primarily here meant, and under him her natural seed, secondarily, is proved, not only by the Hebrew masculine gender, but by the fulfilling of this promise in the expository events, and in other promises to the like effect. The rest of the promises and prophecies to this purpose are so many, that to recite them all would swell the book too big; and therefore I must suppose that the reader, perusing the sacred Scripture itself, will acquaint himself with them there.^c Only a few I shall repeat.

"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," Gen. xxii. 18.

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come," Gen. xlix. 10.

The whole second Psalm is a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, &c. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Sion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Be wise therefore, O ye kings: be learned, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish," &c.

"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption," Psalm xvi. 10.

"Dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture," Psalm xxii. 16—18.

"They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," Psalm lxix. 21.

"Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? for he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet, we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it

pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors," Isa. liii.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this," Isa. ix. 6.

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," Isa. vii. 14.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined be poured upon the desolate," Dan. ix. 24, &c.

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver," &c. Mal. iii. 1—3.

I omit the rest to avoid prolixity. There is scarcely any passage of the birth, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, or glory of our Saviour, which are not particularly prophesied of in the Old Testament; but nothing so copiously as his righteousness and his kingdom. The prophecy of Isaiah is full of such, and is but a prophetic gospel.

To these must be adjoined the prophetic types, even the typical persons, and the typical ordinances and actions. It would be too long to open, how his sufferings from the malignant world was typified in the death of Abel, and the attempted oblation of Isaac, and the selling of Joseph; and his work of salvation in Noah and his preserved ark and family; and his paternity, as to believers, in Abraham; and his kingly conduct and deliverance of the church by Moses, and his deliverance of the

^c *Legē Disputationem Gregentii cum Herbano Judæo.*

Israelites from Egypt, and conduct of them in the wilderness, and by Joshua's victorious bringing them into the land of promise; his reign and kingdom by David, and his building of the church by Solomon, and his priesthood by Aaron and his successors, &c.

And it would take up just a volume to open all the typical ordinances and actions, which prefigured Christ.^d From the institution of circumcision, and the passover, or paschal lamb, to the end of all the mosaical ceremonies, Christ is the signification and the end of all. I will only crave your consideration of the custom of sacrificing in the general: it came into the world immediately upon man's sin. We find Cain and Abel, the two first persons born into the world, employed in it. From thence to this day, it hath continued (in doctrine, though the practice be restrained) with the Jews. It was no peculiar ceremony of their law, but hath been commonly exercised by almost all nations through the world, both Greeks, Romans, and barbarians; and it yet continueth in most countries of the heathens, where the doctrine of Christ hath not abolished it, as it hath done both with the christians and Mahometans; for the Mahometans borrow the confession of one God, and the rejection of idols and sacrifices, originally from the christians. Now, I must confess, that I am not able to satisfy myself of the original and universality of the custom of sacrificing, upon any reasons but those of the christians: either it was a prophetic, promissory institution of God himself to lapsed Adam, to point him to a Saviour, the second Adam; or else, it must be from the law of nature, or else it is from some other positive institution, or else it must be a universal error: there is no fifth way that is probable can be imagined; and, 1. I am not able to see that the mere light or law of nature should be the original cause, for then it would be all men's duty still: and, what reason can nature give us to judge that God is delighted in the blood and pain of the innocent brutes; or that the killing and offering of them should be any satisfaction to his justice for our sins, or any rational means to avert his judgments, or procure our forgiveness. If it be said, that it was but a ceremonial confession, that we ourselves deserve death as that creature suffered it; I answer, confession is indeed due from us by the law of nature; but the question is, of the killing of the poor beasts, and offering them in sacrifice. If the exercise of our own penitence by confession were all that might be done as well without the creature's blood and death, what is it that this addeth to a penitent confession; and why was the oblation to God contained in the sacrifice? If you say, that the life of brutes is not so regardable, but that we take it away for our daily food; I answer, it is true, that it is allowed us for the maintenance of our lives; but yet it is not to be cast away in vain, nor is God to be represented as one that doth delight in blood: and the common sense of all the world in their sacrificing, hath been, that besides the confession of their own desert, there is somewhat in it to appease God's displeasure; and none that I ever read of did take it for a mere confessing sign or action. If it be said, that they did it to signify their homage to God; I answer, why then did they not offer him only the living creature rather than the dead? All took it to be a propitiatory action; and if there had been an aptitude in this sign to betoken our penitent confession only, yet when God knoweth our confessions as well without it, and when the tongue is made

the natural instrument to express the mind, and there are a variety of other signs, it is incredible that all the world should ever, even so early, hit upon this one strange way of expression, without some special revelation or command of God.

2. And it cannot be said, with any credibility, that God made any other revelation of his will to the world for sacrificing, besides what is made in nature and in holy Scripture. For who ever dreamed of such a thing; or hath delivered us any such revelation, and told us when, and to whom, and how it was made?

3. And it is not credible that it was taken up erroneously by all the world, as their vices or superstitions are. For though it is past question, that error hath caused the abuse of it through the world, yet for the thing itself there is no probability of such an original. For what can we imagine should induce men to it, and make all nations (how various soever their idols are) to agree in this way of worshipping and propitiating them? There is nothing of sensuality in it, that by gratifying a lust of the flesh might have such a universal effect: and it must be some universal light, or some universal lust or interest, that must cause such a universal concord. Nay, on the contrary, you shall find that tradition and the custom of their forefathers is the common argument pleaded for sacrificing through all the world, even in the ancients' historical reports of it.

4. Therefore, it remaineth very probable at least that they received it indeed by tradition from their forefathers: and that could be from none originally, but the universal progenitor of mankind, who was capable of conveying it to all his posterity; for no history mentioneth any later original, nor could any later than Adam or Noah have made it so universal. And no man can imagine why God should institute it, if it were not to intimate the translating of our punishment into our Redeemer, and to point us to the great sacrifice which is truly propitiatory, and is the great demonstration of his justice, who in mercy doth forgive.

SECT. 7. II. The second witness of the Spirit, which is inherent and constitutive to the gospel of Christ, is that image of God, the unimitable character of divinity, which by the Holy Spirit is put into the doctrine of Christ, as the very life or soul of it; together with the same on the pattern of his own life.

1. On Christ himself, the unimitable image of God in his perfection, is a testimony of his veracity: which I ascribe to the Holy Spirit, as the ultimate operator in the Trinity, even that Holy Spirit by which he was conceived, and which fell upon him at his baptism, and which (Matt. xii.) his enemies did blaspheme. Many men have so lived, that no notable sin of commission hath been found or observed in them by the world at a distance: but the most virtuous, except Christ, was never without discernible infirmities, and sins of omission. No man ever convicted him of any sin, either in word or deed; his obedience to the law of God was every way perfect; he was the most excellent representative of the divine perfections. The omnipotency of God appeared in his miracles, the wisdom of God in his holy doctrine; and the love of God in his matchless expressions of love, and in all the holiness of his life. He was so far from pride, worldliness, sensuality, malice, impatience, or any sin, that the world had never such a pattern of self-denial, humility, contempt of all the wealth and honours of the world, charity, meekness, patience, &c. as in him. He obeyed his Father to the death. He healed men's bodies, and showed his pity to their souls,

^d See Whately On the Types, and Lud. Crocii Epicris, and most largely Micrelius's Judas, or second part of his book against infidels.

and opened the way of life even to his enemies. He instructed the ignorant, and preached repentance to the impenitent, and suffered patiently the unthankful requitals of them that rendered him evil for good. He endured patiently to be reviled, scorned, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns, nailed to a cross, and put to death; and this, upon the false accusation and imputation of being an evil-doer. In a word, he was perfect and sinless, and manifested first all that obedience and holiness in his life, which he put into his laws, and prescribed unto others; and such perfection is inseparable from veracity.*

Object. How know we what faults he might have, which come not to our knowledge?

Ans. 1. You may see by his enemies' accusations, partly what he was free from, when you see all that malice could invent to charge him with. 2. If the narrative of his life in the gospel have that evident proof, which I shall anon produce, there can remain no doubt of the perfect holiness and innocence of Christ in his person and his life.

Object. We find him accused of many crimes, as of being a gluttonous person, and a wine-bibber; of blasphemy, and impiety, and treason.

Ans. The very accusations are such as show their falsehood and his innocence. He is called a gluttonous person and a wine-bibber, because he did eat and drink, as other men, in temperance and sobriety, and did not tie himself to a wilderness life of austerity, in total abstinence from common meats and wine, as John Baptist did, and as they thought he that professed extraordinary sanctity should have done. They accused him of eating with publicans and sinners, because he went to them as a physician to heal their souls, and lived a sociable, charitable life, and did not observe the laws of proud pharisaical separation. They accused him of blasphemy and treason for saying the truth, that he was the Son of God and the King of Israel: and of impiety, for talking of pulling down the temple, when he did but prophesy of his own death and resurrection. And this was all that malice had to say.

Object. He carried himself contemptuously to magistrates: he called Herod, the king, "That fox." The scribes and Pharisees he railed at, and called them hypocrites, painted sepulchres, a generation of vipers, &c. When he was called to answer whether they should pay tribute to Cæsar, he doth but put off the resolution by ambiguity, instead of an open exhorting them to obedience, and saith, "Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." And when he was called to for tribute for him, he payeth it but as a way to avoid offence, having pleaded first his own immunity.

Ans. 1. His speeches of Herod and the scribes and Pharisees, are not revilings, but a free and just reprehension of their sin, which being done by God's commission, and in his name, and for his cause, is no more to be called reviling, than an arrest of a felon or traitor in the king's name, or an accusation put in against him for his crimes, should be so called. God will not forbear damning impenitent

rebels, though they call it cruelty; nor will he forbear the reprehension and shaming of their villainies, though they call it railing; nor will he flatter proud, rebellious dust, though they call flattery a necessary civility; nor will he give leave to his messengers to leave sin in honour, and to let the proud do what they list, and quietly damn themselves and others without plain reproof, though it be called unreverent sauciness or sedition. And he that considereth how little title Cæsar had to the kingdom of the Jews, and that the sword alone is a better proof of force and strength than of authority, and is a plea which a usurper may have on his side, will rather praise the submission and peaceableness of Christ, than blame him as disloyal. But for the doctrine of obedience in general, who hath ever taught it more plainly and pressingly than Christ and his apostles?

2. The gospel or doctrine of Christ itself also hath the very image and superscription of God, I will not say imprinted on it, for that is too little, but intrinsically animating and constituting it; which is apparent in the matter, and the method, and the style.

1. The matter and design containeth the most wonderful expression of the wisdom of God, that ever was made to man on earth. All is mysterious, yet admirably fit, consistent, and congruous, as is before declared: That a world which is visibly and undeniably fallen into wickedness and misery, should have a Redeemer, Saviour, and Mediator towards God. That he should be one that is near enough to God, and unto us, and hath the nature of both. That he should be the second Adam, the Root of the redeemed and regenerate. That God should give all mercy from himself, from his own bounty and fullness, and not as unwilling be persuaded to it by another; and, therefore, that the Redeemer be not any angel or intermediate person, but God himself. That thus God come nearer unto man, who is revolted from him, to draw up man again to him. That he lose not the world, and yet do not violate his governing justice. That he be so merciful as not to be unrighteous, nor permit his laws and government to be despised; and yet so just, as to save the penitent, renewed souls. That he give man a new law and conditions of salvation, suitable to his lapsed guilty state, and leave him not under a law and conditions which were fitted to the innocent. That he revealed himself to the apostate world in that way which only is fit for their recovery; that is, in his admirable love and goodness; that so love might win our love, and attract those hearts, which under guilt and the terrors of condemning justice, would never have been brought to love him. That guilty souls have such evidence of God's reconciliation to encourage them to expect his pardon, and to come to him with joy and boldness in their addresses, having a Mediator to trust in, and his sacrifice, merits, and acceptable name, to plead with God. That justice and mercy are so admirably conjoined in these effects. That Satan, and the world, and death should be so conquered in a suffering way, and man have so perfect a pattern to imitate, for self-denial, humility,

are sincere: and while the sects and hypocrites do rail at one another, yet in all they speak against sin. I have oft thought, why is it that, as christians, men live together in love; but as parties, when they come to the interests of their sects, they hate, revile, and persecute one another? And I answer it, because as christians they give no cause of hatred to each other; but as sects and parties, they leave God's way, and show their selfishness and loathsome faults, and are inclined to injure one another, and so do again suffer by those whom they have injured. But the wisdom from above is pure and peaceable, &c. Leg. etiam Thalesi Centuriæ, et Nili Parænesis.

* All christians agree in the main doctrines of a holy life. Leg. Marc. Eremit. De Lege Spirituali, et Dorothei Doctrinas, et Benedicti Instrumenta Virtutum, Macarii Homil. Hesychi Presb. Ad Theodol. Centuriæ; Tho. Kempis, et Thauleri Opera; and of the later true papists, Sale's Introduction to a Devout Life, Benedicti de Benedict. Regul., Barbancon, De Amore Dei, Parsons of Resolution, Cressy's Sancta Sophia, &c. And among the protestants, the number of holy treatises is so great, that I shall not name any in so numerous a treasury: so that however the spirit of contention causeth many of them to overlook the good that is in one another, and aggravate the evil, yet holiness is the doctrine of all the christians in the world, and the practice of all that

contempt of honour, wealth, and life, and exact obedience, and resignation to the will of God, with perfect love to God and man. That the world should be under such a universal Administrator, and the church be all united in such a Head; and have one in their nature that hath risen from the dead, to be in possession of the glory which they are going to, and thence to send down his Spirit to sanctify them, and fit them for heaven; and afterwards to be their Judge, and to receive them unto blessedness. And that sinners now be not condemned merely for want of innocence, but for rejecting the grace and mercy which would have saved them. That we have all this taught us by a messenger from heaven, and a perfect rule of life delivered to us by him; and all this sealed by a divine attestation. That this doctrine is suited to the capacity of the weakest, and yet so mysterious as to exercise the strongest wits; and is delivered to us, not by an imposing force, but by the exhortations and persuasions of men like ourselves, commissioned to open the evidences of truth and necessity in the gospel. All this is no less than the image and wonderful effects of the wisdom of God.¹

And his goodness and love is as resplendent in it all; for this is the effect of the whole design, to set up a glass in the work of our redemption, in which God's love and goodness should be as wonderfully represented to mankind, as his power was in the works of creation. Here sinful man is saved by a means which he never thought of, or desired; he is fetched up from the gates of hell, redeemed from the sentence of the righteous, violated law of God, and the execution of his justice; the eternal Word so condescendeth to man in the assumption of our nature, as that the greatness of the love and mercy, incomprehensible to man, becomes the greatest difficulty to our belief. He revealeth to us the things of the world above, and bringeth life and immortality to light: he dwelleth with men; he converseth with the meanest; he preacheth the glad tidings of salvation to the world: he refuseth not such familiarity with the poorest, or the worst, as is needful to their cure; he spendeth his time in doing good, and healing all manner of bodily diseases; he refuseth the honours and riches of the world, and the pleasures of the flesh, to work out our salvation; he beareth the ingratitude and abuse of sinners, and endureth to be scorned, buffeted, spit upon, tormented, and crucified by those, to whom he had done no greater wrong than to seek their salvation; he maketh himself a sacrifice for sin, to show the world what sin deserved, and to save them from the deserved punishment. God had at first decreed and declared that death should be the punishment of sin; and Satan had maliciously drawn man to it, by contradicting this threatening of God, and making man believe that God would falsify his word, and that he did envy man the felicity of his advancement to be liker God in knowledge: and now Christ will first justify the truth and righteousness of God, and will demonstrate himself, by dying in our stead, that death is indeed the wages of sin; and will show the world, that God is so far from envying their felicity, that he will purchase it at the dearest rate, and de-

liver them freely from the misery which sin and Satan had involved them in. Thus, enemies are reconciled by the sufferings of him whom they offended; even by his sufferings in the flesh, whose God-head could not suffer; and by his death as man, who, as God, was most immortal. As soon as he was risen, he first appeared to a woman who had been a sinner, and sent her, as his first messenger, with words of love and comfort to his disconsolate disciples, who had but lately sinfully forsaken him; he giveth them no upbraiding words, but meltingly saith to her, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God," John xx. 17. He after this familiarly converseth with them, and instructeth them in the things concerning the kingdom of God. He maketh a universal pardon, or act of oblivion, in a covenant of grace, for all the world that will not reject it; and appointeth messengers to preach it unto all; and whatever pains or suffering it cost them, to go through all with patience and alacrity, and to stick at nothing for the saving of men's souls. He gave the Holy Spirit miraculously to them, to enable them to carry on this work, and to leave upon record to the world the infallible narrative of his life and doctrine: his gospel is filled up with matter of consolation, with the promises of mercy, pardon, and salvation, the description of the privileges of holy souls, justification, adoption, peace, and joy; and finally, he governeth and defendeth his church, and pleadeth our cause, and secureth our interest in heaven, according to the promises of this his word. Thus is the gospel the very image of the wisdom and goodness of God: and such a doctrine, from such a person, must needs be divine.²

2. And the method and style of it is most excellent, because most suitable to its holy ends; not with the excellency of frothy wit, which is but to express a wanton fancy, and please the ears of airy persons, who play with words, when they should close with wisdom and heavenly light (such excellency of speech must receive its estimate by its use and end): but as the end is most divine, so the light that shineth in the gospel is heavenly and divine. The method of the books themselves is various, according to the time and occasions of their writing (the objections against them are to be answered by themselves anon): but the method of the whole doctrine of christianity set together, is the most admirable and perfect in the world; beginning with God in unity of essence, proceeding to his trinity of essential active principles, and of persons, and so to his trinity of works, creation, redemption, and regeneration, and of relations of God and man accordingly; and to the second trinity of relations, as he is our Owner, Ruler, and chief Good: and hence it brancheth itself into a multitude of benefits flowing from all these relations of God to man, and a multitude of answerable duties flowing from our correlations to God, and all in perfect method, twisted and inoculated into each other, making a kind of circulation between mercies and duties, as in man's body there is of the arterial and venal blood and spirits, till in the issue, as all mercy came from God, and duty subordinately from man, so mercy and duty do

nare, nec a seipsis distare; sed in omnibus sanitatis remedium moderare. Hildebert. Cœnoman. Epist. 83. Argum.

¹ Duo, sine pluribus, faciunt hominem sanctum bonitatis, viz. cognitio et amor: hoc est cognitio veritatis, et amor bonitatis. Sed ad cognitionem Dei qui est veritas, non potest venire, nisi per cognitionem tui-ipsius: nec ad amorem Dei qui est bonitas, nisi per amorem proximi tui. Ad cognitionem tui-ipsius potes pervenire per frequentem meditationem: ad cognitionem Dei per puram contemplationem. Edmund Cantuar. Specul. Eccles. c. 3. vid. plura. c. 29, &c.

¹ Cum Dominus palam dicit Ego in medio vestri sum, sicut qui ministrat, quis adeo ævus super mentis inops est, ut omnem mox fastum et ambitionem non respuat? Cui universa sancta, menteq; et ratione prædita creatura, cultum et ministerium deferat, quique eadem prorsus cum Deo Patre majestatem et potestatem pollet, is ministri persona sumpta, discipulorum pedes lavat. Titus Bostrens. in Luc. c. 21. Diligens lector intelliget unam faciem esse eloquiorum sacrorum; cum distincte considerabit, quid sit admonitio, quid sit preceptum, quid prohibitio, quid remissio; et hæc nec se invicem impug-

terminate in the everlasting pleasure of God ultimately, and man subordinately, in that mutual love which is here begun, and there is perfected. This method you may somewhat perceive in the description of the christian religion, before laid down.

3. And the style also is suited to the end and matter; not to the pleasing of curious ears, but to the declaring of heavenly mysteries; not to the conceits of logicians, who have put their understandings into the fetters of their own ill-devised notions, and expect that all men that will be accounted wise, should use the same notions which they have thus devised, and about which they are utterly disagreed among themselves; but in a language suitable both to the subject, and to the world of persons to whom this word is sent, who are commonly ignorant, and unlearned, and dull: that being the best physic which is most suitable to the patient's temper and disease. And though the particular writers of the sacred Scriptures have their several styles, yet is there in them all in common a style which is spiritual, powerful, and divine; which beareth its testimony proportionably of that Spirit, which is the common author in them all: but of this more among the difficulties and objections anon.

But for the discerning of all this image of God in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, reason will allow me to expect these necessary qualifications in him that must discern it: 1. That before he come to supernatural revelations, he be not unacquainted with those natural revelations which are antecedent, and should be foreknown (as I have in this book explained them with their evidence): for there is no coming to the highest step of the ladder without beginning at the lowest; men, ignorant of things knowable by natural reason, are unprepared for higher things. 2. It is reasonably expected that he be one that is not treacherous and false to those natural truths which he hath received; for how can he be expected to be impartial and faithful in seeking after more truth, who is unfaithful to that which he is convinced of; or that he should receive that truth which he doth not yet know, who is false to that which he already knoweth; or that he should discern the evidence of extraordinary revelation, who opposeth with enmity the ordinary light or law of nature; or that God should vouchsafe his further light and conduct to that man, who wilfully sinneth against him, in despite of all his former teachings? 3. It is requisite that he be one that is not a stranger to himself, but acquainted with the case of his heart and life, and know his sins, and his corrupt inclinations, and that guilt, and disorder, and misery, in which his need of mercy doth consist; for he is no fit judge of the prescripts of his physician, who knoweth not his own disease and temperature. But of this more anon.

SECT. 8. III. The third way of the Spirit's witness to Jesus Christ, is concomitantly by the miraculous gifts and works of himself, and his disciples; which are a cogent evidence of God's attestation to the truth of his doctrine.

SECT. 9. By the miracles of Christ, I mean, 1. His miraculous actions upon others; 2. His miracles in his death and resurrection; 3. His predictions.

The appearance of the angel to Zachary, and his dumbness; his prophecy and Elisabeth's, with the angel's appearance to Mary; the angel's appearance and evangelizing to the shepherds; the prophecy of Simeon and of Anna; the star, and the testimony of the wise men of the east; the testimony of John Baptist, that Christ should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and that he was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world: these

and more such I pass by as pre-supposed. At twelve years of age he disputed with the doctors in the temple, to their admiration, Luke ii. 46. At his baptism the Holy Ghost came down upon him in the likeness of a dove, and a voice from heaven said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased, Luke iii. 22. When he was baptized, he fasted forty days and nights, and permitted Satan to tempt him extraordinarily, by carrying him from place to place, that he might extraordinarily overcome. When Nathanael came to him, he told him his heart, and told him what talk he had with Philip afar off, till he convinced him that he was omniscient. At Cana of Galilee, at a feast, he turned their water into wine, Luke iv.; Matt. iv. At Capernaum he dispossessed a demoniac, Luke iv. 33, &c. He healed Simon's mother of a fever at a word, Luke iv. 38, 39. He healed multitudes of torments, diseases, and madness, Matt. iv. 24; Luke iv. 40, 41. He cleanseth a leper by a word, Matt. viii. 2, 3; Luke v. 12. So also he doth by a paralytic, Matt. ix.; Luke v. He telleth the Samaritan woman all that she had done, John iv. At Capernaum he healed a nobleman's son by a word, John v. At Jerusalem he cured an impotent man, that had waited five-and-thirty years; a touch of his garment cureth a woman diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, Matt. ix. 20. He cured two blind men with a touch and a word, Matt. ix. 28, 29. He dispossessed another demoniac, Matt. ix. 32. He raised Jairus's daughter at a word, who was dead or seemed so, Matt. ix. 23, 24. He dispossessed another demoniac, blind and dumb, Matt. xii. He healeth the servant of a centurion ready to die, by a word, Luke vii. He raiseth the son of a widow from death, that was carried out on a bier to be buried, Luke vii. With five barley loaves and two small fishes, he feedeth five thousand, and twelve baskets full of the fragments did remain, Matt. xiv.; John vi. He walketh upon the waters of the sea, Matt. xiv. He causeth Peter to do the like, Matt. xiv. All the diseased of the country were perfectly healed by touching the hem of his garment, Matt. xiv. 36. He again healed multitudes, lame, dumb, blind, maimed, &c. Matt. xv. He again fed four thousand with seven loaves, and a few little fishes, and seven baskets full were left, Matt. xv. He restoreth a man born blind to his sight, John ix. In the sight of three of his disciples, he is transfigured into a glory, which they could not behold, and Moses and Elias talked with him, and a voice out of the cloud said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him, Matt. xvii.; Luke ix. He healed the lunatic, Matt. xvii. Multitudes are healed by him, Matt. xix. 2. Two blind men are healed, Matt. xx. He healed a crooked woman, Luke xiii. 11. He withereth up a fruitless tree at a word, Mark xi. He restoreth a blind man, nigh to Jericho, Luke xviii. 35. He restoreth Lazarus from death to life, that was four days dead and buried, John xi. He foretelleth Judas, that he would betray him: and he frequently and plainly foretold his own sufferings, death, and resurrection; and he expressly foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the temple, and the great calamity of that place, even before that generation had passed away, Matt. xxiv. &c. He prophesied his death the night before, in the institution of his supper. When he died, the sun was darkened, and the earth trembled, and the veil of the temple rent, and the dead bodies of many arose, and appeared; so that the captain that kept guard, said, "Truly this was the Son of God," Matt. xxvii. When he was crucified and buried, though his grave-stone was sealed, and a guard of soldiers set to watch it, angels appeared, and rolled away the

stone, and spake to those that inquired after him: and he rose and revived, and staid forty days on earth with his disciples: he appeared to them by the way: he came oft among them on the first day of the week, at their meetings, when the doors were shut: he called Thomas to see the prints of the nails, and put his finger into his side, and not be faithless, but believing, till he forced him to cry out, My Lord, and my God! John xx. He appeareth to them as they are fishing, and worketh a miracle in their draught, and provideth them broiled fish, and eateth with them: he expostulated with Simon, and engaged him, as he loved him, to feed his sheep, and discourseth of the age of John, John xxi. He giveth his apostles their full commission for their gathering his church by preaching and baptism, and edifying it by teaching them all that he had commanded them, and giveth them the keys of it, Matt. xxviii.; John xix. and xx. He appeareth to above five hundred brethren at once, 1 Cor. xv. He showed himself to them by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; and being assembled with them, commanded them to tarry at Jerusalem till the Spirit came down (miraculously) upon them: and he ascended up to heaven before their eyes, Acts i. And two angels appeared to them, as they were gazing after him, and told them, that thus he should come again. When Pentecost was come, when they were all together, (about a hundred and twenty,) the Holy Spirit came upon them visibly, in the appearance of fiery cloven tongues, and sat on each of them, and caused them to speak the languages of many nations, which they had never learned, in the hearing of all: upon the notice of which, and by Peter's exhortation, about three thousand were then at once converted, Acts ii. After this, Peter and John do heal a man at the entrance of the temple, who had been lame from his birth, and this by the name of Jesus, before the people, Acts iii. One that was above forty years old, Acts iv. 22. When they were forbidden to preach, upon their praises to God the place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, Acts iv. 31. Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead by Peter's word, for hypocrisy and lying, Acts v. And many signs and wonders were done by them among the people, Acts v. 12; inasmuch that they brought the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, at least, Peter's shadow might overshadow them, Acts v. 14, 15. And a multitude came out of the cities round about to Jerusalem, bringing sick folks and demoniacs, and they were healed every one, ver. 16. Upon this the apostles were shut into the common prison; but an angel by night opened the prison and brought them out, and bid them go preach to the people in the temple, Acts v. When Stephen was martyred, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand, Acts vi. Philip, at Samaria, cured demoniacs, palsies, lameness, and so converted the people of that city; inasmuch that Simon, the sorcerer, himself believed. The Holy Ghost is then given by the imposition of the hands of Peter and John, so that Simon offered money for that gift. Philip is led by the Spirit to convert the Ethiopian

nobleman, and then carried away, Acts viii. Saul, who was one of the murderers of Stephen, and a great persecutor of the church, is stricken down to the earth, and called by Jesus Christ, appearing in a light, and speaking to him from heaven, and is sent to preach the gospel, which he doth with zeal and power, and patient labours to the death. Ananias is commanded by God to instruct him and baptize him after his first call, Acts ix. Peter, at Lydda, cureth Eneas by a word, who had kept his bed eight years of a palsy, Acts viii. At Joppa, he raiseth Tabitha from the dead, Acts ix. Cornelius, by an angel, is directed to send for Peter to preach the gospel to him: the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard his words, Acts x. Agabus prophesied of the dearth, Acts xi. Peter, imprisoned by Herod, is delivered by an angel, who opened the doors, and loosed his bonds, and brought him out. Herod is eaten to death with worms, Acts xii. At Paphos, Elymas, the sorcerer, is stricken blind by Paul's word, for resisting the gospel; and Sergius, the Roman deputy, is thereby made a believer, Acts xiii. At Lystra, Paul, by a word, cureth a cripple that was so born; inasmuch as the people would have done sacrifice to him and Barnabas, as to Mercury and Jupiter, Acts xiv. Paul casteth out a divining devil; and being imprisoned and scourged with Silas, and their feet in the stocks, at midnight as they sung praises to God, an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, the doors were all opened, and all their bonds loosed, and the jailer converted, Acts xvi. The Holy Ghost came upon twelve disciples, upon the imposition of Paul's hands. And God wrought so many miracles by his hands, at Ephesus, that from his body were brought to the sick, handkerchiefs, and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, Acts xix. At Troas, he raised Eutychus to life, Acts xx. His sufferings at Jerusalem are foretold by Agabus, Acts xxi. At Melita, the people took him for a god, because the viper hurt him not that fastened on his hand; and there he cured the father of Publius, the chief man of the island, of a flux and fever, by prayer and imposition of hands. In a word, in all places where the apostles came, these miracles were wrought, and in all the churches the gifts of the Holy Ghost were usual, either of prophecy or healing, or of speaking strange languages, or interpreting them, some had one, and some another, and some had most or all. And by such miracles were the christian churches planted: and all this power Christ had foretold them of at his departure from them: Mark xvi. 17, "These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Yea, in his lifetime on earth, he sent forth his apostles and seventy disciples with the same power, which they exercised openly, Luke ix. 1, &c. and x. 16, 17. Thus was the gospel confirmed by multitudes of open miracles.^b

And Christ's own resurrection and ascension was the greatest of all! And here it must be noted that these miracles were, 1. Not one or two, but multi-

imperii jussione non dicam maris insanias aut tempestatum furores prohibere, compescere, non cecis restituere lumina, non ad vitam revocare defunctos, non annosas dissolvere passiones sed quod levissimum est furenculum, scabiem, aut inherentem spinulam callo una interdicione sanare? Personarum contentio non est eloquentius viribus, sed gestorum operum virtute pendenda. Arnob. adv. Gent. l. 2.

^b Tria totus mundus mirabatur: Christum post mortem surrexisse: cum carne calum ascendisse; et per duodecim Apostolos Piscatores mundum convertisse Chrysost. in Matta.

^b At qui causas causas, partes partibus volumus aquare, magis nos valemus ostendere quid in Christo fuerimus secuti, quam in philosphis quid vos. Ac nos quidem in illo secuti hæc sumus: opera illa magnifica potentissimasque virtutes, quas variis edidit, exhibuitque miraculis, quibus quisvis posset ad necessitatem credulitatis adduci, et judicare fideliter, non esse quæ forent hominis sed divina alioquin et incognita potestatis. Vos in philosphis virtutes secuti quas estis? Ut magis vos illis, quam nos Christo oportuerit credere? Quisquam ne illorum aliquando verbo uno potuit, aut unius

tudes. 2. Not obscure and doubtful, but evident and unquestionable. 3. Not controlled or checked by any greater contrary miracles, as the wonders of the Egyptian sorcerers were by Moses, but altogether uncontrolled. 4. Not in one place only, but in all countries where they came. 5. Not by one or two persons only, but by very many who were scattered up and down in the world.

And that miracles, and such miracles as these, are a certain proof of the truth of Christ and christianity, is most evident, in that they are the attestation of God himself.

1. It is undeniable that they are the effects of God's own power. If any question whether God do them immediately, or whether an angel or spirit may not do them, that makes no difference in the case considerable; for all creatures are absolutely dependent upon God, and can use no power but what he giveth them, and continueth in them, and exerciseth by them. The power of the creatures is all of it the power of God. Without him they are nothing, and can do nothing; and God is as near to the effect himself, when he useth an instrument, as when he useth none. So that, undoubtedly, it is God's work.

2. And God having no voice but created, revealeth his mind to man by his operations; and as he cannot lie, so his infinite wisdom and goodness will not give up the world to such unavoidable deceit, as such a multitude of miracles would lead them into, if they were used to attest a lie. If I cannot know him to be sent of God, who raiseth the dead, and sheweth me such a seal of omnipotency to his commission, I have no possibility of knowing who speaketh from God at all, or of escaping deceit in the greatest matters; of which God, by his omnipotent arm, would be the cause. But none of this can stand with the nature and righteous government of God. This, therefore, is an infallible proof of the veracity of Christ and his apostles; and the truth of the history of these miracles shall be further opened anon.

Sect. 10. IV. The fourth part of the Spirit's testimony to Christ is subsequent, in the work of regeneration or sanctification, in which he effectually illuminateth the mind, and reneweth the soul and life to a true resignation, obedience, and love of God, and to a heavenly mind and conversation; and so proveth Christ to be really and effectively the Saviour.*

This evidence is commonly much overlooked and made little account of by the ungodly, who have no such renovation on themselves; because, though it may be discerned in others by the fruits, yet they that have it not in themselves, are much hindered from discerning it; partly because it is at a distance from them, and because it is in itself seated in the heart, where it is neither felt nor seen by others, but in the effects; and partly because the effects are imperfect, and clouded with a mixture of remaining faults; but, especially, because that ungodly men have a secret enmity to holy things, and thence to holy persons, and therefore are falsely prejudiced against them; which is increased by cross interests and courses in their converse.¹ But yet, indeed, the

spirit of regeneration is a plenary evidence of the truth of Christ and christianity.

To manifest which, I shall, 1. Consider what it is, and doth; 2. How and by what means; 3. On whom; 4. Against what oppositions; 5. That it is Christ indeed that doth it.

1. The change which is made by the Spirit of Christ doth consist in these particulars, following: 1. It taketh down pride, and maketh men humble and low in their own eyes; to which end it acquainteth them with their sin, and their desert and misery. 2. It teacheth men self-denial, and causeth them to resign themselves to God, and use themselves as being wholly his own. 3. It absolutely subjecteth the soul to God, and setteth up his authority, as absolute, over our thoughts and words, and all our actions; and maketh the christian's life a course of careful obedience to his laws, so far as they understand them.^m 4. It taketh up a christian's mind with the thankful sense of his redemption; so that the pardon of his sins, and his deliverance from hell, and his hopes of everlasting glory, do form his soul to a holy gratitude, and make the expressions of it to be his work. 5. It giveth men a sense of the love of God, as their gracious Redeemer; and so of the goodness and mercifulness of his nature. It causeth them to think of God as their greatest Benefactor, and as one that loveth them, and as love itself; and so it reconcileth their estranged, alienated minds to him, and maketh the love of God to be the very constitution and life of the soul. 6. It causeth men to believe that there is an everlasting glory to be enjoyed by holy souls, where we shall see the glory of God, and be filled with his love, and exercised in perfect love and praise, and be with Christ, his angels, and saints for evermore: it causeth them to take this felicity for their portion, and to set their hearts upon it, and to make it the chief care and business of all their lives to seek it. 7. It causeth them to live in the joyful hopes and foresight of this blessedness, and to do all that they do as means thereunto; and thus it sweeteneth all their lives, and maketh religion their chief delight. 8. It accordingly employeth their thoughts and tongues, so that the praises of God, and the mention of their everlasting blessedness, and of the way thereto, is their most delightful conference, as it becometh travellers to the city of God; and so their political converse is in heaven. 9. And thus it abateth the fears of death, as being but their passage to everlasting life; and those that are confirmed christians indeed, do joyfully entertain it, and long to see their glorified Lord, and the blessed majesty of their great Creator. 10. It causeth men to love all sanctified persons with a special love of complacency, and all mankind with a love of benevolence, even to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to abhor that selfishness which would engage us against our neighbour's good. 11. It causeth men to love their enemies, and to forgive and forbear, and to avoid all unjust and unmerciful revenge. It maketh men meek, long-suffering, and patient, though not impassionate, insensible, or void of that anger which is the necessary opposer of sin and folly.ⁿ 12. It employeth men in doing all the good they can; it

* Ideo non omnibus sanctis miracula attribuuntur, ne perniciosissimo errore decipiantur infirmi, aestimantes in talibus factis esse majora bona, quam in operibus justitie, quibus vita aeterna comparatur. Aug. de Civ. Dei, 33.

¹ Christianity is thus truly and orderly described by Augustin. de Agon. cap. 18. Fides est prima, quae subjugat animam Deo; deinde praecepta dat vivendi; quibus custoditis spes nostra firmatur et nutritur, cum quod cognitio et actio beatum faciunt, in cognitione cavendus est error, in actione nequitia.

^m Ille justus et sancte vivit, qui rerum integer aestimator est: Ipse est qui ordinatam habet charitatem, ne aut diligit quod non est diligendum, aut non diligit quod est diligendum, aut amplius diligit quod minus est diligendum, aut minus diligit quod amplius est diligendum; aut minus aut amplius quod aequè diligendum est. August. de Doctr. Christian.

ⁿ Apud christianos, non qui patitur, sed qui facit injuriam miser est. Hieron.

maketh them long for the holiness and happiness of one another's souls, and desirous to do good to those that are in need, according to our power. 13. This true regeneration by the Spirit of Christ doth make those superiors that have it, even princes, magistrates, parents, and masters, to rule those under them in holiness, love, and justice, with self-denial; seeking more the pleasing of God, and the happiness of their subjects, for soul and body, than any carnal, selfish interest of their own; and therefore it must needs be the blessing of that happy kingdom, society, or family, which hath such a holy Governor. Oh that they were not so few! 14. It maketh subjects, and children, and servants submissive and con-
 scionable in all the duties of their relations, and to honour their superiors as the officers of God, and to obey them in all just subordination to him. 15. It causeth men to love justice, and to do as they would be done by, and to desire the welfare of the souls, bodies, estates, and honours of their neighbours, as their own. 16. It causeth men to subdue their appetites, and lusts, and fleshly desires, and to set up the government of God and sanctified reason over them; and to take their flesh for that greatest enemy, in our corrupt state, which we must chiefly watch against and master, as being a rebel against God and reason. It alloweth a man so much sensitive pleasure as God forbiddeth not, and as tendeth to the holiness of the soul, and furthereth us in God's service; and all the rest it rebuketh and resisteth.^a 17. It causeth men to estimate all the wealth, and honour, and dignities of the world, as they have respect to God and a better world, and as they either help or hinder us in the pleasing of God and seeking immortality; and as they are against God and our spiritual work and happiness, it causeth us to account them but as mere vanity, loss, and dung. 18. It keepeth men in a life of watchfulness against all those temptations which would draw them from this holy course, and in a continual warfare against Satan and his kingdom, under conduct of Jesus Christ.^b 19. It causeth men to prepare for sufferings in this world, and to look for no great matters here; to expect persecutions, crosses, losses, wants, defamations, injuries, and painful sickness and death; and to spend their time in preparing all that furniture of mind which is necessary to their support and comfort in such a day of trial, that they may be patient and joyful in tribulation and bodily distress, as having a comfortable relation to God and heaven, which will incomparably weigh down all. 20. It causeth men to acknowledge that all this grace and mercy is from the love of God alone, and to depend on him for it by faith in Christ; and to devote and refer all to himself again, and make it our ultimate end to please him; and thus to subserve him as the first Efficient, the chief Dirigent, and the ultimate, final Cause of all; of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

This is the true description of that regenerate, sanctified state, which the Spirit of Christ doth work

on all whom he will save, and that are christians indeed, and not in name only.^c And certainly this is the image of God's holiness, and the just constitution and use of a reasonable soul; and, therefore, he that bringeth men to this is a real Saviour: of whom more anon.

II. And it is very considerable, by what means, and in what manner, all this is done: it is done by the preaching of the gospel of Christ, and that in plainness and simplicity. The curiosity of artificial oratory doth usually but hinder the success, as painting doth the light of windows. It was a few plain men, that came with spiritual power, and not with the enticing words of human wisdom, or curiosities of vain philosophy, who did more in this work than any of their successors have done since. As in naturals, every thing is apt to communicate its own nature, and not another's. Heat causeth heat, and cold causeth cold; so wit, by communication, causeth wit, and common learning causeth common learning; and so it is holiness and love which are fittest to communicate and cause holiness and love, which common qualifications are too low for, though they may be helpful in their several places and degrees. What contemned instruments hath God used in the world, to do that for the regenerating of souls, which the greatest emperors by their laws, or the subtlest philosophers by their precepts, did not? The Athenian philosophers despised Paul, and Gallio counted his doctrine but a superstitious talk about names and words; but Satan himself despised not those whom he tempted men to despise, but perceived they were like to be the ruin of his kingdom, and therefore every where stirred up the most vehement, furious resistance of them. It is evident, therefore, that there is an inward, effectual operation of the Holy Ghost, which giveth success to these means, which are naturally in themselves so weak.^d

And it is to be observed, that this great change is very often wrought on a sudden, in a prevalent, though not a perfect degree. One sermon hath done that for many thousand sinners, which twenty years' teaching of the greatest philosophers never did. One sermon hath turned them from the sins which they had lived in all their days; and hath turned them to a life which they were strangers to before, or else abhorred. One sermon hath taken down the world, which had their hearts, and hath put it under their feet, and hath turned their hearts to another world: which sheweth that there is an internal agent, more powerful than the speaker.

And it is remarkable that, in the main, the change is wrought in one and the same method. First humbling men for sin and misery, and then leading them to Jesus Christ as the remedy, and to God by him; and so kindling the love of God in them by the bellows of faith; and then leading them towards perfection in the exercises of that holy love.

III. And it will further lead us to the original of this change, to consider on whom it is thus wrought.

they wrought the greatest reformation on their auditors. Laertius saith of Socrates, that Theætetus cum de disciplina disereret, ut ait Plato, mirifice immutatum, divinumque ferme remisit. Eutypbron, qui patri dixerat, quædam de justitia et pietate loquens, ab instituto revocavit. Lysidem hortando maxime moralem fecit. Lamprocleum filium in matrem immitte et ferum, ut ait Xenophon, suadendo ad reverentiam reduxit. Glauconem Platonis fratrem ad republicam accedere volentem a proposito retraxit, quod is rudis esset, ignarusque rerum. These were the converts of Socrates: a change agreeable to the verities which he delivered. But it is another kind of success that the doctrine of christianity hath had.

^a Sanctitatis causa servanda sunt, pudicitia corporis, castitas animæ, et veritas doctrine. Aug. ibid.

^b Fides attingit inaccessa, deprehendit ignota, comprehendit immensa, apprehendit novissima: Ipsam denique æternitatem suo illo vastissimo sinu quodammodo circumcludit. Bern. in Cant.

^c Quatuor mirabilia fecit Deus: de Piscatore primum Ecclesiam pastorem: de persecutore magistrum et doctorem gentium: de publicano primum Evangelistam; de latrone primum Cælicolam. Chrysost. in Matt.

^d Multo melius est, ex duobus imperfectis rusticitatem sanctam habere, quam eloquentiam peccatricem. Hieron. ad Nepol. The better any philosopher was, the nearer he came to the christian pastors, as to the converting of souls; that is,

1. For their place and time. 2. Their quality in themselves. 3. And as compared to each other. 4. And as to their numbers.

1. For time and place, as it is in all ages since Christ, (to say nothing of the former ages now,) and in all nations and countries which have received him and his gospel, that souls have been thus regenerated to God. If it had been only a fanatic rapture of brain-sick men, it would have been like the effects of the heresies of the Valentinians, Basilidians, gnostics, Montanists, &c.; or of the Swenckfeldians, Weigelians, Behmenists, quakers, and other enthusiasts, who make a stir for one age, in some one corner of the world, and then go out with a perpetual stink. In all ages and countries, these effects of christian doctrine are the very same as they were in the first age and the first country where it was preached. Just such effects as it hath in one kingdom or family, it hath in all others who equally receive it; and just such persons as christians were in the first ages at Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, Philippi, &c. such are they now in England, according to their several degrees of grace, though not in miracles and things extraordinary to the church. The children of no one father are so like as all God's sanctified children are throughout the world.

2. As to their civil quality, it is men of all degrees that are thus sanctified, though fewest of the princes and great ones of the world. And as to their moral qualifications, it sometimes falleth on men prepared by a considering, sober temper, and by natural plainness and honesty of heart; and sometimes it befalleth such as are most profane, and drowned in sin, and never dreamed of such a change; nay, purposely set their minds against it. These God doth often suddenly surprise by an overpowering light, and suitable constraining, overcoming attraction, and maketh them new men.

3. And as to their capacities compared, there is plainly a distinguishing hand that disposeth of the work. Sometimes a persecuted Saul is converted by a voice from heaven, when Pharisees that were less persecutors, are left in their unregeneracy. Sometimes, under the same sermon, one that was more profane and less prepared is converted, when another that was more sober and better disposed, remaineth as he was before. The husband and the wife, the parents and the children, brothers and sisters, companions and friends, are divided by this work, and one converted and the other not: though none are deprived of this mercy, but upon the guilt of their forfeiture, resistance, or contempt; yet is there plainly the effect of some special choice of the Holy Spirit, in taking out some of these that abused and forfeited grace, and changing them by an insuperable work.

4. And as to the number, it is many thousands that are thus renewed; enough to show the love and power of him that calleth them: but yet the far smaller part of mankind, to show his dominion, and distinguishing will, who knoweth the reason of all his works. Of which, more anon.

IV. Consider what opposition this work of grace doth overcome. 1. Within us. 2. Without us.

1. Within men it findeth, 1. A dungeon of ignorance, which it dispelleth by its heavenly light. 2. Abundance of error and prejudice, which it unteach-

eth men. 3. A stupid, hardened heart, which it softeneth, and a senseless sleepiness of soul, which it overcometh, by awakening, quickening power.* 4. A love to sin, which it turneth into hatred. 5. An idolizing self-esteem, and self-conceitdness, and self-love, and self-willedness, which it turneth into self-loathing and self-denial; not making us loathe ourselves as natural, or as renewed, but as corrupt with sin, and abusers of mercy, and such as by wilful folly have wronged God, and undone themselves: so that repentance maketh men fall out with themselves, and become as loathsome in their own eyes. 6. It findeth in us an overvaluing love of this present world, and a foolish, inordinate desire to its profits, dignities, and honours, which it destroyeth and turneth into a rational contempt. 7. It findeth in us a prevailing sensuality, and an unreasonable appetite and lust; and a flesh that would bear down both reason and the authority of God; and this it subdueth, and mortifieth its inordinate desires, and bringeth it under the laws of God. 8. It findeth all this radiated and confirmed by custom; and overcometh those sins which a sinner hath turned as into his nature, and hath lived in the love and practice of all his days. All this, and more opposition within us, grace doth overcome in all the sanctified; and there is not one of all these, if well considered of, but will appear to be of no small strength and difficulty to be truly conquered.¹

2. And without us, the Holy Spirit overcometh, 1. Worldly allurements; 2. Worldly men; 3. All other assaults of Satan.

1. While the soul is in flesh, and worketh by the means of the outward senses, these present things will be a strong temptation to us: prosperity and plenty, wealth and honour, ease and pleasure, are accommodated to the desires of the flesh; partly to its natural appetite, and much more to it as inordinate by corruption; and the flesh careth not for reason, how much soever it gainsay. And then all these enticing things are near us, and still present with us, and before our eyes; when heavenly things are all unseen; and the sweetness of honour, wealth, and pleasure, is known by feeling, and therefore known easily, and by all; when the goodness of things spiritual is known only by reason and believing. All which laid together, with sad experience, do fully show that it must be a very great work to overcome this world, and raise the heart above it to a better, and so to sanctify a soul.

2. And worldly men do rise up against this holy work, as well as worldly things. Undeniable experience assureth us, that through all the world, ungodly, sensual men have a marvellous, implacable hatred to godliness and true mortification; and will by flattery, or slanders, or scorns, or plots, or cruel violence, do all that they are able to resist it; so that he that will live a holy, temperate life, must make himself a scorn, if not a prey. The foolish wit of the ungodly is bent to reason men out of faith, hope, and holiness, and to cavil against our obedience to God, and to disgrace all that course of life which is necessary to salvation; and it is a great work to overcome all these temptations of the foolish and furious world: great, I say, because of the great folly and corruption of unregenerate men, on whom

quosdam perfectos philosophos turpiter vivere? Resp. Nullum vero id quidem argumentum est: nam ut agri non omnes frugiferi sunt qui coluntur, sic animi non omnes culti fructum ferunt; atque ut ager quamvis fertilis sine cultura fructuosus esse non potest, sic sine doctrina animus: ita est utraque res sine altera debilis. Cultura autem animi philosophia est, quæ extrahit vitia radicitus, et præparat animos ad salus accipiendos. Tuscul. 2. p. 252, 253.

* Nullus sanctus et justus caret peccato; nec tamen ex hoc desinit esse justus vel sanctus: Cum affectu teneat sanctitatem. August. de defin. Eccles. dogm.

¹ To the grand objection of the many that are not reformed by christianity, let Cicero answer, who, telling us how few philosophers lived as they taught, objecteth: Nonne verendum, si est ita ut dicis, ne philosophiam falsa gloria exornes? Quod est enim majus argumentum nihil eam prodesse, quam

it must be wrought; though it would be smaller to a wise and considerate person. To be made as an owl, and hunted as a partridge, or a beast of prey, by those that we converse with, when we might have their favour, and friendship, and preferments, if we would say and do as they, this is not easy to flesh and blood, but it is easy to the Spirit of God.

3. The devil is so notoriously an enemy to this sanctifying work, that it is a strong discovery that Christ was sent from God to do it. What a stir doth he first make to keep out the gospel, that it may not be preached to the nations of the world; and where that will not serve, what a stir doth he make to debauch Christ's ministers, and corrupt them by ignorance, heresy, error, schism, domineering pride, sensuality, covetousness, slothfulness, and negligence, that they may do the work of Christ deceitfully, as if they did it not; yea, and if it may be, to win them to his service, to destroy the church by oppression or division, under pretence of serving Christ! And what cunning and industry doth this serpent use, to insinuate into great ones, and rulers of the earth, a prejudice against Christ and godliness, and to make them believe, that all that are seriously godly are their enemies, and are against some interest of theirs, that so he might take the sword which God hath put into their hands, and turn it to his own service against him that gave it! How cunning and diligent is he to seduce men, that begin to set themselves to a religious life, into some false opinions, or dividing sects, or scandalous, unjustifiable practice, that thereby he may triumph against Christ, and have something to say against religion, from the faults of men, when he hath nothing to say against it justly from itself; and that he may have something to say to those rulers and people, with whom he would fain make religion odious! How cunningly doth he engage ungodly men to be his servants in seducing others, and making them such as they are themselves, and in standing up for sin and darkness against the light and life of faith; so that ungodly men are but the soldiers and preachers of the devil, in all parts employed to fight against God, and draw men from holiness, and justice, and temperance, to sin, and to damnation! So that it is a very discernible thing, that Satan is the head of one party in the world, as the destroying prince of darkness and deceit; and that Christ is the head of the other party, as the Prince of light, and truth, and holiness; and that there is a continued war, or opposition, between these two kingdoms or armies, in all parts and ages of the world; of which I have fuller treated in another book.* If any shall say, How know you that all this is the work of Satan? I shall have fitter occasion to answer that anon. I shall now say but this,—that the nature of the work, the tendency of it, the irrational, erroneous, or brutish, tyrannical manner of doing it, the internal impurity and manner of his suggestions, and the effects of all, and the contrariety of it to God and man, will soon show a considerate man the author; though more shall be anon added.

V. All this foregoing will show a reasonable man, that the Spirit's regenerating work is such, as is a full attestation of God to that doctrine by which it is effected. And if any now say, How prove you that all this is to be ascribed to Jesus Christ, any more than to Socrates, or to Seneca, or Cicero? I answer, 1. So much truth of a sacred tendency, as Plato, or Pythagoras, or Socrates, or any philoso-

pher taught, might do some good, and work some reformation, according to its quality and degree; but as it was a lame, imperfect doctrine which they taught, so was it a very lame, imperfect reformation which they wrought, unlike the effects of the doctrine and spirit of Jesus Christ. I need to say no more of this, than to desire any man to make an impartial and judicious comparison between them; and besides much more, he shall quickly find these differences following: 1. That the philosophers' disciples had a very poor, dark, disordered knowledge of God, in comparison of the christians; and

Differences between the effects of philosophy and christianity.

that mixed with odious fopperies, either blasphemous or idolatrous. 2. The philosophers spake of God and the life to come almost altogether notionally, as they did of logic or physics; and very few of them practically, as a thing that man's happiness or misery was so much concerned in. 3. They spake very jejune and dryly about a holy state and course of life, and the duty of man to God, in resignation, devotedness, obedience, and love. 4. They said little, comparatively, to the true humbling of a soul, nor in the just discovery of the evil of sin, nor for self-denial. 5. They gave too great countenance to pride, and worldliness, and pleasing the senses by excess.* 6. The doctrine of true love to one another is taught by them exceeding lamely and defectively. 7. Revenge is too much indulged by them; and loving our enemies, and forgiving great wrongs, was little known, or taught, or practised. 8. They were so pitifully unacquainted with the certainty and blessedness of the life to come, that they say nothing of it that is ever likely to make any considerable number set their hearts on heaven, and to live a heavenly life. 9. They were so unacquainted with the nature and will of God, that they taught and used such a manner of worship, as tended rather to delude and corrupt men, than to sanctify them. 10. They meddled so little with the inward sins and duties of the heart, especially about the holy love of God; and their goodness was so much in outward acts, and in mere respect to men, that they were not like to sanctify the soul, or make the man good, that his actions might be good; but only to polish men for civil societies, with the addition of a little varnish of superstition and hypocrisy. 11. Their very style is either suitable to dead speculation, as a lecture of metaphysics; or slight and dull, and unlike to be effectual to convert and sanctify men's souls. 12. Almost all is done in such a disputing, sophistical way, and clogged with so many obscurities, uncertainties, and self-contradictions, and mixed in heaps of physical and logical subtleties, that they were unfit for the common people's benefit, and could tend but to the benefit of a few. 13. Experience taught, and still teacheth the world, that holy souls and lives, that were sincerely set upon God and heaven, were strangers among the disciples of the philosophers and other heathens; or if it be thought that there were some such among them, certainly they were very few, in comparison of true christians; and those few very dark, and diseased, and defective. With us, a child at ten years old will know more of God, and show more true piety, than did any of their philosophers. With us, poor women and labouring persons do live in that holiness, and heavenliness of mind and conversation, which the wisest of the philosophers never did attain. I spake of this before, but here also thought

oportere apud sapientes, ut quilibet illi congregatorum quæ sibi prior occurrit, ut ait Zeno in Rep. et Chrysippus de Rep. Diogene item Cynico et Platone hujus rei autoribus. What blindness and impurity against nature was in this opinion!

* Treatise against Infidelity, part 3.

* Some of the strictest of the philosophers were for a community of wives: Laertius saith of the stoics, (in Zenone li. 6. p. 442.) Placet item illis uxores quoque communes esse

meet, to show you the difference between the effects of Christ's doctrine, and the philosophers'.

2. And that all this is justly to be imputed to Christ himself, I shall now prove. 1. He gave them a perfect pattern for this holy, obedient, heavenly life, in his own person, and his conversation here on earth. 2. His doctrine and law require all this holiness which I described to you : you find the prescript in his word, of which the holy souls and lives of men are but a transcript. 3. All his institutions and ordinances are but means and helps to this. 4. He hath made it the condition of men's salvation to be thus holy, in sincerity, and to desire and seek after perfection in it : he taketh no other for true Christians indeed, nor will any save any other at the last. 5. All his comforting promises of mercy and defence are made only to such. 6. He hath made it the office of his ministers through the world, to persuade and draw men to this holiness : and if you hear the sermons, and read the books, which any faithful minister of Christ doth preach or write, you will soon see that this is the business of them all : and you may soon perceive, that these ministers have another kind of preaching and writing than the philosophers had ; more clear, more congruous, more spiritual, more powerful, and likely to win men to holiness and heavenliness. When our divines and their philosophers are compared, as to their promoting of true holiness, verily the latter seem to be but as glow-worms, and the former to be the candles for the family of God : and yet I truly value the wisdom and virtue which I find in a Plato, a Seneca, a Cicero, an Antonine, or any of them. If you say, our advantage is, because, coming after all, we have the helps of all, even of those philosophers ; I answer, mark in our books and sermons, whether it be any thing but christianity which we preach ? It is from Christ and Scripture that we fetch our doctrine, and not from the philosophers ; we must use their helps in logic, physics, &c. but that is nothing to our doctrine. He that taught me to speak English, did not teach me the doctrine which I preach in English ; and he that teacheth me to use the instruments of logic, doth not teach me the doctrine about which I use them. And why did not those philosophers, by all their art, attain to that skill in this sacred work, as the ministers of Christ do, when they had as much or more of the arts than we ? I read, indeed, of many good orations then used ; even in those of the Emperor Julian there is much good ; and in Antonine, Arrian, Epictetus, Plutarch, more : and I read of much taking oratory of the Bonzii, in Japan, &c. ; but compared to the endeavours of christian divines, they are poor, pedantic, barren things, and little sparks ; and the success of them is but answerable. 7. Christ did beforehand promise to send his Spirit into men's souls, to do all this work upon all his chosen ; and as he promised, just so he doth. 8. And we find by experience, that it is the preaching of Christ's doctrine by which the work is done : it is by the reading of the sacred Scripture, or hearing the doctrine of it opened and applied to us, that souls are thus changed, as is before described : and if it be by the medicines which he sendeth us himself, by the hands of his own servants, that we are healed, we need not doubt whether it be he that healed us. His doctrine doth it as the instrumental cause : for we find it adapted thereunto, and we find nothing done upon us but by that doctrine, nor any remaining effect but what is the impression of it : but his Spirit inwardly reneweth us as the principal cause, and worketh with and by the word : for we find that the word doth not work upon all, nor upon all alike, that are alike prepared ; but we easily perceive a voluntary, dis-

tinguishing choice in the operation. And we find a power more than can be in the words alone, in the effect upon ourselves. The heart is like the wax, and the word like the seal, and the Spirit like the hand that strongly applyeth it. We feel upon our hearts, that, though nothing is done without the seal, yet a greater force doth make the impression than the weight of the seal alone could cause.

By this time, it is evident, that this work of sanctification is the attestation of God, by which he publicly owneth the gospel, and declareth to the world that Christ is the Saviour, and his word is true. For, 1. It is certain that this work of renovation is the work of God. For, 1. It is his image on the soul ; it is the life of the soul, as flowing from his holy life ; wherein are contained the trinity of perfections. It is the power of the soul, by which it can overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil, which, without it, none is able to do. It is the wisdom of the soul, produced by his light and wisdom ; by which we know the difference between good and evil, and our reason is restored to its dominion over fleshly sense. It is the goodness of the soul, by which it is made suitable to the eternal Good, and fit to know him, love him, praise him, serve him, and enjoy him ; and therefore nothing lower than his goodness can be its principal cause.

2. It subverteth the interest of God in the world, and recovereth the apostate soul to himself ; it disposeth it to honour him, love him, and obey him : it delivereth up the whole man to him as his own : it casteth down all that rebelled against him : it casteth out all which was preferred before him : it rejecteth all which standeth up against, and would seduce and tempt us from him ; and therefore it is certainly his work.

3. Whose else should it be ? Would Satan, or any evil cause, produce so excellent an effect ? Would the worst of beings do the best of works ? It is the best that is done in this lower world. Would any enemy of God so much honour him, and promote his interest, and restore him his own ? Would any enemy of mankind thus advance us, and bring us up to a life of the highest honours and delights that we are capable of on earth, and give us the hopes of life eternal.

And if any good angel, or other cause, should do it, all reason will confess, that they do it but as the messengers or instruments of God, and as second causes, and not as the first cause ; for otherwise we should make them gods. For my own part, my soul perceiveth that it is God himself that hath imprinted this his image on me ; and hath hereby, as it were, written upon me his name and mark, even holiness to the Lord ; and I bear about me continually a witness of himself, his Son, and Holy Spirit ; a witness within me which is the seal of God, and the pledge of his love, and the earnest of my heavenly inheritance.

And if our sanctification be thus of God, it is certainly his attestation to the truth of Christ, and to his gospel. For, 1. No man that knoweth the perfections of God will ever believe that he would bless a deceiver, and a lie, to be the means of the most holy and excellent work that ever was done in the world. If Christ was a deceiver, his crime would be so execrable, as would engage the justice of God against him, as he is the righteous Governor of the world ; and therefore he would not so highly honour him, to be his chiefest instrument for the world's renovation. He is not impotent to need such instruments ; he is not ignorant that he should so mistake in the choice of instruments ; he is not bad that he should love and use such instruments, and comply with their

deceits. These things are all so clear and sure, that I cannot doubt of them.

2. No man that knoweth the mercifulness of God, and the justice of his government, can believe that he would give up mankind so remedilessly to seduction; yea, and be the principal causer of it himself. For if, besides prophecy, and a holy doctrine, and a multitude of famous miracles, a deceiver might also be the great renewer and sanctifier of the world, to bring man back to the obedience of God, and to repair his image on mankind, what possibility were there of our discovery of that deceit? or rather, should we not say, He were a blessed deceiver, that had deceived us from our sin and misery, and brought back our straying souls to God.

3. Nay, when Christ foretold men that he would send his Spirit to do all this work, and would renew men for eternal life, and thus be with us to the end of the world; and when I see all this done, I must needs believe that he that can send down a sanctifying Spirit, a Spirit of life, a Spirit of power, light, and love, to make his doctrine in the mouths of his ministers effectual to men's regeneration and sanctification, is no less himself than God, or certainly no less than his certain Administrator.

4. What need I more to prove the cause than the adequate effect? When I find that Christ doth actually save me, shall I question whether he be my Saviour? When I find that he saveth thousands about me, and offereth the same to others, shall I doubt whether he be the Saviour of the world? Sure, he that healeth us all, and that so wonderfully and so cheaply, may well be called our Physician. If he had promised only to save us, I might have doubted whether he would perform it; and, consequently, whether he be indeed the Saviour. But, when he performeth it on myself, and performeth it on thousands round about me; to doubt yet whether he be the Saviour, when he actually saveth us, is to be ignorant in despite of reason and experience. I conclude, therefore, that the Spirit of sanctification is the infallible witness of the verity of the gospel, and the veracity of Jesus Christ.

5. And I entreat all that read this, further to observe the great use and advantage of this testimony above others; in that it is continued from generation to generation, and not as the gift and testimony of miracles, which continued plentifully but one age, and with diminution somewhat after. This is Christ's witness to the end of the world, in every country, and to every soul; yea, and continually dwelling in them: "For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. He that is not able to examine the history which reporteth the miracles to him, may be able to find upon his soul the image of God imprinted by the gospel, and to know that the gospel hath that image in itself which it imprinteth upon others; and that it cometh from God, which leadeth men so directly unto God; and that it is certainly his own means which he blesteth to so great and excellent ends.

6. Note, also, that part of the work of the Spirit of God, in succeeding the doctrine of Jesus Christ, doth consist in the effectual production of faith itself: for though the work be wrought by the reasons of the gospel and the evidences of truth, yet is it also wrought by the Spirit of God concurring with that evidence, and as the internal efficient, exciting the sluggish faculties to do their office, and illustrating the understanding, and fitting the will to entertain the truth; for the difficulties are so great, and the temptations to unbelief so subtle and violent, and our own indisposedness, through corruption, the greatest impediment of all, that the bare word

alone would not produce a belief of that lively, vigorous nature, as is necessary to its noble effects and ends, without the internal co-operation of the Spirit. So that Christ doth not only teach us the christian faith and religion, but doth give it us, and work it in us by his Spirit: and he that can do so, doth prove the divine approbation of his doctrine; without which he could not have the command of men's souls.

7. Note, also, that the gospel proposeth to the soul of man both truth and goodness; and the truth is in order to the good, and subservient to it. That Christ is indeed the Saviour, and his word infallibly true, is believed, that we may be partakers of his salvation, and of the grace and glory promised. And when the Spirit by the gospel hath regenerated and renewed any soul, he hath given him part of that grace in possession, and hath procreated him in the habitual love of God, and of holiness, with a love to that Saviour and holy word which brought him to it; so that this love is now become as a new nature to the soul: and this being done, the soul cleaveth now as fast to Christ and the gospel by love as by belief: not that love becometh an irrational, causeless love, nor continueth without the continuance of belief, or believe without the reasons and evidence of verity and credibility; but love now, by concurrence, greatly assisteth faith itself, and is the faster hold of the two; so that the soul that is very weak in its reasoning faculty, and may oft lose the sight of these evidences of truth, which it did once perceive, may still hold fast by this holy love. As the man that by reasoning hath been convinced that honey is sweet, will easilier change his mind than he that hath tasted; so love is the soul's taste, which causeth its fastest adherence to God and to the gospel. If a caviller dispute with a loving child, or parent, or friend, to alienate their hearts from one another, and would persuade them that it is but dissembled love that is professed to them by their relations and friends, love will do more here to hinder the belief of such a slander than reason alone can do; and where reason is not strong enough to answer all that the caviller can say, yet love may be strong enough to reject it.

And here I must observe how oft I have noted the great mercy of God, to abundance of poor people, whose reasoning faculty would have failed them in temptations to atheism and infidelity, if they had not had a stronger hold than that, and their faith had not been radicated in the will by love. I have known a great number of women who never read a treatise that pleaded the cause of the christian religion, nor were able to answer a crafty infidel, that yet in the very decaying time of nature, at fourscore years of age and upward, have lived in that sense of the love of God, and in such love to him and to their Saviour, as that they have longed to die and be with Christ; and lived in all humility, charity, and piety, such blameless, exemplary, heavenly lives, in the joyful expectation of their change, as hath showed the firmness of their faith, and the love and experience which was in them would have rejected a temptation to atheism and unbelief more effectually than the strongest reason alone could ever do. Yet none have cause to reproach such, and say, Their wills lead their understandings, and they customarily and obstinately believe they know not why. For they have known sufficient reason to believe, and their understandings have been illuminated to see the truth of true religion; and it was this knowledge of faith which bred their love and experience: but when that is done, as love is the more noble and perfect operation of the soul, having the most excellent

object, so it will act more powerfully and prevailingly, and hath the strongest hold : nor are all they without light and reason for their belief, who cannot form it into arguments, and answer all that is said against it.

Object. But may not all this which you call regeneration, and the image of God, be the mere power of fantasy, and affectation ; and may not all these people force themselves, like melancholy persons, to conceit that they have that which indeed they have not ?

Ans. 1. They are not melancholy persons that I speak of, but those that are as capable as any others to know their own minds, and what is upon their own hearts. 2. It is not one or two, but millions. 3. Nature hath given man so great acquaintance with himself, by a power of perceiving his own operations, that his own cogitations and desires are the first thing that naturally he can know ; and therefore if he cannot know them, he can know nothing. If I cannot know what I think, and what I love and hate, I can know nothing at all. 4. That they are really minded and affected as they seem, and have in them that love to God, and heaven, and holiness which they profess, they show to all the world by the effects : 1. In that it ruleth the main course of their lives, and disposeth of them in the world. 2. In that these apprehensions and affections overrule all their worldly, fleshly interest, and cause them to deny the pleasures of the flesh, and profits and honours of the world. 3. In that they are constant in it to the death, and have no other mind in their distress, when, as Seneca saith, Nothing feigned is of long continuance, for all forced things are bending back to their natural state. 4. In that they will lay down their lives, and forsake all the world, for the hopes which faith in Christ begetteth in them.¹

And if the objectors mean that all this is true, and yet it is but upon delusion or mistake that they raise these hopes, and raise these affections, I answer, this is the thing that I am disproving : 1. The love of God, and a holy mind and life, is not a dream of the soul, or a delirium. I have proved from natural reason in the first book, that it is the end, and use, and perfection of man's faculties ; that if God be God, and man be man, we are to love him above all, and to obey him as our absolute Sovereign, and to live as devoted to him, and to delight in his love : man were more ignoble or miserable than a beast, if this were not his work : and is that a dream or a delusion which causeth a man to live as a man ; to the ends that he was made for ; and according to the nature and use of his reason and all his faculties ? 2. While the proofs of the excellency and necessity of a holy life are so fully before laid down, from natural and supernatural revelation, the objector doth but refuse to see in the open light, when he satisfieth himself with a bare assertion, that all this is no sufficient ground for a holy life, but that is taken up upon mistake. 3. All the world is convinced at one time or other, that, on the contrary, it is the unholy, fleshly, worldly life, which is the dream and dotage, and is caused by the grossest error and deceit.

Object. But how shall I know that there is indeed

such holiness in christians as you mention, and that it is not dissembled and counterfeit ?

Ans. I have told you in the foregoing answer, 1. If you were truly christians, you might know it by possession in yourselves : as you know that you love your friend, or a learned man knoweth that he hath learning. 2. If you have it not yourselves, you may see that others do not dissemble, when you see them, as aforesaid, make it the drift of all their lives, and prefer it before their worldly interest, and their lives, and hold on constantly in it to the death. When you see a holy life, what reason have you to question a holy heart ? especially among so great a number, you may well know, that if some be dissemblers, all the rest are not so.

Object. But I see no christians that are really so holy : I see nothing in the best of them above civility, but only self-conceit, and affectation, and strictness in their several forms and modes of worship.

Ans. 1. If you are no better than such yourself, it is the greatest shame and plague of heart that you could have confessed : and it must needs be, because you have been false to the very light of nature and of grace. 2. If you know no christians that are truly holy, it must needs be, either because you are unacquainted with them, or because your malice will not give you leave to see any good in these that you dislike. And if you have acquainted yourself with no christians that were truly holy, what could it be but malice or sensuality that turned you away from their acquaintance, when there have been so many round about you ? If you have been intimate with them, and known their secret and open conversation, and yet have not seen any holiness in them, it can be no better than wilful malice that hath blinded you. And because a negative witness that knoweth not whether it be so or not is not to be regarded against an affirming witness who knoweth what he saith, I will here leave my testimony as in the presence of God, the Searcher of hearts, and the Revenger of a lie, yea, even of lies pretended for his glory.²

I have considered of the characters of a christian in the twenty particulars before expressed in this chapter, (sect. 10.) and I have examined my soul concerning them all ; and as far as I am able to know myself, I must profess, in humble thankfulness to my Redeemer, that there is none of them which I find not in me : and seeing God hath given me his testimony within me, to the truth of the gospel of his Son, I take it to be my duty in the profession of it, to give my testimony of it to unbelievers. And I must as solemnly profess, that I have had acquaintance with hundreds, if not thousands, on whom I have seen such evidences of a holy, heavenly mind, which nothing but uncharitable and unrighteous censure could deny. And I have had special, intimate familiarity with very many ; in all whom I have discerned the image of God, in such innocency, charity, justice, holiness, contempt of the world, mortification, self-denial, humility, patience, and heavenly-mindedness, in such a measure, that I have seen no cause to question their sincerity, but great cause to love and honour them as the saints of God : yea, I bless the Lord that most of my converse in the world, since the twenty-second year of my age, hath been

¹ I plead for no superstition, granting what Torquatus the Epicurean (in Cic. de Fin. l. 1. p. 87.) saith, Superstitio qui imbutus est, quietus esse nunquam potest : but I like not the quietness which intoxication, madness, or ignorance of danger doth procure. Though there be much difference, and though prejudice, and faction, and the interest of their parties, cause uncharitable hypocrites to slander and rail at all that are against their sect and mind ; yet among all christians, there are holy, serious persons to be found, though such

as the worldly sort do vilify : and of all of them write for purity, holiness, love, and peace (of which more after). Read the writings of Thaulerus, and that excellent, holy book of Gerardus Zutphanus. De Reformatione Interiori, et de Spiritualibus Ascensionibus ; where you will see a specimen of other kind of purity than the philosophers held forth.

² Serpit hodie putrida tabes hypocrisis per omne corpus ecclesiae ; et quo tolerantius, eo desperatius ; eoque periculosius quo communis. Bernard.

with such; and much of it six years sooner. Therefore, for my own part, I cannot be ignorant that Christ hath a sanctified people upon earth.^a

Object. But how can one man know another's heart to be sincere?^b

Ans. I pretend not to know by an infallible certainty the heart of any single individual person: but, 1. I have, in such a course of effects as is mentioned before, great reason to be very confident of it, and no reason to deny it, concerning very many. A child cannot be infallibly certain that his father or mother loveth him, because he knoweth not the heart; but when he considereth of the ordinairness of natural affection, and hath always found such usage, as dearest love doth use to cause, he hath much reason to be confident of it, and none to deny it. 2. There may be a certainty that all conjunctly do not counterfeit, when you have no certainty of any single individual. As I can be sure that all the mothers in the world do not counterfeit love to their children, though I cannot be certain of it in any individual.

Object. But it is not all christians, nor most, that are thus holy.

Ans. It is all that are christians in deed and truth. Christ is so far from owning any other, that he will condemn them the more for abusing his name to the covering of their sins. All are not christians who have the name of christians. In all professions, the vulgar rabble of the ignorant and ungodly do use to join with the party that is uppermost, and seem to be of the religion which is most for their worldly ends, be it right or wrong, when indeed they are of none at all. Hypocrites are no true christians, but the persons that Christ is most displeased with. Judge but by his precepts and example, and you will see who they are that are christians indeed.^c

Object. But what if the preaching or writings of a minister do convert and sanctify men, it doth not follow that they are saviours of the world.

Ans. Whatever they do, they do it as the ministers and messengers of Christ, by his doctrine, and not by any of their own; by his commission, and in his name, and by his power or Spirit. Therefore, it witnesseth to his truth and honour, who is indeed the Saviour, which they never affirmed of themselves.

Object. What if Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, the Japonian Bonzii, the Indian Bramenes, &c. do bring any souls to a holy state, as it is like they did, it will not follow that they were all saviours of the world.

Ans. 1. They have but an imperfect doctrine, and consequently make on the minds of men but a lame, defective change; and that change but upon few, and that but for a few ages, and then another sect succeedeth them: so that they have no such attestation and approbation of God, as Christ hath in the renovation of so many thousands all abroad the world, and that for so many ages together.

^a Cum dilectione fides christiani: sine dilectione fides demonum. Qui autem non credunt, peiores sunt quam demones. Aug. de Charit. Hypocritæ ut sine fine cruciuntur, vivere sine fine compelluntur: ut cuius vita hic mortua fuit in culpa, illic ejus moris vivit in pena. Greg. Mor. l. 2.

^b Nihil prodest æstimare quod non sis: et duplicis peccati reus es, non habere quod credideris, et quod habueris simulare. Hieron. Ep. ad fil. Mauriti.

^c Siquis hominem qui sanctus non est, sanctum esse crediderit, et Dei cum junxerit societati, Christum violat cuius membra sumus—Omnes credentes Christi corpus efficiunt. Qui in Christi corpore errat et labetur dicens membrum ejus esse sanctum cum non sit, vel non sanctus cum sit, vide quali crimine obnoxius fiat. Hieron. in Phil.

^d The Grecians, Romans, and Mahometans take the murder of many thousands in unjust wars, to be glorious, and yet

2. They did not affirm themselves to be the sons of God, and the saviours of the world; if they had, God would not have annexed such a testimony to their word as he doth to Christ's. 3. The mercy of God is over all his works. He hath compassion upon all nations, and setteth up some candles, where the sun is not yet risen. The light and law of nature are his, as well as the light and law of supernatural revelation: and, accordingly, he hath his instruments for the communication of them to the rude and ignorant part of the world. All the truth which any philosopher teacheth, is God's truth: and it is no wonder if a God of so much goodness do bless his own truth, according to its nature and proportion, who ever be the messenger of it. Whether the success of philosophy be ever the true sanctification and salvation of any souls, is a thing that I meddle not with; it belongeth not to us, and therefore is not revealed to us. But it is visible in the gospel, that all that part of practical doctrine which the philosophers taught, is contained in the doctrine of Christ, as a part in the whole: and, therefore, the impress and effect is more full and perfect, as the doctrine; and the impress and effect of the philosophers' doctrine, can be no better than the cause, which is partial and defective, and mixed with much corruption and untruth. All that is good in the philosophers is in the doctrine of Christ: but they had abundance of false opinions and idolatries to corrupt it, when christianity hath nothing but clean and pure. So that, as no philosopher affirmed himself to be the Saviour, so his doctrine was not attested by the plenary and common effect of regeneration, as Christ's was: but as they were but the ministers of the God of nature, so they had but an answerable help from God, who could not be supposed (however had they wrought miracles) to have attested more than themselves asserted, or laid claim to.^d

Object. But Mahomet ventured on a higher arrogation and pretence; and yet if his doctrine sanctify men, it will not justify his pretences.

Ans. 1. It is not proved that his doctrine doth truly sanctify any. 2. The effect which it hath can be but lame, defective, and mixed with much vanity and error, as his doctrine is: for the effect cannot excel the cause. 3. That part of his doctrine which is good, and doth good, is not his own, but part of Christ's, from whom he borrowed it, and to whom the good effects are to be ascribed. 4. Mahomet never pretended to be the son of God, and saviour of the world, but only to be a prophet: therefore, his cause is much like that of the philosophers forementioned, saving that he giveth a fuller testimony to Christ. 5. If Mahomet had proved his word, by antecedent prophecies, promises, and types, through many ages; and by inherent purity, and by concomitant miracles, and by such wonderful, subsequent communications of renewing, sanctifying grace by the Spirit of God, so ordinary in the world, we should all have had reason to believe his word: but

punish the murder of single persons. Their renown was got by the most transcendent, unjust, and most inhuman cruelties. Their Alexanders and Cæsars were renowned murderers and thieves. Aristotle and Cicero make revenge a laudable thing, and the omission of it a dishonour. Of the cruel murderous sport of the gladiators; the killing their servants when they were angry; their streams of blood wherewith Rome almost in every age had flowed, by those civil wars which pride and unjust usurpations had produced, &c.; it is needless to tell any that have read their histories. Even Cato could lend his wife to his neighbour; and the Mahometans may have many, and put them away again. And many other such sensualities are the temperature of their religion, which was hatched in war, and maintained by it, and even constituted of war and carnality, added to some precepts of honesty borrowed from christianity, and from the honest heathens.

if he pretend only to be a prophet, and give us none of all these proofs, but a foppish, ridiculous bundle of nonsense, full of carnal doctrines, mixed with holy truth, which he had from Christ, we must judge accordingly of his authority and word, notwithstanding God may make use of that common truth, to produce an answerable degree of goodness, among those that hear and know no better.

These objections may be further answered anon, amongst the rest; and thus much shall here suffice of the great and cogent evidences of the truth of the christian faith.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE SUBSERVIENT PROOFS AND MEANS, BY WHICH THE FOREMENTIONED EVIDENCES ARE BROUGHT TO OUR CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE.

THE witness of the Spirit in the four ways of evidence already opened, is proved to be sure and cogent, if first it be proved to be true, that indeed such a witness to Jesus Christ hath been given to the world. The argument is undeniable, when the minor is proved. He, whose word is attested by God, by many thousand years' predictions, by the inherent image of God upon the frame of his doctrine, by multitudes of uncontrolled miracles, and by the success of his doctrine, to the true regeneration of a great part of the world, is certainly to be believed: but such is Jesus Christ; *ergo*.—I have been hitherto for the most part proving the major proposition, and now come to the minor as to the several branches.

SECT. 1. The prophetic testimony of the Spirit is yet legible, in the promises, prophecies, and types, and main design of the Old Testament.

SECT. 2. The books of holy Scripture where all these are found, are certain, uncorrupted records thereof, preserved by the unquestioned tradition and care, and to this day attested by the general confession, of the Jews, who are the bitterest enemies to christianity.

There are no men of reason that I have heard of, that deny the books of Moses, and the Psalms, and the prophets, &c. to be indeed those that went under those titles from the beginning: and that there can be no considerable corruption in them which might much concern their testimony to Christ, the comparing of all the copies, and the versions, yet extant, will evince, together with the testimony of all sorts of enemies, and the moral impossibility of their corruption. But I will not stand to prove that which no sober adversary doth deny. To these books the christians did appeal, and to these the Jews profess to stand.

SECT. 3. II. The constitutive, inherent image of God upon the gospel of Christ, is also still visible in the books themselves, and needeth no other proof than a capable reader, as afore described.

SECT. 4. The preaching and writings of the ministers of Christ, do serve to illustrate this, and help men to discern it; but add nothing to the inherent perfection of the gospel, for matter, or for method.

SECT. 5. III. The testimony of the age of miracles afore described, can be known naturally no way but by sight or other senses to those present, and by report or history to those absent.

SECT. 6. The apostles, and many thousand others, saw the miracles wrought by Christ, and needed no other proof of them than their senses.

The many thousands who at twice were fed by miracle, were witnesses of that. The multitude were witnesses of his healing the blind, the lame, the paralytic, the demoniac, &c. The Pharisees themselves made the strictest search into the cure of the man born blind, (John ix.) and the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and many more. His miracles were few of them hid, but openly done before the world.*

SECT. 7. The apostles, and many hundreds more, were witnesses of Christ's own resurrection, and needed no other proof but their sense.

At divers times he appeared to them, together and apart, and yielded to Thomas's unbelief so far, as to call him to put his finger into his side, and see the print of the nails. He instructed them concerning the kingdom of God for forty days, Acts i. He gave them their commission, Mark xvi.; Matt. xxviii.; John xxi. He expostulated with Peter, and engaged him to feed his lambs. He was seen of more than five hundred brethren at once. And, lastly, appeared after his ascension to Paul, and to John that wrote the Revelation.

SECT. 8. The apostles also were eye-witnesses of his ascension, Acts i.

What he had foretold them they saw him fulfil.

SECT. 9. All these eye-witnesses were not themselves deluded in thinking they saw those things which indeed they did not see.

For, 1. They were persons of competent understanding, as their writings show; and, therefore, not like children that might be cheated with palpable deceits. 2. They were many; the twelve apostles and seventy disciples, and all the rest; besides many thousands of the common people that only wondered at him, but followed him not. One or two may be easier deceived than such multitudes. 3. The matters of fact were done near them, where they were present, and not far off. 4. They were done in the open light, and not in a corner, or in the dark. 5. They were done many times over, and not once or twice only. 6. The nature of the things was such, as a juggling, deluding of the senses could not serve for so common a deceit: as when the persons that were born blind, the lame, the paralytic, &c. were seen to be perfectly healed, and so of the rest. 7. They were persons who followed Christ, and were still with him, or very oft; and, therefore, if they had been once deceived, they could not be so always. 8. And vigilant, subtle enemies were about them, that would have helped them to have detected a deceit. 9. Yea, the twelve apostles and seventy disciples were employed themselves in working miracles, healing the sick and demoniacs, in Christ's own lifetime, and rejoiced in it. And they could not be deceived for divers years together in the things which they saw, and heard, and felt, and also in that which they did themselves; besides that, all their own miracles which they wrought after Christ's ascension, prove that they were not deceived. 10. There is no way left, then, but one to deceive them; and that is, if God himself should alter and delude all their senses, which it is certain that he did not do; for then he had been the chief cause of all the delusion, and all the consequences of it in the world. He that hath given men sight, and hearing, and feeling, will not delude them all by irresistible alterations and deceits, and then forbid them to believe

ea commendat autoritas, ut sine difficultate vel dubitatione credantur. Aug. de Civit. Dei, 22.

* Miracula ubicunque fiunt, vix a tota civitate feruntur, &c. Nam plerumque fiunt ignorantibus ceteris, maxime si magna sit civitas; at quando alibi alisque narrantur, tanta

those lies, and propagate them to others. Man hath no other way of knowing things sensible but by sense. He that hath his senses sound, and the object proportionate, and at a just distance, and the medium fit, and his understanding sound, may well trust his senses, especially when it is the case of many. And if sense in those cases should be deceived, we should be bound to be deceived; as having no other way of knowing or of detecting the deceit.^b

SecT. 10. Those that saw not Christ's miracles, nor saw him risen, received all these matters of fact from the testimony of them that said they saw them; having no other way by which they could receive them.^c

SecT. 11. Supposing, now, Christ's resurrection and miracles to be true, it is certain that their use and obligation must extend to more than those that saw them; even to persons absent, and of other generations.

This I have fully and undeniably proved, in a disputation in my book against infidelity, by such arguments as these.

1. The use and obligation of such miracles do extend to all that have sufficient evidence of their truth. But the nations and generations which never saw them, may have sufficient evidence of their truth, that they were done; *ergo*, the use and obligation do extend to such.

The major is past all contradiction. He that hath sufficient evidence of the truth of the fact, is obliged to believe it. The minor is to be proved in the following sections.

2. The contrary doctrine maketh it impossible for God to oblige the world by miracles, according to their proper use: but it is not impossible, therefore, that doctrine is false.

Here note, that the use and force of miracles lie in their being extraordinary, rather than in the power which they manifest: for it is as great an effect of omnipotency, to have the sun move, as to stand still. Now, if miracles oblige none to believe but those that see them, then every man in every city, country, town, family, and in all generations to the end of the world, must see Christ risen, or not believe it, and must see Lazarus risen, or not believe it; and must see all the miracles himself which oblige him to believe: but this is an absurdity, and contradiction, making miracles God's ordinary works, and so as no miracles.

3. They that teach men that they are bound to believe no miracles but what they see, do deprive all after-ages of all the benefit of all the miraculous works of God, both mercies and judgments, which their forefathers saw. But God wrought them not only for them that saw them, but also for the absent and after-times.^d

4. By the same reason, they will disoblige men from believing any other matters of fact, which they never saw themselves; and that is to make them like new comers into the world, yea, like children and fools, and to be incapable of human society.

5. This reasoning would rob God of the honour of all his most wondrous works, as from any but those that see them. So that no absent person, or following age, should be obliged to mention them, believe

them, or honour him for them, which is absurd and impious.

6. The world would be still, as it were, to begin anew, and no age must be the wiser for all the experiences of those that have gone before, if we must not believe what we never saw: and if men must not learn thus much of their ancestors, why should they be obliged to learn any thing else, but children be left to learn only by their own eye-sight?

7. If we are not bound to believe God's wondrous works which have been before our days, then our ancestors are not bound to tell them us, nor we to be thankful for them: the israelites should not have told their posterity how they were brought out of the land of Egypt, nor England keep a day of thanksgiving for its deliverance from the powder-plot: but the consequent is absurd; *ergo*, so is the antecedent. What have we our tongues for, but to speak of what we know to others? The love that parents have to their children will oblige them to acquaint them with all things useful which they know. The love which men have naturally to truth, will oblige them to divulge it. Who that had but seen an angel, or received instructions by a voice from heaven, or seen the dead raised, would not tell others what he had seen and heard? And to what end should he tell them, if they were not obliged to believe it?

8. Governments, and justice, and all human converse, are maintained by the belief of others, and the reports and records of things which we see not. Few of the subjects see their king. Witnesses carry it in every cause of justice. Thus princes prove their successions and title to their crowns, and all men their estates, by the records or testimony of others.

9. It is impudent arrogance for every infidel to tie God to be at his beck, to work miracles as oft as he requireth it; to say, I will not believe without a miracle; and if thou work never so many in the sight of others, I will not believe unless I may see them myself.

SecT. 12. There need not be new revelations and miracles to confirm the former, and oblige men to believe them; for then there must be more revelations and miracles to confirm the former, and oblige men to believe those; and so on to the end of the world: and then God could not govern the world by a settled law, by revelations once made; which is absurd.

SecT. 13. Therefore, the only natural way to know all such matters of fact, is sensible apprehension to those that are present, and credible report, tradition, or history, to those that are absent, as is aforesaid; which is the necessary medium to convey it from their sense to our understandings; and in this must we acquiesce, as the natural means which God will use.

SecT. 14. We are not bound to believe all history or report; therefore, we must be able to discern between the credible and the incredible; neither receiving all, nor rejecting all, but making choice as there is cause.

SecT. 15. History is more or less credible, as it hath more or less evidence of truth. 1. Some that is credible hath only evidence of probability, and such is that of mere human faith. 2. Some hath evidence of certainty, from natural causes concurring, where the conclusion is both of knowledge and of

^b Unum boni viri verbum, unus nutus, sexcentis argumentis ac verborum continuationibus parem fidem meretur. Plutarch in Phocion.

^c Pluris est oculatus testis unus, quam auriti decem. Qui audiunt, audita dicunt: qui vident, plane sciunt. Plaut. Truc.

^d Every man expecteth himself to be believed; and therefore oweth just belief to others. The testimony of one or two eye-witnesses, is to be preferred before many learned con-

jectures and argumentations. Many wise men heretofore thought that they proved by argument, that there were no antipodes; and others, that men could not live under the equator and poles. But one voyage of Columbus hath fully confuted all the first; and many since have confuted both the one and the other: and are now believed against all those learned arguments by almost all.

human faith. 3. And some hath evidence of certainty from supernatural attestations, which is both of human faith and of divine.

Sect. 16. That history or report, which hath no more evidence than the mere wisdom and honesty of the author or reporter, supposing him an imperfect man, is but probable; and the conclusion, though credible, is not infallible, and can have no certainty but that which some call moral; and that in several degrees, as the wisdom and honesty of the reporter is either more or less.*

Sect. 17. II. Where there is an evident impossibility that all the witnesses or reporters should lie, or be deceived, there the conclusion is credible, by human faith, and also sure, by a natural certainty.

Sect. 18. Where these things concur, it is impossible that that report or history should be false. 1. When it is certain that the reporters were not themselves deceived. 2. When it is certain that indeed the report is theirs. 3. When they took their salvation to lie upon the truth of the thing reported, and of their own report. 4. When they expected worldly ruin by their testimony, and could look for no commodity by it, which would make them any reparation. 5. When they give full proof of their honesty and conscience. 6. When their testimony is concordant, and they speak the same things, though they had no opportunity to conspire to deceive men; yea, when their numbers, distance, and quality, make this impossible. 7. When they bear their testimony in the time and place where it might well be contradicted, and the falsity detected, if it were not true; and among the most malicious enemies; and yet those enemies either confess the matter of fact, or give no remarkable reason against it. 8. When the reporters are men of various tempers, countries, and civil interests. 9. When the reporters fall out, or greatly differ among themselves, even to separations and condemnations of one another, and yet none ever detecteth or confesseth any falsehood in the said reports. 10. When the reporters being numerous, and such as profess that lying is a damnable sin, and such as laid down their liberties, or lives, in asserting their testimonies, did yet never any of them, in life or death, repent and confess any falsehood or deceit. 11. When their report convinceth thousands, in that place and time, who would have more abhorred them if it had been untrue.

Nay, where some of these concur, the conclusion may be of certainty: some of these instances resolve the point into natural necessity. 1. It is of natural necessity that men love themselves, and their own felicity, and be unwilling of their undoing and misery: the will, though free, is *quædam natura*, and hath its natural, necessary inclination to that good, which is apprehended as its own felicity; or else to have *omnimodum rationem boni*, and its natural, necessary inclination against that evil, or aversion from it, which is apprehended as its own undoing or misery; or to have *omnimodum rationem mali*, its liberty is only *servato ordine finis*; and some acts that are free, are, nevertheless, of infallible, certain futurity, and of some kind of necessity, like the love and obedience of the saints in heaven. 2. Nothing can be without a cause sufficient to produce it; but some things here instanced can have no cause sufficient to produce them, if the thing testified were false; as the consent of enemies; their not gainsaying; the concurrence of so many, and so dis-

tant, and of such bitter opposites, against their own common, worldly interest, and to the confessed ruin of their souls; and the belief of many thousands that could have disproved it if false; and more which I shall open by-and-by. There is a natural certainty that Alexander was the king of Macedonia, and Cæsar emperor of Rome; and that there is such a place as Rome, and Paris, and Venice, and Constantinople; and that we have had civil wars between the king and parliament in England, and between the houses of York and Lancaster; and that many thousands were murdered by the French massacre, and many more by the Irish; and that the statutes of this land were made by the kings and parliaments whose names they bear, &c.; because that, 1. There is no cause in nature which could produce the concurrence of so many testimonies of men so distant and contrary, if it were not true; 2. And on the contrary side there are natural causes which would infallibly produce a credible contradiction to these reports, if they were false.

Sect. 19. III. When they that testify such matters of fact, do affirm that they do it by God's own command, and prove this by multitudes of evident, uncontrolled miracles, their report is both human and divine, and to be believed as most certain by a divine belief.

This is before proved in the proof of the validity of the testimony of miracles, and such miracles as these.

Sect. 20. The testimonies of the apostles and other disciples of Christ, concerning his resurrection and miracles, were credible by all these three several sorts of credibility. 1. They were credible, and most credible, by a human belief, as they were the testimony of honest, and extraordinarily honest, men. 2. They were credible, as reported with concourses of natural certainty. 3. They were credible, as attested by God by miracles, and therefore certain, by a certainty of divine belief.

Sect. 21. I. They that observe in the writings of the said disciples, the footsteps of eminent piety, sincerity, simplicity, self-denial, contempt of the world, expectation of a better world, a desire to please and glorify God, though by their own reproach and sufferings, mortification, love to souls, forgiving enemies, condemning liars, with high spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, &c. must needs confess them to be most eminently credible by a human faith. They being also acquainted with the thing reported.

Sect. 22. II. 1. That the apostles were not themselves deceived, I have proved before. 2. That the report was theirs, the churches that saw and heard them knew by sense; and how we know it I am to show anon. 3. That they took their own salvation to lie upon the belief of the gospel which they preached, is very evident, both in the whole drift and manner of their writings, and in their labours, sufferings, and death; and that they took a lie to be a damning sin.

He that doth but impartially read the writings of the apostles and evangelists, will easily believe that they believed what they preached themselves, and looked for salvation by Jesus Christ. Much more, if he further consider of their forsaking all, and labouring, and dying in and for these expectations; and nature taught them, as well as Christ, to know that a lie was a damning sin. They teach us themselves that liars are without, as dogs, and not ad-

* Quod si falsa historia illa rerum est, unde tam brevi tempe-
re totius mundus ista religione completus est? Aut in unam
coire qua potuerunt mentem gentes regionibus disjunctæ?
Ventis, cælo, convexionibusque dimotæ? Imo, quia hæc om-

niam et ab ipso cernebat geri, et ab ejus præconibus qui per
orbem totius missi—veritas ipsius vi victæ, et dederunt se
Deo, nec in magnis posuere dispendiis, membra vobis proji-
cere, et viscera sua lanianda præbere. Arnob. l. 1. p. 9.

mitted into the kingdom of God;^f and that God needeth not our lie to his glory; nor must we do evil that good may come by it. Therefore, they could never think that it would help them to heaven, to spend their labours, and lay down their lives, in promoting a known lie, to deceive the world.

Sect. 23. 4. That they expected temporal ruin by their religion, without any worldly satisfaction, is manifest both in Christ's prediction, telling them that it would be so, and in the tenor of his covenant, calling them to forsake life and all, if they will be his disciples; and in the history of their own lives and labours, in which they met with no other usage than was thus foretold them.^g

Many of them had not much wealth to lose; but every man naturally loveth his ease, and peace, and life. And some of them, though not many, had worldly riches, as Zaccheus, Joseph of Arimathea, &c. and commonly they had possessions, which they sold, and laid down the price at the apostles' feet. And the apostles had ways of comfortable living in the world: instead of all this, they underwent reproach, imprisonment, scourgings, and death. Commodity or preferment they could not expect by it.

Object. But to men that had been but low in the world, the very applause of the people would seem a sufficient satisfaction for their sufferings. To be teachers, and have many followers, is a thing that some people would venture liberty and life for.

Ans. Lay all these following things together, and you may be certain that this was not the case. 1. Even women, and many that were not teachers, were of the same belief. 2. The teachers did all of them set up their Lord, and not themselves, but debased and denied themselves for his honour and service. 3. Their way of teaching was in travel and labour, where they must deny all fleshly ease and pleasure; and so must have nothing but bare applause, if that had been it which they sought after. 4. They suffered so much reproach and shame from the unbelievers, who were the rich and ruling party, as would have much overbalanced their applause among believers. They were persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, scorned, and made as the offscouring of the world. 5. They were so many, that no single person was like to be carried so far with that ambition, when his honour was held in equality with so many. 6. One of the great vices which they preached and wrote against, was pride, and self-seeking, and overvaluing men, and following sect-masters, and crying up Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, &c.^h And those that thus sought to set up themselves, and draw away disciples after them, were the men whom they specially condemned. 7. If they had done as this objection supposeth, they must have all the way gone on against their certain knowledge and conscience, in teaching lies in matter of fact. And though some men would go far in seeking followers and applause, when they believe the doctrine which they preach themselves, yet hardly in preaching that which they know to be false. The stirrings of conscience would torment some of them, among so many, and at last break out into open confession and detection of the fraud.ⁱ 8. And if they had gone thus violently

against their consciences, they must needs know that it was their souls, as well as their lives and liberties, which they forfeited. 9. And the piety and humility of their writings show that applause was not their end and prize. If they had sought this, they would have fitted their endeavours to it; whereas it is the sanctifying and saving of souls, through faith in Jesus Christ, which they bent their labours towards. 10. So many men could never have agreed among themselves in such a scattered case, to carry on the juggle and deceit, without detection. Now tell us, if you can, where ever so many persons in the world, so notably humble, pious, and self-denying, did preach against pride, man-pleasing, and lying, as damnable sins; and debase themselves, and suffer so much reproach and persecution, and go through such labour and travel, and lay down their lives, and confessedly hazard their souls for ever, and all this to get followers, that should believe in another man, by persuading men that he wrought miracles, and rose from the dead when they knew themselves that all were lies which they thus laboriously divulged? If you give an instance in the disciples of Mahomet, the case was nothing so; no such miracles attested; no such witnesses to proclaim it; no such consequences of such a testimony: none of all this was so: but only a deceiver maketh a few barbarous people believe that he had revelations, and was a prophet; and being a soldier, and prospering in war, he setteth up and keepeth up a kingdom by the sword; his preachers being such as being thus deluded, did themselves believe the things they spake, and found it the way to worldly greatness.

Sect. 24. 5. That the witnesses of Christ were men of honesty and conscience, is before proved. 6. That it was not possible for so many persons to conspire so successfully to deceive the world, is manifest from, 1. Their persons; 2. Their calling; 3. Their doctrine; 4. And their manner of ministration and labours.

1. For their persons, they were, 1. Many; 2. Not men of such worldly craft and subtlety, as to be apt for such designs; 3. Of variety of tempers and interests, men and women. 2. For their callings, the apostles knew the matter of fact indeed by common sense; but their sufficiency and gifts by which they carried on their ministry, were suddenly given them by the Holy Ghost, when Christ himself was ascended from them; and Paul, that had conferred with none of them, yet preached the same gospel, being converted by a voice from heaven in the heat of his persecution. 3. Their doctrine containeth so many and mysterious particulars, that they could never have concurred in it all, in their way. 4. And their labours did so disperse them about the world, that many new emergent cases must needs have cast them into several minds or ways, if they had not agreed by the unity of that Spirit, which was the common teacher of them all.

Sect. 25. 7. That the disciples of Christ divulged his miracles and resurrection, in the same place and age, where the truth or falsehood might soon have been searched out; and yet that the bitterest enemies

^f Rev. xxi. 22.

^g Ambigua, si quando citare testis

Incertæ rei, Phalaris licet imperet ut sis

Falsus, et admodum dicet perjuris tauro;

Summum decet nefas vitam præferre pudori,

Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas. Juv. 8.

^h 1 Cor. i. ii. iii.; Acts xx.

ⁱ Sed non creditis gesta hæc. Sed qui ea conspiciunt sunt feri, et sub oculis suis videntur agi, testes optima certissime auctores, et crediderunt hæc ipsi et credenda posteris nobis haud exilibus cum approbationibus tradiderunt. Qui-

nam isti sunt, fortasse quæritis: gentes, populi, nationes, et incredulum illud genus humanum; quod nisi aperta res esset, et luce ipsa clarius, nunquam rebus hujusmodi credulitatis sue commoderent assensum. At nunquid dicemus illius temporis homines usque adeo fuisse vanos, mendaces, stolidos, brutos, ut que nunquam viderant, vidisse se fingerent? Et que facta non erant falsis proderent testimoniis, ut puerili assertionem firmarent? Cumque possent vobiscum et unanimiter vivere, et inoffensas ducere conjunctiones, gratuita susciperent odia, et execrabili haberentur nomine. Arnob. l. 1.

either denied not or confuted not their report, is apparent, partly by their confessions, and partly by the non-existence of any such confutations.

That the disciples in that age and country did divulge these miracles, is denied by none; for it was their employment, and by it they gathered their several churches; and their writings, not long after written, declare it to this day. That the enemies confuted not their report, appeareth, 1. Not only in the gospel history, which sheweth that they denied not many of his miracles, but imputed them to con-juration, and the power of Satan; but also by the disputes and writings of the Jews, in all ages since which do go the same way. 2. And if the enemies had been able to confute these miracles, no doubt but they would have done it, having so much advantage, wit, and malice.

Object. Perhaps they did, and their writings never come to our knowledge.

Ans. The unbelieving Jews were as careful to preserve their writings, as any other men; and they had better advantage to do it than the christians had: and therefore if there had been any such writings, yea, or verbal confutations, the Jews of this age had been as like to have received them, as all the other ancient writings which they yet receive. Josephus's testimony of Christ is commonly known; and though some think it so full and plain that it is like to be inserted by some christian, yet they give no proof of their opinion; and the credit of all copies justifieth the contrary; except only that these words are like to have been thrust in, "This is Christ," which some annotator putting into the margin, might after be put into the text. And that the Jews wanted not will or industry to confute the christians, appeareth by what Justin Martyr saith to Tryphon, of their malice: "That they sent out into all parts of the world their choicest men to persuade the people against the christians, that they are atheists, and would abolish the Deity, and that they were convict of gross impiety."^k

Sect. 26. 8. The great diversity of believers and reporters of the gospel miracles, doth the more fully evince, that there was no conspiracy for deceit.

There were learned and unlearned Jews and gentiles, rich and poor, men and women; some that followed Christ, and some (as Paul) that perhaps never saw him: and for all these to be at once inspired by the Holy Ghost, and thenceforth unanimously to accord and concur in the same doctrine and work, doth show a supernatural cause.^l

Sect. 27. 9. There were dissensions upon many accidents, and some of them to the utmost distance, which would certainly have detected the fallacy, if there had been any such, in the matters of fact, so easily detected.

1. In Christ's own family there was a Judas, who betrayed him for money: this Judas was one that had followed Christ, and seen his miracles, and had been sent out to preach, and wrought miracles himself. If there had been any collusion in all this, what likelier man was there in the world to have detected it? Yea, and his conscience would never have accused, but justified him; he need not to have gone and hanged or precipitated himself, and said, I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood. The

^k Prophetizare et virtutes facere et demonia ejicere interdum non est meriti illius qui operatur; sed invocato Christi hoc agit, vel ob utilitatem eorum qui vident et audiunt, vel, &c. Hieron. in Matt. vii.

^l Operum Dei causa si lateat hominem, non se obliviscatur esse hominem, nec propterea Deo det insipientiam, quia non bene capit ejus sapientiam. Aug. de spir. et lit. Rationem de occulto Dei consilio querere, nil aliud est quam contra ejus consilium superbiere. Gregor. Hom.

Pharisees, who hired him to betray his Master, might, by money and authority, have easily procured him to have written against him, and detected his fraud, if he had been fraudulent: it would have tended to Judas's justification and advancement. But God is the greater Defender of truth.

2. And there were many baptized persons, who were long in good repute and communion with the christians, who fell off from them to several sects and heresies; not denying the dignity and truth of Christ, but superinducing into his doctrine many corrupting fancies of their own; such as the Judaizers, the Simonians, the Nicolaitans, the Ebionites, the Cerinthians, the Gnostics, the Valentinians, Basilidians, and many more: and many of these were in the days of the apostles, and greatly troubled them, and hindered the gospel; inasmuch as the apostles rise up against them with more indignation than against the infidels; calling them dogs, wolves, evil-workers, deceivers, brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, &c. They write largely against them; they charge the churches to avoid them, and turn away from them, and after a first and second admonition, to reject them as men that are self-condemned, &c. And who knoweth not that among so many men thus excommunicated, vilified, and thereby irritated, some of them would certainly have detected the deceit, if they had known any deceit to have been in the reports of the aforesaid miracles? Passion would not have been restrained among so many, and such, when they were thus provoked.^m

3. And some in those times, as well as in all following ages, have forsaken the faith, and apostatized to open infidelity: and certainly their judgment, their interest, and their malice, would have caused them to detect the fraud, if they had known any in the matters of fact of these miracles. For it is not possible that all these causes should not bring forth this effect, where there was no valuable impediment. If you again say, It may be they did detect such frauds by words or writings which come not to our knowledge, I answer again, 1. The Jews, then, that have in all ages disputed and written against christianity, would certainly have made use of some such testimony, instead of charging all upon magic, and the power of the devil. 2. And it is to me a full evidence, that there were no such deniers of the miracles of Christ, when I find that the apostles never wrote against any such, nor contended with them, nor were ever put to answer any of their writings or objections. When all men will confess that their writings must needs be written according to the state and occasion of those times in which they wrote them: and if then there had been any books or reasonings divulged against Christ's miracles, they would either have written purposely against them, or let fall some confutations of them, in their epistles to the churches. But there are no such things at all.

Sect. 28. 10. Seeing it is so heinous a crime to divulge lies in multitudes of matters of fact, to deceive the world into a blasphemy, it is scarce possible that the consciences of so many persons, of so much piety as their writings prove, should never be touched with remorse for so great a villany, either in life, or at the hour of death, and force some one

^m 2 Peter ii.; Jude; Tit. iii. 10. Nulla major est comprobatio quam gestarum ab eo fides rerum; quam virtutum novitas, quam omnia victa decreta, dissolutaque fatalia, que populi gentesque suo generis sub lumine nullo dissente videri: quæ nec ipsi audent falsitatis arguere, quorum antiquas seu patrias leges vanitatis esse plenissimas atque inanisimæ superstitionis ostendit. Arnob. adv. Gent. l. 1.

of them to detect all the fraud, if they had been guilty of it.

There is a natural conscience in the worst of men, (much more in the best,) which will at some time do its office, and will constrain men to confess, especially their heinous crimes, and especially at the time of death, when they see that their lies will serve their worldly interest no more; and especially if they be men that indeed believe another life. Now, consider, if the apostles and disciples had been deceivers, how heinous a crime they had committed: 1. To affirm a man to be God incarnate, and to be the Saviour of the world, on whom all men must trust their souls, &c. if he had been but a deceiver. 2. To make such abundance of lies in open matters of fact. 3. To frame hereupon a new law to the world. 4. To overthrow the law of Moses, which was there in force. 5. To abuse the intellects of so many thousand persons with such untruths, and to call the world to such a needless work as the christian religion would be, if all this were false. To put the world upon such tasks, as forsaking all for Christ. 6. To draw so many to lose their lives in martyrdom to attest a lie. 7. To lose their own time, and spend all their lives and labour upon so bad a work. All these set together, would prove them far worse than any thieves, or murderers, or traitors, if they knew it to be a lie which they preached and attested. There are now no men known on earth, even in this age of villanies, guilty of such a heinous crime as this. And let any man that readeth the apostles' writings, or considereth of their lives and deaths, consider whether it be not next to an impossibility, that so many, and such persons, should go on in such a way, upon no greater motives of benefit than they expected; nay, through such labours, reproach, and sufferings, and not one of them to the death be constrained by conscience to detect the fraud, and undeceive the world.^a

Sec. 29. 11. Lastly, it is not possible that so many thousands of such persons as they presently converted, should ever have been persuaded to believe their reports of these matters of fact, in a time and place where it was so easy to disprove them, if they had been false.

For, 1. The understanding is not free as the will is, but only *participative in quantum a voluntate imperatur*: and a man cannot believe what he will, nor deny belief to cogent evidence, though against his will. The intellect's acts, as in themselves, are necessitated; and *per modum naturæ*. 2. And all these new converts had understandings which were naturally inclined to truth as truth, and averse to falsehood. And they had all self-love. And they all embraced now a doctrine which would expose them to suffering and calamity in the world. And, therefore, both nature and interest obliged them to be at the labour of inquiring whether these things were so or not, before they ran themselves into so great misery. And he three thousand which Peter converted at his first sermon, must also take the shame of being murderers of their Saviour, and for this they were pricked at the heart. And Paul must be branded for a confessed persecutor, and guilty of the blood of Stephen. And would so many men run themselves into all this for nothing, to save the labour of an easy inquiry, after some matters of

public fact? How easily might they go and be satisfied, whether Christ fed so many thousand twice miraculously, and whether he healed such as he was said to heal, who were then living? And whether he raised Lazarus and others from death, who were then living? And whether the earth trembled, and the vail of the temple rent, and the sun was darkened at his death? And whether the witnesses of his resurrection were sufficient? And if none of this had been true, it would have turned them all from the belief of the apostles, to deride them.

Object. Is not the unbelief of the most a greater reason against the gospel, than the belief of the smaller number is for it?

Ans. No: 1. Because it is a negative which they were for, and many witnesses to a negative is not so good as a few to an affirmative. 2. Most of them were kept from the very hearing of the apostles, which should inform them and excite them. 3. Most men every where follow their rulers, and look to their worldly interest, and never much mind or discuss such matters, as tend to their salvation, especially by the way of suffering and disgrace. 4. We believe not that the unbelieving party did deny Christ's miracles, but fathered them upon the devil: therefore even their testimony is for Christ. Only they hired the soldiers to say, that Christ was stolen out of the sepulchre while they slept, of which they never brought any proof, nor could possibly do it, if asleep.

Sec. 30. 111. I have proved Christ's miracles to be, 1. Credible, by the highest human faith. 2. Certain, by natural evidence; there being a natural impossibility that the testimonies should be false. 3. I am next to prove, that they are certain, by supernatural evidence; which is the same with natural evidence, as in the effect, but is called supernatural, from the way of causing it.

Sec. 31. The same works of the Spirit, inherent, concomitant, and subsequent, were the infallible proof of the truth of the disciples' testimony of Christ's person, miracles, and doctrine.^o

Sec. 32. I. They were persons of holy lives; and holiness is the lively impress or constitution of their doctrine, now visible in their writings.

What was before said of the doctrine of Christ himself, is true of theirs: and as the king's coin is known by his image and superscription, or rather, as an unimitable author is known by his writings, for matter, method, and style, even so is God's Spirit known in them, and in their doctrine.

Sec. 33. 11. Their miraculous gifts and works were so evident, and so many, and uncontrolled, as amount to an infallible proof that God bare his witness in the world, and sheweth the most infallible proof of his assertions.

Sec. 34. Their gifts and miracles were many in kind: as their sudden illumination, when the Spirit fell upon them, and knowing that which they were ignorant of before; their prophesying and speaking in languages never before learned by them, and interpreting such prophecies and languages; their dispossessing demoniacs, and healing diseases; their deliverances by angels out of closed prisons and fetters; their inflicting judgments on opposers and offenders; their raising the dead; and the conveying of the same Spirit to others, by the imposition of the apostles' hands.

^a Occursurus forsitan est cum aliis multis calumniis et perilibus vocibus. Magnus fuit, clandestinis artibus omnia illa perfecit, Ægyptiorum ex adytis angelorum potentium nomina, et remotas furatus, esse disciplinas. Quid dicitis O parvuli? Incomperita vobis et nescia temeraria: vocis loquacitate garrientes? Ergone illa quæ gesta sunt, demonum fure præstigia, et magicarum artium ludi? Potestis aliquem

nobis designare, monstrare, ex omnibus illis Magia, qui unquam fuere per secula, consimile alicui Christo millesimo ex parte qui fecerit? Qui sine ulla vi carminum, &c. Arnob. ubi sup. l. 1.

^o 2 Peter ii. 16. Eye-witnesses of his majesty on the mount.

1. It is not the least testimony of the veracity of the apostles, that even while they lived with Jesus Christ, they remained ignorant of much of the mystery of the gospel, and some (that are since necessary) articles of faith, as of his death and burial, and resurrection, and ascension, and much of the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and privileges of believers; and that all this was made known to them upon a sudden, without any teaching, studying, or common means, by the coming down of the Holy Ghost upon them.^a And that Christ had promised them his Spirit before, to lead them into all truth, and bidden them wait at Jerusalem till they received it: and it came upon them at the appointed time, on the day of Pentecost. And he promised that this Spirit should be sent on others, and become his agent or advocate in the world, to do his work in his bodily absence, and bear witness of him. And he told his disciples, that this Spirit should be better to them than his bodily presence; and therefore it would be for their good that he should go from them into heaven: so that Christ's teaching them immediately and miraculously by this sudden giving them his Spirit, is an infallible proof both of his truth and theirs.

2. This prophesying was partly by foretelling things to come, (as Agabus did the dearth, and Paul's bonds,) and partly the exposition of old prophecies, and partly the spiritual instruction of the people, by sudden inspirations; and those that were enabled to it, were people of themselves unable for such things, and ignorant, but a little while before.

3. Their speaking in various languages was a thing which no natural means could produce. Fernelius, and many other physicians, who were very loth to believe diabolical possessions, do confess themselves convinced by hearing the possessed speak Greek and Hebrew, which they had never learned. How much more convincing is this evidence, when so many speak in so many languages, even in the language of all the inhabitants of the countries round about them; and this upon these sudden inspirations of the Spirit!

4. Their interpreting of such tongues also which they never learnt, was no less a proof of a supernatural power and attestation.

5. Their deliverances are recorded in the Scriptures; Peter, Acts xii. and Paul and Silas, Acts xvi. had their bonds all loosed, and the prison doors opened by an angel and a miracle; which must be by a power that sufficiently attesteth their verity.

6. And they inflicted judgments on delinquents by no less a power: Ananias and Sapphira, one after another, were struck dead upon the word of Peter, for their hypocrisy and lies: Elymas the sorcerer was struck blind by Paul, in the presence (or knowledge) of the governor of the country; and the excommunicated were often given up to Satan, to suffer some extraordinary penalty.

7. Their healing demoniaes, the lame, the blind, the paralytic, and all manner of diseases with a word, or by prayer and imposition of hands in the name of Christ, yea, upon the conveyance of napkins and cloths from their bodies, is witnessed in the many texts which I have before cited out of the Acts of the Apostles. And this Christ promised them particularly beforehand: and it was the occasion of that unction of the sick, which some have still continued as a sacrament.

8. Their raising the dead is also among the fore-cited passages; so Peter raised Dorcas or Tabitha, Acts ix.; and it is like, Paul Eutychus, Acts xx.

9. And this is the greatest evidence of all, that the

same Spirit was given to so many others, by their imposition of hands and prayers; and all these had some of these wonderful gifts, either prophecies, tongues, healing, or some such like.

Sect. 35. 2. These miracles were wrought by multitudes of persons, and not only by a few; even by the apostles, and seventy disciples, and others on whom they laid their hands; which was by the generality or greater part of the christians.

If it were but by one or two men that miracles were wrought, there would be greater room for doubting of the truth; but when it shall be by hundreds and thousands, there can be no difficulty in the proof. That the apostles and the seventy disciples wrought them in Christ's own time, is declared before: that they wrought them more abundantly after, and that the same Spirit was then commonly given to others, I shall now further prove,^a besides all the histories of it before recited. That upon the imposition of the apostles' hands, or baptism, or prayer, the Holy Ghost was given, is expressed, Acts ii. 38; to three thousand at once the Holy Ghost was given; Acts iv. 31, "All the assembly were filled with the Holy Ghost; and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." The Samaritans received the Holy Ghost upon the prayer of Peter and John, Acts viii. 15, 17; so that Simon Magus would fain have bought that gift with money. Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost by the imposition of Ananias's hands, Acts ix. 7. Upon Peter's preaching, the Holy Ghost fell on all the family, and kindred, and friends of Cornelius, who heard him preach; and they spake with tongues, and magnified God, Acts x. 44, 45, 47; even in the same manner as it fell on the apostles, Acts xi. 15. The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, Acts xiii. 52. Twelve men, upon Paul's imposition of hands, received the Holy Ghost, and spake with tongues, and prophesied, Acts xix. 6. The Holy Ghost was given to the Roman christians, Rom. v. 5. Yea, he telleth them, if any have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, Rom. viii. 9. The same was given to the church of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 19, and xii. 12, 13. And to the church of the Galatians, Gal. iii. 1—3, 5. And to the church of the Ephesians, Eph. i. 13; iv. 30. To the Philippians, Phil. i. 19, 27; ii. 1. To the Colossians, Col. i. 8. To the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. v. 19; i. 6. And what this Spirit was and did, you may find in 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7, &c. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or gentiles, bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." And in (1 Cor. xiv.) the gift of speaking with tongues was so common in the church of the Corinthians, that the apostle is fain to give them instructions for the moderate use of it, lest they hindered the edification of the church, by suppressing prophecy or instruction in known tongues: and therefore he persuadeth them to use it but more sparingly.

^a Acts i. and ii.; John xiv. 16.

^a Matt. xvi. 17; x. 1, 2; Luke x. 1, 17, 19: Acts ii. 1—3; Matt. iii. 11.

And James (v. 14, 15) exhorteth christians when they were sick, "to send to the elders of the church, that they may pray for them and anoint them," and they may be forgiven and recover: by which it seems it was no unusual thing in those times to be healed by the prayers of the elders. Yea, the very hypocrites and ungodly persons, that had only the barren profession of christianity, had the gift of miracles, without the grace of sanctification. And this Christ foretold, Matt. vii. 22, "Many shall say in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works?"

Object. But all were not healed by them: Paul left Trophimus at Miletum sick. Why doth not Paul cure Timothy of his weak stomach and infirmity, without drinking of wine, if he could do it?

Answe. 1. Certainly, they did not cure all men that were sick, for then who would have died. It was none of the intent of the Spirit of Christ, in working miracles, to make men immortal here on earth, and to keep them from heaven.

2. And it is easily confessed, that the Spirit was not at the command or will of them that had it: and therefore they could not do what and when they pleased, but what the Spirit pleased, and his operations were at his own time and disposal. And this proveth the more fully that it was the testimony of God, and not the contrivance of the wit of man. 3. And miracles and tongues were not for them that believed, but rather for them that believed not: and, therefore, a Trophimus or a Timothy might be unhealed.

Sec. 36. 3. These miracles were oftentimes wrought, even for many years together, in several countries and places through the world, where the apostles and disciples came; and not only once, or for a little space of time.

Dissimulation might be easilier cloaked for a few acts, than it can be for so many years. At least these gifts and miracles continued during the age of the apostles, though not performed every day, or so commonly as might make them uneffectual, yet so frequently as to give success to the gospel, and to keep up a reverence of christianity in the world. They were wrought not only at Jerusalem, but at Samaria, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, and the rest of the churches through the world.

Sec. 37. 4. They were also wrought in the presence of multitudes, and not only in a corner, where there was more possibility of deceit.

The Holy Ghost fell on the apostles and all the disciples at Jerusalem before all the people; that is, they all heard them speak in several tongues, the wonderful works of God; even the Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judæa, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, Rome; Jews, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians, Acts ii. 8—12. It was three thousand that the Holy Ghost fell on, Acts ii. 38. Those that went into the temple, and all the people, saw the lame man, that was cured by Peter and John, Acts iii. The death of Ananias and Sapphira was a public thing, so that fear fell on all, and hypocrites were deterred from joining with the church, Acts v. The gifts of tongues, and interpretation, were commonly exercised before congregations or multitudes. And crowds of people flocked

to them to be healed. As with Christ they uncovered the roofs of the houses to lay the sick before him; so with the apostles they strove who might come within their shadow, or touch the hem of their garment, or have clothes or napkins from them, that they might be healed. So that here was an age of public miracles.

Sec. 38. 5. All these miracles were uncontrolled; that is, they were not wrought in opposition to any controlling truth, which hath certain evidence contradicting this, nor yet were they overtopped by any greater miracles for the contrary.

A miracle, if God should permit it to be wrought in such a case, might be said to be controlled, either of these two ways: 1. If a man should work miracles to contradict the certain light of nature, or persuade men to that which is certainly false. 2. If men should do wonders, as Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian sorcerers, which should be overtopped by greater wonders, as those of Moses; and as Simon Magus and Elymas by Peter and Paul: in these cases God could not be said to deceive men, by his power or permission, where he giveth them a sufficient preservative. But these miracles had no such control, but prevailed without any check from contradictory truths or miracles. Thus Christ performed his promise, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father," John xiv. 12.

Sec. 39. III. The third testimony of the Spirit to the truth of the apostles' witness, was the marvellous success of their doctrine to the sanctifying of souls, which as it could not be done without the power and Spirit of God, so neither would the righteous and merciful Governor of the world have made a company of profligate liars and deceivers his instruments of doing this excellent work by cheats and falsehoods.

This I spake of before, as it is the seal of Christ's own doctrine. I now speak of it only as it is the seal of the apostles' verity, in their testimony of the resurrection and miracles of Christ. Peter converted three thousand at once. Many thousands and myriads up and down the world were speedily converted. And what was this conversion? They were brought unfeignedly to love God above all, and their neighbours as themselves. Acts ii. 42—47, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayers. And all that believed were together and had all things common (not by levelling, but by loan); and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people." "The multitude of believers were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things that he possessed was his own, but they had all things common," Acts iv. 32.

All that are in Christ, have his Spirit, and are spiritually-minded, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. viii. They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts: the world is crucified to them, and they to the world, Gal. v. 24; vi. 14. They are chosen to be holy and unblamable in love, Eph. i. 4. They walk as renewed in the spirit of their minds, with

^r Quid soboles, virtusque Dei, et sapientia Christus?
Nonne satis vanis curas erroribus aufert?
Nosque simul monitis et factis edocet unum
Cuncta Deum regere, —et cum
Omnipotens verbo sternit mare, vel pede calcatur;
Et verbo morbos abigit, vel dæmonas urget;

Aut reduces animas in corpora sancta remittit;
Jamque diu examines tumulus jubet ire reclusis;
Integratque putres vita remeantem sepulchro:
Nonne potestatem propriam satis indicat auctor?
Qui solus naturam omnem vitæque gubernat.
Claudian. Mammert. Carm. post lib. de Anim.

all lowliness, and meekness, and long-suffering, forbearing one another, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, Eph. iv. 23; ii. 3. As being created unto good works in Christ, Eph. ii. 10. Without corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, clamour, evil-speaking, fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting, Eph. iv. 29; v. 3, 4. Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, as redeemed from all iniquity, and purified as a peculiar people to Christ, zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 12, 14. Having their conversation in heaven, from whence they expect their Redeemer to translate them into glory, Phil. iii. 20, 21. These were the fruits of the ministry of the apostles.

And God was pleased to bless their labours more than any others since, and make better, holier, heavenlier christians, by the means of their endeavours; that so he might give a fuller proof of the truth of their testimony of Christ.

SecT. 40. It is the great advantage of our faith, that these second attestations to the disciples' testimony of the miracles of Christ, are much more open, evident, and convincing, to us at this distance, than the miracles of Christ himself; that so there might be no place for rational doubting.

The sorts of their miracles were as numerous as his. They were wrought by hundreds and thousands, and not by Christ alone. They were wrought for an age, and not for three years and a half alone. They were wrought in a great part of the world, and not in Judea and Galilee alone. They were done in the face of abundance of congregations, and not before the Jews only: and they succeeded to the conversion and sanctification of many thousands more than did the preaching of Christ himself. So that if any thing that is said before, of the confirmation of Christ's own miracles, had wanted evidence, it is abundantly made up in the evidence of their miracles who were the reporters and witnesses of his.

SecT. 41. I have hitherto been showing you, how the miracles of Christ were proved, attested, and made certainly known to the first churches planted by the apostles themselves, viz. by the testimony of the Spirit, 1. In their doctrine and lives; 2. In their miracles; and 3. In their success, in the sanctification of men's souls. I am next to show you how these matters of fact, or actions of the apostles, are certainly proved, or brought down to us.

SecT. 42. And this is by the same three ways of proof as the apostles proved to the first churches their testimony; though with much difference in the point of miracles: viz. I. We have it by the most credible human testimony; II. By such testimony as hath a natural certainty; III. And by some of that testimony of God, which is also a supernatural evidence. Of all which I must speak in order, supposing what is said before.

SecT. 43. I. The only natural way of transmitting those things down to us, is by historical conveyance. And the authors of this history, are both the churches of Christ, and their enemies. The credibility of which testimonies will be fuller opened under the second degree of proofs; which comprehendeth this.

SecT. 44. II. That there is a natural impossibility that our history of the apostles' gifts and miracles should be false, will appear by reviewing all the particulars by which the same was proved of the apostles' testimony of the miracles of Christ; and in many respects, with much more advantage.

SecT. 45. It is naturally impossible that all the reporters could be themselves deceived. For, 1. They

were many thousands, in several countries through the world; and, therefore, could not be all either mad or senseless. 2. They were men that took their salvation to be most nearly concerned in the thing, and were to forsake the pleasure of the world, and suffer from men for their religion; and, therefore, could not be utterly careless in examining the thing. 3. They were present upon the place, and eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of all. 4. The languages were said to be spoken in their assemblies, and the miracles done among them for many years, even an age together. And it is impossible all countries could be cheated by juggling, in matters which their eyes and ears were such competent witnesses of, for so many years together. 5. They were said to be the objects of many of these miracles themselves; viz. That the cures were wrought on many of them; that the same Spirit was given to them all. 6. And they were said to be the agents themselves in the several works of that Spirit, according to their several gifts. So that their common deceit must be impossible.

If any man should now, among us, take on him to speak with divers languages, or tell the churches that divers languages are spoken among them in their hearing, by unlearned men; and that prophecys, interpretations, miraculous cures, &c. are wrought among them; and name the persons, time, and place; and should tell them that they had all some sort or other of the same gifts themselves; were it possible for the people to believe all this, if it were a lie? Would they not say, When did we ever hear your languages? or when did we ever see your cures and other miracles? when did we see an Ananias and Sapphira die? When did we do any such works ourselves? Do we not know what we do? Men could not believe such palpable untruths in matter of public fact, so near them, among them, upon them; and much less could so many thousands believe this, in so many nations, if it were false; because the understanding is not free in itself; but *per modum nature* is necessitated by cogent evidence. Absurd doctrines may easily deceive many thousands; and so may false history do by men at a sufficient distance. But he that thinks the ears and eyes and other senses of so many thousand sound persons, were all deceived thus in presence, will sure never trust his own ears, or eyes, or sense in any thing; nor expect that any man else should ever believe him, who so little believeth his own sense and understanding.

SecT. 46. That the reporters were not purposely the deceivers of the world by wilful falsehood, is also certain by these following evidences.

SecT. 47. I. It is not possible that so many thousands, in all countries, should have wit and cunning enough for such a contrivance, and could keep it secret among themselves, that it should never be detected.

They that think they were all so stupid as to be themselves deceived, cannot also think that they were all so cunning as to conspire the deceiving of all the world, so successfully and undiscovered. But it is past doubt, that for their naturals, they were ordinary persons, neither such mad people as all to think they saw, and heard, and did things which were nothing so, for so long together; nor yet so subtle, as to be able to lay such a deceiving plot, and carry it on so closely to the end. And they that suspect the apostles and first disciples to be the authors of the plot, will not suspect all the churches too; for if there were deceivers, there must be some to be deceived by them: if Christ deceived the disciples, then the disciples could not be wilful deceivers themselves;

for if they were themselves deceived, they could not therein be wilful deceivers: and then, how came they to confirm their testimony by miracles? If the apostles only were deceivers, then all the disciples and evangelists who assisted them must be deceived, and not wilful deceivers: and then how came they also to do miracles? If all the apostles and disciples of the first edition were wilful deceivers, then all the churches through the world which were gathered by them, were deceived by them, and then they were not wilful deceivers themselves: which is all that I am now proving, having proved before that they were not deceived.

Sect. 48. II. If they had been cunning enough, it is most improbable that so many thousands, in so many nations, should be so bad, as to desire and endeavour, at such a rate as this, their own temporal and eternal ruin, to deceive all the world into a blasphemy, without any benefit to themselves, which might be rationally sufficient to seem a tempting compensation to them.

Sect. 49. For all these churches which witnessed the apostles' miracles, 1. Did profess to believe lying and deceiving to be a heinous sin; 2. And to believe an everlasting punishment for liars. 3. They were taught by their religion to expect calamity in this world. 4. They had experience enough to confirm them in that expectation: therefore they had no motive which could be sufficient to make them guilty of so costly a deceit.*

For, 1. *Operari sequitur esse*. A man will do ill but according to the measure that he is ill; and as bad as human nature is, it is not yet so much depraved, as that thousands through the world could agree, without any commodity to move them to it, to ruin their own estates, and lives, and souls for ever, merely to make the world believe that other men did miracles, and to draw them to believe a known untruth. And, 2. As free as the will is, it is yet a thing that hath its nature and inclination, and cannot act without a cause and object; which must be some apparent good: therefore, when there is no good appearing, but wickedness and misery, it cannot will it; so that this seemeth inconsistent with human nature.

Sect. 50. And the certain history of their lives doth show, that they were persons extraordinarily good and conscionable; being holy, heavenly, and contempters of this world, and ready to suffer for their religion; and therefore could not be so extremely bad, as to ruin themselves only to do mischief to the world and their posterity.[†]

Sect. 51. And their enemies bare them witness, that they did and suffered all this in the hopes of a reward in heaven; which proveth that they were not wilful liars and deceivers; for no man can look for a reward in heaven, for the greatest known villany on earth, even for suffering, to cheat all the world into a blasphemy.

Even Lucian scoffeth at the christians for running into sufferings, and hoping to be rewarded for it with a life everlasting.

Sect. 52. III. If they had been so cunning, and so bad, yet was it impossible that they should be able for the successful execution of such a deceit, as will appear by all these following evidences.

Sect. 53. I. It was impossible that so many thousands, at such a distance, who never saw each other's faces, could lay the plot in a way of concord; but one would have been of one mind, and another of another.

Sect. 54. II. It is impossible that they should agree in carrying it on, and keeping it secret through all the world, if they had accorded in the first contrivance and attempts.

Sect. 55. III. It is impossible that all the thousands of adversaries among them, who were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses as well as they, should not discover the deceit.

All those Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and other countrymen mentioned, Acts ii. were not christians; and the christians, though many, were but a small part of the cities and countries where they dwelt: and Paul saith, that tongues and miracles were for the sake of unbelievers, and unbelievers were ordinarily admitted into the christian assemblies, and the christians went among them to preach, and most of the miracles were wrought in their sight and hearing.

Sect. 56. IV. It is impossible that the falling-out of christians among themselves, among so many thousands in several nations, should never have detected the deceit, if they had been all such deceivers.

Sect. 57. V. It is impossible but some of the multitudes of the perverted, exasperated, separating, or excommunicated heretics, which were then in most countries where there were christians, and opposed the orthodox, and were opposed by them, should have detected this deceit, if it had been such.

Sect. 58. VI. It is impossible but some of the apostates of those times, who are supposed to have joined in the deceit, would have detected it to the world, when they fell off from christianity.

Sect. 59. VII. It is scarce possible among so many thousands in several lands, that none of their own consciences, living or dying, should be constrained, in remorse and terror, to detect so great an evil to the world.

Sect. 60. VIII. Much more impossible is it, that, under the conscience of such a villany, they should live, and suffer, and die rejoicingly, and think it a happy exchange to forsake life and all, for the hopes of a reward in heaven for this very thing.

Sect. 61. IX. Lastly, it is impossible that these thousands of christians should be able to deceive many more than themselves, into the belief of the same untruths, in the very time and place where the things were said to be done, and where the detection of the deceit had been easy, yea, unavoidable.

Christianity was then upon the increase; they that were converted did convert more than themselves. Suppose in Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, &c. some thousands believed by the preaching of the apostles, in a few years, at the first; in a few years more, there were as many more added. Now, supposing all this had been but a cheat, if the christians had told their neighbours,—Among us, unlearned men speak in the languages of all countries; they cast out devils; they cure all diseases with prayer and anointing; they prophesy, and interpret tongues; they do many other miracles; and the same Spirit is given to others by their imposition of hands; and all this in the name and by the power of Jesus;—would not their neighbours easily know whether this were true or not? And if it were false, would they not hate such deceivers, and make them a common scorn, instead of being converted by them?

Sect. 62. The foresaid impossibilities are herein founded: 1. There is no effect without a sufficient cause. 2. A necessary cause, not sufficiently hindered, will bring forth its answerable effect. But the opposed supposition maketh effects without any

* Nemo jam infamiam incutiat; nemo aliud existimet: quia nec fas est ulli de sua religione mentiri. Tertul. Apol. c. 20.

† Quid adeo simile philosophus et christianus? Græcie

discipulus et celi? Famæ negotiator et vitæ? Verborum et factorum operator. Tertul. Apol. c. 45.

sufficient cause, and necessary causes without their adequate effects.

Sect. 63. The providence of God permitted dissensions and heresies to arise among christians, and rivals and false teachers to raise hard reports of the apostles, and the people to be somewhat alienated from them, that the apostles might by challenges appeal to miracles, and future ages might be convinced that the matter of fact could not be contradicted.

The Romans had contentions among themselves; the strong and the weak contemning or condemning one another about meats and days, Rom. xiv. 15. The Corinthians were divided into factions, and exasperated against Paul by false apostles; so that he is fain at large to vindicate his ministry; and he doth it partly by appealing both to miracles and works of power wrought among them, and by the Spirit given to themselves, 2 Cor. xii. 12; and xiii. 3—5; and 1 Cor. xii. 7, 12, 13. The Galatians were more alienated from Paul by Jewish teachers, and seemed to take him as an enemy for telling them the truth, and he feared that he had bestowed on them labour in vain; and in this case he vehemently rebuketh them, and appealeth first to miracles wrought among them, and before their eyes, and next to the Spirit given to themselves: Gal. iii. 1—5, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? He, therefore, that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Now, if no such miracles were wrought among them, and if no such Spirit was received by themselves, would this argument have silenced adversaries, and reconciled the minds of the Galatians? or rather have made them deride the cause that must have such a defence, and say, Who be they that work miracles among us, and when did we receive such a Spirit? So, to the Romans, this is Paul's testimonial: Rom. xv. 18, 19, "For I will not dare speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God," &c. And to the Corinthians he saith, 1 Cor. xiv. 18, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all." So Gal. ii. 8. 1 Cor. xiv. 22, "Tongues are for a sign to them that believe not." So, Acts ii. 43; iv. 30; v. 12; vii. 36; viii. 13; xiv. 3; vi. 8; viii. 6, 13; xv. 12; xix. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 10, miracles are still made the confirmation of the apostles' testimony and doctrine.

And in Heb. ii. 3, 4, you have the just method of the proof and progress of christianity: "Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, (but how is that known?) and was confirmed to us by them that heard him; (but how shall we know that they said truth?) God also bearing them witness, with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."

And Acts iv. 33, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." 1 John i. 1—3, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us," &c.

Sect. 64. III. The miracles of the apostles are not only attested by the churches which were eye-witnesses of them, 1. By the way of most credible human testimony; 2. And by natural evidence of infallible certainty; but also, 3. By supernatural testimony of God himself, as appeareth in these following evidences.

Sect. 65. I. Many miracles were wrought by those first churches, who were the witnesses of the apostles' miracles, which is a divine attestation to their testimony.

The Scriptures forecited tell us, that the same Holy Ghost was given to them all, though all had not the same gifts; and that tongues, and healing, and miracles were the gifts of many, though not of all. Which, as I have showed, they could not themselves have believed of themselves, if it had not been true. Yea, sufficient historical testimony telleth us, that for three or four hundred years, at least till Constantine owned and protected christianity by secular power, miracles were wrought in confirmation of the christian faith. It hath been the devil's craft to seek to destroy the credit of them, partly by hypocrites, who have counterfeited miracles; and partly by lying legends of the carnal, proud, domineering part of the church, who have told the world so many palpable lies, that they seemed to do it in design, to persuade them to believe nothing that is true. But yet all wise men will know the difference between history credible and incredible. The many testimonies of the miracles of Gregory Thaumaturgus, and many others, mentioned by Eusebius, and almost all other christian writers of those times; and those mentioned by Augustine, de Civitate Dei, lib. xxii. cap. 8. and *Retract.* lib. i. cap. 13, et passim; and by Cyprian, Tertullian, and many more; will not be thought incredible by impartial, considering men.

Sect. 66. II. The eminent sanctity of the pastors of the churches, with the success of their testimony and doctrine for the true sanctification of many thousand souls, is God's own attestation to their testimony and doctrine.

How far the sanctifying, renewing success of the doctrine is a divine attestation to its verity, I have before opened; and how far God owneth even the truths of philosophy, by blessing them with an adequate proportionable success. The defective partial truths of philosophy, produce a defective partial reformation; how far God accepteth it belongeth not to my present business to determine. The more full and integral discovery of God's will, by Jesus Christ, doth produce a more full and integral renovation. And, I. The cause is known by the effect. 2. And God will not, as is before said, bless a lie to do the most excellent work in all the world. Now, it is a thing most evident, that God hath still blessed the ministry of the christian pastors in all ages, to the renewing of many thousand souls. That this is truly so, I shall somewhat fuller show anon. But that it is God's own attestation, I have showed before.

Sect. 67. I have opened the validity of the apostles' testimony of the resurrection and miracles of Christ, and the first churches' certain testimony of the miracles of the apostles; both of them having a three-fold certainty, moral, natural, and supernatural: in all which I have supposed, that such a testimony the churches have indeed given down to their posterity; which is the thing that remaineth lastly to be here proved.

Sect. 68. The doctrine and miracles of Christ and his apostles have been delivered us down from the first churches, by all these following ways of history: I. By delivering to us the same writings of the apos-

tles and evangelists which they received from their hands themselves, as certain truth, and delivered down as such to us; even the holy Scriptures of the New Testament. They that believed their words, believed their writings, and have told us their belief, by preserving them for posterity as sacred verities.

In the holy Scriptures, the life, and death, and doctrine of Christ is contained with the doctrine of the apostles, and so much of the history of their preaching and miracles, as Luke was an eye-witness of, or had certain knowledge of, (who was commonly Paul's companion,) by which we may partly judge of the acts of the rest of the apostles. And if the churches had not believed all these, they would not have delivered them as the infallible writings of the inspired apostles to their posterity.

Sect. 69. III. The very successive being of christians and churches, is the fullest history that they believed those things which made them christians and churches, which was the doctrine and miracles of Christ.

A christian is nothing else but one that receiveth the doctrine, resurrection, and miracles of Christ, as certain truth, by the preaching and miracles of his great witnesses, the apostles: so many christians as there ever were, so many believers of these things there have been. It was this doctrine and miracles that made them christians, and planted these churches: and if any man think it questionable, whether there have been christians ever since Christ's time in the world, all history will satisfy him, Roman, Mahometan, Jewish, and christian, without any one dissenting voice. Pliny, Suetonius, Tacitus, Marcellinus, Eunapius, Lucian and Porphyry, and Julian, and all such enemies, may convince him: he shall read the history of their sufferings, which will tell him, that certainly such a sort of persons there was then in the world.

Sect. 70. The succession of pastors and preachers in all generations, is another proof: for it was their office to read publicly, and preach this same Scripture to the church and world, as the truth of God.

I speak not of a succession of pastors in this one city or that, or by this or that particular way of ordination, having nothing here to do with that: but that a certain succession there hath been since the days of the apostles, is past question: for, 1. Else there had been no particular churches; 2. Nor any baptism, 3. Nor any public worship of God; 4. Nor any synods, or discipline: but this is not denied.

Sect. 71. IV. The continuance of baptism, which is the kernel or sum of all christianity, proveth the continuance of the christian faith. For all christians in baptism were baptized into the vowed belief and obedience of the Son and Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father.

Sect. 72. V. The delivering down of the three breviate symbols, of faith, desire, and duty,—the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue,—is the churches' delivery of the christian religion, as that which all christians have believed.

Sect. 73. VI. The constant communion of the church in solemn assemblies, and setting apart the Lord's day to that use, was a delivery of the christian faith, which those assemblies all professed to believe.

Sect. 74. VII. The constant preaching and reading of these same Scriptures in those assemblies, and celebrating there the sacrament of Christ's death, and the custom of open professing their belief, and the prayers and praises of God, for the resurrection and miracles of Christ, are all open, undeniable testimonies that these things were believed by those churches.

Sect. 75. VIII. The frequent disputes which christians in all ages have held with the adversaries of the Scriptures and christianity, do show that they believed all these Scriptures, and the doctrines and miracles therein contained.

Sect. 76. IX. The writings of the christians in all ages, their apologies, commentaries, histories, devotional treatises, all bear the same testimony, that we have these things by their tradition.

Sect. 77. X. The confessions, sufferings, and martyrdom of many in most ages, do bear the same testimony, that they believed this, for which they suffered; and that posterity received it from them.

Sect. 78. XI. The decrees and canons of the synods or councils of the bishops of the churches, are another part of the history of the same belief.

Sect. 79. XII. Lastly, the decrees and laws of princes concerning them, are another part of the history, showing that they did believe these things.

Sect. 80. And if any question whether our Scriptures which contain these histories and doctrines be indeed the same which these churches received and delivered from the apostles, he may easily be convinced, as followeth.

Sect. 81. I. Various copies of it in the Hebrew and Greek text, were very quickly scattered about the world, and are yet found in all nations agreeing in all material passages.

Sect. 82. II. These Scriptures were translated into many languages, of which there are yet extant, the Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Persian, &c. which agree in all material things.

Sect. 83. III. It was the stated office of the ministers in all the churches in the world, to read these Scriptures openly to the people, and preach on them in all their solemn assemblies; and a thing so publicly maintained and used, could not possibly be altered materially.

Sect. 84. IV. All private christians were exhorted to read and use the same Scriptures also, in their families, and in secret.

Sect. 85. V. This being through so many nations of the world, it was not possible that they could all agree upon a corruption of the Scriptures: nor is there mention in any history of any attempt of any such agreement.

Sect. 86. VI. If they would have met together for that end, they could not possibly have all consented; because they were of so many minds, and parties, and inclinations.

Sect. 87. VII. Especially when all christians, by their religion, take it to be matter of damnation, to add to, or diminish from, these sacred writings, as being the inspired word of God.

Sect. 88. VIII. And every christian took it for the rule of his faith, and the charter for his heavenly inheritance; and therefore would certainly have had his action against the corrupters of it.

As the laws of this land being recorded, and having lawyers and judges, whose calling is continually to use them, and men holding their estates and safety by them, if any would alter them, all the rest would quickly detect it, and make head against him.

Sect. 89. IX. Yea, the many sects and contentions among christians, and the many heretics that were at enmity with them, would certainly have detected any combination to corrupt the Scriptures.

Sect. 90. X. Some few heretics in the beginning did attempt to bring in the Gospel of Nicodemus, and some other forged writings, and to have corrupted some parts of Scripture; and the churches presently cried them down.

Sect. 91. XI. Most heretics have pleaded these same Scriptures; and denied them not to be genuine:

yea, Julian, Celsus, Porphyry, and other heathens, did not deny it, but took it as a certain truth.

Sec. 92. XII. The ancient writers of the church, Clemens, Ignatius, Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Athenagoras, Lactantius, Eusebius, Nazianzen, Nyssen, Basil, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Hierom, Augustin, &c. do all cite these Scriptures as we now have them in all things material.

Sec. 93. XIII. The christian emperors have inserted the mention of some passages in their laws, in the same words as they are in our Bibles.

Sec. 94. XIV. Several councils have not only cited several passages out of them, but pleaded them still as the word of God, and enumerated the particular books which constitute the whole system.

All this set together, will tell any man of reason, consideration, and impartiality, that we have much fuller certainty that these Scriptures are the same which the first churches received from the apostles, than they can have that Virgil's, Ovid's, Cicero's, or Plutarch's works are theirs; or that the statutes of this land are current. Yea, were it not lest I be too tedious, I might distinctly show you the forementioned threefold certainty of all this. 1. A moral certainty of the strongest human faith; 2. A natural certainty, grounded upon physical impossibilities of the contrary; 3. And somewhat of a divine, supernatural attestation, by the continued blessing of God on the Scriptures, for the sanctifying of souls in every age.

And this bringeth me up to the last part of this chapter. I have all this while been showing how the three first parts of the Spirit's witness to Christ are made known to us, viz. prophecy, the holiness of the doctrine, and miracles. I come now in a word to the fourth.

Sec. 95. IV. How may we certainly know the fourth part of the Spirit's witness to Christ, viz. the success of his doctrine in the regeneration of his disciples, and the actual saving them from their sins."

Ans. I shall answer this, 1. As to the times past; and, 2. As to the present age.

Sec. 96. I. What men have been in times past, we have but these three ways to know: 1. By the history of those ages: 2. By their remaining works: 3. By their successors, in whom their belief and qualities are continued. And, 1. That there have been holy persons in all ages, yea, that all true christians were such, we have as good testimony as history can afford; whether you will judge of them by their profession, life, or sufferings. 2. Their remaining works are very great testimonies what a spirit of holiness, charity, and justice, doth breathe in the writings of those holy men, which are come to our hands. Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Cyprian, Ephrem Syrus, Macarius, Augustin, Gregory Nazianzen, Gr. Nyssen, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Salvian, Cassianus, Bernard, &c. 3. Those that succeed them at this day in the serious profession of christianity, are a living history of the virtues of their ancestors.

Sec. 97. II. Of the sanctity of the christians of this present age, there is a double knowledge to be had: 1. By them that are regenerate themselves; 2. By them that are not: between these ways of knowledge the difference must be great.

* Matt. i. 21. "He shall save his people from their sins." Vide qua de nomine Jesu habet Beda in Luc. ii. l. i. c. 7. fol. 62. p. 2. de numero 888 in literis numeralibus *Ihous* inclusio.

* Sicut ars in eo qui nactus est illam, ita gratia Spiritus in eo qui recepit, semper quidem præsens, at non perpetuo operans est. Basil. de Spir. sanct. Animæ afflatæ ac illustratæ Spiritu, fiunt et ipsæ spirituales; et in alios gratiam emittunt: hinc futurorum præsentia, arcanorum intelligentia,

Sec. 98. I. As he that hath learning, or love to his parents, or loyalty to his king, or faithfulness to his friend, may know that he hath it; so may he that is renewed by the Spirit of God, and hath a predominant love to God, a heavenly mind and conversation, a hatred of sin, and delight in holiness, a love to all men, even his enemies; a contempt of the world; a mastery over his fleshly appetite, sense, and lusts; a holy government of his passions, thoughts, and tongue; with a longing desire to be perfect in all this, and a supporting hope to see God's glory, and enjoy him in the delights of love and praise, for evermore.*

Sec. 99. This evidence of the Spirit of sanctification in ourselves, is not the reason or motive of our first faith, but of our confirmation, and fuller assurance in believing afterwards: for a man must in some sort believe in Christ, before he can know that he is sanctified by him.

The rest of the motives are sufficient to begin the work of faith; and are the means which God ordinarily useth to that end.

Sec. 100. It is Christ's appointed method, that by learning of him, and using his appointed means, men be brought up to such a degree of holiness, as to be able to discern this witness in themselves, and thence to grow up to full assurance of faith and hope; therefore, if any one that hath heard the gospel, do want this inward assuring testimony, it is because they have been false to the truth and means before revealed to them.

He that will but inquire into the gospel, and receive it and obey it so far as he hath reason to do it, and not be false to his own reason and interest, shall receive that renewing, sanctifying Spirit, which will be an abiding witness in himself. But if he will reject known truth, and refuse known duty, and neglect the most reasonable means that are proposed to him, he must blame himself if he continue in unbelief, and want that evidence which others have. Suppose, that in a common plague, one physician should be famed to be the only and infallible curer of all that take his remedies; and suppose many defame him, and say, He is but a deceiver; and others tell you, He hath cured us, and many thousands, and we can easily convince you, that his remedies have nothing in them that is hurtful, and therefore you may safely try them, especially having no other help: he that will so far believe in him, and trust him now, as to try his remedies, may live; but he that will not, must blame none but himself, if he die of his disease. He that trieth, shall know by his own cure and experience, that his physician is no deceiver: and he that will not, and yet complaineth that he wanteth that experimental knowledge, doth but talk like a peevish self-destroyer.

Sec. 101. II. He that yet hath not the evidence of the Spirit of regeneration in himself, may yet be convinced that it is in others; and thereby may know that Christ is indeed the Saviour of the world, and no deceiver.

Even as in the aforesaid instance, he that never tried the physician himself, yet if he see thousands cured by him, may know by that that he is not a deceiver; and so may be persuaded to trust and try him himself.

oculorum comprehensio, donorum distributiones, cœlestis conversatio, cum Angelis chœra; hinc gaudium nunquam finitundum, hinc in Deo perseverantia, et cum Deo similitudo, et quo nihil sublimius expeti potest, hinc est ut divinus fias. Basil. Ibid. Hoc itaque protest in Deum credere, recta fide, Deum colere, Deum nosse, ut et bene vivendi ab illo sit nobis auxilium; et si peccaverimus, indulgentiam mereamur; non in factis qua odit, securi perseverantes, &c. August. de Fid. et Operib. cap. 21. p. 34.

Sect. 102. The way to know that others are thus regenerated, is, 1. By believing them *fide humana*: 2. By discerning it in the effects.⁷

And though it be too frequent to have presumptuous, self-conceited persons, to affirm that the Spirit of Christ hath renewed them, when it is no such matter, yet all human testimony of matters so near men, even within them, is not, therefore, incredible; but wise men will discern a credible person from an incredible. In the forementioned instance, many may tell you, that they are cured by the physician, when it is not so; but will you therefore believe no one that telleth you that he is cured? Many may boast of that learning which they have not, and tell you, that they have knowledge in mathematics, or in several arts; but is no man therefore to be believed, that saith the same?

But yet I persuade no man here to take up with the bare belief of another man's word, where he seeth not enough in the effects to second it, and to persuade a reasonable man that it is true. But, as he that heareth a man that was sick profess that he is cured, may well believe him, if he see him eat, and drink, and sleep, and labour, and laugh, as the healthful used to do; so he that heareth a sober man profess with humble thanks to God that he hath changed and renewed him by his Spirit, may well believe him, if he see him live like a renewed man.

Sect. 103. Though you cannot be infallibly certain of the sincerity of any one individual person but yourself, because we know not the heart; yet may you be certain that all do not dissemble.

Because there is a natural impossibility that interests, and motives, and sufficient causes should concur to lead them to it: as I said before, we are not certain of any individual woman, that she doth not dissemble love to her husband and children; but we may be certain that all the women in the world do not, from many natural proofs which might be given.

Sect. 104. All these effects of renovation may be discerned in others. 1. You may discern that they are much grieved for their former sins. 2. That they are weary of the remnant of their corruption or infirmity. 3. That they long and labour to be delivered, and to have their cure perfected, and live in the diligent use of means to that end. 4. That they live in no sin, but smaller human frailties. 5. That all the riches in the world would not hire them deliberately and wilfully to sin, but they will rather choose to suffer what man can lay upon them. 6. That they are vile in their own eyes, because of their remaining imperfections. 7. That they do no wrong or injustice to any; or if they do wrong any, they are ready to confess it, and make them satisfaction. 8. That they love all good men with a love of complacency, and all bad men with a love of benevolence, yea, even their enemies; and instead of revenge, are ready to forgive, and to do what good they can for them and all men: and that they hate bad men in opposition to complacency, but as they hate themselves for their sins. 9. That they love all doctrines, persons, and practices, which are holy, temperate, just, and charitable. 10. That their passions at least are so far governed, that they do not carry them to swear, curse, or rail, or slander, or fight, or to do evil. 11. That their tongues are used

to speak with reverence of holy and righteous things, and not to filthy, ribald, railing, lying, or other wicked speech. 12. That they suffer not their lusts to carry them to fornication, nor their appetites to drunkenness or notable excess. 13. That nothing below God himself is the principal object of their devotion; but to know him, to love him, to serve and please him, and to delight in these, is the greatest care, and desire, and endeavour of their souls. 14. That their chiefest hopes are of heaven, and everlasting happiness with God, in the perfection of this sight and love. 15. That the ruling motives are fetched from God, and the life to come, which most command their choice, their comforts, and their lives. 16. That in comparison of this, all worldly riches, honours, and dignities, are sordid, contemptible things in their esteem. 17. That for the hope of this, they are much supported with patience under all sufferings in the way. 18. That they value and use the things of this world, in their callings and labours, in subserviency to God and heaven, as a means to its proper end. 19. That they use their relations in the same subserviency; ruling chiefly for God, if they be superiors, and obeying chiefly for God, if they be inferiors, and that with fidelity, submission, and patience, so far as they can know his will. 20. That their care and daily business in the world is, by diligently redeeming precious time, in getting and doing what good they can, to make ready for death and judgment, to secure their everlasting happiness, and to please their God.⁸

Sect. 105. All this may be discerned in others, with so great probability of their sincerity, that no charitable reason shall have cause to question it. And I repeat my testimony, that here is not a word which I have not faithfully copied out of my own heart and experience; and that I have been acquainted with multitudes, who, I verily believe, were much better than myself, and had a greater measure of all this grace.

Sect. 106. If any shall say, that men superstitiously appoint themselves unnecessary tasks, and forbid themselves many lawful things, and then call this by the name of holiness: I answer, that many indeed do so, but it is no such that I am speaking of: let reason judge, whether in this or any of the foregoing descriptions of holiness, there be any such thing at all contained.

Sect. 107. He that will be able to discern this Spirit of God in others, must necessarily observe these reasonable conditions: 1. Choose not those that are notoriously no christians, to judge of christianity by—a drunkard, fornicator, voluptuous, carnal, worldly, proud, or selfish person, calling himself a christian, is certainly but a hypocrite; and shall christianity be judged of by a lying hypocrite? 2. As you must choose such to try by, as are truly serious in their religion, so you must be intimate and familiar with them, and not strangers, that see them as afar off, for they make no vain ostentation of their piety. And how can they discern the divine motions of their souls, that only see them in common conversation? 3. You must not judge of them by the revilings of ignorant, ungodly men: 4. Nor by the reproach of selfish men, that are moved only by some interest of their own: 5. Nor by the words of faction, civil or religious, which judgeth of all men ac-

⁷ Non in meditatione sermonis et structura verborum, sed in rebus opere declarandis, tanquam doctrina viva, professio nostra posita est. Athenagor. Apol. B. P. p. 78. Yet there he complaineth that they were accused of the most odious villanies, without all show of cause.

⁸ Spiritus sanctus conceditur ad usum, ad miraculum, ad salutem, ad auxilium, ad solatium, ad fervorem. Ad usum

vite, bonis et malis communia bona tribuens: ad miraculum in signis et prodigiis. Ad salutem, cum toto corde revertitur ad Deum. Ad auxilium cum in omni collectatione adjuvat infirmitatem nostram: ad solatium cum testimonium perhibet spiritui nostro, quod filii Dei sumus: ad fervorem, cum in cordibus peccatorum vehementer spirans validum ignem charitatis accendit. Bern. Ser. 15. Pentecost.

cording to the interest of their sect, or cause and party : 6. Nor by your own partial interest, which will make you judge of men, not as they are indeed ; and towards God, but as they either answer or cross your interests and desires : 7. Nor must you judge of all by some that prove hypocrites, who once seemed sincere : 8. Nor must you judge of a man by some particular fall or failing, which is contrary to the bent of his heart and life, and is his greatest sorrow : 9. Nor must you come with a forestalled and malicious mind, hating that holiness yourself which you inquire after ; for malice is blind, and a constant false interpreter, and a slanderer. 10. You must know what holiness and honesty is, before you can well judge of them.

These conditions are all so reasonable and just, that he that liveth among religious, honest men, and will stand at a distance, unacquainted with their lives, and maliciously revile them, upon the seduction of false reports, or of interest, either his own interest, or the interest of a faction, and will say, I see no such honest and renewed persons, but a company of self-conceited hypocrites : this man's confirmed infidelity and damnation, is the just punishment of his wilful blindness, partiality, and malice, which made him false to God, to truth, and to his own soul.

Sect. 108. It is not some, but all true christians, that ever were or are in the world, who have within them this witness or evidence of the spirit of regeneration.^a

As I have before said, Christ will own no others : " If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. He that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple," Rom. viii. 4—9 ; 2 Cor. v. 17 ; Luke xiv. 26, 33. " They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts," Gal. v. 24. Indeed the church visible, which is but the congregate societies of professed christians, hath many in it that have none of this spirit or grace ; but such are only christians equivocally, and not in the primary, proper sense. " There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood ; and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater : for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself : he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son," 1 John v. 7—10.

Sect. 109. The more any one is a christian in degree, the more he hath of this witness of the sanctifying Spirit in himself, and the holier he is.

Sect. 110. The nearer any philosopher or others are like to christians, the nearer they come to this renewed image of God.^b

Sect. 111. As this image of God, the holiness of the soul, is the very end and work of a true Saviour, so the true effecting of it on all true christians, is actually their begun salvation ; and therefore the standing, infallible witness of Christ, which should confound unbelief in all that are indeed his own.

This, which I spake of in the foregoing chapter, is a testimony in every holy soul, which the gates of hell shall not prevail against.^c He that undertaketh to cure all of the plague, or stone, or gout, or fever, that will take his medicines, and be ruled by him, is certainly no deceiver if he do that which he undertaketh. He that undertaketh to teach all men arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, &c. who will come and learn of him, is certainly no deceiver if he do it. What is it that Jesus Christ hath undertaken ? think of that, and then tell me whether he be a deceiver. He never undertook to make his disciples kings, or lords, or rich, or honourable in the world ; nor yet to make them the best logicians, orators, astronomers, mathematicians, physicians, musicians, &c. ; but to make them the best men ; to renew them to the love of God in holiness, and thereby to save them from their sins, and give them repentance unto life. Nor hath he promised this to all that are baptized or called christians, but only to those that sincerely consent to learn of him, and take his counsel, and use the remedies which he prescribeth them. And is it not certain that Christ doth truly perform this undertaking ? How, then, can he be a deceiver, who doth perform all that he undertaketh ? Of this all true christians have a just demonstration in themselves, which is his witness.^d

Object. But Christ undertaketh more than this, even to bring us to everlasting blessedness in heaven.

Answe. It is our comfort that he doth so. But methinks it is easy to believe him in that, if he perform the rest. For, 1. I have proved in the first part of this book, that by the light of nature, a future life of retribution must be expected, and that man is made for a future happiness. 2. And who then should have that happiness, but the holy and renewed souls ? Doth not natural reason tell you, that so good a God will show his love to those that are good, that is, to those that love him ? 3. And what think you is to be done to bring any man to heaven, but to pardon him, and make him holy ? 4. And the nature of the work doth greatly help our faith. For this holiness is nothing but the beginning of that happiness.

When we find that Christ hath by his Spirit begun to make us know God, and love him, and delight in him, and praise him ; it is the easier to make us believe that he will perfect it. He that promiseth to convey me safely to the antipodes, may easily be believed, when he hath brought me past the greatest difficulties of the voyage. He that will teach me to sing artificially, hath merited credit when he hath taught me the gradual tones, the scale of music, the sol-fa-ing, the clefs, the quantity, the moods, the rules of time, &c. He that causeth me to love God on earth, may be believed if he promise me that I shall love him more in heaven. And he that causeth me to desire heaven above earth, before I see it, may be believed when he promiseth, that it shall be my great delight when I am there. It is God's work to love them that love him, and to reward the obedient ; and I must needs believe that God will do his work, and will never fail the just expectations of any creature. All my doubt is whether I shall do my part, and whether I shall be a prepared subject for that felicity. And he that resolveth this, resolveth all ; he that will make me fit for heaven, hath overcome the greatest difficulty of my belief, and I should the

entia lumen. Pignus salutis, ut ipse reddat testimonium spiritui tuo quod filius Dei sis : robur vite, ut quod per naturam tibi est impossibile, per gratiam ejus non solum possibile sed facili fiat : lumen scientie, ut cum omnia bene feceris, te servum inutilem putes ; et quicquid boni in te invenieris, illi tribuas, a quo omne bonum est. Bern. Serm. 2. Pentecost.

^a Inseparabilis est bona vita a fide quam per dilectionem operatur, imo vero ea ipsa est bona vita. Aug. de Fid. et Oper. c. 23.

^b See what I cited before of Socrates and his converts.

^c Nulla in discendo mora est, ubi spiritus sanctus doctor adest. Beda in Luc.

^d Spiritus Paracletus dat pignus salutis, robur vite, sci-

more easily believe that he will do the rest, and that I shall surely come to heaven when I am fit for it.

Object. But Christ doth not only undertake to regenerate and to save us, but also to justify us, and this by a strange way, by his sacrifice and merits.

Ans. The greater is his wisdom and goodness, as made known to us. I am sure an unpardoned, unrighteous person is incapable of felicity in that state; and I am sure I cannot pardon myself, nor well know which way else to seek it; and I am sure that so excellent and holy a person is fitter to be well-beloved of God than I. But I pray you remember, 1. That he undertaketh not to pardon or justify any man, whom he doth not renew and sanctify; 2. And that all his means, which seem so strange to you, are but to restore God's image on you, and fit you for his love and service. And this we can testify by experience, that he hath done in some measure in us; and if I find his means successful, I will not quarrel with it, because it seemeth strange to me. A physician may prescribe me remedies for some mortal disease, which I understand not, but seem unlike to do the cure; but if I find that those unlikely means effect it, I will not quarrel with him, nor refuse them, till I know myself to be wiser than he, and have found out some surer means.

It is most evident, then, that he who saveth us is our Saviour; and he that saveth us from sin, will save us from punishment; and he that maketh us fit for pardon, doth procure our pardon; and he that causeth us to love God above all, doth fit us to enjoy his love; and he that maketh us both to love him and to be beloved by him, doth prepare us for heaven, and is truly the Mediator.

Sec. 112. Four or five consecretaries are evident from this, which I have been proving: 1. That we have left no room for their insipid cavil, who say that we fly to a private spirit, or conceit, or enthusiasm, for the evidence of our faith.

There are some, indeed, that talk of the mere persuasion, or inward active testimony of the Spirit, as if it were an inward word that said to us, This is the word of God: * but this is not it which I have been speaking of; but the objective testimony, or evidence of our regeneration, which could not be effected but, 1. By a perfect doctrine; and, 2. By the concurrent work or blessing of God's Spirit, which he would not give to confirm a lie. The Spirit is Christ's witness in the four ways forementioned; and he doth moreover cause me to believe and increase that faith, by blessing due means; but for any enthusiasm, or unproved, bare persuasion, we own it not.

Sec. 113. II. That malignity is the highway to infidelity; as the holiness of his members is Christ's last, continued tendeth to the destruction of christianity in the world, by laying Christ's vineyard common to the wilderness, and confounding the godly and the notoriously ungodly, and representing christianity to pagans and infidels, as a barren notion, or a common and debauching way.

Sec. 114. III. That the destruction of true church discipline tendeth to the destruction of christianity in the world, by laying Christ's vineyard common to the wilderness, and confounding the godly and the notoriously ungodly, and representing christianity to pagans and infidels, as a barren notion, or a common and debauching way.

Sec. 115. IV. That the scandals and wickedness of nominal christians is, on the same accounts, the devil's way to extirpate christianity from the earth.

Sec. 116. V. That the great mercy of God hath provided a sure and standing means for the ascertaining multitudes of holy christians of the truth of the gospel, who have neither skill nor leisure to ac-

quaint themselves with the history of the church, and records of antiquity, nor to reason it out against a learned, subtile caviller, from other extrinsic arguments.

Abundance of honest, holy souls, do live in the fervent love of God, and in hatred of sin, and in sincere obedience, in justice and charity to all men, and in heavenly desires and delights; who yet cannot well dispute for their religion; nor yet do they need to fly to believe as the church believeth, though they know not what or why, nor what the church is. But they have that Spirit within them, which is the living witness and advocate of Christ, and the seal of God, and the earnest of their salvation: not a mere pretence that the Spirit persuadeth them, and they know not by what evidence; nor yet that they count it most pious to believe strongest without evidence; when they least know why. But they have the Spirit of renovation and adoption, turning the very bent of their hearts and lives from the world to God, and from earth to heaven, and from carnality to spirituality, and from sin to holiness.† And this fully assureth them, that Christ, who hath actually saved them, is their Saviour; and that he who maketh good all his undertaking, is no deceiver; and that God would not sanctify his people in the world by a blasphemy, a deceit and lie; and that Christ who hath performed his promise in this, which is his earnest, will perform the rest. And withal the very love to God, and holiness, and heaven, which is thus made their new nature by the Spirit of Christ, will hold fast in the hour of temptation, when reasoning otherwise is too weak. Oh what a blessed advantage have the sanctified against all temptations to unbelief! And how lamentably are ungodly sensualists disadvantaged, who have deprived themselves of this inherent testimony! If two men were born blind, and one of them had been cured, and had been showed the candlelight and twilight, how easy is it for him to believe his physician, if he promise also to show him the sun; in comparison of what it is to the other who never saw the light!

CHAPTER VIII.

OF SOME OTHER SUBSERVIENT AND COLLATERAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE CHRISTIAN VERITY.

HAVING largely opened the great evidence of the christian verity, viz. the Spirit in its four ways of testifying, antecedently, inherently, concomitantly, and subsequently; I shall more briefly recite some other subservient arguments, which I find most satisfactory to my own understanding.

Sec. 1. I. The natural evidence of the truth of the Scripture, about the creation of the world, doth make it the more credible to me in all things else.

For that is a thing which none but God himself could reveal to us. For the Scripture telleth what was done, before there was any man in being. And that this world is not eternal, nor of any longer continuance, is exceeding probable, by the state of all things in it. 1. Arts and sciences are far from that maturity, which a longer continuance, or an eternity, would have produced. Guns and printing are but lately found out: the body of man is not yet well anatomized; Asellius's milky veins, and Pecquet's receptacle of the chyle, and Bartholine's glandules, calliditatem, solertiam, contraque fictas omnium insidias facile se per se ipsam defendat! Cic. pro Cœli.

* Of this see Amyraldus in Thess. Salmuriens.

† O magna vis veritatis! quæ contra hominum ingenia,

and the vasa lymphatica, are of late discovery : Galilæus's glasses, and his four Medicæan planets, and the lunar mutations of Venus, and the strange either opacous parts and shape of Saturn, or the proximity of two other stars which misshape it to our sight, the shadowy parts of the moon, &c. with the innumerable stars in the via lactea, &c. were all unknown to former ages. Gilbert's magnetical discoveries, (I speak not of those questionable inferences which Campanella and others contradict,) the nature of many minerals and plants, the chief operations and effects of chemistry, abundance of secrets for the cure of many diseases, even the most excellent medicaments, are all of very late invention. Almost all arts and sciences are increasing nearer towards perfection. Ocular demonstrations by the telescope, and sensible experiments, are daily multiplied; yea, the world itself is not all discovered to any one part; but a great part of it was but lately made known even to the Europeans, whose knowledge is greatest, by Columbus, and Americus Vespasianus; and it is not long since it was first measured by a circumnavigation. If the world had been eternal, or of much longer duration than the Scripture speaketh, it is not credible that multiplied experiences would not have brought it above that infancy of knowledge in which it so long continued.

Object. Cursed wars by fire and depopulation, consume all antiquities, and put the world still to begin anew.

Ans. It doth indeed do much this way; but it is not so much that war could do; for when it is in one country, others are free; and some would fly, or lie hid, or survive, who would preserve arts and sciences, and be teachers of the rest. Who can think now that any wars are likely to make America, or Galilæus's stars, unknown again, or any of the forenamed inventions to be lost?

2. Moreover, it is strange, if the world were eternal, or much older than the Scripture speaketh, that no part of the world should show any older monument of antiquity; no engraven stones or plates; no mausoleums, pyramids, or pillars; no books; no chronological tables; no histories, or genealogies, or other memorials and records. I know to this, also, cursed wars may contribute much; but not so much, as to leave nothing to inquisitive successors.

Sec. 2. II. It greatly confirmeth my belief of the holy Scriptures, to find by certain experience, the original and universal pravity of man's nature, how great it is, and wherein it doth consist; exactly agreeing with this sacred word; when no others have made such a full discovery of it.

This I have opened and proved before; and he is a stranger to the world and to himself that seeth it not: were it not lest I weary the reader with length, how fully and plainly could I manifest it.

Sec. 3. III. The certain observation of the universal, spiritual war, which hath been carried on according to the first gospel, between the woman's and the serpent's seed, doth much confirm me of the truth of the Scriptures.*

Such a contrariety there is, even between Cain and Abel, children of the same father; such an implacable enmity, throughout all the world, in almost all wicked men against godliness itself, and those that sincerely love and follow it; such a hatred in those that are orthodoxly bred, against the true power, use, and practice of the religion which they themselves profess; such a resolute resistance of all that is seriously good and holy, and tendeth but to the saving of the resisters; that it is but a public,

visible acting of all those things which the Scripture speaketh of, and a fulfilling them in all ages and places in the sight of all the world. Of which, having treated largely in my treatise against infidelity of the sin against the Holy Ghost, I refer you thither.

Sec. 4. IV. It much confirmeth me to find that there is no other religion professed in the world, that an impartial, rational man can rest in.

That man is made for another life, the light of nature proveth to all men; and some way or other there must be opened to us to attain it. Mahometanism I think not worthy a confutation. Judaism must be much beholden to christianity for its proofs, and is but the introduction to it, inclusively considered. The heathens, or mere naturalists, are so blind, so idolatrous, so divided into innumerable sects, so lost and bewildered in uncertainties, and show us so little holy fruit of their theology, that I can incline to no more than to take those natural verities which they confess, and which they cast among the rubbish of their fopperies and wickedness, and to wipe them clean, and take them for some part of my religion. Christianity, or nothing, is the way.

Sec. 5. V. It much confirmeth me to observe, that commonly the most true and serious christians are the holiest and most honest, righteous men; and that the worse men are, the greater enemies they are to true christianity: and then to think how incredible it is that God should lead all the worst men into the truth, and leave the best and godliest in an error.

In small matters, or common secular things, this were no wonder: but in the matter of believing, worshipping, and pleasing God, and saving of souls, it is not credible. As for the belief of a life to come, no men are so far from it as the vilest whore-mongers, drunkards, perjured persons, murderers, oppressors, tyrants, thieves, rebels, or if any other name can denote the worst of men; and none so much believe a life to come, as the most godly, honest-hearted persons. And can a man that knoweth that there is a God, believe that he will leave all good men in so great an error, and rightly inform and guide all these beasts, or living, walking images of the devil. The same, in a great measure, is true of the friends and enemies of christianity.

Sec. 6. VI. It hath been a great, convincing argument with me, against both atheism and infidelity, to observe the marvellous providences of God, for divers of his servants, and the strange answer of prayers which I myself, and ordinarily other christians, have had.

I have been, and am, as backward to ungrounded credulity about wonders as most men, that will not strive against knowledge; but I have been often convinced by great experience, and testimonies which I believed equally with my eye-sight, of such actions of God, as I think would have convinced most, that should know as much of them as I did. But few of them are fit to mention; for some of them so much concern myself, that strangers may be tempted to think that they savour of self-esteem; and some of them, the factions and parties in these times will by their interest be engaged to distaste: and some of them have been done on persons, whose after-scantalious crimes have made me think it unfit to mention them, lest I should seem to put honour on a scandalous sinner, or seem to dishonour God's works by mentioning such an object of them: and I have much observed, that whatever wonder I ever knew done, in answer to prayer, or attestation of any born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."

* Even between the carnal, hypocritical, nominal christian and the true christian; as Gal. iv. 29, "As then he that was VOL. II. K

good, the devil hath, with marvellous subtlety, endeavoured, by some error or scandal of men, to turn it all against Christ, and to his own advantage. But yet God declareth the truth of his promises, by the deliverances of his servants, and the granting of prayers, which are put up to him in the name of Christ. I will not dispute whether these actions shall be called miracles, or not: it is enough for my purpose, if they be but attesting providences. All church history telleth us of many such heretofore: how great things have been done, and deliverances wrought, upon christians' earnest prayer to God! The success of the thundering legion in the army of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, in Germany, is commonly mentioned: you may see it in the Apolog. of Justin Martyr and Tertullian: see more in Pamelius's Notes on Tertull. p. 64. Cyprian saith to Demetrius, (p. 328,) of the christians' casting-out of devils, *O si audire velles et videre, quando a nobis adjuramus et torquentur spiritualibus flagris, et verborum tormentis de obsessis corporibus ejiciuntur, quando ejulantes et gementes voce humana, et potestate divina flagella et verbera sentientes, venturum judicium confitentur. Veni et cognosce vera esse quæ dicimus: et quia sic Deos colere te dicis, vel ipsi quos colis, crede: aut si volueris et tibi credere, de te ipso loquatur, audiente te, qui nunc tuum pectus obsedit. Videbis nos rogari ab eis quos tu rogas, tamen ab eis quos tu adoras: videbis sub manu nostra stare victos, et tremere captivos, quos tu suspicis et veneraris ut Dominos: certe vel sic confundi in istis erroribus tuis poteris, cum conspexeris et audieris Deos tuos, quid sint, interrogatione nostra statum prodere, &c.*

But it were too tedious to recite all that antiquity telleth us of this kind: later times have their testimonies also: Baynam could tell the papists that burned him, in the midst of the flames, "Lo, ye papists, here is a miracle: I feel no more pain in this fire than in a bed of down; it is as sweet to me as a bed of roses." Bishop Farrar could say, when he went to the fire, "If I stir in the fire believe not my doctrine;" and accordingly remained unmoved: many more you may see in martyrologies and church history. It was the merciful providence of God to Mrs. Honywood,^b who, in her passionate self-accusations, when the minister was persuading her of the pardon of her sin, threw the glass which was in her hand up to the wall, saying, "She was as certainly a hypocrite, as that glass would break;" and it fell to the ground, and remained unbroken. They were convincing providences, which God exercised on the

leading women of the familistical sect which troubled New England: when one of them, Mrs. Dyer, brought forth a monster that had the parts of man, beast, birds, and fishes; and the other, their prophetess, Mrs. Hutchinson, brought forth about thirty misshapen lumps or births at once; and thereby the land was awakened and delivered from the danger.^c

My own deliverances by prayer, because they were my own, I think not fit here to express; nor many other persons, that were familiar with me, some yet living, and some dead: nor would I mention such small things as corporal deliverances and cures, but only because they are matters of sense, and somewhat unusual; and not as supposing them the great matters which christians have to look after or expect in answer to their prayers: they are far greater things which prayer brings to all true christians: the strength of the Spirit against temptations; the mortification of those sins which nature, constitution, temperature, custom, and interest, would most strongly draw them to; the special assistances of God in duty; the information of the mind, by a light which sheweth the evidence of the truth in a special clearness; the resolution of doubts; the conquest of passions; the elevation of the soul in divine love and praises; the joy of the Holy Ghost, and comfortable thoughts of the coming of Christ, and our endless blessedness with God in heaven. These are the answers of prayer, which are the fulfilling of the promises of Christ, and which are of greater moment than miracles, of which we have ordinary experience.

SECT. 7. VII. It confirmeth my belief of the gospel, to observe the connaturality and suitableness which it hath to the best and holiest souls: that by how much the better, in true honesty, and charity, and heavenliness, any man is, by so much the more is the gospel beloved, pleasant, and suitable to him; as human food is to human nature.

My much converse in the world with men of all sorts, but most with the persons now described, hath given me opportunity to be fully assured of the truth of this experiment, beyond all doubt. And that which is the best in man, is certainly of God: and therefore that which is suitable and connatural to the best in man, must be of God also.

SECT. 8. VIII. It confirmeth my belief of the gospel, to find it so very suitable to the world's diseases, necessities, and business; to reconcile them to God, and fill them with love and heavenly-mindedness; which other religions do meddle with so little, and superficially, and ineffectually.

^b See her story in Fuller's Worthies of England.

^c Which Mr. Weld, of New England, hath printed: and upon Mr. Stubbs's extenuation, in his book for Sir Henry Vane, against me, in letters since he hath fully confirmed. The many miracles mentioned by such credible persons as Augustin (De Civit. Dei) and other learned, holy men, deserve some credit sure. Victor Uticensis telleth of many confessors, whose tongues were cut out by the Crian Vandal Hunnerichus, who spake freely without tongues; and Aeneas Gazæus, in a notable treatise for the immortality of the soul, saith the same, and that he saw them himself; and hath more such wonders. Ego novi multa bonorum virorum corpora, quæ etiam phalanges demonum, tantopere terrent, quantopere ipsi vexabant hominem abs se captum atque obsessum; itemque morbos innumeris quibus curandis ars medica non sufficeret, ipsa facile curarent, purgarent, omninoque auferrent. Id. ibid. p. 411. B. P. Even Cicero, speaking of some sacrilegious, impious persons, could observe, Qui vero ex his et omnium scelerum principes fuerunt, et præter cæteros in omni religione impii, non solum vita cruciati (vel cum cruciati, ut Lambinus) atque dedecore, verum etiam sepultura ac justis exequiis caruerunt. Lib. 2. de Leg. p. 245. And to the objection, that it falleth out otherwise, and that the best suffer most, he answereth, Non recte estimamus quæ pœna sit divina: et opinionibus, vulgi rapimur in errorem, nec vera cernimus: morte aut dolore corporis, aut

luctu animi, aut offensione judicii, hominum miseras ponderamus: quæ fateor humana esse, et multis bonis viris accidisse: sceleris autem pœna tristis, et præter eos eventus qui sequuntur, per se ipsa maxima est. Videmus eos qui nisi odissent patriam, nunquam inimici nobis fuissent, ardentes cum cupiditate, tum metu, tum conscientia; quid agerent modo timentes, vicissim contemnentem religionem. And he concludeth, Duplicem pœnam esse divinam, quod constaret et ex vexandis vivorum animis, et ex fama mortuorum, ut eorum exitium et judicio vivorum, et gaudio comprobetur. Ibid. I desire the learned reader to read the three miracles which Aen. Gazæus saith he saw with his own eyes, in his Theophrast. in Bib. Pat. Gr. To. 2. p. 414, 415. The first, of an old man, that raised one from the dead: the second, of a good man, that when he was dying, promised his scholar, that was blind, that within seven days he should have his sight, which accordingly came to pass: the third, of the confessions before mentioned, that by prayer could speak most articulately without tongues: all these he professeth he saw with his own eyes; and the rationality and piety of his writings maketh his testimony the more credible. Lege Palladii Historiam Lausiac, c. 52. de miraculo ab ipso viso. Though I know that as apparitions, so miracles are too oft counterfeited, yet all that are recorded by the ancient doctors and historians cannot be so thought, especially when we have seen something like them.

Sect. 9. IX. The matter of the gospel is so holy and spiritual, and against all sin, and evil spirits, that it is incredible that evil spirits, or very bad men, should be the inventors of it: and yet to forge so many miracles and matters of fact, and call a man God, and to perplex the world with needless, delusory strictnesses, and to father all this on God himself, would have been a villany so transcendent, that none but men extremely bad could do it. Therefore it must needs be the design of heaven, and not of men.

Sect. 10. X. When I deeply consider the evidence of verity in the gospel, it hath as much to convince me, as I could have chosen or desired.

Sect. 11. I. If I had been put myself to choose by what means God should open to man the things of the unseen world, I could have desired no more than that a messenger might come to us from heaven, to tell it us; unless we had either sight and sense, or immediate vision and fruition.

And I am fully satisfied, 1. That spiritual things are invisible, and are no objects of corporeal sense. 2. That it is not meet and honourable to God's wisdom and justice to govern rational free agents *in via*, by sight and sense. It would be no trial, or thanks to the most sensual wrtch, to forbear his sin, if heaven and hell were open to his sight. 3. That spiritual vision and fruition is our state *in patria*; our end and perfection, and not fit for the state of trial and travellers in the way.

Sect. 12. II. If I had been to choose who this messenger should be, I could have preferred none before him, who is the very wisdom, truth, and word of God.

Had it been but an angel, I might have thought that his indefectibility and veracity is uncertain to mankind on earth; but wisdom and truth itself can never lie.

Sect. 13. III. If I had been to choose in what way this messenger should converse with man, as an effectual and suitable teacher of these mysteries, and how the work of mediation between God and man should be performed, I could have desired no fitter way than that he should assume our nature, and in that nature familiarly instruct us, and be our example, and our high priest toward God, by his merit, sacrifice, and intercession.

Sect. 14. IV. Had I been to choose what way he should prove his message to be of God, I could not have chosen a more satisfying way than that of prophecy, sanctity, and open numerous and uncontrolled miracles, with his own resurrection and ascension, and giving the Holy Ghost to be his advocate and witness continually to the world.

Sect. 15. V. I could not have expected that these miracles should be done in the sight of all the persons in the world, in every place and age, (for then they would be but as common works,) but rather before such chosen witnesses, as were fit to communicate them to others.

Sect. 16. VI. Nor could I have chosen a fitter way for such witnesses to confirm their testimony by, than by the same Spirit of holiness and power, and by such a stream of miracles as the apostles wrought, and such success in the actual renovation of their followers.

Sect. 17. VII. Nor could I well have chosen a more meet and convincing way of history or tradition, to convey down all these things to us, than that before described, which hath been used by God.

Sect. 18. VIII. Nor could I have chosen any one standing seal and witness of Christ, so fit for all per-

sons, learned and unlearned, and to endure through all generations, as is the actual saving of men, by the real renovation of their hearts and lives by the Holy Spirit, reclaiming them from selfishness, sensuality, worldliness, and other sin, and bringing them up to the image of God's holiness, in love and heavenliness; which is the continued work of Christ.

So that when God hath done all things so, as my very reason is constrained to acknowledge best, what should I desire more? I confess I feel still that my nature would fain be satisfied by the way of sight and sense. Could I see heaven and hell, I think it would most effectually end all doubts. But my reason is satisfied that it is a thing unmeet, and utterly unsuitable to a world that must be morally governed and conducted to their end.

Sect. 19. XI. The temptations of Satan, by which he would hinder us from faith, love, and obedience, are so palpable, malicious, and importunate, that they do much to confirm me of the truth and goodness of that word and way which he so much resisteth.

I think that there are few men, good or bad, if they will observe both the inward suggestions with which they are oft solicited, for matter, manner, and season, and the outward impediments to every good work, and invitations to evil, which they meet with in their conversations, but may be convinced that there are malicious spirits, who are enemies to Christ and us, and continually by temptations fight against him.

Sect. 20. XII. The devil's contracts with witches opposing Christ, and engaging them to renounce their baptism, and to forsake his ways, is some confirmation of the christian verity.

That witches really there are, as I said before, he that will read Remigius and Bodin only, may be satisfied, as also the Malleus Maleficorum, Danæus, &c.; and the numerous instances in Suffolk and Essex, about twenty-one years ago, may further satisfy them. And that the devil draweth them to such renunciations of the covenant and ordinances of Christ, the many histories of it are full proof.^a

Sect. 21. XIII. Though many such reports are fabulous and delusory, yet there have been certainly proved, in all ages, such apparitions as, either by opposition or defence, have borne some testimony to the christian faith.

Of both these last, see what I have written in my "Treatise of Infidelity," and in the "Saints' Rest," part ii. and read Lavater De Spectris, et Zanchius, tom. 3. lib. iv. cap. 10, and cap. 20. Del Rio, &c. And what I said before, especially the narrative called "The Devil of Mascon," and Dr. Moor, "Of Atheism."

Sect. 22. XIV. The speeches and actions of persons possessed by the devil, usually raging blasphemously against Christ, do somewhat confirm the christian verity.

That there are, and have been, many such, there hath been unquestionable evidence. See my "Saints' Rest," part ii. p. 258, &c.; Zanchius, tom. 3. lib. iv. cap. 10. p. 288; Forestus de Veneris, observ. 8; in Schol. Pet. Mart. Loc. Com. clas. i. cap. 9; Fernel. De addit. rerum causis, lib. ii. cap. 16; Platerus Observ. p. 20; De stupore Dæmon, &c.: Tertul. Apol. cap. 23; Cyprian. Epis. Ad Demetrium; Origen. in Matt. 17; Augustin De Divinat.; Dæmon, &c.

Sect. 23. XV. Lastly: the testimony of the enemies of christianity is some encouragement to faith.^c

What conjectures there be that Pythagoras had phecy, that he is fain to say, that it was written after the things were fulfilled; saith Grot. Imo Petri miracula Phlegon Adriani imperatoris libertus in Annalibus suis commemoravit: inquit Grotius de Verit. Rel. l. 3.

^a Of the abundance of witches at that time read Bishop Hall, sol. 15. p. 53, 54. Read Edm. Bower, "Of the Salisbury Witch."

^c Porphyry was so convicted of the truth of Daniel's pro-

his knowledge from the Jews, and Plato was not a stranger to Moses's writings, hath been showed by many. How plain it is that the wiser and better any heathens have been, the nearer they have come in their doctrines to that of Jesus Christ, I need not say much to convince the considerate, that are men of reading. How the Jews were convinced of the miracles of Christ, and fled to the accusation of Christ as a magician, is already showed. The wisest and best of the Roman emperors favoured them. Dion Cassius, in the Life of Nerva Cocceius, page 1, saith, *Ceterum Nerva omnes qui impietatis in Deos rei fuerant, eos absolvi voluit: exules in patriam reduxit.* These that were called impietatis rei, were the Jews and christians who refused to sacrifice to idols: and he addeth, *Et ne servi de cætero dominos criminarentur, edicto veluit, neve liceret aut impietatis, aut Judaicæ secta quemquam de hinc insinulari.* It seemeth by this that when displeased servants would be revenged on their masters, they used to accuse them of christianity, or Judaism.

Trajan did something against the christians, being provoked by the Jews, who, saith Dion Cassius, in Vita Trajani, did make one Andrew their captain, and, about Cyrene, murdered, of Greeks and Romans, above two hundred thousand men; but upon Pliny's information of the christians' innocency and unjust sufferings, their persecutions were moderated.¹

Adrian also was exasperated by the Jews, who, as Æl. Spartianus saith, in Adrian, *Movrant bellum, quod vebantur mutilare genitalia:* and the christians were taken for a sort of Jews, and so suffered often for their faults. But Serennius Granianus Legatus, a Roman nobleman, writing to Adrian, how unjust it was, upon vulgar clamour, to kill innocent christians only for their religion, Adrian wrote to Minutius Fundanus, proconsul of Asia, that no christian should suffer, but for proved crimes. Euseb. Hist. lib. 4.²

Lampridius, in Alexand. Sever. saith: *Quod (viz. templum Christo facere) et Adrianus cogitasse fertur; qui templa in omnibus civitatibus sine simulari christi fieri: quæ hodie idcirco, quia non habent numina, dicuntur Adriani; quæ ille ad hoc parasse dicebatur: sed prohibitum est ab his, qui consulentes sacra repererant, omnes christianos futuros, si id optato evenisset, et templa reliqua deserenda.*

Lucian honoureth the christians, while he derideth them for their sufferings and faith, saying: *Persuaserunt sibi infelices christiani, se immortalitate fruituros, perpetuoque victuros esse: ideo et mortem magno contemnunt animo: ac non pauci sua sponte semetipsos occidendos offerunt; postquam vero semel a nobis desciverunt, Græcorum Deos constanter abnegant, &c.*

When Adrian had found how the christians differed from the Jews, and had suffered by Barchochebas, because they would not join in the rebellion, when he had ended the war, he gave Jerusalem to the christians and others, to inhabit: saith Eusebius.

Antoninus Pius published this edict for the christians: *Si quisquam cuiquam christiano, quia christianus sit pergat molestiæ quicquam aut criminis inferre, ille cui crimen illatum erit, etiamsi christianus reipsa deprehensus sit, absolvatur: qui autem illum accusa-*

verat, justum debitumque supplicium subeat: adding a decree of Adrian's thus: *Pro quibus hominibus et aliis provinciarum præsidēs, jam ante divo patri meo scriperunt: quibus ille rescriptis, nequid inturbarent hoc genus hominum nisi qui convicti essent tentasse quippiam contra rempublicam.* Euseb. Hist. lib. 4.

And though, under that excellent prince, Antoninus Philosophus, some persecution was raised, it was mostly by officers at a great distance, in France, &c.; yet all was staid, and favour showed them, upon the miraculous relief of the army by rain, upon the christian soldiers' prayers, called Legio Fulminatrix, when they were at war with the Quadi: of which see Jul. Capitolin., Dion Cass., Tertul. Apolog., Euseb. lib. 5., Orosium, &c. His letters to the senate are these: *Credibile est christianos, licet eos impios existimemus, Deum pro munimento habere in pectore: simul enim atque humi sese abjecerunt, et preces fuderunt, ad ignotum mihi Deum, statim e cælo pluvia delapsa est, in nos quidem frigidissima, in nostros vero hostes grandio et fulmina: eorumque orationibus et precibus statim Deus præsto fuit, qui neque vinci neque expugnari potest. Quamobrem concedamus talibus, ut sint christiani, ne quæ tela ejus generis contra nos petant et impetrent.*

After this emperor, a company of beasts successively followed; yet most of them were restrained from great persecutions: Commodus was restrained by Martia, a friend to the christians, as Dio Cass. writeth; and others by other means. And the christians often tendered their apologies: among whom, Apollonius, a senator, in the reign of Commodus, offered a book for christianity, and was beheaded; Euseb. lib. 5. But of all the emperors that were from Augustus to Constantine, there were but ten that persecuted the christians, of whom, those that I have mentioned, who reversed their decrees, or restrained the persecutors, were a part.

Septim. Severus forbade any to become christians; but what judgments did fall upon divers of his presidents, who persecuted the christians, and what convictions some of them had by miracles, is worth the reading in Tertullian ad Scapul.

Alexander Severus, the most excellent of all the heathen emperors, not excepting Antoninus Philos. was guided by the renowned Ulpian, and his mother Mammea, supposed a christian: of him, saith Lampridius, *Judæis privilegia reservavit: christianos esse passus est: yea, in the mornings, he went to prayer, in lacario suo, in quo et divos principes, sed optimos electos, et animas sanctiores, in quibus et Apollonium; et quantum scriptor suorum temporum dicit, Christum, Abraham, et Orpheum, et hujusmodi Deos habebat. Yea, saith the same Lampridius, Christo templum facere voluit, eumque inter Deos recipere: Quod et Adrianus cogitasse fertur, &c.; ut ante. And after: Cum christiani quandam locum, qui publicus fuerat, occupassent; contra, popinarii dicerent sibi eum deberi; rescriptis, melius esse ut quomodocunque illi Deus colatur; quam popinariis dedatur. The great strictness of the christian churches in the election of their pastors, he made his example in the choice of his officers: Dicebatque grave esse, cum id christiani et Judæi facerent in prædicandis sacerdotibus qui ordi-*

¹ Fuit vero prodigiorum apud sepulchra editorum tanta frequentia, tot eorum testes, ut etiam Porphyrio ejus rei confessionem expresserit inquit. Grot. l. 3.

² I know what a stir is made about Josephus's Testimony of Christ; some accounting it current, and some as foisted in by some christian; but I doubt not to say, that to those who well consider all, the middle opinion of B. Usher will appear to be far the most probable: viz. That the whole sentence is current, except those words, "This was Christ;" and that some christian having written those words as expository in the margin of his book, they afterwards crept thence into the text.

Athenagoras tells M. Aurel. Antoninus, the emperor, and L. Aur. Commodus, to whom he wrote: Nec dubito quin vos etiam doctissimi et sapientissimi principes, historiarum et scripta Mosis, Esaiæ, Hieremie, et reliquorum prophetarum aliqua ex parte cognoveritis.—Sed vobis relinquo qui libros novistis, studiosius, in illorum prophetias inquirere ac perpendere, &c. Apol. p. in B. p. 56, 57. And it is like that Antonine learned somewhat from the Scriptures, as well as Severus, if he so well knew them; and thence received some of his wisdom and virtue.

nandi sunt, non fieri in provinciarum rectoribus, quibus fortuna hominum committuntur et capita: that is, *Nomina eorum proponebat, hortans populum, si quis quid haberet criminis, probaret manifestis rebus; si non probaret, pœnam subire capitis.* He made a saying of Christ's motto, saith Lamprid: *Clamabatque sæpius quod a quibusdam sive Judæis sive christianis audierat, et tenebat; idque per præconem cum aliquem emendaret, dici jubebat, Quod tibi novis, alteri ne feceris: quam sententiam usque adeo dilexit, ut et in palatio, et in publicis operibus, præscribi juberet.* Thus you see what opinion the best Roman heathen emperors had of Christ and the christians. Paul had liberty in Rome to preach in his hired house to any that would come and hear him; (Acts xviii. 31;) no man forbidding him. And those emperors that did persecute christianity, were either such beasts as Nero, or at best such as never understood the reason of that religion, but persecuted they knew not what. And it was not so much for the positive parts of christianity that they persecuted them, as for the negatives, even for denying honour and worship to those idols, whom the Romans had been long accustomed to adore. So that *Tollite impios, Tollite impios*, was the cry of the rabble, as if it had been ungodliness to deny their gods: and to sacrifice or burn incense on the idols' altars was that ordinary command which they disobeyed, to the suffering of death.

As Grotius saith, (lib. 3.) *Multa habemus testimonia quæ historicæ istis libris traditæ partes aliquot confirmant. Sic Jesus cruci affixum, ab ipso et discipulis ejus miracula patrata, et Hæbræi et pagani memorant. De Herode, Pilato, Festo, Felice, de Johanne Baptista, de Gamaliele, de Jerosolymorum excidio, exstant scripta luculentissima Josephi edita paulo post annum a Christi obitu 40. Cum quibus consentient ea quæ apud Thalmudicos de iisdem temporibus leguntur. Neronis sævitiam in christianos Tacitus memoriæ prodidit. Exstabant olim et libri tum privatorum ut Phlegontis, tum et acta publica, ad quæ christiani, provocabant, quibus constabat de eo sedere, quod post Christum natum apparuit, de terræ motu, et solis deliquio contra naturam, plenissimo lunæ orbe, circa tempus quo Christus crucis supplicio affectus est.*

Celsus and Julian do not deny the miracles of Christ: Mahomet himself confesseth Christ to be a true prophet, and the Word of God; and condemneth the Jews for rejecting him. He confesseth his miraculous nativity, and mighty works, and that he was sent from heaven to preach the gospel: he bringeth in God as saying, "We have delivered our declarations to Jesus the son of Mary, and strengthened him by the Holy Ghost." And, "We have delivered him the Gospel, in which is direction and light," &c. : and he teacheth his followers this creed, "Say, We believe in God, and that which was delivered to Moses and Jesus, and which was delivered to the prophets from their Lord. We distinguish not between any of them, and we deliver up ourselves to his faith." And if Christ be to be believed, as Mahomet saith, then christianity is the true religion; for, as for his and his followers' reports, that the Scriptures are changed, and that we have put out Christ's prediction that Mahomet must be sent, &c. they are fables, not only unproved, but before here proved utterly impossible.

Read Eusebius, Eccles. Hist. I. viii. c. 17 and 18, and I. ix. c. 10. of God's strange judgments on Maximinus, the emperor; whose bowels being tormented, and his lower parts ulcerated with innume-

merable worms, and so great a stink as killed some of his physicians; which forced him to confess, that what had befallen him was deservedly, for his madness against Christ; for he had forbidden the christians their assemblies, and persecuted them: wherefore he commanded that they should cease persecuting the christians; and that, by a law and imperial edict, their assemblies should be again restored: he confessed his sins, and begged the christians' prayers, and professed that if he were recovered, he would worship the God of the christians, whom by experience he had found to be the true God.

See Bishop Fotherby's Atheomast. I. i. c. 3. p. 140, 141, comparing his case with Antiochus's.

Paulus Orosius, Hist. lib. 6, *fine*, telleth us of a fountain of oil which flowed a whole day in Augustus's reign, and how Augustus refused to be called Dominus, and how he shut up Janus's temple because of the universal peace; and that *Eo tempore, id est, eo anno quo fortissimam verissimamque pacem ordinatione Dei Cæsar composuit, natus est Christus; cujus adventum pax ista famulata est: in cujus ortu audientibus hominibus exultantes angeli cecinerunt, Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.*

See also what, after others, he saith of Tiberius motioning to the senate, that Christ might be accounted a God; and Sejanus resisting it: lib. 7. Auct. Bib. Pat. to. I. p. 209, where he saith also, that *aliquanti Græcorum libri* attested the darkness at Christ's death. And lib. 7. p. 216, he sheweth that, as after the ten plagues of Egypt, the Israelites were delivered, and the Egyptians destroyed, so was it in the Roman empire with the christians and pagans, after the particular revenges of the ten persecutions. But because he is a christian historian, I cite no more from him.

CHAPTER IX.

YET FAITH HATH MANY DIFFICULTIES TO OVERCOME:
WHAT THEY ARE; AND WHAT THEIR CAUSES.

There are two sorts of persons who may possibly peruse these things, and are of tempers so contrary, that what helpeth one may hurt the other: the first are those who see so many objections and difficulties, that they are turned from the due apprehension of the evidences of christianity, and can think of nothing but stumblingblocks to their faith. To tell these men of more difficulties, may add to their discouragement, and do them hurt: and yet I am not of their mind that think they should be therefore silenced; for that may tempt them to imagine them unanswerable, if they come into their minds: the better way for these men is, to desire them better to study the evidence of truth. And there are other men, who must be thought on, who seeing no difficulties in the work of faith, do continue unfortified against them, and keep up a belief by mere extrinsic helps and advantages, which will fall as soon as the storms assault it; and because no doubt is well overcome that is not known, and *nil tam certum quam quod ex dubio certum est*, I will venture to open the difficulties of believing.*

SECT. I. That believing in Christ is a work of difficulty, is proved both by the paucity of sound believable incredible continet. Nam rebus quæ dubitandi causam non habent, non credere, eorum est qui sano judicio in discutienda veritate minime utuntur. Athenagor. Leg. p. 82.

* Omnis credendi difficultas non temere ex futili nulliusque iudicii opinione nascitur; sed ex valida causa, et verisimilitudine munita: tum enim incredulitas rationem justam habet, quum ipsa res de qua non creditur, quiddam

lievers, and the imperfection of faith in the sincere; and the great and wonderful means which must be used to bring men to believe.

Superficial believers are a small part of the whole world, and sound believers are a small part of professed christians: and these sound believers have many a temptation, and some of them many a troublesome doubt, and all of them a faith which is too far from perfection. And yet all the miracles, evidences, arguments, and operations aforesaid, must be used to bring them even to this.

Sec. 2. The difficulties are, I. Some of them in the things to be believed. II. Some of them in extrin-
sical impediments. III. And some of them in the mind of man who must believe.

Sec. 3. I. The mysteriousness of the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, hath always been a difficulty to faith, and occasioned many to avoid christianity, especially the Mahometans; and many heretics to take up devices of their own, to shift it off.

Sec. 4. II. The incarnation of the Second Person, the eternal Word, and the personal union of the divine nature with the human, is so strange a condescension of God to man, as maketh this the greatest of difficulties, and the greatest stumblingblock to infidels and heretics.

Sec. 5. III. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the advancement of man's nature in him above the angelical nature and glory, is a difficulty.

Sec. 6. IV. To believe all the history of the miracles of Christ, the prophets, and apostles, is difficult, because of the strangeness of the things.

Sec. 7. V. It is not without difficulty firmly to believe the immortality of souls, and the endlessness of the felicity of the life to come.^b

Sec. 8. VI. And it hath proved hard to many to believe the endless miseries of damned souls in hell.

Sec. 9. VII. And it is as hard to believe the paucity of the blessed, and that the damned are the far greater number.

Sec. 10. VIII. And that so great a change, and so holy a life, is necessary to salvation, hath proved a difficulty to some.

Sec. 11. IX. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is one of the greatest difficulties of all.

Sec. 12. X. So is Christ's coming into the world so late, and the revealing of his gospel to so few, by prophecy before, and by preaching since.

Sec. 13. XI. So also was the appearing meanness of the person of Christ, and of his parentage, place, and condition in the world; together with the manner of his birth.

Sec. 14. XII. The manner of his sufferings and death upon a cross, as a malefactor, under the charge of blasphemy, impiety, and treason, hath still been a stumblingblock both to Jews and gentiles.

Sec. 15. XIII. So hath the fewness and meanness of his followers, and the number and worldly pre-eminence and prosperity of unbelievers and enemies of Christ.

Sec. 16. XIV. The want of excellency of speech and art in the holy Scriptures, that they equal not other writings in logical method and exactness, and in oratorical elegancies, is a great offence to unbelievers.

Sec. 17. XV. As also that the physics of Scripture so much differeth from philosophers'.

Sec. 18. XVI. As also the seeming contradictions of the Scripture do much offend them.

Sec. 19. XVII. And it offendeth them, that faith

^b Si animus sit quinta illa, non nominata magis quam intellecta natura: multo integratiora et puriora sunt ut a terra longissime se efferant. Cicer. Tuscul. Qu. l. i. pag. 223.

in Christ himself is made a thing of such excellency and necessity to salvation.

Sec. 20. XVIII. And it is hard to believe, that present adversity and undoing in the world is for our benefit and everlasting good.

Sec. 21. XIX. And it offendeth many, that the doctrine of Christ doth seem not suited to kingdoms and civil governments, but only for a few private persons.

Sec. 22. XX. Lastly, the prophecies, which seem not intelligible, or not fulfilled, prove matter of difficulty and offence. These are the intrinsic difficulties of faith.

Sec. 23. II. The outward adventitious impediments to the belief of the christian faith are such as these: 1. Because many christians, especially the papists, have corrupted the doctrine of faith, and propose gross falsehoods, contrary to common sense and reason, as necessary points of christian faith, as in the point of transubstantiation.

Sec. 24. II. They have given the world either false or insufficient reasons and motives, for the belief of the christian verity; which, being discerned, confirmeth them in infidelity.

Sec. 25. III. They have corrupted God's worship, and have turned it from rational and spiritual, into a multitude of irrational, ceremonious fopperies, fitted to move contempt and laughter in unbelievers.

Sec. 26. IV. They have corrupted the doctrine of morality, and thereby hidden much of the holiness and purity of the christian religion.

Sec. 27. V. They have corrupted church history, obtruding or divulging a multitude of ridiculous falsehoods in their legends and books of miracles, contrived purposely by Satan to tempt men to disbelieve the miracles of Christ and his apostles.

Sec. 28. VI. They make christianity odious, by upholding their own sect and power by fire, and blood, and inhuman cruelties.

Sec. 29. VII. They openly manifest that ambition and worldly dignities, and prosperity in the clergy, is their very religion; and withal pretend that their party, or sect, is all the church.

Sec. 30. VIII. And the great disagreement among christians is a stumblingblock to unbelievers, while the Greeks and Romans strive who shall be the greatest; and both they, and many other sects, are condemning, unchurching, and reproaching one another.

Sec. 31. IX. The undisciplined churches, and wicked lives of the greatest part of professed christians, especially in the Greek and Latin churches, is a great confirmation of infidels in their unbelief.^c

Sec. 32. X. And it tempteth many to apostasy, to observe the scandalous errors and miscarriages of many who seemed more godly than the rest.

Sec. 33. XI. It is an impediment to christianity, that the richest, and greatest, the learned, and the far greatest number in the world, have been still against it.

Sec. 34. XII. The custom of the country, and tradition of their fathers, and the reasonings and cavils of men that have both ability, and opportunity, and advantage, do bear down the truth in the countries where infidels prevail.

Sec. 35. XIII. The tyranny of cruel, persecuting princes, in the Mahometan and heathen parts of the world, is the grand impediment to the progress of christianity, by keeping away the means of knowledge.

And of this the Roman party of christians hath

^c Leg. Naz. anz. Orat. 26 et 32.

given them an encouraging example, dealing more cruelly with their fellow-Christians, than the Turks and some heathen princes do; so that tyranny is the great sin which keepeth out the gospel from most parts of the earth.

SECT. 36. III. But no impediments of faith are so great as those within us; as, 1. The natural strangeness of all corrupted minds to God, and their blindness in all spiritual things.

SECT. 37. II. Most persons in the world have weak, injudicious, unfurnished heads, wanting the common, natural preparatives to faith, not able to see the force of a reason, in things beyond the reach of sense.

SECT. 38. III. The carnal mind is enmity against the holiness of christianity, and therefore will still oppose the receiving of its principles.

SECT. 39. IV. By the advantages of nature, education, custom, and company, men are early possessed with prejudices and false conceits against a life of faith and holiness, which keep out reforming truths.

SECT. 40. V. It is very natural to incorporated souls, to desire a sensible way of satisfaction, and to take up with things present and seen, and to be little affected with things unseen, and above our senses.^d

SECT. 41. VI. Our strangeness to the language, idioms, proverbial speeches then used, doth disadvantage us as to the understanding of the Scriptures.

SECT. 42. VII. So doth our strangeness to the places and customs of the country, and many other matters of fact.

SECT. 43. VIII. Our distance from those ages doth make it necessary, that matters of fact be received by human report and historical evidence; and too few are well acquainted with such history.

SECT. 44. IX. Most men do forfeit the helps of grace by wilful sinning, and make atheism and infidelity seem to be desirable to their carnal interest, and so are willing to be deceived; and forsaking God, they are forsaken by him, flying from the light, and overcoming truth, and debauching conscience, and disabling reason, for their sensual delights.

SECT. 45. X. Those men that have most need of means and help, are so averse and lazy, that they will not be at the pains and patience to read, and confer, and consider, and pray, and use the means which are needful to their information; but settle their judgment by slight and slothful thoughts.

SECT. 46. XI. Yet are the same men proud and self-conceited, and unacquainted with the weakness of their own understandings, and pass a quick and confident judgment on things which they never understood; it being natural to men to judge according to what they do actually apprehend, and not according to what they should apprehend, or is apprehended by another.

SECT. 47. XII. Most men think it the wisest way, because it is the easiest, to be, at a venture, of the religion of the king and the country where they live; and to do as the most about them do, which is seldom best.

SECT. 48. XIII. Men are grown strangers to themselves, and know not what man is, or what is a reasonable soul; but have so abused their higher faculties, that they are grown ignorant of their dignity and use, and know not that in themselves which should help their faith.

SECT. 49. XIV. Men are grown so bad and false,

and prone to lying themselves, that it maketh them the more incredulous of God and man, as judging of others by themselves.

SECT. 50. XV. The cares of the body and world do so take up the minds of men, that they cannot afford the matters of God and their salvation such retired, serious thoughts, as they do necessarily require.

SECT. 51. XVI. Too few have the happiness of judicious guides, who rightly discern the methods and evidences of the gospel, and tempt not men to unbelief by their mistaken grounds and unsound reasonings. These are the impediments and difficulties of faith in the persons themselves who should believe.

CHAPTER X

THE INTRINSICAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH RESOLVED.

Object. 1. The doctrine of the Trinity is not intelligible or credible.

Ans. 1. Nothing at all in God can be comprehended or fully known by any creatures. God were not God, that is, perfect and infinite, if he were comprehensible by such worms as we. Nothing is so certainly known as God, and yet nothing so imperfectly.

2. The doctrine of the Trinity in unity is so intelligible and credible, and is so admirably apparent in its products, in the methods of nature and morality, that to a wise observer it maketh christianity much the more credible, because it openeth more fully these excellent mysteries and methods. It is intelligible and certain that man is made in the image of God; and that the noblest creatures bear most of the impress of their Maker's excellency; and that the invisible Deity is here to be known by us, as in the glass of his visible works; of which the rational or intellectual nature is the highest with which we are acquainted.^a And it is most certain that in the unity of man's mind or soul, there is a trinity of essentialities, or primalities, (as Campanella calleth them); that is, such faculties as are so little distinct from the essence of the soul as such, that philosophers are not yet agreed, whether they shall say, it is *realiter, formaliter, relative vel denominatione extrinseca*. To pass by the three faculties of vegetation, sensation, and intellection; in the soul, as intellectual, there are the essential faculties of power, executive or communicative, *ad extra*; intellect and will, *posse, scire, velle*.^b and accordingly in morality or virtue, there is in one new creature or holy nature, wisdom, goodness, and ability or fortitude, and promptitude to act according to them; and in our relation to things below us, in the unity of our dominion or superiority, there is a trinity of relations, viz. we are their owners, their rulers, according to their capacity, and their end and benefactors. So that in the unity of God's image upon man, there is this natural, moral, and dominative image; and in the natural, the trinity of essential faculties; and in the moral, the trinity of holy virtues; and in the dominative, a trinity of superior relations.^c

in Unity, in the Harmony of Musical Concordance, in the Division Violist, pag. 17.

^b Read Campanella's Metaphysics, and his Atheismus triumphatus, of this.

^c Richardus in Opuscul. ad S. Bernard. de appropriatis personarum, inquit, quod potentia, sapientia, et bonitas, sunt

^d Magni autem est ingenii, revocare mentem a sensibus, et cogitationem a consuetudine abducere. Cicero Tuscul. Qu. 1. p. 222.

¹ See part 1. chap. 5. Pardon the repetitions here for the reasons after mentioned. See before, in the margin of chap. 5. part 1. the Collection of Christopher Simpson, Of Trinity

And though the further we go from the root, the more darkness and dissimilitude appeareth to us, yet it is strange to see even in the body, what analogies there are to the faculties of the soul, in the superior, middle, and inferior regions; and in them, the natural, vital, and animal parts, with the three sorts of humours, three sorts of concoctions, and three sorts of spirits answerable thereto, and admirably united; with much more, which a just scheme would open to you. And, therefore, seeing God is known to us by this his image, and in this glass, though we must not think that any thing in God is formally the same as it is in man, yet, certainly, we must judge that all this is eminently in God; and that we have no fitter notions and names concerning his incomprehensible perfections, than what are borrowed from the mind of man. Therefore, it is thus undeniable, that God is in the unity of his eternal, infinite essence, a trinity of essentialities, or active principles, viz. power, intellect, and will; and in their holy perfections, they are omnipotent, omniscience or wisdom, and goodness; and in his relative supremacy is contained this trinity of relations, he is our Owner, our Rector, and our chief Good, that is, our Benefactor and our End.

And as in man's soul, the *posse, scire, velle*, are not three parts of the soul, it being the whole soul, *quæ potest, quæ intelligit et quæ vult*, and yet these three are not *formaliter*, or how you will otherwise call the distinction, the same; even so in God, it is not one part of God that hath power, and another that hath understanding, and another that hath will; but the whole Deity is power, the whole is understanding, and the whole is will. The whole is omnipotency, the whole is wisdom, and the whole is goodness, the Fountain of that which in man is called holiness, or moral goodness; and yet, formally, to understand is not to will, and to will is not to be able to execute.

If you say, What is all this to the Trinity of hypostases or persons? I answer, Either the three subsistences in the Trinity are the same with the *potentia, intellectus, and voluntas*, in the divine essence, or not: if they are the same, there is nothing at all unintelligible, incredible, or uncertain in it; for natural reason knoweth that there is all these eminently in God; and whoever will think that any human language can speak of him, must confess that his omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness, his power, intellect, and will, must be thus to man's apprehension distinguished; otherwise, we must say nothing at all of God, or say that his power is his willing, and his willing is his knowing, and that he willeth all the sin which he knoweth, and all that he can do; which language will, at best, signify nothing to any man.^d

notissima quid sint apud nos, qui ex visibilibus invisibilia Dei per ea quæ facta sunt intellecta conspiciamus: et quoniam in elementis, et plantis, et brutis reperitur potentia sine sapientia; et in homine et in angelo reperitur potentia, sed non sine sapientia! Et in Lucifero reperitur potentia et sapientia, sine bonitate et charitate, seu bona voluntate: sed in homine bono, bonoque in angelo, non datur bona voluntas, nisi adit posse et scire: igitur sunt tria hæc distincta; et posse est per se ut principale, sapientia est a potentia, et ab utriusque voluntas et amor.

^d Ecce in uno capite, duo tibi sunt oculi: sed est substantiæ eorum unus aspectus, &c. Quod si unus substantiæ in te ista bina continent unitatem, non vis in Deo Patre et Filio vere duas personas unam habere substantiam. Ambrosius Conflic. cum Serapione, p. 364. Vid. Cæsari Dialog. Q. 2. de triplici lumine. *Ἐστὶν αὖτε τριπλὴν αὐτῷ ἔργον*, inquit Theophil. Antioch. ad Autol. l. 1. p. 3. Leg. August. de Trinitate, et Dialog. ex eo excerpt. de Trinit. in B. P. Gr. Lat. to. i. p. 540.

^e Nihil aliud est Filius vel Verbum Dei, quam cogitatio, vel ars, vel sapientia ejus—Nihil aliud Sp. Sanctus quam amor Dei intelligitur. Id. Ibid. p. 542, 543.

And it is to be noted, that our Saviour, in his eternal subsistence, is called, in Scripture, the Wisdom of God (or his Internal Word); and in his operations, in the creation, he is called, the Word of God, as operative or efficient; and in his incarnation he is called, the Son of God: though these terms be not always and only thus used, yet usually they are.

The words of an ancient, godly writer before cited, are considerable: Potho Prumensis, De Statu Domus Dei, lib. i. p. 567. in Biblioth. Patr. t. 9. *Tria sunt invisibilia Dei; h. e. potentia, sapientia, benignitas, a quibus omnia procedunt, in quibus omnia subsistunt, per quæ omnia reguntur: Pater est potentia, Filius sapientia, Spiritus Sanctus benignitas. Potentia creat, sapientia gubernat, benignitas conservat. Potentia per benignitatem sapienter creat: sapientia per potentiam benigne gubernat: benignitas per sapientiam potenter conservat: sicut imago in speculo cernitur, sic in ratione anime. Huius similitudini Dei approximatur homo; cui potentia Dei dat bonum posse: sapientia tribuit scire; benignitas præstat velle: hæc triplex anime rationalis vis est; scil. posse, scire, velle; quæ supradictis tribus fidei, spei, et charitati cooperantur, &c.* Read more in the author, and in Raimundus Lullius; and among later writers, in Campanella, Raymundus de sabundis, &c. as I said before. He that will give you a scheme of divinity in the true method, will but show you how all God's works and laws flow from these three essentialities or principles; and the three great relations founded in them, his being our Owner, Ruler, and chief Good; and how all our duty is branched out accordingly in our correlations. He will show you the trinity of graces, faith, hope, and love; and the three summary rules, the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue; and, in a word, would show you that the Trinity revealeth itself through the whole frame of true theology or morality; but who is able to discern it in the smaller and innumerable branches?^f

Yea, if ever it were to be hoped that our physics should be brought into the light of certainty and true method, you would see unity in trinity in all things in the world; you would see that in the sun and the other celestial luminaries, which are the glorious images of the intellectual world, in the unity of their essence there is a moving, illuminating, and heating power, and that no one of these is formally the other, nor is any one of them a part of the sun or other luminary, much less a mere accident of quality, but an essential, active principle or power; the whole luminary being essentially a principle of motion, light, and heat, which are not accidents in them, but acts flowing immediately from their essential powers, as intellection and volition from the soul.

I shall now say no more of this, but profess that

^f Leg. et Hilar. de Trinit. Vide Maxim. Mystagog. Ecclesiast. c. 6. Per talem rationem venit homo ad cognitionem Dei, quod est unus in substantia, et trinus in personis. Istud idem videt homo in seipso: nam ipse videt bene quod semper habuit homo in seipso potentiam, et post potentiam, sapientiam.—Et de ambabus venit amor: et quod videt homo quod ita est in seipso, ex hoc intelligit bene quod ita est in Deo, qui est ultra illum, viz. Quod in Deo sit potestas, et de illa potestate venit sapientia, et de utraque venit amor. Et propter hoc quod ex prima persona venit secunda, et de ambabus procedit tertia, ideo prima persona vocatur Pater, secunda Filius, tertia Spiritus Sanctus. Isto modo venit homo primo ad cognitionem Dei sui creatoris, quomodo est sine principio, et quare vocatur Deus, unus substantia, trinus personis. Et quia prima persona vocatur Pater, secunda Filius, tertia Spiritus Sanctus; et quia appropinquatur potestas Patri, sapientia Filio, bonitas et amor Sp. Sancto: tali modo debet cognoscere Deum Filium, et iste modus cognitionis est fundamentum contemplationis. Edmund. Archiep. Cantuari. Specul. Eccles. c. 28. See more of this before, cap. 5.

the discovery of the emanations or products of the Trinity, and the image and *vestigia* of it, in the course of nature and method of morality, doth much increase my reverence to the christian doctrine : so far is the Trinity from being to me a stumbling block.

Object. But what are such trinities in unity as these to the Trinity of persons in the Deity? Such weak arguments will but increase incredulity. Will you pretend to prove the Trinity by natural reason; or would you persuade us that it is but three of God's attributes, or our inadequate conceptions of him? *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa: ergo*, no creature can reveal to us the Trinity.

Ans. 1. It is one thing to prove the sacred Trinity of persons by such reason, or to undertake fully to open the mystery; and it is another thing to prove that the doctrine is neither incredible nor unlikely to be true; and that it implieth no contradiction or discordancy, but rather seemeth very congruous both to the frame of nature and of certain moral verities. This only is my task against the infidel.

2. It is one thing to show in the creatures a clear demonstration of this Trinity of persons, by showing an effect that fully answereth it; and another thing to show such *vestigia*, adumbration or image of it, as hath those dissimilitudes which must be allowed in any created image of God. This is it which I am to do.

3. He that confoundeth the attributes of God, and distinguisheth not those which express these three essential primalities or active principles to which our faculties are analogous, from the rest; or that thinketh that we should cast by this distinction, under the name of an inadequate conception, so far as we can imagine these principles to be the same, and that there is not truly in the Deity a sufficient ground for this distinction; is not the man that I am willing now to debate this cause with; I have done that sufficiently before. Whether the distinction be real, formal, or denominative, the Thomists, Scotists, and nominals, have disputed more than enough; but even the nominals say that there is a sufficient ground for the denomination, which some call virtual, and some relative; and they that dispute of the distinction of persons, do accordingly differ, calling it either relative, virtual, formal, or moral, or *ratione ratiocinata*, as they imagine best; and they that differ about these do accordingly differ about the difference of the faculties of our souls: for my part, I see not the least reason to doubt but that the Trinity of divine primalities, principles, and perfections hath made its impress on man's soul in its three parts, viz. the natural, the moral, and the dominative parts. In the first we have an active power, an intellect and free-will: in the second, fortitude, or holy promptitude and strength; wisdom and goodness, or love: in the third, we are to the inferior creatures their owners, rulers, and benefactors, or end; and whatever you will call our faculties, and their moral perfections, it is undoubted that in God, his omnipotency, wisdom, and goodness are his essence, and yet as much distinct as is aforesaid. And what mortal man is able to say whether the distinction of persons be either greater or less than this? And remember, that as I speak of motion, light, and heat, both as in the faculties of the sun, as I may call them, and in the acts or emanations; and of the power, intellect, and will of man, both as in the faculties and acts; so do I here of the divine primalities; yet so, as supposing that in God, who is called a pure act, there is not such a difference between power and act as there is in man or other creatures.

4. No man, I think, is able to prove, that the works of the Trinity, *ad extra*, are any more undivided, than the works of the three essential active principles: they are so undivided, as that yet the work of creation is eminently, or most notably, ascribed to the Father, (as is also the sending of the Son into the world, the forgiving of sin for his sake, &c.) and the work of redemption to the Son, and the work of sanctification to the Holy Ghost: we shall be as loth to say, that the Father or Holy Ghost was incarnate for us, or died for us, or mediates for us, as that the power or love of God doth the works which belong to his wisdom. And the essential wisdom and love of God are no more communicable to man, than the Son and Holy Spirit, who are said to be given to us, and to dwell within us. The Scripture often calleth Christ the wisdom of God: and *λόγος* is both the *ratio* et *oratio*, the internal and expressed (or incarnate) word. And he that understandeth that by the Holy Ghost, which is said in Scripture to be given to believers, is meant the habitual or prevalent love to God, will better understand how the Holy Ghost is said to be given to them that already have so much of it as to cause them to believe. Abundance of heretics have troubled the church with their self-devised opinions about the Trinity, and the person and natures of Christ: and I am loth to say, how much many of the orthodox have troubled it also, with their self-conceited, misguided, uncharitable zeal, against those whom they judged heretics. The present divisions between the Roman church, the Greeks, the Armenians, Syrians, Coptics, and Ethiopians, is too sad a proof of this; and the long contention between the Greeks and Latins about the terms *hypostatis* and *persona*.

5. And I would advise the reader to be none of those, that shall charge with heresy all those schoolmen and late divines, both papists and protestants, who say, that the three persons are *Deus seipsum intelligens*, *Deus a seipso intellectus*, et *Deus a seipso amatus*, though I am not one that say as they: nor yet those holy men whom I have here cited, Potho Prumensis, Edmundus Archiepisc. Cantuariensis, et Parisiensis, and many others, who expressly say, that *potentia*, *sapientia*, et *amor*, are the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.^s

6. But for my own part, as I unfeignedly account the doctrine of the Trinity the very sum and kernel of the christian religion, (as expressed in our baptism,) and Athanasius's Creed the best explication of it that ever I read, so I think it very unmeet in these tremendous mysteries, to go further than we have God's own light to guide us: and it is none of my purpose at all to join with either of the two forementioned parties, nor to assert that the mystery of the blessed Trinity of hypostases, or persons, is no other than this uncontroverted Trinity of essential principles. All that I endeavour is but as aforesaid, to show that this doctrine is neither contradictory, incredible, nor unlikely, by showing the *vestigia* or image of it, and that which is as liable to exception, and yet of unquestionable truth. And if the three hypostases be not the same with the trinity of principles aforesaid, yet no man can give a sufficient reason why three in one should not be truly credible and probable in the one instance, when common, natural reason is fully satisfied of it in the other. He must better understand the difference between a person and such an essential principle *in divinis*, than any mortal man doth, who will undertake to prove from the title of a "person" that one is incredible or

^s See Bp. Lucy, in the end of his book against Hobbs, proving the Trinity by Lully's reasons.

unlikely, when the other is so clear and sure; or rather, he understandeth it not at all, that so imagineth. For my part, I again, from my heart, profess, that the image or *vestigia* of Trinity in unity through the most notable parts of nature and morality, do increase my estimation of the christian religion, because of the admirable congruity and harmony.

Object. II. But who is able to believe the incarnation and hypostatical union? If you should read that a king's son, in compassion to poor flies, or fleas, or lice, had himself become a fly, or flea, or louse, (had it been in his power,) to save their lives, would you have thought it credible? And yet the condescension had been nothing to this, as being but of a creature to a creature.^b

Ans. This is indeed the greatest difficulty of faith: but if you do not mistake the matter, you will find it also the greatest excellency of faith. 1. Therefore, you must take heed of making it difficult by your own error. Think not that the Godhead was turned into man, (as you talk of a man becoming a fly,) nor yet that there was the least real change upon the Deity by this incarnation; nor the least real abasement, dishonour, loss, injury, or suffering to it thereby. For all these are not to be called difficulties, but impossibilities and blasphemies. There is no abatement of any of the divine perfections by it, nor any confinement of the essence: but as the soul of man doth animate the body, so the Eternal Word doth, as it were, animate the whole human nature of Christ. As Athanasius saith, As the reasonable soul and human flesh do make one man, so God and man are one Christ: and that without any coaction, limitation, or restriction of the Deity. 2. And this should be no strange doctrine, nor incredible to most of the philosophers of the world, who have one part of them taught, that God is the Soul of the world, and that the whole universe is thus animated by him; and another part, that he is the Soul of souls, or intelligences, animating them as they do bodies. That, therefore, which they affirm of all, cannot by them be thought incredible of one. And it is little less, if any thing at all, which the peripatetics themselves have taught of the assistant forms (intelligences) which move the orbs; and of the agent-intellect in man; and some of them, of the universal soul in all men. And what all their vulgar people have thought of the deifying of heroes, and other men, it is needless to recite: Julian himself believed the like of Esculapius. None of these philosophers, then, have any reason to stumble at this, which is but agreeable to their own opinions. And, indeed, the opinion that God is the Soul of souls, or of the intellectual world, hath that in it which may be a strong temptation to the wisest to imagine it: though, indeed, he is no constitutive form of any of those creatures, but to be their Creator and total Efficient is much more. What union it is which we call hypostatical, we do not fully understand ourselves: but we are sure that it is such as no more abaseth

the Deity, than its concurrence with the sun in its efficiencies.ⁱ

Object. But what kin are these assertions of philosophers to yours, of the incarnation of the Eternal Word and Wisdom of God?

Ans. What was it but an incarnation of a deity which they affirmed of Esculapius and such others? And they that thought God to be the soul of the world, thought that the world was as much animated with the Deity as we affirm the human nature of Christ to have been; yea, for aught I see, whilst they thought that this soul was parcelled out to every individual, and that matter only did *pro tempore* individuate, they made every man to be God incarnate. And can they believe that it is so with every man, and yet think it incredible in christianity that our human nature is personally united with the divine? I think in this they contradict themselves.

3. And it is no way incredible that God should value man according to his natural worth and usefulness, as an intellectual agent, capable of knowing, and loving, and praising him, and enjoying him. His creating us such, and his abundant mercies to us, do abundantly prove the truth of this. Nor is it incredible that he should be willing that his depraved creature should be restored to the use and ends of its nature: nor is it incredible that God should choose the best and fittest means to effect all this. Nothing more credible than all this.

4. And it is not incredible at all that the incarnation of the Eternal Word should be the fittest means for this reparation. If we consider, 1. What question we should have made of the word of an angel, or any mere creature, that should have said he came from God to teach us, seeing we could not be so certain that he was infallible and indefectible. 2. And how short a creature would have fallen in the priestly part of mediation. 3. And how insufficient he would have been for the kingly dignity, and universal government and protection of the church, and judgment of the world. 4. And withal, that God himself being the Glorifier of himself, and the Donor of all felicity to us, it is very congruous that he should most eminently himself perform the most eminent of these works of mercy.

5. And it much assisteth my belief of the incarnation, to consider that certainly the work that was to be done for man's recovery was the winning of his heart to the love of God from himself and other creatures; and there was no way imaginable so fit to inflame us with love to God, as for him most wonderfully to manifest his love to us, which is more done in the work of man's redemption than any other way imaginable; so that being the most suitable means to restore us to the love of God, it is fittest to be the way of our recovery, and so the more credible.

6. And it much suppresseth temptation to unbelief in me, to consider that the three grand works in which God's essentialities declare themselves, must needs be all such as beseech God; that is, most

perti Tuitiens. de Divin. Offic. l. 11. c. 2, 3, 4. Quod nomen Patri, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti propria veri Dei descriptio sit, &c. per totum lib. Arnob. (ubi supra, l. 1.) telleth the heathens how many they worship as gods, who once were men, as Jupiter, Esculapius, Hercules, &c. p. 6. Leg. Theodori Presbyteri Rbathuensis Præpar. et Meditat. de Incarnat. Christi. et Heresibus circa eandem. Leg. et Theodori Abucæar Opuscul. 2. explan. vocum quibus philosophi utuntur, &c. Et ejusdem fidem orthodox. missam ad Armen. a Thoma Patriarch. Hierosol. Vide et Theorian. Dialog. cum Generalis. Armeniorum. At Deus Verbum nihil ipsum a sociatæ, et animæ immutatum neque illorum imbecillitatis particeps, sed eis suam divinitatem impartiens, unum cum eis sit; et permanet, quod erat ante junctionem. Vide cætera in Nemesio Emissen. de Natura hom. c. 3.

^b Arnobius junior, in his conflict, cum Serapione, useth this similitude: As fire and gold are two distinct substances, yet fire is of itself invisible, till by union with the heated gold it becometh visible: so Christ's divine nature and his human, &c. Leg. p. 368, 369. And to the question, Utrum Pater Filium genuerit necessitate an voluntate? he answereth, "Neither: because understanding or wisdom is not necessitated, and yet is antecedent to volition." But by necessity he seemeth to mean that which is by constraint. Vide Nat. Fervardent. in loc. Leg. Methodii Resp. ad eos qui dicunt, Quod profuit nobis Filius Dei homo factus? &c. Edit. per Greter.

ⁱ Junilius (part. Div. Leg. l. 1. c. 19.) saith, that Et essentia vel natura facit, quia ei nihil accidens est, et tamen voluntate, quia nihil facit necessitate vel coactus. Speaking of his operations as he is Bonus, Sapiens, Fortis. Leg. Ru-

wonderful, transcending man's comprehension. And as his omnipotency showed itself, with wisdom and love, in the great work of creation, so was it meet that his wisdom should show itself most wonderfully in the great work of redemption, in order to the as wonderful declaration of his love and goodness, in the great work of our salvation, our regeneration, and glorification. And therefore if this were not a wonderful work, it were not fit to be parallel with the creation, in demonstrating God's perfections to our minds.

Object. III. But how incredible is it that human nature should, in a glorified Christ, be set above the angelical nature!

Answ. There is no arguing in the dark, from things unknown, against what is fully brought to light. What God hath done for man, the Scripture hath revealed, and also that Christ himself is far above the angels. But what Christ hath done for angels, or for any other world of creatures, God thought not meet to make us acquainted with. There have been christians who have thought, (by plausible reasonings from many texts of Scripture,) that Christ hath three natures, the divine, and a super-angelical, and a human; and that the Eternal Word did first unite itself to the super-angelical nature, and in that created the world; and in that appeared to Abraham and the other fathers; and then assumed the human nature last of all for redemption. And thus they would reconcile the Arians and the orthodox. But the most christians hold only two natures in Christ: but then they say, that he that hath promised that we shall be equal with the angels, doth know that the nature of man's soul and of angels differ so little, that in advancing one, he doth as it were advance both; and certainly maketh no disorder in nature, by exalting the inferior *in sensu composito*, above the superior and more excellent. Let us not then deceive ourselves, by arguing from things unknown.

Object. IV. There are things so incredible in the Scripture miracles, that it is hard to believe them to be true.

Answ. I. No doubt but miracles must be wonders; they were not else so sufficient to be a divine attestation, if they were not things exceeding our power and reach. But why should they be thought incredible? it is because they transcend the power of God, or his wisdom, or his goodness; or because they are harder to him than the things which our eyes are daily witnesses of. Is not the motion of the sun and orbs, and especially of the *primum mobile*, which the peripatetics teach, yea, or that of the earth and globes, which others teach, as great a work as any miracle mentioned in the holy Scriptures? Shall any man that ever considered the number, magnitude, glory, and motions of the fixed stars, object any difficulty to God? Is it not as easy to raise one man from the dead, as to give life to all the living?

2. And are not miracles according to our own necessities and desires? Do not men call for signs and wonders, and say, If I saw one rise from the dead, or saw a miracle, I would believe; or at least, I cannot believe that Christ is the Son of God, unless he work

miracles? And shall that be a hinderance to your belief, which is your last remedy against unbelief? Will you not believe without miracles, and yet will you not believe them because they are miracles? This is but mere perverseness; as much as to say, we will neither believe with miracles nor without.

3. Impartially consider of the proof I have before given you, of the certain truth of the matter of fact, that such miracles were really done: and then you may see, not only that they are to be believed, but the doctrine to be the rather believed for their sakes.

Object. V. It is hard to believe the immortality of the soul, and the life to come, when we consider how much the soul dependeth in its operations on the body; and how it seemeth but gradually to exceed the brutes: especially to believe the eternity of it, or its joys; when *omne quod oritur interit*; and if eternity a *parte ante* be proper to God, why not eternity a *parte post*?^k

Answ. I. The immortality of the soul, and consequently its perpetual duration, and a life of retribution after this, did not seem things incredible to most of the heathens and infidels in the world: and I have proved it before by evidence of nature to common reason. So that to make that incredible in christianity, which philosophers and almost all the world hold, and which hath cogent natural evidence, is to put out the eye of reason as well as of faith.

2. And that it hath much use of, or dependence on, the body in its present operations, is no proof at all that when it is out of the body it can no otherwise act or operate. Not to meddle with the controversy, whether it take with it hence the material, sensitive soul as a body afterward to act by; or whether it fabricate to itself an ethereal body; or remain without any body of itself? It is certain, that it was not the body that was the principle of intellection and volition here; but it was the soul which did all in the body, but according to the mode of its present co-existence: seeing, then, that it was the soul that did it here, why may it not also do it hereafter? If the candle shine in the lantern, it can shine out of it, though with some difference: he is scarce rational that doubteth whether there be such things as incorporeal, invisible intelligences, minds, or spirits; and if they can act without bodies, why may not our minds? Though the egg would die if the shell were broken, or the hen did not sit upon it, it doth not follow that, therefore, the chicken cannot live without a shell, or sitting on. Though the embryo and infant must have a continuity with the mother, and be nourished by her nourishment, it doth not follow that, therefore, it must be so with him, when he is born and grown up to ripeness of age. And when there is full proof that souls have a future life to live, it is a folly to doubt of it, merely because we cannot conceive of the manner of their acting without a body; for he that is not desirous to be deceived, must reduce things uncertain and dark, to those that are clear and certain, and not contrarily: all good arguing is a *notioribus*, and not a *minus notis*. The nearer any being is in excellency unto God, the more there is in it which is hard to be comprehend-

^k Fuge garrulitates anxias philosophorum, qui asserere non erubescunt, suas canumque animas eandem tenere speciem. Basil. Hexam. l. 8. Interp. Eustath. Leg. Mammerti Claudiani l. 3. de statu animæ; et præcipue Gr. Nyssenum; et quæ ex eo citantur in Cæsarii Dialog. 3. This stuck with Galen, and some such. His et talibus adductus Socrates, nec patronum quæsit ad iudicium capitis, nec iudeibus supplex fuit: adhibuitque liberam contumaciam a magnitudine animi ductum, non a superbia; et supremo vitæ die de hoc ipso multa disseruit; et paucis ante diebus, cum facile posset educi e custodia, noluit: et cum pene in manu jam mortiferum illud teneret poculum, locusus ita est, ut non ad mortem, verum in

cælum videretur ascendere. Ita enim censebat, atque disseruit: duas esse vias, duplicesque cursus animorum: e corpore excedentium: nam qui se humanis vitiis contaminassent, et se totos libidini deditissent, quibus cæcæ velut domesticis vitiis atque flagitiis se inquinassent, vel in republica violanda fraudes inexpliabiles conceperissent, iis devium quoddam iter esse seclusum a concilio Deorum: qui autem se integros castosque servassent, quibusque fuisset minima cum corporibus contagio, seseque ab his semper se vocassent, essentque in corporibus humanis vitam imitati Deorum; his ad illos a quibus essent profecti, reditum facilem patere. Cicer. Tuscul. l. 1. p. 233.

ed: spirits and minds are excellent beings; and therefore very imperfectly known even by themselves, while they are in the lantern, the shell, the womb of flesh. The eye is not made to see its own sight, though it may see in a glass the organ of its sight: and as sight seeth not sight, or hearing heareth not hearing, or taste tasteth not tasting, &c. the act being not its own object; but yet by seeing other things, I am most certain that I see; and by hearing, tasting, smelling, &c. I am certain that I hear, taste, and smell: so is not the intellect here fitted intuitively to understand its own act of understanding; but by understanding other objects, it understandeth that it doth understand (though, I confess, some learned men in this think otherwise, viz. that the intellect intuitively knoweth itself). If a man have a watch which is kept in order, to tell him the hour of the day, though he know not the reason of the frame, the parts, and motions, nor how to take it into pieces, and set it again together, yet it serveth his turn to the use he bought it for. And a ship may carry him who is unacquainted with the workmanship that is in it: and so, if a man's soul know how to love and please its Maker, and know itself morally, it attaineth its end, though it know not itself physically so far, as to be able to anatomize its faculties and acts. Argue not, therefore, from obscurities against the light.

And that man doth not differ from a brute only in degree, but specifically, he that is indeed a man doth know: considering what operations the mind of man hath above brutes; not only in all the most abstruse and wonderful arts and sciences, astronomy, geometry, music, physic, navigation, legislation, logic, rhetoric, &c. but also his knowledge of a Creator, a love and fear of him, an obedience to him, and a care for an everlasting life. Whether brutes have analogical ratiocination or not, it is certain that these things are far above them.¹

2. If by the eternity of our felicity, were meant only an *ævum* of very long duration, it would be so strong a motive to godliness and christianity, with any rational man, as to weigh down all the counterpleasures of this world.

3. But as long as there is no want of power in God to perpetuate our blessedness, nor any proof that it is disagreeable to his wisdom or his will, why should that seem incredible to us, which is sealed and attested so fully by supernatural revelation, as I have proved? If once the revelation be proved to be divine, there is nothing in this which reason will not believe.

4. And all they that confess the immortality and perpetuity of the soul, must confess the perpetuity of its pleasure or pain.

5. And why should it be hard for the peripatetic to believe the perpetuity of the soul, who will needs believe the eternity of the world itself, both as a *parte ante*, and a *parte post*; surely it should seem no difficulty to any of that opinion.

Object. VI. Who can believe that God will torment

¹ Campanella well noteth, that the soul hath naturally a certain inward knowledge or sense of itself; but when men go about to bring this to such a knowledge as we have of things extrinsecal by ratiocination, they oftentimes reason themselves into ignorance and error. And Cicero hath the very same: *Nec vero de hoc quisquam dubitare posset, nisi idem nobis accideret diligenter de animo cogitantibus, quod iis saepe uno venit, qui acriter oculos deficientem solem intuerentur, ut aspectum omnino amitterent; sic mentis acies seipsum intuens, nonnunquam hebescit; ob eamque causam contemplandam diligentiam amittimus.* Cic. *Tuscul. l. 1. p. 233.*

^m *Sospitru ubi incidisset in disputationem de anima in genere; quæ ejus pars supplicio puniatur, quæque interitus sit ex pers, dum furore quodam divino incitata rapitur, &c. Eunap. in *Ædes. p. 594.* Et, ut quod ignotum esse pateat,*

his creatures in the flames of hell for ever? Is this agreeable to infinite goodness?

Answ. 1. I have fully answered this already, (chap. 15, part 1,) and therefore I must entreat the objector to peruse his answer there; only I shall now say, that it is not incredible that God is the Governor of the world, nor that he hath given man a law, nor that his law hath penalties to the disobedient, nor that he is just, and will judge the world according to that law, and make good his threatenings; nor is it incredible that those who chose sin when they were foretold of the punishment, and refused godliness when they were foretold of the blessed reward and fruits, and this with obstinacy to the last, should have no better than they chose. It is not incredible that unholy enemies of God and holiness, should not live hereafter in the blessed sight and love, and holy, delightful fruition of God, no more than that a swine is not made a king; nor that an immortal soul, who is excluded immortal happiness by his wilful refusal, should know his folly, and know what he hath lost by it, or that such knowledge should be his continual torment: nor is it incredible that God will not continue to him the pleasures of whoredom, and gluttony, and drunkenness, and sports, and worldly wealth, or tyrannical domination, to quiet him in his loss of heaven; nor that he will deprive him of the temporal mercies which now content him, or may afford him any delight hereafter: nor is it incredible, if his body rise again, that it shall be partaker with his soul; nor that God, who might deprive him of his being, if he had been innocent, may make him worse, or bring him into a condition to which he would prefer annihilation, when he is an obstinate, impenitent sinner. It is not incredible that a good king, or judge, may hang a felon, or traitor, for a crime against man and human society; nor is it any goodness in them to be unjust, or to cherish murderers by impunity: none of all this is at all incredible. But it is indeed incredible, till conscience have humbled him, that the thief or murderer should like this penalty, or think well of the judge; or that a sinner, who judgeth of good and evil in others as dogs do, by the interest of his throat or flesh, and thinks them good only that love him, and bad, that hurt him and are against him, should ever believe that it is the amiable goodness of God, which causeth him, in justice, to condemn the wicked.^m

2. But yet, let not misunderstanding make this seem harder to you than indeed it is." Do not think that souls in hell are hung up in flames, as beasts are hung in a butcher's shambles; or that souls have any pain but what is suitable to souls, and that is more than bodies bear: it is an affliction in rational ways which falls on rational spirits. Devils are now in torment, and yet have a malignant kingdom, and order, and rule in the children of disobedience, and go up and down seeking whom they may devour. We know not the particular manner of their sufferings, but that they are forsaken of God, and deprived of his complacential love and mercy, and have the rational misery

hec est hominis vera mors, cum animæ nescientes Deum, perlongissimum temporis cruciatu consumuntur ignifero, in quem illas jaciunt quidam crudeliter sævi, et autem Christum incogniti, et ab solo scientie detecti. This was the conceit of Arnob. adv. Gent. 1. 2. p. 14.

ⁿ We say not that corporeal fire doth touch the soul. Sed memorate apud inferos pœne et suppliciorum generibus multiformes: equis erit tam brutus, et rerum consequentias nesciens, qui animis incorruptibilibus credat, ut tenebras tartareas posse aliquid nocere? aut igneos fluvios, aut cœnoscis gurgitibus paludes; aut rotarum volubilibus circumactus. Quod enim contiguum non est, et a legibus dissolutionis amotum est, licet omnibus ambiatur flammis, — ilibatum necesse est permaneat. Arnob. advers. Gentes. l. 2. p. 17. Auct. Bibl. Pat. tom. 1.

before described, and such also as shall be suitable to such kind of bodies as they shall have: and while they are immortal, no wonder if their misery be so.

Object. VII. Who can believe that the damned shall be far more than the saved, and the devil have more than God? How will this stand with the infinite goodness of God?

Ans. I have fully answered this before in p. i. ch. 11, and shall now add but this: 1. In our inquiries, we must begin with the *primum cognita*, or *notissima*, as aforesaid: that God is most good, and also just, and punisheth sinners, is before proved to be among the *notissima*, or *primum cognita*; and therefore it is most certain, that these are no way contradictory to each other.

2. And if it be no contradiction to God's goodness, to punish and cast off for ever the lesser part of the world, then it is none to punish or cast off the greater part. The inequality of number will not alter the case.*

3. It is no way against the goodness of human governors, in some cases, to punish even the greater number, according to their deserts.

4. Can any man that openeth his eyes deny, in matter of fact, that the far greater part of the world is actually ungodly, worldly, sensual, and disobedient; or that such are meet for punishment, and unmeet for the love and holy fruition of God? When I see that most men are ungodly, and incapable of heaven, is it not harder to reason to believe that these shall have that joy and employment of which they are incapable, than that they shall have the punishment which agreeth with their capacity, desert, and choice? Must I believe that God's enemies shall love him for ever, merely because they are the greater number? If one man, that dieth unrenewed, be capable of heaven, another is so, and all are so; therefore, I must either believe that no impenitent, ungodly person is saved, or that all be saved. The number, therefore, is nothing to the deciding of the case.

5. Can any man in his wits deny that it is as sure that God permitteth sin in the world, as that the sun shineth on us; yea, that he permitteth that universal enormous deluge of wickedness which the world groaneth under at this day; and that this sin is the soul's calamity, and, to a right judgment, is much worse than punishment, whatever beastly sensuality may gain-say. If, then, the visible wickedness of the world be permitted by God, without any impeachment of his goodness, then certainly his goodness may consist with punishment (which as such is good) when sin is evil: and much of this punishment also is but materially permitted by God, and executed by sinners upon themselves.

6. The wisdom and goodness of God saw it meet, for the right government of this world, to put the threatenings of an everlasting punishment in his law: and how can that man have the face to say, it was needless, or too much in the law, with whom it proved not enough to weigh down the trifling interests of the flesh? And if it was meet to put that penalty in the law, it is just and meet to put that law

into execution, how many soever fall under the penalty of it, as hath been proved.

7. The goodness of God consisteth not in a will to make all his creatures as great, or good and happy, as he can; but it is essentially in his infinite perfections, and expressively in the communication of so much to his creatures, as he seeth meet, and in the accomplishment of his own pleasure, by such ways of benignity and justice as are most suitable to his wisdom and holiness. Man's personal interest is an unfit rule and measure of God's goodness.

8. To recite what I said, and speak it plainlier, I confess it greatly quieteth my mind against this great objection of the numbers that are damned and cast off for ever, to consider how small a part this earth is of God's creation, as well as how sinful and impenitent. Ask any astronomer that hath considered the innumerable numbers of the fixed stars and planets, with their distances, and magnitude, and glory, and the uncertainty that we have whether there be not as many more, or a hundred or thousand times as many, unseen to man, as all those which we see, (considering the defectiveness of man's sight,) and the planets about Jupiter, with the innumerable stars in the milky way, which the tube hath lately discovered, which man's eyes without it could not see: I say, ask any man who knoweth these things, whether all this earth be any more in comparison of the whole creation than one prison is to a kingdom or empire; or the paring of one nail, or a little mole, or wart, or a hair, in comparison of the whole body. And if God should cast off all this earth, and use all the sinners in it as they deserve, it is no more sign of a want of benignity, or mercy, in him, than it is for a king to cast one subject of a million into a gaol, and to hang him for his murder, or treason, or rebellion; or for a man to kill one louse, which is but a molestation to the body which beareth it; or than it is to pare a man's nails, or cut off a wart, or a hair, or to pull out a rotten, aching tooth. I know it is a thing uncertain and unrevealed to us, whether all these globes be inhabited or not. But he that considereth, that there is scarce any uninhabitable place on earth, or in the water, or air; but men, or beasts, or birds, or fishes, or flies, or worms, and moles, do take up almost all; will think it a probability, so near a certainty as not to be much doubted of, that the vaster and more glorious parts of the creation are not uninhabited; but that they have inhabitants answerable to their magnitude and glory, as palaces have other inhabitants than cottages; and that there is a con-naturality and agreeableness there as well as here, between the region, or globe, and the inhabitants. But whether it be the globes themselves, or only the inter-spaces, or other parts, that are thus inhabited, no reason can doubt, but that those more vast and glorious spaces are proportionably possessed. And whether they are all to be called angels, or spirits, or by what other name, is unrevealed to us: but whatever they are called, I make no question but our number, to theirs, is not one to a million at the most.

Now this being so, for aught we know, those glo-

* And seeing most of the heathens believe the immortality of souls, and the justice of God, it is meet that they believe a punishment for the bad, as they do a reward for the good. As Arnobius saith, lib. 2. advers. Gent: Cum igitur hæc ita sunt, quænam injustitia tanta est, ut fatui nobis crudelitatem ista videamur? Cum vos et similia credere, et in eadem videmus expectatione versari? Si irrisione existimamus digni, quod spem nobis hujusmodi pollicemur, et vos eadem expectat irrisio, qui spem vobis immortalitatis adsciscitis. Si tenetis aliquam sequiminique ratione, et nobis portione ex ista rationem concedite. Si nobis hæc gaudia Plato promississet—Consentaneum fuerat ejus suscipere nos cultus, a quo tantum

doni expectaremus et muneris. Nunc cum eam Christus non tantum promiserit, verum etiam virtutibus tantis manifestaverit, posse compleri, quid alienum facimus aut stultitiam crimen quibus rationibus sustinemus, si ejus nomini majestatem subternimus, a quo speramus utrumque et mortem cruciabilem fugere, et vitam æternitate donari? pag. 17. Auct. Bib. Pat. to. 1.

¶ Of the probability of the habitation of the planets, see Gassendus, and his reasons, that the inhabitants are not men of our species, but that the inhabitants are diversified as the habitations are, and other things in the universe. Though Cicero frequently derideth the superstitious fear of hell, yet

rious parts may have inhabitants without any sin or misery; who are filled with their Maker's love and goodness, and so are fitter to be the demonstration of that love and goodness than this sinful molehill or dungeon of ignorance is. If I were sure that God would save all mankind, and only leave the devils in their damnation, and forsake no part of his creation but their hell, it would not be any great stumbling to my faith. Or if earth were all God's creation, and I were sure that he would condemn but one man of a hundred thousand, or a million, and that only for final impenitency in the contempt of the mercy which would have saved him; this would be no great difficulty to my faith. Why then should it be an offence to us, if God, for their final refusal of his grace, do for ever forsake and punish the far greater part of this little, dark, and sinful world, while he glorifieth his benignity and love abundantly upon innumerable angels, and blessed spirits, and inhabitants of those more large and glorious seats? If you would judge of the beneficence of a king, will you go to the gaol and the gallows to discern it; or to his palace, and all the rest of his kingdom? And will you make a few condemned malefactors the measure of it; or all the rest of his obedient, prosperous subjects? If hell be totally forsaken of God, as having totally forsaken him; and if earth have made itself next to hell, and be forsaken as to the far greater part, because that greater part hath forsaken him; as long as there may be millions of blessed ones above, to one of these forsaken ones on earth, it should be no offence to any but the selfish, guilty sinner. I confess, I rather look on it as a great demonstration of God's holiness and goodness in his justice, that he will punish the rebellious according to his laws; and a great demonstration of his goodness in his mercy, that he will save any of such a rebellious world, and hath not forsaken it utterly, as hell. And when of all the thousands of worlds or globes which he hath made, we know of none forsaken by him, but hell, and part of the earth, all the devils, and most of men; we should admire the glory of his bounty, and be thankful, with joy, that we are not of the forsaken number; and that, even among sinners, he will cast off none but those that finally reject his mercy.⁹

But selfishness and sense do make men blind, and judge of good and evil only by self-interest and feeling; and the malefactor will hardly magnify justice, nor take it to be a sign of goodness: but God will be God, whether selfish rebels will or not.

Object. That any thing existeth besides God, cannot be known but by sense or history. Have you either of these for those inhabitants? And if we may go by conjectures, for aught you know, there may as many of those worlds be damned as of earthly men.

Ans. 1. Some men are so little conscious of their humanity, that they think that nothing is known at all; but he that knoweth by sense that he is himself, and that there is a world about him, and then, by reason, that there is a God, may know also, by reason, that

there are other creatures which he never saw. Neither sense nor history told us of the inhabitants of the then unknown parts of the world; and yet it had been easy to gather at least a strong probability that there are such. He that knoweth that an intelligent nature is better than a non-intelligent, and then knoweth that God hath made man intelligent, and then thinketh what difference there is in matter, magnitude, and glory, between the dirty body of man, with the earth he liveth in, and those vast and glorious ethereal spaces, will quickly judge that it is a thing incredible, that God should have no creatures nobler than man, nor imprint more of his image upon any in those more glorious regions, than on us that dwell, as snails, in such a shell; or that there should be such a strange disproportion in the works of God, as that a point of dirty earth only should be possessed of the divine or intellectual nature, and the vast and glorious orbs, or spaces, be made only to look on, or to serve these mortal worms. But proofs go according to the preparation of the receiver's mind; nothing is a proof to the unprepared and prejudiced.

2. We have sense, by the telescope, to tell us, that the moon hath parts unequal, and looketh much like the habitable earth; and we have sense to tell us, that there are witches and apparitions, and consequently, other kinds of intellectual wights than we. And we have history to tell us of the appearances and offices of angels; and if there be certainly such wights, our eyes may help us to conjecture at their numbers, compared to us, by the spaces which they inhabit.

3. There is a proportion and harmony in all the works of God; and, therefore, we that see how much the superior orbs do in glory excel this dirty earth, have reason to think that the nature of the inhabitants is suited to their habitations, and, consequently, that they are more excellent creatures than we, and therefore less sinful, and therefore more happy.

4. Yet, after all this, I am neither asserting that all this is so, nor bound to prove it; I only argue, that you, who are offended at the numbers that sin and perish, do wrangle in the dark, and speak against you know not what. Conjecture is enough for me to prove that you do foolishly to argue against experience (of the sin and misery of the most) upon mere uncertainties. You will not censure the actions of a prince or general, when your ignorance of their counsels maketh you uncertain of the cause; yea, and of the matter of fact itself. The proof lieth on your part, and not on mine: you say, our doctrine is incredible, because so few are saved, and yet confess that, for aught you know, taking all together, it may be many millions for one that perisheth. I think, by proving you uncertain of this, I prove you foolish in your infidelity. And if you will conjecture, then, that there may as many of those other regions be damned, 1. You show yourselves much more harsh in your censures than the christians are, whose harshness you are now reproving: yea, you con-
jecture?

he meaneth not of all future punishment of the wicked, but of the poet's fables of Styx, Cerberus, Tantalus, and Sisyphus kind of penalties, and of Minos and Rhadamanthus, the infernal judges. Sed si generis Christus humani (inquit) conservator advenit, cur non omnes aequali munificentia liberat? *Resp.* Aequaliter liberat, qui aequaliter omnes vocat. Haud ab indulgentia principali quemquam repellit, aut respuit: qui sublimibus, infimis, servis, &c. uniformiter potestatem veniendi ad se facit? Patet omnibus fons vitæ, neque ab iure potandi quisquam prohibetur. Si tibi fastidium tantum est, ut oblati respuas beneficium muneris, quinimo si tantum sapientia prævaleat; ut ea quæ offeruntur a Christo ludum et ineptias nomines, quid invitans peccat, cuius solum sunt hæ partes, ut sub tui juris arbitrio fructus suæ benignitatis

exponat? An orandus es, ut beneficium salutis a Deo digneris accipere et tibi aspernari, fugientique longissime, infundenda est in gremium divinæ benevolentie gratia? Vis sumere quod offertur, et in tuos usus convertere consuleris tu tibi. Aspernaris, contemnis et despicias, te muneris commoditate privaveris. Nulli Deus inferi necessitatem. *Object.* Nolo (inquis) et voluntatem non habeo. *Resp.* Quid ergo crimiraris Deum, tanquam tibi desit? Opem desideras tibi ferre, cuius dona et munera non tantum asperneris et fugias, verum in alia verba cognomines, et jocularibus factis prosequaris. Arnob. Advers. Gent. l. 2.

⁹ Eunomiani minas futuri supplicii et gehennæ, non ad veritatem, sed ad metum prolatis aiebant. Hermenop. de Sectis, sect. 13.

ture this without all ground or probability: and will you say, then, For aught I know it may be so; *ergo*, christianity is incredible? Can a groundless conjecture allow any rational man such a conclusion?

Object. But you say, yourselves, that many of the angels fell, and are now devils.

Ans. But we say not how many; we never said that it is the whole number of the glorious inhabitants of all the superior world, who are called angels, as messengers or officers about man. We know not how small a part of them, comparatively, it may be, and of them we know not how few fell. Augustine conjectured that it was the tenth part, but we have no ground for any such conjecture.

Object. But it is incredible that the world should perish for one man's sin, whom they never knew, nor could prevent?

Ans. 1. To them that know what generation is, and what the son is to the father, it is not incredible at all that the unholy parents do not beget holy children, nor convey to them that which they have not themselves; nor yet that God should hate the ungodly; nor that the parents' choice should signify much for their children's state, who have no wills of their own fit for actual choice; nor that restored, imperfect holiness should not be conveyed to children by natural propagation, which came to the parents by regeneration; nor that the children of traitors should be disinherited for their fathers' faults; nor that the children of drunkards and gluttons should be naturally diseased.

2. No man in the world doth perish for Adam's sin alone, without his own: though we judge the case of infants to allow you no exception, yet, to carry the controversy to them into the dark, and to argue a *minus notis*, is not the property of such as seek impartially for truth. Christ hath procured a new covenant, upon which all those that hear the gospel shall again be tried for life or death; and those that hear it not, have divers means which have a tendency to their recovery, and are under undeniable obligations to use those means in order to their recovery, which, if they do not faithfully, they perish for their own sin. Should it not make christianity the more easily credible, when certain experience assureth us, how prone even infants are to sin, and how universally the world is drowned in wickedness; and then to find so admirable and suitable a remedy revealed?

Object. But punishment is to warn others from sinning; but after this life there will be none to warn: therefore, there will be no punishment, because the end of punishment ceaseth.

Ans. 1. It is a false position, that punishment is only or chiefly to be a warning to others. It is chiefly for the ultimate end of government, which *secundum quid*, among men, is the *bonum publicum*; but *simpliciter*, in God's government, it is the glorifying or demonstration of the holiness and justice of God, the universal Governor, to the pleasure of his holy will.

2. It is the penalty as threatened in the law, and not the penalty as executed, which is the first necessary means to deter others from offending; and then the execution is secondarily necessary, because the law must be fulfilled. It is not the actual hanging

^r See more of this before, part i. ch. 15. The reader must pardon this speaking of the same thing twice, both because the objection requireth the repetition, and because I think it needful to most readers, to procure their observation. Aut ideo gregem pusillum appellat, quia totum hominum genus, ne dum soli sancti, cum immensa illa angelorum multitudine, collatum, per exiguum grex est. Est enim illorum multitudo incredibilis, hominum numerum infinitis pene partibus excedens. Titus Bostreus, in Luc. c. 12.

of a murderer which is the first instrument or means to restrain murderers, but it is the penalty in the law, which saith that murderers shall be hanged; and the commination of the law would be no restraint, if it were not that it relateth to a just execution. So that it was necessary to the restraint of sinners in this world, that God should threaten hell in his law; and, therefore, it is necessary that he execute that law, or else it would be delusory and contemptible.^r

3. How know we who shall survive this present world, to whom God may make man's hell a warning? Are not the devils now set out in Scripture for a warning to man? And how know we what other creatures God hath to whom these punished sinners may be a warning? or whether the new earth, wherein righteousness must dwell, according to God's promise, 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13, shall not have use of this warning to keep them in their righteousness? As long as all these things are probable, and the contrary utterly uncertain, how foolish a thing is it to go from the light of a plain revelation and Scripture, and argue, from our dark uncertainties and improbabilities, against that light; and all because self-love and guilt doth make sinners unwilling to believe the truth! So much for the objection against hell.

Object. VIII. But it is incredible that all those shall be damned that live honestly and soberly, and do nobody harm, if they do not also live a holy and heavenly life, and forsake all for another world.

Ans. 1. It is but selfishness and blindness which maketh men call him an honest man, and speak lightly of his wickedness, who preferreth the dung and trifles of this world before his Maker and everlasting glory. What, if a pack of murderers, thieves, and rebels do live together in love, and do one another no harm, shall that excuse their murders or rebellions, and give them the name of honest men? What is the creature to the Creator? What greater wickedness can man commit, than to deny, despise, and disobey his Maker, and to prefer the most contemptible vanity before him, and to choose the transitory pleasure of sinning before the endless fruition of his God? What is wronging a neighbour in comparison of this wrong? Shall a sinner refuse his everlasting happiness when it is offered him, and then think to have it when he can possess the pleasure of sin no longer, and all because he did no man wrong? Doth he think to refuse heaven, and yet to have it? If he refuse the love of God, and perfection of holiness, he refuseth heaven. It is so far from being incredible that the unholy should be damned and the holy only saved, that the contrary is impossible. I would not believe an angel from heaven, if he should tell me that one unholy soul, in *sensu composito*, while such, shall be saved and have the heavenly felicity, because it is a mere contradiction; for to be blessed in heaven is to be happy in the perfect love of God; and to love God without holiness, signifieth to love him without loving him. Are these the objections of unbelief?^s

Object. IX. The resurrection of these numerical bodies, when they are devoured and turned into the substance of other bodies, is a thing incredible.

Ans. 1. If it be neither against the power, the

^s We deny not but that there are different degrees of punishment, according to the difference of men's sins. Etsi mortalibus in decies millenos annos hæc externis sensibus exposita vita producatur, nunquam tamen opinor tantæ angelorum et demonum multitudini, humanarum animarum numerus par erit. Æneas Gazæus de Animo Theophrastus, p. 399. Cum non esses, te formavit ex humida et minima substantia, et ex minutissima guttula, quæ nec ipsa aliquando erat. Theoph. Antioch. ad Autolych. l. 1.

wisdom, or the will of God, it is not incredible at all; but it is not against any of these. Who can say that God is unable to raise the dead, who seeth so much greater things performed by him in the daily motion of the sun or earth, and in the support and course of the whole frame of nature? He that can, every spring, give a kind of resurrection to plants, and flowers, and fruits of the earth, can easily raise our bodies from the dust; and no man can prove that the wisdom of God, nor yet his will, are against our resurrection; but that both are for it may be proved by his promises. Shall that which is beyond the power of man be therefore objected as a difficulty to God?*

2. Yea, it is congruous to the wisdom and governing justice of God, that the same body which was partaker with the soul in sin and duty, should be partaker with it in suffering or felicity.

3. The Lord Jesus Christ did purposely die and rise again in his human body, to put the resurrection out of doubt, by undeniable, ocular demonstration, and by the certainty of belief.

4. There is some natural reason for the resurrection in the soul's inclination to its body. As it is unwilling to lay it down, it will be willing to reassume it, when God shall say, The time is come. As we may conclude at night when they are going to bed, that the people of a city or country will rise the next morning, and put on their clothes, and not go naked about the streets, because there is in them a natural inclination to rising and to clothes, and a natural aversness to lie still, or to go unclothed; so may we conclude from the soul's natural inclination to its body, that it will reassume it as soon as God consenteth.

5. And all our objections, which reason from supposed contradictions, vanish; because none of us all have so much skill in physics as to know what it is which individuateth this numerical body, and so what it is which is to be restored; but we all confess, that it is not the present mass of flesh and humours, which being in a continual flux, is not the same this year which it was the last, and may vanish long before we die.

Object. X. If Christ be indeed the Saviour of the world, why came he not into the world till it was four thousand years old? and why was he before revealed to so few, and to them so darkly? Did God care for none on earth but a few Jews; or did he not care for the world's recovery till the latter age, when it drew towards its end?

Ans. It is hard for the Governor of the world, by ordinary means, to satisfy all self-conceited persons of the wisdom and equity of his dealings. But, 1. It belongeth not to us, but to our free Benefactor, to determine of the measure and season of his benefits: may he not do with his own as he list? and shall we deny or question a proved truth, because the reason of the circumstances is unrevealed to us? If our physician come to cure us of a mortal disease, would we reject him because he came not sooner,

* One that had never heard nor thought of the way of generation, would think it as unlikely a thing that an acorn should bring forth an oak, or such a thing as *sperma humanum* the body of a man, as you do that the body rise again. And the Platonists think, that all souls, presently upon their departure hence, do fabricate to themselves either aerial or ethereal bodies: and why should you think them so alienated from the bodies which they lived in, as only to be incapable of those? If we knew what the *hoc idem* of the body is, we might have more particular, explicit satisfaction: in the mean time we must implicitly trust in God. Leg. Finem. Disput. Zachariæ Scholast. Mytlen. Lege etiam Athenagoram de Resurrectione. Read Garbut Of the Resurrection. Read Æn. Gazeus's Theophrastus, where is a handsome discourse of the resurrection.

and because he cured not all others that were sick as well as us?

2. The eternal Wisdom and Word of God, the Second Person in the Trinity, was the Saviour of the world before he was incarnate. He did not only by his undertaking make his future performances valid, as to the merit and satisfaction necessary to our deliverance, but he instructed mankind in order to their recovery, and ruled them upon terms of grace, and so did the work of a Redeemer or Mediator, even as Prophet, Priest, and King, before his incarnation. He enacted the covenant of grace, that whosoever repenteth and believeth shall be saved; and so gave men a conditional pardon of their sins.*

3. And though repentance, and the love of God, was necessary to all that would be saved, even as a constitutive cause of their salvation, yet that faith in the Mediator, which is but the means to the love of God, and to sanctification, was not always, nor in all places, in the same particular articles necessary as it is now where the gospel is preached. Before Christ's coming, a more general belief might serve the turn for men's salvation, without believing that "This Jesus is the Christ; that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried, and descended to *hades*, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven," &c. And as more is necessary to be believed, since Christ's incarnation and resurrection, than before, so more was before necessary to the Jews, who had the oracles of God, and had more revealed to them than to other nations, who had less revealed; and now more is necessary where the gospel cometh, than where it doth not.

4. So that the gentiles had a Saviour before Christ's incarnation, and not only the Jews. They were reprieved from legal justice, and not dealt with by God upon the proper terms of the covenant of works, or mere nature: they had all of them much of that mercy which they had forfeited, which came to them by the grace of the Redeemer. They had time and helps to turn to God, and a course of means appointed them to use, in order to their recovery and salvation; according to the use of which they shall be judged. They were not with the devils, left remediless, and shut out of all hope, under final desperation; no one ever perished in any age or nation of the world, who, by believing in a merciful, pardoning, holy God, was recovered to love God above all. And if they did not this, they were all without a just excuse.*

5. The course of grace, as that of nature, doth wisely proceed from low degrees to higher, and bringeth not things to perfection at the first; the sun was not made the first day of the creation, nor was man made till all things were prepared for him. The church's infancy was to go before its maturity. We have some light of the sun before it rise; much more before it come to the height: as Christ now teacheth his church more plainly, when he is him-

* If philosophy be medicinal to the foolish world, why were Thales, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno born no sooner; but the world suffered to lie so long in ignorance? Answer this yourselves, and you are answered. Arnobius answereth the objection, partly by alleging man's ignorance of what God did to former ages; and partly by asserting God's mercy to them. Adv. Gentes. l. 2.

* *Object.* Quid visum est ut ante horas pauculas sospitator Christus celi ex arcibus mitteretur? Resp. Quia causa est quod serius hyems, æstas, autumnus fiant? — Non minus inficias nescire nos: nec promptum est cuicumque Dei mentem videre, aut quibus modis ordinaverit res suas, homo animal cœcum et ipsum se nesciens ullis potest rationibus consequi — Nec continuo sequitur ut infecta fiant quæ facta sunt, et amittat res fidem, quæ potestatibus est monstratum. Id. ibid.

self gone into glory, even by his pastors whom he fitteth for that work, and by his Spirit; so did he (though more obscurely, yet sufficiently) teach it before he came into the flesh, by prophets and priests: his work of salvation consisteth in bringing men to live in love and obedience; and his way of teaching them his saving doctrine, is by his ministers without and by his Spirit within; and thus he did before his coming in flesh, and thus he doth since: we that are born since his coming, see not his person any more than they who were born before; but we have his word, ministers, and Spirit, and so had they: his reconciling sacrifice was effectual, morally, *in esse cognito et volito*, before the performance of it; and the means of reconciling our minds to God were sufficient in their kind before, though more full and excellent since his coming.⁷

If you would not be deluded into infidelity by this objection, which, indeed, is one of the greatest difficulties of faith, you must not further one error by another. 1. Think not that God is hired or persuaded by Christ, as against his will, to forgive men's sins, and save their souls, or to do them any good. Understand that no good cometh to man, or any creature, but totally from God's will and love, who is the original and eternal Goodness. All the question is but of the *modus conferendi*, the way of his conveyance; and then it will not seem incredible, that he should give out his mercy by degrees, and with some diversity.

2. Think not that christianity doth teach men, that all those who were not of the Jewish nation or church then, or that are not now of the christian church, were so cast off and forsaken by God as the devils are, to be left as utterly hopeless or remediless; nor that they were upon no other terms for salvation, than man in innocence was under, which was, "Obey perfectly, and live; or if thou sin, thou shalt die;" for this had been to leave them as hopeless as the devils, when once they had sinned.

3. And think not that Christ can show no mercy, nor do any thing towards the salvation of a sinner, before he is known himself to the sinner; especially before he is known as an incarnate Mediator, or one that is to be incarnate. He struck down Paul, and spake to him from heaven, before Paul knew him; he sent Philip to the eunuch before he knew him, and Peter to Cornelius; and sendeth the gospel to heathen nations, before they know him. If the apostles themselves, even after that they had lived long with Christ, and heard his preaching, and seen his miracles, yea, and preached and wrought miracles themselves, did not yet understand that he must suffer, and die, and rise again, and send down the Spirit, &c. you may conjecture by this what the common faith of those before Christ's coming was who were saved.

4. Think not, therefore, that Christ hath no way or degree of effectual teaching, but by the express doctrine of his incarnation, death, and resurrection, which is now the gospel.

5. And think not that all the mercies which pagan

nations have from God, are no acts of grace, nor have any tendency to their conversion and salvation. Doubtless, it is the same Redeemer, even the eternal Wisdom and Word of God, who before his incarnation gave greater mercy to the Jews, and lesser to the gentiles. He doth by these mercies oblige or lead men to repentance and gratitude, and reveal God as merciful, and ready to forgive all capable sinners. As even under the law (Exod. xxxiv.) he revealed himself fullier to Moses, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin," &c.; though he "will by no means (no, not by Christ) clear the guilty;" that is, either say to the wicked, Thou art just, or pardon any uncapable subject. Doubtless, mercy bindeth heathens to know God as merciful, and to love him, and to improve that mercy to their attainment of more, and to seek after further knowledge, and to be better than they are; and they are set under a certain course of means and appointed duty, in order to their recovery and salvation; else it might be said that they have nothing to do for their own recovery, and, consequently, sin not by omitting it. By all this you may perceive that Christ did much by mercies and teaching before his incarnation, and since for all the world, which hath a tendency to their conversion, recovery, and salvation.⁸

Object. XI. The conception of a virgin, without man, is improbable, and must all depend upon the credit of her own word; and the meanness of his parentage, breeding, and condition, doth more increase the difficulty.

Ans. 1. It was meet that the birth of Christ should begin in a miracle, when his life was to be spent and finished in miracles. 2. It is no more than was promised before by the prophet, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son," &c. Isa. vii. 14. And why should the fulfilling of a prophecy by miracle be incredible? 3. It is neither above, nor against, the power, wisdom, or love of God, and therefore it should not seem incredible. There is no contradiction or impossibility in it, nor any thing contrary to sense or reason. Reason saith, indeed, that it is above the power of man, and above the common course of nature, but not that it is above the power of the God of nature. Is it any harder for God to cause a virgin to conceive by the Holy Ghost, than to make the first of human kind, or any other kind, of nothing? 4. It was meet that he who was to be a sacrifice for sin, and a teacher and pattern of perfect righteousness, and a Mediator between God and man, should not be an ordinary child of Adam, nor be himself defiled with original or actual sin; and therefore that he should be in a peculiar sense the Son of God. 5. And this doth not depend only on the credit of the virgin mother's word, but on the multitude of miracles whereby God himself confirmed the truth of it.

And as for the meanness of his person and condition, 1. It was a needful part of the humiliation which he was for our sins to undergo; that he

had then innovated at Rome. Et postea—sed novellum nomen est nostrum, et ante dies paucos religio est nata quam sequimur: *Resp.* Ut interim concedam—Quid est in negotiis hominum, quod vel opere corporis et manibus fiat, vel solius animæ disciplina et cognitione teneatur, quod non ex aliquo cœperit tempore? Philosophia, musica, astronomia, &c. Id. ib. p. 24.

² Religionis auctoritas non est tempore estimanda sed æternæ. Id. ib. Yet next he saith, Our religion is the oldest, because God is so, though Christ came but lately to teach it us better.

⁷ Nam quod nobis objectare consuevit, novellam esse religionem nostram, et ante dies propemodum paucos natam, neque vos potuisse antiquam et patriam linquere, &c.; ratione istud intenditur nulla: quid enim si hoc modo culpam velimus infingere, prioribus illis et antiquissimis seculis, quod inventis frugibus glandes spreverint, quod corticibus contegi, et amirici desiderint pelibus, postquam vestis excogitata est textili—Commune est omnibus et ab ipsis penæ incunabulis traditum, bona malis anteferre, inutilibus utilia præponere—Convenit ut insipientis non factum, nec quid reliquerimus opponere sed secuti quid simus potissimum contueri. Arnob. ib. l. 1. 2. And he next instanceth what abundance of things they

should "take upon him the form of a servant, and make himself of no reputation," Phil. ii. 7—9. 2. It was a suitable testimony against the pride, carnality, and worldly-mindedness of deluded men, who overvalue the honour, and pleasure, and riches of the world; and a suitable means to teach men to judge of things aright, and value every thing truly as it is; the contrary whereof is the cause of all the sin and misery of the world. He that was to cure men of the love of the world, and all its riches, dignities, and pleasures, and he that was to save them from this by the office of a Saviour, could not have taken a more effectual way, than to teach them by his own example; and to go before them in the settled contempt of all these vanities, and preferring the true and durable felicity. 3. Look inwardly to his Godhead, and spiritual perfections. Look upward to his present state of glory, who hath now all power given into his hands, and is made head over all things to the church, Eph. i. 22. Look forward to the day of his glorious appearing, when he shall come with all his celestial retinue to judge the world; and then you will see the dignity and excellency of Christ. If you prefer not spiritual and heavenly dignities yourselves, you are incapable of them, and cannot be saved: but if you do, you may see the excellences of Christ. He that knoweth how vain a bubble the honour of man and the glory of this world is, will not be offended at the King of saints, because his kingdom is not of this world; and he that knoweth any thing of the difference between God and the creature, heaven and earth, will not despise the eternal Jehovah because he weareth not a silken coat, and dwelleth not in the gilded palaces of a prince. If earthly glory had been the highest, it had been the glory of Christ: and if he had come to make us happy by the rich man's way, "to be clothed in purple and silk, and faring sumptuously every day," (Luke xvi.) then would he have led us this way by his example. But when it is the work of a Saviour to save us from the flesh, and from this present evil world, the means must be suited to the end.

Object. XII. But it is a very hard thing to believe that person to be God incarnate, and the Saviour of the world, who suffered on a cross as a blasphemer and a traitor that usurped the title of a king.

Ans. The cross of Christ hath ever been the stumblingblock of the proud and worldly sort of men; but it is the confidence and consolation of true believers. For, 1. It was not for his own sins, but for ours that he suffered; even so was it prophesied of him, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet did we esteem him stricken of God, and afflicted: but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed: all we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have every one turned to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii. 4. And it is impudent ingratitude to make those his sufferings the occasion of our unbelief, which we were the causes of ourselves, and to be ashamed of that cross which we laid upon him by our sins. It is not worth the labour to answer the slanders of his accusers about his usurpation of a kingdom, when they believed it not themselves.

^a Leg. Ivon. Carnotens. de rebus Ecclesiast. cap. Quare Deus natus et passus est? Bibl. Pat. to. 10. p. 809, 810. Etiam Ruper. Tutiens. lib. 3. de D. vnis Offic. cap. 14. de eo quod solet quæri, Cur Deus lapsus hominis evenire permiserit pro quo incarnatio ejus necessaria fuit? p. 897. Pythagoras Samius suspicione dominationis injusta vivus concrematus in fano est: nunquid ea quæ docuit, vim propriam perdidit, quia non Spiritum sponte, sed crudelitate appe-

He was above a worldly kingdom; and it could be no blasphemy for him to say that he was the Son of God, when he had so fully proved it by his works.^a

2. His suffering as a reputed malefactor on a cross, was a principal part of the merit of his patience; for many a man can bear the corporal pain who cannot so far deny his honour as to bear the imputation of a crime; for the innocent Son of God, that was never convict of sin, to suffer under the name of a blasphemer and a traitor, was greater condescension than to have suffered under the name of an innocent person.

3. And in all this it was needful that the Saviour of mankind should not only be a sacrifice and ransom for our sinful souls, but also should heal us of the overlove of life and honour, by his example. Had not his self-denial and patience extended to the loss of all things in this world, both life itself and the reputation of his righteousness, it had not been a perfect example of self-denial and patience unto us; and then it had been unmeet for so great a work as the cure of our pride and love of life. Had Christ come to deliver the Jews from captivity, or to make his followers great on earth, as Mahomet did, he would have suited the means to such an end; but when he came to save men from pride, and self-love, and the esteem of this world, and to bring them to patience, and full obedience to the will of God, and to place all their happiness in another life, true reason telleth us that there was no example so fit for this end, as patient submission to the greatest sufferings. The cross of Christ, then, should be our glory, and not our stumblingblock or shame. Let the children of the devil boast that they are able to do hurt, and to trample upon others: the disciples of Christ will rather boast that they can patiently endure to be abused, as knowing that their pride and love of the world is the enemy which they are most concerned in conquering.

Object. XIII. It was but a few mean, unlearned persons who believed in him at the first, and it is not past a sixth part of the world that yet believeth in him; and, of these, few do it judiciously and from their hearts, but because their kings, or parents, or country, are of that religion.

Ans. 1. As to the number, I have answered it before. It is no great number, comparatively, that are kings, or lords, or learned men, and truly judicious and wise; will you, therefore, set light by any of these? Things excellent are seldom common. The earth hath more stones than gold or pearls. All those believed in Christ who heard his word, and saw his works, and had wise, considerate, honest hearts, to receive the sufficient evidence of truth. The greater part are every where ignorant, rash, injudicious, dishonest, and carried away with prejudice, fancy, custom, error, and carnal interest. If all men have means in its own kind sufficient to bring them to believe, to understand so much as God immediately requireth of them, it is their fault who after this are ignorant and unbelieving; and if it prove their misery, let them thank themselves. But yet, Christ will not leave the success of his undertaking so far to the will of man, as to be uncertain of his expected fruits: he hath his chosen ones throughout the world, and will bring them effectually to faith and holiness, to grace and glory, though all the

titus effudit: similiter Socrates civitatis suæ judicio damnatus, &c. Aquilius, Trebonius, Regulus, acerbissimarum mortuorum experti sunt formas: nunquid ideo post vitam iudicati sunt turpes? Nemo unquam innocens male interemptus infamis est; nec turpitudinis alicujus commaculatur nota qui non suo merito, pœnas graves, sed cruciatoris perpetitur sævitatem. Arnob. adv. Gent. lib. 1. p. 7.

powers of hell do rage against it: in them is his delight, and them he will conform to his Father's will, and restore them to his image, and fit them to love and serve him here, and enjoy him for ever. And though they are not the greater number, they shall be the everlasting demonstration of his wisdom, love, and holiness: and when you see all the worlds of more blessed inhabitants, you will see that the damned were the smaller number, and the blessed, in all probability, many millions to one. If the devil have the greater number in this world, God will have the greater number in the rest.^b

2. It was the wise design of Jesus Christ, that few, in comparison, should be converted by his personal converse or teaching, and thousands might be suddenly converted upon his ascension, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost: both because his resurrection and ascension were part of the articles to be believed, and were the chiefest of all his miracles which did convert men; and therefore he would rise from the dead before the multitude should be called: and, because the Spirit, as it was his extraordinary Witness and Advocate on earth, was to be given by him after he ascended into glory; and he would have the world see that the conversion of men to faith and sanctity was not the effect of any politic confederacy between him and them, but the effect of God's power, light, and love: so that it should be a great confirmation to our faith, to consider that those multitudes believed by the wonderful testimony and work of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples, when Christ had been crucified in despite, who yet believed not before, but were his crucifiers. It was not so hard nor honourable an act to believe in him, when he went about working miracles, and seemed in a possibility to restore their temporal kingdom, as to believe in him after he had been crucified among malefactors. He, therefore, that could, after this, by the Spirit and miracles, bring so many thousands to believe, did show that he was alive himself and in full power.

3. And that the apostles were mean, unlearned men, is a great confirmation to our faith; for now, it is apparent that they had their abilities, wisdom, and successes from the Spirit and power of God: but if they had been philosophers, or cunning men, it might have been more suspected to be a laid contrivance between Christ and them: indeed, for all his miracles, they began to be in doubt of him themselves, when he was dead and buried, till they saw him rise again, and had the Spirit come upon them; and this last, undeniable evidence, and this heavenly, insuperable call and conviction, was it which miraculously settled them in the faith.

4. And that Saviour who came not to make us worldlings, but to save us from this present evil world, and to cure our esteem and love of worldly things, did think it meetest both to appear in the form of a poor man himself, and to choose disciples of the like condition, and not to choose the worldly wise, and great, and honourable to be the first at-

^b How gallantly have your learned philosophers excelled us! when the Pyrrhonians, and Arcesilas's new academics, have learned to know that nothing can be known; and the one sort of them say, that they know not that much neither. But whether they dare say that they know that they know not that much, they have not told us. Of them, even Cicero learned as much to doubt as to know,

Quicquid nil verum statuens academia duplex

Personat; arroso quicquid sapit ungue Cleaveans—

Apol. Sidonius, Carm. 2. p. 123.

^c Quid nobis est investigare ea quæ neque scire compendium, neque ignorare detrimentum est ulum? Remittite hæc Deo, atque ipsum scire concedite, quid, quare, et unde sit? debuerit esse aut non esse. Vestris non est rationibus liberum implicare vos talibus, et tam remotas inutiliter curare

testors of his miracles, or preachers of his gospel; though he had some that were of place and quality in the world, as Nicodemus, Joseph, Cornelius, Sergius Paulus, &c. yet his power needed not such instruments; as he would not teach us to magnify worldly pomp, nor value things by outward appearance, as the deluded, dreaming world doth, so he would show us, that he needeth not kings nor philosophers, by worldly power or wisdom, to set up his kingdom. He giveth power, but he receiveth none. He setteth up kings, and by him they reign, but they set not up him, nor doth he reign by any of them; nor will he be beholden to great men, or learned men, for their help to promote his cause and interest in the world. The largeness of his mercy, indeed, extendeth to kings and all in authority, as well as to the poor; and if they will not reject it, nor break his bonds, but kiss the Son, before his wrath break forth against them, they may be saved as well as others, Psalm ii. 1, 2, 9, 10; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2; but he will not use them in the first setting up of his church in the world, lest men should think that it was set up by the learning, policy, or power of man, 1 Cor. i. 26—29, and ii. 5—7, 10, 13, and xiii. 19, &c.; and therefore he would not be voted one of the gods, by Tiberius, or Adrian's senate, nor accept of the worship of Alexander Severus, who, in his Lararium, worshipped him as one of his demigods, nor receive any such beggarly deity from man; but when Constantine acknowledged him as God indeed, he accepted his acknowledgment. Those unlearned men whom he used were made wiser in an hour by the Holy Ghost, than all the philosophers in the world: and those mean, contemned persons, overcame the learning and power of the world, and not by arms as Mahomet, but against arms and arguments, wit and rage; by the Spirit alone they subdued the greatest powers to their Lord.

Object. XIV. But it doth, *sapere scenam*, sound like a poetical fiction, that God should satisfy his own justice, and Christ should die instead of our being damned, and this to appease the wrath of God, as if God were angry, and delighted in the blood or sufferings of the innocent.

Ans. Ignorance is the great cause of unbelief. This objection cometh from many errors, and false conceits about the things of which it speaketh. 1. If the word, satisfaction, offend you, use only the Scripture words, that Christ was a sacrifice, an atonement, a propitiation, a price, &c. and if this be incredible, how came it to pass that sacrificing was the custom of all the world? Doth not this objection as much militate against this? Was God angry, or was he delighted, in the blood and sufferings of harmless sheep and other cattle? And must these either satisfy him, or appease his wrath? What, think you, should be the cause that sacrificing was thus commonly used in all ages, through all the earth, if it savoured but of poetical fiction?^{2d}

2. God hath no such thing as a passion of anger to be appeased, nor is he at all delighted in the

res: vestra in ancipiti sita est salus animarum vestrarum; et nisi vos applicatis Dei principis notioni, a corporalibus vinculis exolutis, expectat mors sæva; non repentinam affertis extinctionem, sed pertractum temporis cruciabilis pœnæ acerbitate consensum. Arnob. adv. Gent. l. 2.

^{2d} Lege pretiosissimum Grotii lib. de satisfactione: Item Zarnovécium et Johan. Junium et Essenium de satisf. Pontifex ille credo est qui principaliter apud divinitatem summæ Trinitatis humani generis oblata sanctificat, peccata expiat, vota commendat. Ipse ergo verus sacerdos est, quia Filius Dei secundum id quod æqualis est Patri, non tam preces fundit, quam precentes exaudit; homo potius hic intelligendus est, quam pontifex apostolus dicens, nostrisque infirmitatibus compati, &c. Claudian. Mammet. de statu Animæ contra Faust. l. 1. c. 3.

blood or suffering of the worst, much less of the innocent, nor doth he sell his mercy for blood; nor is his satisfaction any reparation of any loss of his which he receiveth from another. But, 1. Do you understand what government is, and what divine government is, and what is the end of it; even the pleasing of the will of God in the demonstrations of his own perfections? If you do, you will know that it was necessary that God's penal laws should not be broken by a rebel world, without being executed on them according to their true intent and meaning, or without such an equivalent demonstration of his justice as might vindicate the law and lawgiver from contempt, and the imputation of ignorance or levity, and might attain the ends of government as much as if all sinners had suffered themselves; and this is it that we mean by a sacrifice, ransom, or satisfaction. Shall God be a Governor, and have no laws; or shall he have laws that have no penalties; or shall he set up a lying scare-crow to frighten sinners by deceit, and have laws which are never meant for execution? Are any of these becoming God? Or shall he let the devil go for true, who told Eve at first, "You shall not die," and let the world sin on with boldness, and laugh at his laws, and say God did but frighten us with a few words which he never intended to fulfil; or should God have damned all the world according to their desert? If none of all this be credible to you, then certainly nothing should be more credible than that his wisdom hath found out some way to exercise pardoning, saving mercy, without any injury to his governing justice and truth, and without exposing his laws and himself to the contempt of sinners, or imboldening them in their sins; even a way which shall vindicate his honour, and attain his ends of government as well as if we had been all punished with death and hell, and yet may save us with the great advantage of honour to his mercy, and in the fullest demonstration of that love and goodness which may win our love: and where will you find this done but in Jesus Christ alone? 2. You must distinguish between anger and justice: when God is said to be angry it meaneth no more but that he is displeased with sin and sinners, and executeth his governing justice on them. 3. You must distinguish between sufferings in themselves considered, and as in their significations and effects: God loved not any man's pain, and suffering, and death, as in itself considered, and as evil to us; no, not of a sacrificed beast; but he loveth the demonstration of his truth, and justice, and holiness, and the vindication of his laws from the contempt of sinners, and the other good ends attained by this means; and so as a means adapted to such ends he loveth the punishment of sin.

Object. XV. It is a suspicious sign that he seeketh but to set up his name, and get disciples, that he

* The parts and style of men may vary, who speak the same truth. Sentit ut Pythagoras, dividit ut Socrates, explicat ut Plato, implicat ut Aristoteles, ut Æschines blanditur, ut Demosthenes irascitur, verna ut Hortensius, ut Cethegus, incitat ut Curio, moratur ut Fabius, simulat ut Crassus, dissimulat ut Cæsar, suadet ut Cato, dissuadet ut Appianus, persuadet ut Tullius: instruit ut Hieronimus, destruit ut Lactantius, astruit ut Augustinus, attollit ut Hilarius, summittit ut Joannes, ut Basilus corripit, ut Gregorius consolatur, ut Orosius affluit, ut Rufinus stringit, ut Eusebius narrat, ut Eusebius sollicitat, ut Paulinus provocat, ut Ambrosius perseverat. Sidonius Ep. Mammet. Even as your heathen authors had their several styles, so had the sacred writers.

Qua Cyprianus brevitate placet, quo pondere Varro.

Quo genio Plautus, quo lumine Quintilianus.

Qua pompa Tacitus nunquam sine laude loquens.

Apol. Sidonius, Carm. 2. Actuar. Bib. Patr. p. 123. Nihil fide nostra iniquius fingi posset, si in eruditio tantum, et dicendi facultate et logicis demonstrationibus excellentes

maketh it so necessary to salvation to believe in him; and not only to repent and turn to God.

Answ. He maketh not believing in him necessary, *sub ratione finis*, as our holiness and love to God is, but only *sub ratione medii*, as a means to make us holy, and work us up to the love of God. He proclaimeth himself to be the way, the truth, and the life, by whom it is that we must come to the Father; and that he will save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, Heb. vii. 25; John xiv. 6. So that he commandeth faith but as the bellows of love to kindle in us the heavenly flames. And I pray you, how should he do this otherwise? Can we learn of him, if we take him for a deceiver? Will we follow his example, if we believe him not to be our pattern? Will we obey him, if we believe not that he is our Lord? Will we be comforted by his gracious promises and covenant, and come to God with ever the more boldness and hope of mercy, if we believe not in his sacrifice and merits? Shall we be comforted at death in hope that he will justify us, and receive our souls, if we believe not that he liveth, and will judge the world, and is the Lord of life and glory? Will you learn of Plato or Aristotle, if you believe not that they are fit to be your teachers? Or will you take physic of any physician whom you trust not, but take him for a deceiver? Or will you go in the vessel with a pilot, or serve in the army under a captain, whom you cannot trust? To believe in Christ, which is made so necessary to our justification and salvation, is not a dead opinion, nor the joining with a party that crieth up his name: but it is to become christians indeed; that is, to take him unfeignedly for our Saviour, and give up ourselves to him by resolved consent or covenant, to be saved by him from sin and punishment, and reconciled to God, and brought to perfect holiness and glory. This is true justifying and saving faith. And it is our own necessities that have made this faith so necessary as a means to our salvation. And shall we make it necessary for ourselves, and then quarrel with him for making it necessary in his covenant?

Object. XVI. If Christ were the Son of God, and his apostles inspired by the Holy Ghost, and the Scriptures were God's word, they would excel all other men and writings, in all true rational worth and excellency; whereas, Aristotle excelleth them in logic and philosophy, and Cicero and Demosthenes in oratory, and Seneca in ingenious expressions of morality, &c.

Answ. You may as well argue that Aristotle was no wiser than a minstrel, because he could not fiddle so well; or than a painter, because he could not limn so well; or than a harlot, because he could not dress himself so neatly. Means are to be estimated according to their fitness for their ends.* Christ himself excelled all mankind, in all true perfections;

caderet: popularis autem multitudo, ut auro et argento aliisque omnibus rebus, quæ hic in pretio habentur, atque a plerisque avidè expetuntur, sic hoc quoque frustraretur, ac Deus id quod altum et excelsum est, et ad paucos pertingit, gratum acceptumque haberet; contra, quod propinquius est, nec vulgi capere superat, aspernaretur et rejiceret. Nazianz. Orat. 26. p. 458. Sed ab indoctis hominibus et rudibus scripta sunt. Et idcirco non sunt facili audientie credenda. Vide ne magis fortior hæc causa sit: cur illa sint nullis coinquinata mendaciis; mente simplici prodita, et ignara lenociniis ampliare trivialis et sordidus sermo est: nunquam enim veritas secatata est fucum, nec quod exploratum et certum est, circumduci se patitur orationis per ambitum longiorem: collectiones enthymeta, definitiones, omniæ illa ornamenta quibus fides queritur assertionis, suspicientes adjuvant, non veritatis lineamenta demonstrant—Solécismis, barbarismis, inquis obisita sunt res vestra—Puerilis sane et angustæ pectoris reprehensio: Quam si admitteremus ut vera sit—Quid enim officit, O queso? aut quam præstat intellectui tarditatem? utrumne quid leve, an hirsuta cum asperitate promatur?

and yet it became him not to exercise all men's arts, to show that he excelleth them. He came not into the world to teach men architecture, navigation, medicine, astronomy, grammar, music, logic, rhetoric, &c. and therefore showed not his skill in these. The world had sufficient helps and means for these in nature. It was to save men from sin and hell, and bring them to pardon, holiness, and heaven, that Christ was incarnate, and that the apostles were inspired, and the Scriptures written; and to be fitted to these ends is the excellency to be expected in them; and in this they excel all persons and writings in the world. As God doth not syllogize, or know by our imperfect way of ratiocination, but yet knoweth all things better than syllogizers do, so Christ hath a more high and excellent kind of logic and oratory, and a more apt, and spiritual, and powerful style, than Aristote, Demosthenes, Cicero, or Seneca. He showed not that skill in methodical healing which Hippocrates and Galen showed, but he showed more and better skill, when he could heal with a word, and raise the dead, and had the power of life and death; so did he bring more convincing evidence than Aristote, and persuaded more powerfully than Demosthenes or Cicero. And though this kind of formal learning was below him, and below the inspired messengers of his gospel, yet his inferior servants, an Aquinas, a Scotus, an Ockam, a Scaliger, a Ramus, a Gassendus, do match or excel the old philosophers; and abundance of christians equalize or excel a Demosthenes or Cicero, in the truest oratory.

2. His mercy had a general design for the salvation of all sorts and ranks of men, and therefore was not to confine itself to a few trifling, pedantic logicians and orators, or those that had learned to speak in their new-made words and phrases; but he must speak in the common dialect of all those whom he would instruct and save. As the statutes of the land, or the books of physic, which are most excellent, are written in a style which is fitted to the subject matter, and to the readers, and not in syllogisms, or terms of logic, so was it more necessary that it should be with the doctrine of salvation. The poor and unlearned were the greatest number of those that were to be converted and saved by the gospel, and still to use the holy Scriptures.

3. There is greater exactness of true logical method in some parts of the Scripture, (as e. g. in the covenant of faith, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue,) than any that is to be found in Aristote or Cicero; though men that understand them not do not observe it. The particular books of Scripture were written at several times, and on several occasions, and not as one methodical system, though the Spirit that indited it hath made it indeed a methodical system, agreeable to its design: but if you saw the doctrines of all this Bible, *uno intuitu*, in a perfect scheme, as it is truly intended by the Spirit of God; if you saw all begin the Divine Unity, and branch out itself into the Trinity, and thence into the Trinity of relations and correlations, and thence into the multiplied branches of mercy and precepts, and all these accepted and improved in duty and gratitude by man, and returned up in love to the blessed Trinity and Unity again, and all this in perfect order, proportion, and harmony; you would see the most admirable, perfect method that ever was set before you in the world: the resemblance of it is in the circular motion of the humours and spirits in man's body, which are delivered on from vessel to vessel, and perfected in all their motions. I know there are

infectatur quod acui, an acutior quod oportebat infecti.
 Arnob. l. 1. p. 10. Dissoluti est pectoris, in rebus seriis
 querere voluptatem—Atsi verum species, nullus sermo natura

many systems and schemes attempted which show not this, but that is because the wisdom of this method is so exceeding great that it is yet but imperfectly understood: for my own part, I may say as those that have made some progress in anatomy beyond their ancestors, that they have no thought that they have yet discovered all, but rejoice in what they have discovered, which showed them the hopes and possibility of more; so I am far from a perfect comprehension of this wonderful method of divinity, but I have seen that which truly assureth me that it excelleth all the art of philosophers and orators, and that it is really a most beautiful frame and harmonious consort, and that more is within my prospect than I am yet come to.

4. Moreover, it is Christ who gave all men all the gifts they have: to logicians, orators, astronomers, grammarians, physicians, musicians, &c. whatever gifts are suited to men's just ends and callings he bestoweth on them; and to his apostles he gave those gifts which were most suitable to their work. I do not undervalue the gifts of nature or art in any; I make it not, with Aristote, an argument for the contempt of music, *Joem neque carnere, neque Cytharam pulsare*; but I may say, that as God hath greater excellencies in himself, so hath he greater gifts to give; and such gifts as were fittest for the confirmation of the truth of the gospel, and first planting of the churches, he gave to the apostles; and such as were fit for the edifying of the church he giveth to his ministers ever since; and such as were fit for the improvement of nature, in lower things, he gave the philosophers and artists of the world.

Object. XVII. The Scripture hath many contradictions in it, in points of history, chronology, and other things; therefore it is not the word of God.

Ans. Nothing but ignorance maketh men think so: understand once the true meaning, and allow for the errors of printers, transcribers, and translators, and there will no such thing be found. Young students, in all sciences, think their books are full of contradictions; which they can easily reconcile, when they come to understand them. Books that have been so oft translated into so many languages, and the originals and translations so oft transcribed, may easily fall into some disagreement between the original and translations; and the various copies may have divers, inconsiderable verbal differences. But all the world must needs confess, that in all these books, there is no contradiction in any point of doctrine, much less in such as our salvation resteth on.

There are two opinions among christians about the books of the holy Scripture: the one is, that the Scriptures are so entirely and perfectly the product of the Spirit's inspiration, that there is no word in them which is not infallibly true: the other is, that the Spirit was promised and given to the apostles, to enable them to preach to the world the true doctrine of the gospel, and to teach men to observe whatever Christ commanded; and truly to deliver the history of his life, and sufferings, and resurrection, which they have done accordingly. But not to make them perfect and indefectible in every word, which they should speak or write, no, not about sacred things; but only in that which they delivered to the church, as necessary to salvation, and as the rule of faith and life; but every chronological and historical narrative is not the rule of faith or life. I think that the first opinion is right, and that no one error or contradiction, in any matter, can be proved in the Scriptures.

est integer, vitiosus similiter nullus: quænam enim est ratio naturalis, aut in mundi constitutionibus lex scripta, ut hic paries dicatur, et hæc sella? Id. ibid.

Yet all are agreed in this, that it is so of divine inspiration, as yet in the manner, and method, and style, to partake of the various abilities of the writers, and consequently of their human imperfections. And that it is a mere mistake which infidels deceive themselves by, to think that the writings cannot be of divine inspiration unless the book, in order and style, and all other excellences, be as perfect as God himself could make it: though we should grant that it is less logical than Aristotle, and less oratorical, and grammatical, and exact in words than Demosthenes or Cicero, it would be no disparagement to the certain truth of all that is in it. It doth not follow that David must be the ablest man for strength, or that he must use the weapons which in themselves are most excellent, if he be called of God to overcome Goliath; but rather that it may be known that he is called of God, he shall do it with less excellence of strength and weapons than any other men: and so there may be some real weakness, not culpable, in the writings of the several prophets and apostles, in point of style and method, which shall show the more that they are sent of God to do great things by little human excellency of speech, and yet that human excellency be never the more to be disliked, any more than a sword, because David used but a sling and stone. If Amos have one degree of parts, and Jeremiah another, and Isaiah another, &c. God doth not equal them all by inspiration, but only cause every man to speak his saving truth in his own language, and dialect, and style. As the body of Adam was made of the common earth, though God breathed into him a rational soul; and so is the body of every saint, even such as may partake of the infirmities of parents; so Scripture hath its style, and language, and methods so from God, as we have our bodies; even so that there may be in them the effects of human imperfection: and it is not so extraordinarily of God as the truth of the doctrine is: all is so from God, as to be suitable to its proper ends. But the body of Scripture is not so extraordinarily from him, as the soul of it is; as if it were the most excellent and exact in every kind of ornament and perfection. The truth and goodness is the soul of the Scripture, together with the power manifested in it: and in these it doth indeed excel. So that variety of gifts in the prophets and apostles may cause variety of style and other accidental excellences in the parts of the holy Scriptures, and yet all these parts be animated with one soul of power, truth, and goodness.

But those men who think that these human imperfections of the writers do extend further, and may appear in some by-passages of chronologies or history, which are no proper part of the rule of faith and life, do not hereby destroy the christian cause: for God might enable his apostles to an infallible recording and preaching of the gospel, even all things necessary to salvation, though he had not made them infallible in every by-passage and circumstance, any more than they were indefectible in life.

As for them that say, I can believe no man in any thing, who is mistaken in one thing, at least, as infallible, they speak against common sense and reason; for a man may be infallibly acquainted with some things, who is not so in all. An historian may infallibly acquaint me, that there was a fight at Le-

panto, at Edge-hill, at York, at Naseby; or an insurrection and massacre in Ireland and Paris, &c. who cannot tell me all the circumstances of it: or he may infallibly tell men of the late fire which consumed London, though he cannot tell just whose houses were burnt, and may mistake about the causes of it, and the circumstances. A lawyer may infallibly tell you whether your cause be good or bad, in the main, who yet may misreport some circumstances in the opening of it. A physician, in his historical observations, may partly err as an historian in some circumstances, and yet be infallible as a physician in some plain cases which belong directly to his art. I do not believe that any man can prove the least error in the holy Scripture in any point, according to its true intent and meaning; but, if he could, the gospel, as a rule of faith and life, in things necessary to salvation, might be nevertheless proved infallible by all the evidence before given.

Object. XVIII. The physics in Gen. i. are contrary to all true philosophy, and suited to the vulgar's erroneous conceits.

Ans. No such matter: there is sounder doctrine of physics in Gen. i. than any philosopher hath who contradicteth it: and as long as they are all together by the ears among themselves, and so little agreed in most of their philosophy, but leave it to this day either to the sceptics to deride as utterly uncertain, or to any novelist to form anew into what principles and hypotheses he please, the judgment of philosophers is of no great value, to prejudice any against the Scriptures. The sum of Gen. i. is but this, that God having first made the intellectual superior part of the world, and the matter of the elementary world in an unformed mass or chaos, did the first day distinguish or form the active element of fire, and caused it to give light. The second day he separated the attenuated or rarified part of the passive element, which we call the air; expanding it from the earth upwards, to separate the clouds from the lower waters, and to be the medium of light:¹ and whether in different degrees of purity, it fill not all the space between all the globes both fixed and planetary, is a question which we may more probably affirm than deny; unless there be any waters also upwards by condensation, which we cannot disprove. The third day he separated the rest of the passive element, earth and sea, into their proper place and bounds; and also made individual plants, in their specific forms and virtue of generation, or multiplication of individuals. The fourth day he made the sun, moon, and stars, either then forming them, or then making them luminaries to the earth, and appointing them their relative office; but hath not told us of their other uses, which are nothing to us. The fifth day he made inferior sensitives, fishes and birds, the inhabitants of water and air, with the power of generation or multiplication of individuals. The sixth day he made first the terrestrial animals, and then man, with the power also of generation or multiplication. And the seventh day, having taken complacency in all the works of this glorious perfected frame of nature, he appointed to be observed by mankind as a day of rest from worldly labours, for the worshipping of him their omnipotent Creator, in commemoration of this work.

dunt, quorum nec vocabula reperire possibile est. Hæc substantiam invisibilis mundi replevisse sciendum est, &c. Basil. Hex. interp. Eustath. l. i. Casarius (Dial. l. Qu. 50. et Qu. 51.) saith, that Moses passed by the nations of angels, and began with the creation of the visible world, and that the first day he created matter, and afterward other things of that, &c.: and that of the light first made, God made the sun. But he ignorantly denieth its circular motion.

¹ Lege Basilii Hexamer. et Greg. Nysseni addit. Basil saith, that *in principio* is in the beginning of time; but that the intellectual world is here presupposed: Erat antiquissima creaturæ ordinatio, illis quæ extra mundum sunt, apta virtutibus, orta sine tempore, sempiterna sibi quæ propria: in qua conditor omnium Deus opera certa constituit, id est, lumen intellectibile, conveniens beatitudini amantium Dominum: rationabiles, invisibilesque dico naturas, et omnium intellectibilium decorationem, quæ capacitatem nostræ mentis exce-

This is the sum and sense of the physics of Gen. i.; and here is no error in all this, whatever prejudiced philosophers may imagine.

Object. XIX. It is a suspicious sign that believing is commanded us instead of knowing, and that we must take all upon trust without any proof.

Ans. This is a mere slander. Know as much as you are able to know: Christ came not to hinder, but to help your knowledge. Faith is but a mode or act of knowing: how will you know matters of history which are past, and matters of the unseen world, but by believing. If you could have an angel come from heaven to tell you what is there, would you quarrel because you are put upon believing him? If you can know it without believing and testimony, do: God biddeth you believe nothing but what he giveth you sufficient reason to believe. Evidence of credibility in divine faith is evidence of certainty: believers in Scripture usually say, We know that thou art the Christ, &c. You are not forbidden, but encouraged to try the spirits, and not to believe every spirit nor pretended prophet: let this treatise testify whether you have not reason and evidence for belief. It is Mahomet's doctrine, and not Christ's, which forbiddeth examination.

Object. XX. It imposeth upon us an incredible thing, when it persuadeth us that our undoing, and calamity, and death, are the way to our felicity and our gain, and that sufferings work together for our good; at least, these are hard terms which we cannot undergo, nor think it wisdom to lose a certainty for uncertain hopes.

Ans. Suppose that the truth of the gospel proved; yea, or but the immortality and retribution for souls hereafter, which the light of nature proveth; and then we may well say that this objection savoureth more of the beast than of the man: a heathen can answer it, though not so well as a christian. Seneca and Plutarch, Antonine and Epictetus, have done it in part; and what a dotage is it to call things present, certainties, when they are certainly ready to pass away, and you are uncertain to possess them another hour: who can be ignorant what haste time maketh, and how like the life of man is to a dream? What sweetness is now left of all the pleasant cups and morsels, and all the merry hours you have had, and all the proud or lusty fancies which have tickled your deluded, fleshly minds? Are they not more terrible than comfortable to your most retired, sober thoughts? and what an inconsiderable moment is it till it will be so with all the rest! All that the world can possibly afford you will not make death the more welcome, nor less terrible to you; nor abate a jot of the pains of hell. It is as comfortable to die poor as rich; and a life of pain, and weakness, and persecution, will end as pleasantly as a life of pomp, and wealth, and pleasures. If it be no unreasonable motion of a physician to tell you of blood-letting, vomiting, purging, and strict diet, to save your lives; nor any hard dealing in your parents to set you many years to school to endure both the labour of learning and the rod, and after that to set you to a seven years' apprenticeship, and all this for things of a transitory nature; sure, God deserveth not to be accused as too severe if he train you up for heaven more strictly, and in a more suffering way than the flesh desireth. Either you believe that there is a future life of retribution, or you do not: if not, the foregoing evidences must first convince you, before you will be fit to debate the

case, whether sufferings are for your hurt or benefit; but if you do believe a life to come, you must needs believe that its concerns weigh down all the matters of fleshly interest in this world, as much as a mountain would weigh down a feather; and then do but further bethink yourselves, impartially, whether a life of prosperity or of adversity be the liker to tempt you into the love of this world, and to turn away your thoughts and desires from the heavenly felicity? Judge but rightly, first, of your own interest, and you will be fitter to judge of the doctrine of Christ.^s

Object. XXI. Christ seemeth to calculate all his precepts to the poorer sort of people's state, as if he had never hoped that kings and nobles would be christians: if men think as hardly of the rich as he doth, and take them to be so bad, and their salvation so difficult, how will they ever honour their kings and governors? And if all men must suffer such as abuse and injure them, and must turn the other cheek to him that striketh them, and give him their coat who taketh away their cloak, what use will there be for magistrates and judicatures?

Ans. 1. Christ fitteth his precepts to the benefit of all men; but, in so doing, he must needs tell them of the danger of overloving this world, as being the most mortal sin which he came to cure; and he must needs tell them what a dangerous temptation a flesh-pleasing, prosperous state is to the most, to entice them to this pernicious sin. Had he silenced such necessary truths as these, he could not have been their Saviour; for how should he save them from sin if he conceal the evil and the danger of it. If the corruption of man's nature be so great, that riches, and honours, and pleasures, are ordinarily made the occasions of men's perdition, must Christ be Christ and never tell them of it? and is he to be blamed for telling them the truth; or they, rather, who create these difficulties and dangers to themselves? Christ teacheth men to honour a sacred office, such as magistracy is, without honouring vice, or betraying sinners by concealing their temptations; and to holy, faithful rulers he teacheth us to give a double honour. They that will prove that most of the great and wealthy shall be saved, must prove, first, that most of them are godly and mortified, heavenly persons; and the fit proof that must be by showing us the men that are so.

2. The laws of Christ require every soul to be subject to the higher powers, and not resist; and this not only for fear of their wrath, but for conscience' sake; and to pay honour and custom to all whom it is due to. And what more can be desired for the support of government.

3. Yea, nothing more tendeth to the comfort and quietness of governors, than the obedience of those precepts of patience and peace, which the objection quarrelleth with. If subjects would love each other as themselves, and forgive injuries, and love their enemies, what could be more joyful to a faithful governor? And to the question, What use would there be then of judicatures? I answer, they would be useful to good men, for their protection against the injuries of the bad, where we are but defendants; and also in cases where it is not want of love, but of knowledge, which causeth the controversy, and when no fit arbitration can decide it; and they will be useful among contentious persons, for all men are not true believers: the most will be, ordinarily, the worst. As we will not be fornicators, thieves, per-

^s Sed et nobis in hujusmodi casibus non auxiliatur Deus. Prompta et manifesta causa est. Nihil enim est nobis promissum ad hanc vitam, nec in carunculae hujus folliculo constitutis opus aliquid sponsum est, auxiliique decretum: quinimo

edocti sumus minas omnes quæcunque sunt parvi dicere.—Atque ista quam dicitis persecucionis asperitas, liberatio nostra est, non persecutio: nec penam vexatio inferet, sed ad lucem libertatis educet. Arnobius adv. Gent. l. 2. in fine.

jured, &c. lest you should say, To what purpose is the law against such offenders? so we will not be revengeful and contentious, lest you should say, To what end are judicatures? The law is to prevent offences by threatened penalties: and that is the happiest commonwealth where the law doth most without the judge, and where judicatures have least employment; for there is none to be expected on earth so happy, where mere love of virtue and of one another will prevent the use both of penal laws and judicatures.

4. And it is but selfishness, and contentiousness, and private revenge, which Christ forbiddeth, and not the necessary defence or vindication of any talent which God hath committed to our trust, so it be with the preservation of brotherly love and peace.

5. And that Christ foreknew what princes and states would be converted to the faith, is manifest, 1. In all his propheths, who have foretold it, that kings shall be our nursing fathers, &c. 2. In that Christ prophesied himself, that when he was lifted up he would draw all men to him. 3. By the prophecies of John, who saith, that the kingdoms of the world should become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

Object. XXII. But it is the obscurity of all those prophecies, which is one of the difficulties of our faith, and that they are never like to be fulfilled. Almost all your expositors differ about the sense of John's Revelation; and the calling of the Jews, and bringing in all the gentiles to their subjection, seem to be plainly prophesied of, which are never like to come to pass.^b

Ans. 1. Prophecies are seldom a rule of life, but an encouragement to hope, and a confirmation to faith, when they are fulfilled; and, therefore, if the particularities be dark, and understood by few, so the general scope be understood, it should be no matter of offence or wonder. It is doctrine, and precept, and promises of salvation, which are the daily food of faith.

2. If no man can hitherto truly say, that any one promise or prophecy hath failed, why should we think that hereafter they will fail? What, though the things seem improbable to us, they are never the unlikely to be accomplished by God. The conversion of the gentiles of the Roman empire, and so many other nations of the world, was once as improbable as the calling of the Jews is; and yet it was done.

3. And many of those prophecies are hereby fulfilled, it being not a worldly kingdom, as the carnal Jews imagined, which the prophets foretold of the Messiah, but the spiritual kingdom of a Saviour. When the power and glory of the Roman empire, in its greatest height, did submit and resign itself to Christ, with many other kingdoms of the world, there was more of those prophecies then fulfilled, than selfishness will suffer the Jews to understand: and the rest shall all be fulfilled in their season. But as, in all sciences, it is but a few of the extraordinarily wise, who reach the most subtle and difficult points; so it will be but a very few christians who will understand the most difficult prophecies, till the accomplishment interpret them.

^b *Obj.* Sed et ipse pollicetur quæ non probat. *Resp.* Ita est: nulla enim futurorum existere potest comprobatio. Arnob. lib. 2.

¹ Read Cicero De Fato, de Divinatione, &c. and all those philosophers de fato, whose opinions Grotius hath collected, and you will see that they had the same doubts as we, but were less able to resolve them.

^k Intellectum est optimum cognoscere voluntatem Dei; omnium superior efficitur homo, qui obediens veritati. Pachomius in monit. per. Voss. Edit.

Object. XXIII. But the difficulties are as great in the doctrines as in the prophecies. Who is able to reconcile God's decrees, foreknowledge, and efficacious, special grace, with man's free-will, and the righteousness of God's judgment, and the reasonableness of his precepts, promises, and threats? How God's decrees are all fulfilled, and in him we live, and move, and be; and are not sufficient for a good thought of ourselves; but to believe, to will, and to do, is given us; and he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth; and it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. And yet that he would not the death of a sinner, but rather that he repent and live; and that he would have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; and layeth all the blame of their misery on themselves.¹

Ans. First, Consider these things apart and in themselves, and then comparatively as they respect each other. 1. Is it an incredible thing that all being should be from the First Being, and all goodness from the Infinite Eternal Good; and that nothing should be unknown to the Infinite Omniscient Wisdom; and that nothing can overcome the power of the Omnipotent; or that he is certainly able to procure the accomplishment of all his own will; and that none shall disappoint his purposes, nor make him fall short of any of his counsels or decrees? Go no further now, and do not by false or uncertain doctrine make difficulties to yourselves, which God never made; and then tell me whether any of this be doubtful.^k

2. On the other side, is it incredible that man is a rational free agent, and that he is a creature governable by laws; and that God is his Ruler, Lawgiver, and Judge; and that his laws must command and prohibit, and the sanction contain rewards and punishments: and that men should be judged righteously, according to their works; or that the messengers of Christ should entreat and persuade men to obey; and that they should be moved as men by motives of good or evil to themselves? Is there any thing in this that is incredible or uncertain? I think there is not.^l

And these difficulties will concern you nevertheless, whether you are christians or not: they are harder points to philosophers than to us; and they have been their controversies before Christ came into the world: they are points that belong to the natural part of theology, and not that which resteth only on supernatural revelation; and therefore this is nothing against Christ.

2. But yet I will answer your question, who can reconcile these things? ^m 1. They can do much to the reconciling of them, who can distinguish a mere volition, or purpose, or decree, from an efficacious, pre-determining influx. 2. And can distinguish between those effects which need a positive cause, and purpose or decree, and those nullities which, having no cause but defective, do need no positive purpose or decree. 3. And can distinguish between the need we have of medicinal grace for holy actions, and the need we have of common help for every action natural and free. 4. And can distinguish

¹ Leg. librum excell. D. Strangii Scoti de hisce controversiis. Plurima etiam considerant dignissima sunt in Ro. Baronii Metaphysic.

^m Dorotheus, (Doct. 6.) to prove the unsearchableness of God's counsels and differencing grace, doth instance in two young maids, in natural temper much alike, both brought as captives in a ship to be sold. A holy woman bought one of them, and instructed her in holiness. A harlot bought the other, and taught her the trade of wickedness: and who, saith he, can give the reason of this event?

between an absolute volition, and a limited volition, *in tantum et ad hoc*, and no further. 5. They that can distinguish between man's natural liberty of self-determination, and his civil liberty from restraint of law, and his moral liberty from vicious habits. 6. They that can well difference man's natural power or faculties, from his moral power of good and holy disposition. 7. They that know what a free power is, and how far the causer of that power is, or is not, the cause of the act or its omission. 8. They that can distinguish between those acts which God doth as our Owner or as our free Benefactor, and those which he doth as Rector. 9. And between those which he doth as Rector by his legislative will, antecedent to men's keeping or breaking of his laws, and by his judicial and executive will, as consequent to these acts of man. 10. He that can distinguish between God's method in giving both the first call of the gospel, and the first internal grace to receive it, and of his giving the grace of further sanctification, justification, and glory. 11. And between the manner of his procuring our first faith, and the procuring our following sanctification. 12. And he that knoweth how easy it is with God to attain what he willett, without destroying the liberty of our wills (as a miller can make the stream of water turn his mill and grind his corn, without altering any thing in the inclination of the water). 13. And, withal, how incomprehensible the nature and manner of God's operation is to man; and how transcendently it is above all physical agency by corporeal contact or motion. I say, he that understandeth and can apply these distinctions, can reconcile the decrees and concurrence of God with his government and man's free-will, as far as is necessary to the quieting of our understandings.

Object. XXIV. But the christian faith doth seem to be but human, and not divine, in that it is to be resolved into the credit of men; even of those men who tell us that they saw Christ's miracles, and saw him risen and ascend; and of those who saw the miracles of the apostles; and of those who tell us, that the first churches witness that they saw such things. The certainty cannot exceed the weakest of the premises; and this is the argument: The doctrine which was attested by miracles is of God; but the christian doctrine was attested by miracles; proved; the spectators averred it to others, who have transmitted the testimony down to us. So that you are no surer of the doctrine than of the miracles, and no surer of the miracles than of the human testimony which hath delivered it to you.

Ans. If you will be at the labour to read over what I have written before, you shall find a threefold testimony to Christ, besides this of miracles: and you shall find the apostles' testimony of Christ's miracles and resurrection attested by more than a human testimony; and you shall find the miracles of the apostles also to have a fuller attestation: even, 1. Besides the most credible and human testimony; 2. A natural impossibility of deceit and falsehood; 3. And a further attestation of God supernaturally: and you shall find that the gospel hath its certain evidence in the sanctifying effect, by the co-operation of the Holy Spirit of Christ unto this day. Peruse it impartially, and you will find all this in what is said.

What would men rather desire to attest the veracity of a messenger from heaven, than miracles; evident, uncontrolled, multiplied miracles? And must this messenger live in every age, and go into every land, to do these miracles in the presence of every living soul? If not, how would those that live in another land or age be brought to the knowledge

of them, but by the testimony of those that saw them? and how would you have such testimonies better confirmed, than by multiplied miracles, delivered in a way which cannot possibly deceive; and fully and perpetually attested by the Spirit of effectual sanctification on believers? It is an unreasonable arrogance to tell our Maker, that we will not believe any miracles which he doth, by whomsoever or howsoever witnessed, unless we see them ourselves with our own eyes; and so they be made as common as the shining of the sun: and then we should condemn them as of no validity.

So much shall here suffice against the objections from the intrinsic difficulties in the christian faith. Many more are answered in my "Treatise against Infidelity," published heretofore.

CHAPTER XI.

THE OBJECTIONS FROM THINGS EXTRINSICAL, RESOLVED.

Object. I. All men are liars, and history may convey down abundance of untruths: who liveth with his eyes open among men, that may not perceive how partially men write; and how falsely through partiality; and with what brazen-faced impudence the most palpable falsehoods, in public matters of fact, are most confidently averred; and that in the land, the city, the age, the year of the transaction? Who, then, can lay his salvation upon the truth of the history of acts and miracles done one thousand six hundred years ago?

Ans. The father of lies, no doubt, can divulge them as well by pen or press, as by the tongue: and it is not an unnecessary caution to readers, and hearers too, to take heed what they believe; especially, 1. When one sect or party speaks against another; 2. Or when carnal interest requireth men to say what they do; 3. Or when falling out provoketh them to asperse any others; 4. Or when the stream of the popular vogue, or countenance of men in power, hath a finger in it; 5. Or when it is as probably contradicted by as credible men; 6. Or when the higher powers deter all from contradicting it, and dissenters have not liberty of speech.

But none of these, nor any such, are in our present case. There are liars in the world; but shall none, therefore, be believed? There is history which is false; but is none, therefore, true? Is there not a certainty in that history which telleth us of the Norman conquest of this land; and of the series of kings which have been since them; and of the statutes which they and their parliaments have made; yea, of a battle, and other transactions, before the incarnation of Jesus Christ? Doth the falsehood of historians make it uncertain whether ever there was a pope at Rome, or a king in France, or an inquisition in Spain, &c.

But I have proved that it is more than the bare credit of any tradition or historians in the world, which assure us of the truth, both of fact and doctrine, in the christian faith.

Object. II. Are not the legends written with as great confidence as the Scriptures; and greater multitudes of miracles there mentioned and believed by the subjects of the pope? and yet they are denied and derided by the protestants!

Ans. Credible history reporteth many miracles done in the first ages of the christian church, and

some since, in several ages and places; and the truth of these was the cloak for the legends' multiplied falsities, which were not written by men that wrought miracles themselves to attest them, or that proved the verity of their writings as the apostles did; nor were they ever generally received by the christian churches, but were written awhile ago, by a few ignorant, superstitious friars, in an age of darkness, and in the manner, exposing the stories to laughter and contempt, and are lamented by many of the most learned papists themselves, and not believed by the multitude of the people. And shall no chronicles, no records, no certain history be believed, as long as there are any foolish, superstitious liars left upon the earth? Then liars will effectually serve the devil indeed, if they can procure men to believe neither human testimony nor divine.

Object. III. Many friars and fanatics, quakers, and other enthusiasts, have, by the power of conceit, been transported into such strains of speech, as in the apostles were accounted fruits of the Spirit; yea, to a pretence of prophecy and miracles: and how know we that it was not so with the apostles?

Ans. 1. It is the devil's way of opposing Christ, to do it by apish imitation: so would the Egyptian magicians have discredited the miracles of Moses: and christianity consisteth not of any words which another may not speak, or any actions of devotion, or gesture, or formality, which no man else can do.* There are no words which seem to signify a rapture, (which are not miraculous,) but they may be counterfeited; but, yet, as a statuary or painter may be known from a creator, and a statue from a man, so may the devil's imitations and fictions, from the evidences of christianity which he would imitate. Look through the four parts of the testimony of the Spirit, and you may see this to be so: 1. What antecedent prophecies have foretold us of these men's actions? 2. What frame of holy doctrine do they deliver, bearing the image of God, besides so much of Christ's own doctrine as they acknowledge? 3. And what miracles are, with any probability, pretended to be done by any of them, unless you mean any preacher of christianity in confirmation of that common, christian faith? There are no quakers, or other fanatics, among us, that I can hear of, who pretend to miracles. In their first arising, two or three of them were raised to a confidence that they had the apostolical gift of the Spirit, and could speak with unlearned languages, and heal the sick, and raise the dead, but they failed in the performance, and made themselves the common scorn, by the vanity of their attempts. Not one of them, that ever spake a word of any language but what he had learned; not one that cured any disease by miracle. One of them, at Worcester, half famished, and then, as is most probable, drowned himself; and a woman, that was their leader, undertook to raise him from the dead: but she spake to him as the priests of Baal to their god, that could not hear; and made but matter of laughter and pity to those that heard of it. There hath not been in England, in our days, that ever I could hear of, either by Jesuit, friar, quaker, or other fanatic, so much as a handsome cheat, resembling a miracle, which the people might not easily see to be a transparent foolery. But many wonders I have known done at the earnest prayers of humble christians. So that he who shall compare the friars and fanatics with the apostles and other disciples of Christ, whose miracles were such as afore described, will see that the devil's apish design, though it may cheat forsaken souls into infidelity, is such as may

* How like are the stories of Eunapius, of Jamblichus, Ædesius, Sosipatra the wife of Eustathius, and others' rap-

confirm the faith of sober men. 4. And what spirit of sanctification doth accompany any of their peculiar doctrines? If any of them do any good in the world, it is only by the doctrine of Christ; but, for their own doctrines, what do they but cheat men, and draw the simple into sin? A friar, by his own doctrine, may draw men to some foppery, or ridiculous ceremony, or subjection to that clergy, whose holy diligence consisteth in striving who shall be greatest; and lord it over the inheritance of Christ, and rule them by constraint, and not willingly. A quaker, by his own doctrine, may teach men to cast away their bands, and cuffs, and points, and hatbands, and to say thou, instead of you, and to put off their hats to no men, and to be the public and private revilers of the holiest and ablest preachers of the gospel, and the best of the people, and, with truculent countenances, to rail at God's servants, in a horrid abuse of Scripture terms. If this image and work of the devil were indeed the image and work of God, it were some testimony of the verity of their doctrine: and yet, even these sects do but, like a flash of lightning, appear for a moment, and are suddenly extinct, and some other sect or fraternity succeedeth them. The quakers already recant most of those rigidities, on which, at first, they laid out their chiefest zeal. If a flash of such lightning, or a squib, or glow-worm, be argument sufficient to prove that there is no other sun, then friars and fanatics, as oft as they are mad, may warrant you to believe that all men are so too, even Christ and his apostles.

Object. IV. But the power of cheaters, and credulity of the vulgar, is almost incredible. The great number of papists who believe their holy cheats; and the greater number of Mahometans, who believe in a most sottish, ignorant deceiver, do tell us what a folly it is to believe for company.

Ans. This is sufficiently answered already. No doubt but cheaters may do much with the ignorant and credulous multitude; but doth it follow, thence, that there is nothing certain in the world? None of these were ever so successful in deceiving, as to make men of sound understanding and senses believe that they saw the lame, and blind, and deaf, and sick, and lunatic healed, and the dead raised, and that they themselves performed the like; and that they saw and were instructed by one risen from the dead, when there was no such thing; or that abundance of men did speak in many unlearned tongues, and heal the lame, and blind, and sick, and raise the dead; and this for many years together, in many countries, before many congregations; and that they procured the same Spirit to those that believe them to do the like, and that by this means they planted churches of such believers through the world. Who is it that hath been such a successful deceiver?

As for the Mahometans, they do but believe, by education and human authority, that Mahomet was a great prophet, whose sword, and not his miracles, hath made his sect so strong that they dare not speak against it. Those few miracles which he pretendeth to are ridiculous, unproved dreams: and if there be found a people in the world that, by a tyrant's power, may be so barbarously educated as to believe any foppery, how foolish and vain soever be the report, it doth not follow that full and unquestionable evidence is not to be believed.

Object. But what can be imagined by the wit of man more certain than sense, when it is sound sense, and all the senses, and all men's senses, upon an object suitable, and near, and with convenient media, &c. &c. And yet, in the point of transubstantiation, it tures, prophecies, visions, miracles, to those of the Roman legends, and the quakers!

is not a few fools, but princes, popes, prelates, pastors, doctors, and the most profound and subtle schoolmen, with whole kingdoms of people of all sorts, who believe that all these senses are deceived, both other men's and their own. What, therefore, may not be believed in the world?^b

Ans. And yet a *nihil scitur vel certum est*, is an inhuman, foolish consequence of all this; nor hath it any force against the certainty of the Scripture miracles. For, 1. All this is not a believing that positively they see, and feel, and taste, and hear that which indeed they do not; but it is a believing that they do not see, and hear, and feel, and taste, that which indeed they do. They are made believe that there is no bread and wine when indeed there is. But this is no delusion of the senses, but of the understanding, denying credit to the sense. If you had proved that all these princes, lords, prelates, and people, had verily thought that they had seen, and tasted, and felt bread and wine, when it was not so, then you might have carried the cause of unbelief; but upon no other terms, which is to be remarked, than by proving that nothing in all the world is certain or credible: for all the certainty of the intellect is so far founded in the certainty of sense, and resolved into it, in this life, that it cannot possibly go beyond it. If you suppose not all men's sound, consenting senses to have as much infallibility as man is capable of in this life, for the ordinary conduct of his judgment, you must grant that there is no further infallibility to be had by any natural way: for he that is not certain of the infallibility of such consenting senses is not certain that ever there was a Bible, a pope, a priest, a man, a council, a church, a world, or any thing.

2. And, for my part, I do not believe that all these that you mention do really believe that their senses are deceived, though, if they did, it is nothing to our case. Most of them are frightened, for carnal preservation, into a silencing of their belief; others know not what transubstantiation meaneth. Many are cheated by the priests changing the question; and when they are about to consider whether all our senses be certain that this is bread and wine, they are made believe that the question is whether our senses are certain of the negative, that here is not the real body and blood of Christ: and they are taught to believe that sense is not deceived about the accidents, which they call the species, but about the substance only; when most of the simple people by the species do understand the bread and wine itself, which they think is to the invisible body of Christ, like as our bodies, or the body of a plant, is to the soul. So that, although this instance be one of the greatest in the world, of infatuation by human authority and words, it is nothing against the christian verity.

Object. V. You are not yet agreed among yourselves what christianity is, as to the matter of rule. The papists say it is all the decrees, *de fide*, at least, in all general councils, together with the Scriptures canonical and apocryphal. The protestants take up with the canonical Scriptures alone, and have not near so much in their faith or religion as the papists have.^c

Ans. What it is to be a christian, all the world

^b *Sensus nostros, non parens, non nutrix, non magister, non poeta, non scena depravat; non multitudinis consensus abducit a vero: animis omnes tenduntur insidiæ, vel ab iis quos modo innumeravi vel ab ea que penitus in omni sensu implicata insidet imitatrix boni voluptas, malorum autem mater omnium.* Cic. de Leg. 1. p. 226.

^c Of the canon of the Scripture, read Dr. Reynolds, (De Lib. Apoc.) and Bishop Cousin's full Collections on that subject. Vide etiam Carm. Iambic, Amphilocheii in Auct.

may easily perceive, in that solemn sacrament, covenant, or vow, in which they are solemnly entered into the church and profession of christianity, and made christians: and the ancient creed doth tell the world what hath always been the faith which was professed: and those sacred Scriptures which the churches did receive, do tell the world what they took for the entire comprehension of their religion; but if any sects have been since tempted to any additions, enlargements, or corruptions, it is nothing to the disparagement of Christ, who never promised that no man should ever abuse his word, and that he would keep all the world from adding to or corrupting it. Receive but so much as the doctrine of Christ, which hath certain proof that indeed it was his, delivered by himself, or his inspired apostles, and we desire no more.

Object. VI. But you are not agreed of the reasons and resolution of your faith. One resolveth it into the authority of the church, and others into a private spirit, and each one seemeth sufficiently to prove the groundlessness of the other's faith.

Ans. Dark-minded men do suffer themselves to be fooled with a noise of words not understood. Do you know what is meant by the resolution and grounds of faith? Faith is the believing of a conclusion, which hath two premises to infer and prove it; and there must be more argumentation for the proof of such premises, and faith in its several respects and dependences may be said to be resolved into more things than one, even into every one of these. This general and ambiguous word, resolution, is used oftener to puzzle than resolve. And the grounds and reasons of faith are more than one, and what they are I have fully opened to you in this treatise. A great many of dreaming wranglers contend about the logical names of the *objectum quod*, *et quod et ad quod*; the *objectum formale*, *et materiale*, *per se*, *et per accidens*, *primarium et secundarium*; *ratio formalis quæ, quæ et sub quæ*; *objectum univocationis, communitatis, perfectionis, originis, virtutis, adæquationis*, &c. the *motiva fidei*, *resolutio*, and many such words; which are not wholly useless, but are commonly used but to make a noise to carry men from the sense, and to make men believe that the controversy is *de re*, which is merely *de nomine*. Every true christian hath some solid reason for his faith, but every one is not learned and accurate enough to see the true order of its causes and evidences, and to analyze it thoroughly, as he ought. And you will take it for no disproof of Euclid or Aristotle, that all that read them do not sufficiently understand all their demonstrations, but disagree in many things among themselves.

Object. VII. You may make it a ridiculous idolatry to worship the sun, and Jupiter, and Venus, and other planets and stars, which in all probability are animate, and have souls as much nobler than ours as their bodies are; for it is like God's works are done in proportion and harmony; and so they seem to be to us as subordinate deities.^d And yet at the same time you will worship your Virgin Mary, and the very image of Christ, yea, the image of the cross which he was hanged on; and the *Sabita Capita*, and rotten bones of your martyrs, to the dishonour of princes, who put them to death as male-

Bib. Pat. to 1. p. 624. Many papists confess, that the holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to the salvation of all. *Quem admodum enim siquis vellet sapientiam hujus seculi exercere, non aliter hoc consequi poterit, nisi dogmata philosophorum legat; sic quicunque volumus pietatem in Deum exercere, non aliunde discemus quam ex Scripturis divinis.* S. Hippolit. Homil. Auctuar. Bibl. Pat. to 1. p. 622.

^d Thus Julian, in his Orations, and Eunapius, in *Ædesio*, pag. (mibi) 598, &c.

factors. Is not the sun more worthy of honour than these?

Ans. 1. We ever granted to an Eunapius, Julian, Porphyry, or Celsus, that the sun, and all the stars and planets, are to be honoured according to their proper excellency and use; that is, to be esteemed as the most glorious of all the visible works of God; which show to us his omnipotency, wisdom, and goodness, and are used as his instruments to convey to us his chief corporal mercies, and on whom, under God, our bodies are dependent, being incomparably less excellent than theirs: but whether they are animated or not, is to us utterly uncertain; and if we were sure they were, yet we are sure that they are the products of the will of the Eternal Being; and he that made both them and us, is the Governor of them and us. And, therefore, as long as he hath no way taught us to call them gods, nor to pray to them, nor offer them any sacrifice, as being uncertain whether they understand what we do or say; nor hath any way revealed that this is his will; nay, and hath expressly forbidden us to do so; reason forbiddeth us to do any more than honourably to esteem and praise them as they are, and use them to the ends which our Creator hath appointed.

2. And for the martyrs, and the Virgin Mary, we do no otherwise by them: we honour them by estimation, love, and praise, agreeable to all the worth which God hath bestowed on them; and the holiness of human souls, which is his image, is more intelligible to us, and so more distinctly amiable, than the form of the sun and planets is. But we pray not to them, because we know not whether they hear us, or know when we are sincere or hypocritical; nor have we any such precepts from our common Lord. It is but some ignorant, mistaken christians who pray to the dead, or give more than due veneration to their memories. And it is Christ, and not every ignorant christian, or mistaken sect, that I am justifying against the cavils of unbelief.

Object. VIII. You make the holiness of christian doctrine a great part of the evidence of your faith: and yet papists and protestants maintain each others' doctrine to be wicked. And such, especially against kings and government, as Seneca, or Cicero, or Plutarch, would have abhorred. The protestants tell the papists of the general council at the Lateran, (sub Innoc. 3.) where (Can. 3.) it is made a very part of their religion, that temporal lords, who exterminate not heretics, may be admonished and excommunicated, and their dominions given by the pope to others, and subjects disobliged from their allegiance; they tell them of the doctrine of their leading doctors, that kings excommunicate are no kings, but may be killed; and of the many rebellions which the pope hath raised against kings and emperors. And the papists say, that the protestants are worse than they, and that their religion hath every where been introduced by rebellion, or established by it; and that the Bible, which is your religion, hath caused most rebellions, and, therefore, they dare not let the people read it: and is this your holy doctrine?

Ans. 1. That christianity is incomparably more for government and due subjection than heathenism, is past all doubt, to those that are impartial judges.

* As you cannot judge of the faculties of man by an infant, so neither of the nature of christianity by infant christians. A primo mirabiliter occulta est natura, nec perspicere nec cognoscere potest; progredientibus autem ætatis sensim, tarde potius nosmetipsos cognoscimus: itaque illa prima commendatio quæ a natura nostra facta est, nōbus obscura et incerta est; primusque appetitus ille animi, tantum agit ut salvi atque integri esse possimus: cum autem despiciere cæperimus et sentire quid simus, et quid ab animantibus cæteris

How few of all the Roman heathen emperors was there, that died not by subjects' hands! Among the Athenians, a king and a tyrant were words too often of the same signification. How hateful the name of a king was among the Romans, is well known. How few, even of their most renowned orators and philosophers, were not put to death, upon accusation of resistance of some prince: Brutus, Cicero, Cato, Seneca, &c. Cicero, pro Milone, can say, *Non se obtinuit scelere, siquis tyrannum occidit: quamvis familiarē, which Brutus practised on Cæsar. Et Tuscul. 5. Nulla nobis cum tyranni societas est, neque est contra naturam spoliare eum quem honestum est necare.* Much more such dangerous doctrine hath Cicero. Seneca (Traged. Hercul. far.) saith, *Victima haud ulla amplior potest, magisque opima mactari Jovi, quam rex iniquus.* But christianity teacheth us subjection to bad rulers, and not only to the good. The ordinary writings of the Athenian and Roman learned men are so bitter against kings, and so much for the people's power, that it is mere impudency for men of their religion to asperse christianity as injurious to kings. How things were used to be carried at Rome, you may perceive by these words of Lampridius, who, wondering that Heliogabalus was killed no sooner, but permitted three years, saith, *Mirum fortasse cupiam videretur, Constantine venerabilis, quod hæc clades quam retuli loco principum fuerit, et quidem prope triennio, ita ut nemo inventus fuerit qui istum a gubernaculis Romanæ majestatis abduceret; cum Neroni, Vitellio, Caligula, cæterisque hujusmodi nunquam tyrannica defuerit.*

Hesechius (in Arcesil.) saith, *Arcesilaus regum neminem magnopere coluit: quomobrem legatione ad Antigonum fungens pro patria, nihil obtinuit.* And Laert. maketh Solon resolve not to live in his own country, merely because there was a tyrant, that is, a king, that had by a faction set up himself, and yet ruled, as he professed, as righteously as a senate. And he saith of Thales, that it was one of the rarities which he spake of, *Rempubl. vidisse tyrannum senem.* And of Chrysippus, *Quod videtur aspernator regum, immodice fuisse, &c.*

We do not deny but there are three sorts of christians that are too much for the resisting and destroying of bad governors, and speak much as these heathens did. The one sort are some over-philosophical, learned men, who have more conversed with the ancient Greeks and Romans than with christian writers. Such was honest Petarch, who perilously saith, *Et sane si vel unum patria civem bonum habeat, malum Dominum diutius non habebit.* The second sort are the faction of the pope, who are led to it by mere interest; their religion and clergy interest both consist in a universal kingdom or government over kings and all the christian world: it is no wonder, therefore, to find them industrious to subject all powers to themselves. The third sort are here and there a few enthusiasts, or fanatical, deluded persons, who are like the turbulent zealots among the Jews, who occasioned the combustions and bloodshed at Jerusalem, about the time of its destruction, who are but the ignorant sort of christians, misled by pretences of zeal or inspiration, for want of judgment, steadiness, and experience. And this is *ritium persone*, and is no disparagement to Christ. As for

differamus, tum ea sequi incipimus ad quæ nati sumus. Cic. de Fin. l. 5. p. 192. So is it here.

* Cum Antistibus agamus ut ex libris illis (Sibyllinis) quidvis potius quam regem proferant: quæ Romæ posthac nec Diæ nec homines esse patientur. Cic. Divinat. l. 2. p. 186. Imperatorem necesse est ut suspicamus, ut enim quem Dominus noster elegit: ut merito dixerim, noster est magis Cæsar, ut a Deo nostro constitutus. Tertul. Apol. 33.

any doctrines of rebellion or sedition, or deposing and killing excommunicate kings, there is none more condemneth them than Christ. It is not every proud or covetous person that maketh the name of christianity or church government a cloak for his usurpation, ambition, or worldliness, that we are pleading for. A Roman prefect was wont to say, Make me the bishop of Rome, and I will be a christian. What if the match had been made, and the pagan had turned christian in profession, for that bishopric, and had lived like a pagan still, and domineered according to his ambition, would christianity have been ever the worse for that? Judge of Christ by his own book and doctrine, and not by the council of Lateran, nor by the books, or doctrine, or practice of any proud and worldly hypocrite, who abuseth his name to sin against him. Christ never promised to make such laws as no man could abuse or break. Yet, withal, let me tell you, that the spleen and envy of factious persons do usually cause them to belie each other, and make each other's doctrine as odious as they can: and if wrangling boys fall out, and call one another bastards, it is no good proof that they are so indeed.^s

Object. But those of you that do escape the doctrines of disloyalty are traitors against your country's liberties, and base-spirited men, and flatterers of princes, and defenders of tyranny and oppression, and all to beg their countenance for your religion. The christian spirit is poor and private, in comparison with the old Greek and Roman genius, which would stand up against the proudest tyrant.

Ans. It seems christianity is hot and cold, as malice fancieth it. Indeed, the doctrine of it is so much for submission, patience, and peace, as giveth more countenance to this accusation than the former, but is guilty of neither of the crimes. It is not flattering hypocrites that I am to defend, let them bear their shame, but it is the doctrine of Christ which is the thing in question. Did Christ flatter Herod, when he said, "Go tell that fox, behold, I cast out devils?" &c. Luke xiii. 32. Did John the Baptist flatter him when he lost his liberty and life for reprehending his filthy lust? Did Christ flatter the Pharisees? Matt. xxiii. Both James flatter the rich and great? James v. 1, &c. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter: ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you." James ii. 6, "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?" Christianity teacheth us to lament the sin of tyranny, the grand crime which keepeth out the gospel from the nations of infidels and pagans through the earth, and eclipseth its glory in the popish principalities: it teacheth us to resist tyrannical usurpers in the defence of our true and lawful kings. But if it teach men patiently to suffer, rather than rebelliously resist, that is not from base-

ness, but true nobleness of spirit, exceeding both the Greek and Roman genius, in that it proceedeth from a contempt of those inferior trifles which they rebel for, and from that satisfaction in the hopes of endless glory, which maketh it easy to them to bear the loss of liberty, life, or any thing on earth, and from obedience to their highest Lord. But in a lawful way, they can defend their countries and liberties as gallantly as ever heathens did.

Object. IX. If your religion had reason for it, what need it be kept up by cruelty and blood? How many thousands and hundred thousands hath sword, and fire, and inquisition devoured, as for the supporting of religion? And when they are thus compelled, how know you who believeth christianity indeed?

Ans. This is none of the way or work of christianity, but of that sect which is raised by worldly interest and design, and must accordingly be kept up. In Christ's own family, two of his disciples would have called for fire from heaven to consume those that rejected him, but he rebuked them, and told them that they knew not what manner of spirit they were of, and that he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Will you now lay the blame of that consuming zeal on Christ, which he so rebuketh? The same two men would have been preferred before the rest, to sit at his right hand and his left hand in his kingdom; and his disciples strove who should be the greatest. Did Christ countenance this, or did he not sharply reprehend them, and tell them that they must not have titles and domination as secular princes have, but be as little children in humility, and their greatness must consist in being greatest serviceable, even in being servants to all. If men after this will take no warning, but fight, and kill, and burn, and torment men, in carnal zeal, and pride, and tyranny, shall this be imputed to Christ, who, in his doctrine and life, hath formed such a testimony against this crime, as never was done by any else in the world, and as is become an offence to unbelievers?^a

Object. X. We see not that the leaders in the christian religion do really themselves believe it: Pope Leo the Tenth called it *Fabula de Christo*. What do men make of it but a trade to live by; a means to get abbeyes, and bishoprics, and benefices; and to live at ease and fleshly pleasure? And what do secular rulers make of it, but a means to keep their subjects in awe?

Ans. He that knoweth no other christians in the world but such as these, knoweth none at all, and is unfit to judge of those whom he knoweth not. True christians are men that place all their happiness and hopes in the life to come, and use this life in order to the next, and contemn all the wealth and glory of the world, in comparison with the love of God and their salvation. True pastors and bishops of the church do thirst after the conversion and happiness of sinners, and spend their lives in diligent labours to these ends; not thinking it too much to stoop to the poorest for their good, nor regarding worldly wealth and glory in comparison with the winning of one soul, nor counting their lives dear, if they may but finish their course and ministry with joy, Luke

^s Beda (in Apocal. 13. fol. 211. p. 2.) expounded the number of antichrist, 666, by reference to 1 Kings x. 14; 2 Chron. ix. 13; where Solomon's yearly revenue of gold was 666 talents: and so he saith, antichrist shall exact that tribute of money to himself, which is due to a true king. As if covetousness and great revenues were the number of the beast. Et in cap. 17. In purpura fucus simulati regiminis: in coccino, eruentus habitus impietatis demonstratur. Fol. 214. p. 2. Vobis humana æstimo innocentiam tradidit: humana item dominio imperavit: inde nec plenè nec adeo

timendæ estis disciplinæ: tanta est prudentia hominis ad demonstrandum bonum, quantum auctoritas ad exigendum: tam illa falli facilius quam ista contemni. Tertul. Apol. c. 45.

^a In ecclesia non coactum, sed acquiescentem oportet ad meliora converti; non est enim qui curare possit invitum, Chrysost. Nemo invitus bene agit, etiamsi bonum est quod facit. Aug. Confes. Praefecti vel Antistes vitium est non quam optimum esse, nec novas subinde virtutum accessiones facere: siquidem virtutis suæ præstantia, multitudinem ad mediocritatem tracturus sit. Nazian. Orat. l. p. 8.

xv.; Acts xx.; Heb. xiii. 7, 17, &c. They are hypocrites, and not true christians, whom the objection doth describe, by what names or titles soever they be dignified, and are more disowned by Christ than by any other in the world.¹

Object. XI. Christians are divided into so many sects among themselves, and every one condemning others, that we have reason to suspect them all; for how know we which of them to believe or follow?

Ans. I. Christianity is but one, and easily known; and all christians do indeed hold this as certain, by common agreement and consent, they differ not at all about that which I am pleading for. There may be a difference whether the pope of Rome or the patriarch of Constantinople be the greater, or whether one bishop must rule over all, and such like matters of carnal quarrel; but there is no difference whether Christ be the Saviour of the world, or whether all his doctrine be infallibly true; and the more they quarrel about their personal interests and by-opinions, the more valid is their testimony in the things wherein they all agree. It is not those things which they differ about that I am now pleading for, or persuading any to embrace; but those wherein they all consent.²

2. But if they agree not in all the integrals of their religion, it is no wonder, nor inferreth any more than that they are not all perfect in the knowledge of such high and mysterious things; and when no man understandeth all that is in Aristotle, nor any two interpreters of him agree in every exposition, no, nor any two men in all the world agree in every opinion, who hold any thing of their own, what wonder if christians differ in many points of difficulty.

3. But their differences are nothing in comparison of the heathen philosophers, who were of so many minds and ways that there was scarcely any coherence among them, nor many things which they could never agree in.

4. The very differences of abundance of honest christians, is occasioned by their earnest desire to please God, and do nothing but what is just and right, and their high esteem of piety and honesty, while the imperfection of their judgments keepeth them from knowing, in all things, what it is which indeed is that good and righteous way which they should take. If children do differ and fall out, if it be but in striving who shall do best, and please their father, it is the more excusable: enemies do not so. Idiots fall not out in school disputes, or philosophical controversies; swine will not fall out for gold or jewels, if they be cast before them in the streets; but it is like that men may.

5. But the great sidings and factions kept up in the world, and the cruelties exercised thereupon, are from worldly hypocrites, who, under the mask of christianity, are playing their own game; and why must Christ be answerable for those whom he most abhorreth, and will most terribly condemn?

Object. XII. You boast of the holiness of christi-

¹ *Profecto* ars quedam artium, et scientia scientiarum mihi esse videtur, hominem regere, animal omnium maxime varium et multiplex. Naz. Orat. l. p. 8.

² *Sicut* noxium est si unitas desit bonis, ita perniciosum est si sit in malis. Perversos quippe unitas corroborat, dum concordant; et tanto magis incorrigibiles, quanto unanimes fecit. Greg. Moral. l. 33. Sed perturbat nos opinionum varietas hominumque dissentio: et quia non idem contingit in sensibus, hos natura certos putamus: illa que aliis esse, aliis secus, nec iisdem semper uno modo videntur, ficta esse dicimus. Quod est longe aliter. Cic. de Leg. l. p. 226.

³ *Spiritus Sanctus* est Patris et Filii amor et connexio: ad ipsum pertinet societas, qua efficitur unum corpus unius Filii Dei. *Sicut* enim unum corpus hominis multis constat mem-

ans, and we see not but they are worse than heathens and Mahometans; they are more drunken, and greater deceivers in their dealings; as lustful and unclean, as covetous and carnal, as proud and ambitious, as tyrannical and perfidious, as cruel and contentious; insomuch, as among the Turkish Mahometans, and the Indian Bannians, the wickedness of christians is the grand cause that they abhor christianity, and it keepeth out your religion from most nations of the earth; so that it is a proverb among them, when any is suspected of treachery, What, do you think I am a christian? And Acosta witnesseth the like of the West Indies.¹

Ans. I. Every man knoweth that the vulgar rabble, who indeed are of no religion, will seem to be of the religion which is most for their worldly advantage, or else which their ancestors and custom have delivered to them; and who can expect that such should live as christians, who are no christians? You may as well blame men, because images do not labour, and are not learned, wise, and virtuous. We never took all for christians indeed, who, for carnal interest, or custom, or tradition, take up the bare name, and desire to be called christians. Rebels may affect the name of loyal subjects, and thieves and robbers the name of true and honest men; shall loyalty, truth, and honesty, therefore, be judged of by such as them? Nothing can be more unrighteous than to judge of christianity by those hypocrites, whom Christ hath told us shall be condemned to the sorest punishment, and whom he hateth above all sorts of sinners. What, if Julian, Celsus, Porphyry, or any of these objectors, should call themselves christians, and live in drunkenness, cruelty, perjury, or deceit, is it any reason that Christ should be reproached for their crimes? Christianity is not a dead opinion or name, but an active, heavenly principle, renewing and governing heart and life: I have before showed what christianity is.

2. In the dominions of the Turks, and other infidel princes, the christians, by oppression, are kept without the means of knowledge; and so their ignorance hath caused them to degenerate, for the greater part, into a sensual, sottish sort of people, unlike to christians: and in the dominions of the Moscovite, tyranny hath set up a jealousy of the gospel, and suppressed preaching, for fear lest preachers should injure the emperor: and in the west, the usurpation and tyranny of the papacy hath locked up the Scriptures from that people in an unknown tongue, that they know no more what Christ saith, than the priest thinks meet to tell them, lest they should be loosened from their dependence on the Roman oracle: and thus ignorance with the most destroyeth christianity, and leaveth men but the shadow, image, and name; for belief is an intellectual act, and a sort of knowing; and no man can believe really he knoweth not what. If any disciples in the school of Christ, have met with such teachers as think it their virtue and proficiency to be ignorant, call not such christians as know not what christianity is, and judge

bris, et vegetat omnia membra una anima, faciens in oculo ut videat, in aure ut audiat, &c. Ita Spiritus Sanctus membra corporis Christi quod est ecclesia, continet et vegetat. Et sicut humani corporis membrum præcium, formam quidem qua membrum cognoscitur retinet, &c. Sic quicumque a prædicta pacis unitate divisus est, Sacramentum quidem tantum formam retinet, sed spiritu præter unitatem non vivit. Frustra ergo foris de forma gloriatur, nisi intus spiritu vegetentur. Aug. de Grat. Nullus christianus malus est nisi hanc professionem simulaverit. Athenag. Leg. pro Christ. p. 3. Nemo (in carceribus vestris) christianus nisi plane tantum christianus: aut si aliud, jam non christianus. Tert. Apol. c. 43.

not of Christ's doctrine by them that never read or heard it, or are not able to give you any good account of it; but, blessed be the Lord, there are many thousand better christians.

Object. XIII. But it is not the ignorant rabble only, but many of your most zealous professors of christianity, who have been as false, as proud, and turbulent, and seditious, as any others.

Ans. 1. That the true, genuine christian is not so,^m you may see, past doubt, by the doctrine and life of Christ and his apostles. And that there are thousands and millions of humble, holy, faithful christians in the world, is a truth which nothing but ignorance or malice can deny. *2.* Hypocrites are no true christians, what zeal soever they pretend: there is a zeal for self and interest, which is oft masked with the name of zeal for Christ. It is not the seeming, but the real christian, which we have to justify. *3.* It is commonly a few young, unexperienced novices, who are tempted into disorders. But Christ will bring them to repentance for all, before he will forgive and save them. Look into the Scripture, and see whether it doth not disown and contradict every fault, both great and small, which you ever knew any christian commit? If it do, (as visibly it doth,) why must Christ be blamed for our faults, when he is condemning them, and reproofing us, and curing us of them.

Object. XIV. The greater part of the world is against christianity: heathens and infidels are the far greater part of the earth: and the greatest princes, and learnedest philosophers, have been and are on the other side.

Ans. 1. The greater number of the world are not kings, nor philosophers, nor wise nor good men; and yet that is no disparagement to kings, or learned or good men. *2.* The most of the world do not know what christianity is, nor ever heard the reasons of it; and, therefore, no wonder if they are not christians. And if most of the world be ignorant and carnal, and such as have subjected their reason to their lusts, no wonder if they are not wise. *3.* There is no where in the world so much learning as among the christians; experience puts that past dispute with those that have any true knowledge of the world. Mahometanism cannot endure the light of learning, and therefore doth suppress or slight it. The old Greeks and Romans had much learning, which did but prepare for the reception of christianity, at whose service it hath continued ever since. But barbarous ignorance hath overspread almost all the rest of the world: even the learning of the Chineses and the Pythagoreans of the east, is but childishness and dotage, in comparison with the learning of the present christians.

Object. XV. For all that you say, when we hear subtle arguments against christianity, it staggereth us, and we are not able to confute them.

Ans. 1. That is indeed the common case of tempted men; their own weakness and ignorance is their enemies' strength. But your ignorance should be

^m Ut ubique triticum, ibi et zizania: sic ubique fuerit bonum Dei, illic erit et scandalum inimici. Chrysost. in Matt. 6. Hom. 33. Sed dicat aliquis etiam de nostris excedere quosdam a regula discipline: Desunt tum christiani haberi apud nos. Philosophi vero illi cum talibus factis in nomine et in honore sapientie perseverant. Tertul. Apol. c. 46. See a notable exhortation in Dorotheus, (Doct. 5. ne nos ipsos informemus.) How unhappy they are that go on their own heads, and want good guides in religion. Bibl. Pat. Gr. Lat. tom. 1. p. 778.

ⁿ An hoc usquequaque aliter in vita? et non ex maxima parte de iudicabit. An dubium est quin virtus ita maximam partem obtineat in rebus humanis, ut reliquias obruat? Audebo quæ secundum naturam sunt bona appellare, nec fraudare suo veteri nomine, virtutis autem amplitudinem

lamented, and not the christian cause accused. It is a dishonour to yourselves, but it is none to Christ. Do your duty, and you may be more capable of discerning the evidence of truth.

Object. XVI. But the sufferings which attend christianity are so great, that we cannot bear them: in most places it is persecuted by princes and magistrates; and it restraineth us from our pleasures, and putteth us upon an ungrateful, troublesome life; and we are not souls that have no bodies, and therefore cannot slight these things.^a

Ans. 1. But you have souls that were made to rule your bodies, and are more worthy and durable than they; and were your souls such as reason telleth you they should be, no life on earth would be so delectable to you, as that which you account so troublesome. And if you will choose things perishing for your portion, and be content with the momentary pleasures of a dream, you must patiently undergo the fruits of such a foolish choice. And if eternal glory will not compensate whatever you can lose by the wrath of man, or by the crossing of your fleshly minds, you may let it go, and boast of your better choice as you find cause.

How much did the light of nature teach the stoics, the cynics, and many other sects, which differeth not much in austerity from Christ's precepts of mortification and self-denial! Socrates could say, *Opes ac nobilitates, non solum nihil in se habere honestatis, verum omne malum ex eis aboriri. Dicebat et unicum esse bonum scientiam, malumque unicum inscitiam. Et referenti quod illum Athenienses mori decrevisset, et natura illos, inquit. Et multa prius de immortalitate animorum ac præclara disserens, cicutum bibit. Magna animi sublimitate carpentes se et objurgantes contemnebat.* (Laert. 1. 2. in Soer. p. 99, 105, 96.) When he was publicly derided, *Omnia ferebat æquo animo.* And when one kicked him and the people marvelled at his patience, he said, "What if an ass had kicked me, should I have sued him at law?" (p. 93.) When he saw in fairs and shops what abundance of things are set to sale, he rejoicingly said, *Quam multis ipse non ego? et cum libere quo vellet abire carcere liceret, noluit, et plorantes severe increpavit, pulcherrimos sermones illos victus prosecutus est.* If so many philosophers thought it a shameful note of cowardice, for a man to live and not to kill himself, when he was falling into shame or misery; much greater reason hath a true believer, to be willing to die in a lawful way, for the sake of Christ, and the hope of glory; and to be less fearful of death, than a Brutus, a Cato, a Seneca, or a Socrates, though not to inflict it on themselves. Soundly believe the promises of Christ, and then you will never much stick at suffering. To lose a feather, and win a crown, is a bargain that very few would grudge at: and profanely, with Esau, to sell the birth-right for a morsel, to part with heaven for the paltry pleasures of flesh and fancy, were below the reason of a man, if sin had not unmanned him. "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall

quasi in altera libere lance ponere. Terram, mihi crede, ea lanx, et maria deprimet: semper enim ex eo quod maximas partes continet, latissimeque funditur, res toto appellatur. Dicimus aliquem hilarem vivere? Igitur si semel tristior effectus est, an hilara vita amissa est? Cic. de Fin. 1. 5. p. 209. Isti ipsi qui voluptate et dolore omnia metiuntur, nonne clamant, sapient! plus semper adesse quod velint, quam quod nolet. Id. ibid. Those that revolt from Christ because of sufferings, are like him that Cicero (ibid.) speaks of, Nobis Heracleotes ille Dionysius flagitiose descivisse videtur a stoicis, propter eorum dolorem. Quasi hoc didicisset a Zenone, non dolere cum doleret! Illud audierat, nec tamen dicerat, malum illud non esse, quia turpe non esset, et esset ferendum viro. p. 209. Qui per virtutem peritat, non interit Plaut. in du capt.

find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?" Matt. xvi. 25, 26.

Virulent Eunapius giveth us the witness of natural reason for a holy, mortified life, whilst he maketh it the glory of the philosophers, whom he celebrateth. Of Antoninus, the son of *Ædesius*, he saith, *Totum se dedit atque applicuit Divi loci gentilibus, et sacris mysticis et arcanis ; citoque in Deorum immortalium contubernium receptus est ; neglecta prorsus corporis cura, ejusque voluptatibus remisso nuntio, et sapientie studio profano vulgo incognitum amplexus.*—*Cuncti mortales hujusce viri temperantium, constantiam et inflecti nesciam mentem demirati fuere.* (Eunap. in *Ædes.*) What a saint doth he make Jamblichus to be, of whom it was feigned, that in his prayers he would be lifted up above ten cubits from the earth, and his garments changed into a golden colour, till he had done ? (Eun. in Jamb. p. 572.) Even while he railleth at the Alexandrian monks, *Ut homines quidem specie, sed vitam turpem porcorum more eages, &c.* (p. 598.) contrary to the evidence of abundant history, he beareth witness against a vicious life. And if holiness, and mortification, or temperance, be so laudable, even in the judgment of the bitterest heathens, why should it be thought intolerable strictness, as it is more clearly and sweetly proposed in the christian verity ? And if he say of Jamblichus, *Ob justitiæ cultum, facilem ad deorum aures accessum habuit ;* we may boldly say, that the righteous God loveth righteousness, and that the prayers of the upright are his delight ; and that their sufferings shall not always be forgotten, nor their faithful labours prove in vain.

CHAPTER XII.

THE REASONABLE CONDITIONS REQUIRED OF THEM WHO WILL OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES OF BELIEVING, AND WILL NOT UNDO THEMSELVES BY WILFUL INFIDELITY.

I HAVE answered the objections against christianity, but have not removed the chiefest impediments ; for *recipitur ad modum recipientis* ; the grand impediments are within, even the incapacity, or indisposition, or frowardness of the persons that should believe. It is not every head and heart that is fit for heavenly truth and work. I will next, therefore, tell you, what conditions reason itself will require of them that would not be deceived ; that so you may not lay that blame on Christ, if you be infidels, which belongeth only to yourselves.

Cond. 1. Come not, in your studies of these sacred mysteries, with an enmity against the doctrine which you must study ; or at least suspend your enmity, so far as is necessary to an impartial search and examination.^a

For ill-will cannot easily believe well. Malice and partiality will blind the strongest wits, and hide the force of the plainest evidence.

Cond. 2. Drown not the love of truth in a vicious, fleshly heart and life ; and forfeit not the light of supernatural revelation, by wilful sinning against natural light, and debauching your consciences, by abusing the knowledge which already you have.

Sensuality, and wilful debauchery, is the common

temptation to infidelity : when men have once so heinously abused God, as that they must needs believe, that if there be a God, he must be a terror to them ; and if there be a judgment, and a life of retribution, it is like to go ill with them ; a little thing will persuade such men, that there is no God, nor life to come, indeed. When they once hope it is so, and take it for their interest, and a desirable thing, they will easily believe that it is so indeed. And God is just, and beginneth the executions of his justice in this world : and the forsaking of a soul that hateth the light, and wilfully resisteth and abuseth knowledge, is one of his most dreadful judgments. That man who will be a drunkard, a glutton, a whore-monger, a proud, ambitious worldling, in despite of the common light of nature, can hardly expect that God should give him the light of grace. Despising truth, and enslaving reason, and turning a man into a beast, is not the way to heavenly illumination.^b

Cond. 3. Be not ignorant of the common, natural truths (which are recited in the first part of this book) ; for supernatural revelation presupposeth natural ; and grace, which maketh us saints, supposeth that reason hath constituted us men ; and all true knowledge is methodically attained.

It is a great wrong to the christian cause, that too many preachers of it have missed the true method, and still begun at supernatural revelations, and built even natural certainties thereupon ; and have either not known, or concealed much of the fore-written natural verities. And it is an exceeding great cause of the multiplying of infidels, that most men are dull or idle drones, and unacquainted with the common, natural truths, which must give light to christianity, and prepare men to receive it. And they think to know what is in heaven, before they will learn what they are themselves, and what it is to be a man.

Cond. 4. Get a true anatomy, analysis, or description of christianity in your minds ; for if you know not the true nature of it first, you will be lamentably disadvantaged in inquiring into the truth of it.

For christianity, well understood in the quiddity, will illustrate the mind with such a winning beauty, as will make us meet its evidence half-way, and will do much to convince us by its proper light.

Cond. 5. When you have got the true method of the christian doctrine, or analysis of faith, begin at the essentials, or primitive truths, and proceed in order, according to the dependences of truth ; and do not begin at the latter end, nor study the conclusion before the premises.

Cond. 6. Yet look on the whole scheme or frame of causes and evidences, and take them entirely and conjunct ; and not as peevish, factious men, who, in spleenish zeal against another sect, reject and vilify the evidence which they plead.

This is the devil's gain, by the raising of sects and contentions in the church ; he will engage a papist, for the mere interest of his sect, to speak lightly of the Scripture and the Spirit ; and many protestants, in mere opposition to the papists, to slight tradition, and the testimony of the church, denying it its proper authority and use. As if in the setting of a watch or clock, one would be for one wheel, and another for another, and each in peevishness cast away that which another would make use of, when it will never go true without them all. Faction and contentions are deadly enemies to truth.

Cond. 7. Mark well the suitability of the remedy to the disease ; that is, of christianity to the depraved state of man ; and mark well the lamentable effects

showing that wickedness causeth further atheism, and that it blindeth sinners that they cannot know God.

^c Viva lectio est vita sanctorum. Greg. Mor. 21.

^a Non meretur audire veritatem, qui fraudulentè interrogat. Ambros.

^b Read the beginning of Theophil. Antioch : Ad Autolyca.

of that universal depravation, that your experience may tell you how unquestionable it is.

Cond. 8. Mark well how connaturally christianity doth relish with holy souls, and how well it suiteth with honest principles and hearts; so that the better any man is, the better it pleaseth him. And how potentially all debauchery, villany, and vice, befriendeth the cause of atheists and unbelievers.

Cond. 9. Take a considerate, just survey of the common enmity against christianity and holiness, in all the wicked of the world; and the notorious war which is every where managed between Christ and the devil, and their several followers; that you may know Christ partly by his enemies.

Cond. 10. Impartially mark the effects of christian doctrine, wherever it is sincerely entertained, and see what religion maketh the best men; and judge not of serious christians at a distance, by false reports of ignorant or malicious adversaries; and then you will see that Christ is actually the Saviour of souls.

Cond. 11. Be not liars yourselves, lest it dispose you to think all others to be liars, and to judge of the words of others by your own.

Cond. 12. Bethink you truly what persons you should be yourselves, and what lives you should live, if you did not believe the christian doctrine; or, if you do not believe it, mark what effect your unbelief hath on your lives.^d

For my own part, I am assured, if it were not for the christian doctrine, my heart and life would be much worse than it is, though I had read Epictetus, Arrian, Plato, Plotinus, Jamblichus, Proclus, Seneca, Cicero, Plutarch, every word; and those few of my neighbourhood, who have fallen off to infidelity, have at once fallen to debauchery, and abuse of their nearest relations, and differed as much in their lives from what they were before in their profession of christianity, though unsound, as a leprous body differeth from one in comeliness and health.

Cond. 13. Be well acquainted, if possible, with church history, that you may understand by what tradition christianity hath descended to us.

For he that knoweth nothing but what he hath seen, or receiveth a Bible, or the Creed, without knowing any further whence and which way it cometh to us, is greatly disadvantaged as to the reception of the faith.

Cond. 14. In all your reading of the holy Scriptures, allow still for your ignorance in the languages, proverbs, customs, and circumstances, which are needful to the understanding of particular texts; and when difficulties stop you, be sure that no such ignorance remain the cause.

He that will but read Brugensis, Grotius, Hammond, and many others that open such phrases and circumstances, with topographers, and Bochartus, and such as write of the animals, utensils, and other circumstances of those times, will see what gross errors the opening of some one word or phrase may deliver the reader from.

Cond. 15. Understand what excellences and perfections they be which the Spirit of God intended to adorn the holy Scriptures with, and also what sort of human imperfections are consistent with these, its

proper perfections; that so false expectations may not tempt you into unbelief.

It seduceth many to infidelity, to imagine, that if Scripture be the word of God, it must needs be most perfect in every accident and mode, which were never intended to be part of its perfection. Whereas, God did purposely make use of those men, and of that style and manner of expression, which was defective in some points of natural excellency, that so the supernatural excellency might be the more apparent. As Christ cured the blind with clay and spittle, and David slew Goliath with a sling. The excellency of the means must be estimated by its aptitude to its end.

Cond. 16. If you see the evidence of the truth of christianity in the whole, let that suffice you for the belief of the several parts, when you see not the true answer to particular exceptions.

If you see it soundly proved that Christ is the Messenger of the Father, and that his word is true, and that the holy Scripture is his word, this is enough to quiet any sober mind, when it cannot confute every particular objection; or else no man should ever hold fast any thing in the world, if he must let all go after the fullest proof, upon every exception which he cannot answer. The inference is sure. If the whole be true, the parts are true.

Cond. 17. Observe well the many effects of angels' ministration, and the evidences of a communion between us and the spirits of the unseen world; for this will much facilitate your belief.

Cond. 18. Overlook not the plain evidences of the apparitions, witches, and wonderful events which fall out in the times and places where you live, and what reflections they have upon the christian cause.

Cond. 19. Observe well the notable answers of prayers, in matters internal and external, in others and in yourselves.

Cond. 20. Be well studied at home, about the capacity, use, and tendency of all your faculties; and you will find that your very nature pointeth you up to another life, and is made only to be happy in that knowledge, love, and fruition of God, which the gospel most effectually leads you to.

Cond. 21. Mark well the prophecies of Christ himself, both of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the successes of his apostles in the world, &c. and mark how exactly they are all fulfilled.

Cond. 22. Let no pretence of humility tempt you to debase human nature below its proper excellency, lest thence you be tempted to think it incapable of the everlasting sight and fruition of God.

The devil's way of destroying is oftentimes by overdoing. The proud devil will help you to be very humble, and help you to deny the excellency of reason and natural free-will, and all supernatural inclinations, when he can make use of it to persuade you, that man is but a subtle sort of brute, and hath a soul but gradually different from sensitives, and so is not made for another life.

Cond. 23. Yet come to Christ as humble learners, and not as arrogant, self-conceited censurers; and think not that you are capable of understanding every thing as soon as you hear it.

Cond. 24. Judge not of the main cause of chris-

^d An vero nisi Deum genus humanum respicere, eique præesse putaremus, adeo puritati et innocentie studeamus? Nequaquam, sed quia persuasissimè vult, Deo qui et nos et mundum hunc condidit, transactæ hic vitæ totius rationes nos reddituros, moderatum, benignum, et perlisque contemptum vivendi genus deligimus. Quippe nullum in hac vitâ tantum malum, etiamsi capitis periculum agatur, supervenire nobis posse arbitramur, quod non omnino sit minimi, immo nihili facieudum præ illa quam a summo iudice expectamus olim

felicitate, &c. Athenag. Apol. p. 58. in B. P. Si enim solam hanc præsentem vitam nos victuros crederemus, suspicioni foret locus, nos carni et sanguini indulgentes, aut avaritia aut concupiscentia captos, peccare? Nos vero omnibus non modo factis sed cogitationibus et sermonibus nostris, tunc noctu tamen interdiu, Deum adesse scimus; eumque et totum esse lumen, et quæ in cordibus nostris latent videre, et hac mortali vita defunctos, et alteram hac terrestri longe meliorem, nempe cœlestem, nos victuros. Id. ibid. p. 77.

tianity, or of particular texts or points, by sudden, hasty thoughts and glances, as if it were a business to be cursorily done; but allow it your most deliberate, sober studies, your most diligent labour, and such time and patience, as reason may tell you are necessary to a learner in so great a cause.

Cond. 25. Call not so great a matter to the trial, in a case of melancholy and natural incapacity, but stay till you are fitter to perform the search.

It is one of the common cheats of Satan, to persuade poor, weak, and melancholy persons, that have but half the use of their understandings, to go then to try the christian religion, when they can scarce cast up an intricate account, nor are fit to judge of any great and difficult thing. And then he hath an advantage to confound them, and fill them with blasphemous and unbelieving thoughts; and if not to shake their habitual faith, yet greatly to perplex them, and disturb their peace. The soundest wit, and most composed, is fittest for so great a task.

Cond. 26. When, upon sober trial, you have discerned the evidences of the christian verity, record what you have found true; and judge not the next time against those evidences, till you have equal opportunity for a full consideration of them.

In this case the tempter much abuseth many injudicious souls: when by good advice and soberest meditation, they have seen the evidence of truth in satisfying clearness, he will after surprise them, when their minds are darker, or their thoughts most scattered, or the former evidence is out of mind, and push them on suddenly then to judge of the matters of immortality, and of the christian cause, that what he cannot get by truth of argument, he may get by the incapacity of the disputant; as if a man that once saw a mountain some miles distant from him, in a clear day, should be tempted to believe that he was deceived, because he seeth it not in a misty day, or when he is in a valley, or within the house; or as if a man that, in many days' hard study, hath cast up an intricate, large account, and set it right under his hand, should be called suddenly to give up the same account anew, without looking on that which he before cast up, when, as if his first account be lost, he must have equal time, and helps, and fitness, before he can set it as right again. Take it not, therefore, as any disparagement to the christian truth, if you cannot on a sudden give yourselves so satisfactory an account of it, as formerly, in more clearness, and by greater studies, you have done.

Cond. 27. Gratify not Satan so much as to question well-resolved points, as oft as he will move you to it.

Though you must prove all things, till, as learning, you come to understand them in their proper evidence, time, and order; yet you must record and hold fast that which you have proved, and not suffer the devil to put you to the answer of one and the same question over and over, as often as he please. This is to give him our time, and to admit him to debate his cause with us by temptation, as frequently as he will, which you would not allow to a ruffian to the debauching of your wife or servants: and you provoke God to give you up to error, when no resolution will serve your turn. After just resolution, the tempter is to be rejected, and not disputed with; as a troublesome fellow that would interrupt us in our work.

Cond. 28. Where you find your own understand-

ings insufficient, have recourse for help to some truly wise, judicious divine.

Not to every weak christian, nor unskilful minister, who is not well grounded in his own religion, but to those that have thoroughly studied it themselves. You may meet with many difficulties in theology, and in the text, which you think can never be well solved, which are nothing to them that understand the thing. No novice in the study of logic, astronomy, geometry, or any art or science, will think that every difficulty, that he meeteth with, doth prove that his author was deceived, unless he be able to resolve it of himself: but he will ask his tutor, or some one versed in those matters, to resolve it; and then he will see that his ignorance was the cause of all his doubts.

Cond. 29. Labour faithfully to receive all holy truths with a practical intent, and to work them on your hearts according to their nature, weight, and use. For the doctrine of christianity is *scientia affectiva practica*; a doctrine for head, heart, and life. And if that which is made for the heart, be not admitted to the heart, and rooted there, it is half rejected while it seemeth received, and is not in its proper place and soil.

If you are yet in doubt of any of the supernatural verities, admit those truths to your hearts which you are convinced of; else you are false to them and to yourselves, and forfeit all further helps of grace.

Object. This is but a trick of deceit to engage the affections, when you want arguments to convince the judgment: *perit omne judicium cum res transit in affectum.*

Ans. When the affection is inordinate, and overruns the judgment, this saying hath some truth; but it is most false as of ordinate affections which follow sound judgment. For by suscitation of the faculties, such affections greatly help the judgment: and judgment is but the eye of the soul to guide the man, and it is but the passage to the will, where human acts are more complete. If your wife be taught that conjugal love is due to her husband, and your child that filial love and reverence is due to his father, such affections will not blind their judgments; but contrarily they do not sincerely receive these precepts, if they let them not into the heart, and answer them not with the affections.^e

And here is the great difference between the faith of an honest, sanctified ploughman, and of a carnal, unsanctified lord or doctor; the one openeth his heart to the doctrine which he receiveth, and faithfully admitteth it to its proper work, and so embraceth it practically, and in love, and therefore holdeth it fast as a radicated, experienced truth, when he cannot answer all cavils that are brought against it. The other superficially receiveth it into the brain, by mere speculation, and treacherously shuts up his heart against it, and never gave it real rooting, and therefore, in the time of trial loseth that unsound, superficial belief which he hath. God blesteth his word to the heart that honestly and practically receiveth it, rather than to him that imprisoneth it in unrighteousness.

Cond. 30. Lastly, if yet any doubts remain, be-think you which is the surest side which you may follow with least danger, and where you are certain to undergo the smallest loss.

It is pity that any should hesitate in a matter of such evidence and weight, and should think with any doubtfulness of christianity, as an uncertain

^e Dubitamus, ambigimus. necesse quod dicitur plenum fidei suspicamus: committamus nos Deo, nec plus apud nos valeat incredulitas nostra, quam illius nominis et potentie magnitudo: ne dum ipsi nobis argumenta conquirimus qui-

bis esse videator falem id quod esse novimus atque aditum verum obrepit dies extremus, et inimice mortis reperiamur in faucibus. Arnob. adv. Gent. l. 2. verbis ultim.

thing; but yet true believers may have cause to say, Lord, help our unbelief, and increase our faith; and all doubting will not prove the unsoundness of belief. The true mark to know when faith is true and saving, notwithstanding all such doubtings, is the measure of its prevalence with our hearts and lives. That belief in Christ and the life to come is true and saving, notwithstanding all doubtings, which habitually possesseth us with the love of God above all, and resolveth the will to prefer the pleasing of him, and the hopes of heaven, before all the treasures and pleasures of this world, and causeth us in our endeavours to live accordingly. And that faith is unsound which will not do this, how well soever it may be defended by dispute. Therefore, at least, for the resolving of your wills for choice and practice, if you must doubt, yet consider which is the safest side. If Christ be the Saviour of the world, he will bring believers to grace and glory: and you are sure there is nothing but¹ transitory trifles which you can possibly lose by such a choice. For, certainly, his precepts are holy and safe, and no man can imagine rationally that they can endanger the soul. But if you reject him by infidelity, you are lost for ever; for there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking-for of judgment, and fire, which shall devour his adversaries for ever. There is no other Saviour for him who finally refuseth the only Saviour. And if you doubted whether faith might not prove an error, you could never see any cause to fear that it should prove a hindrance to your salvation; for salvation itself is an unknown thing to most that do not believe in Christ: and no man can well think that a man who is led by an age of such miracles, so credibly reported to us, to believe in one that leadeth up souls to the love of God, and a holy and heavenly mind and life, can ever perish for being so led to such a guide, and then led by him in so good a way, and to so good an end.

And thus, reader, I have faithfully told thee what reasonings my own soul hath had about its way to everlasting life, and what inquiries it hath made into the truth of the christian faith: I have gone to my own heart for those reasons, which have satisfied myself, and not to my books, (from which I have been many years separated,) for such as satisfy other men, and not myself. I have told thee what I believe, and why; yet, other men's reasonings, perhaps, may give more light to others, though these are they that have prevailed most with me. Therefore, I desire the reader that would have more said, to peruse especially these excellent books: Camero's *Prælectiones de Verbo Dei*, with the *Theses Salmurienses* and *Sedanenses* on that subject; Grotius *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ*; Marsilius Ficinus *De Relig. Christ. cum notis Lud. Crocii*; Lodovici Vives *De Verit. Fid. Christ.*; Phil. Morney *du Plessis De Verit. Fid. Christ.*; John Goodwin *Of the Authority of the Scriptures*; Campanella's *Atheismus Triumphatus*; Hieronymus Savonarola's *Triumphus Crucis*; (both excellent books, excepting the errors of their times;) Raymundus De Sabundis *Theologia Naturalis* Micrelii *Ethnophronius*; (an excellent book;) Raymundus Lullius *Articuli*. *Fid. Alexander Gill*; (out of him, on the Creed;) Mr. Stillingfleet's

Origines Sacræ; (a late and very worthy labour;) Dr. Jackson on the Creed; Mr. Vincent Hatecliff's *Aut Deus aut Nihil*; (for the first part of religion;) passing by Lessius, Parsons, and abundance more; and common-place books, which many of them treat very well on this subject: and of the ancients, Augustin *De Civitate Dei*, and Eusebii *Preparatio et Demonstratio Evangelica*, are the fullest; and almost all of them have somewhat to this use, as Justin M. Athenagoras, Tatianus, Tertullian, Clemens, Alexand. Origen against Celsus, &c., Cyprian, Lactantius, Athanasius, Basil, Gr. Nazianzen, Nyssen, &c.

For my own part, I humbly thank the heavenly Majesty for the advantages which my education gave me, for the timely reception of the christian faith; but temptations and difficulties have so often called me to clear my grounds, and try the evidences of that religion, which I had first received upon the commendation of my parents, that I have long thought no subject more worthy of my most serious, faithful search; and have wondered at the great number of christians, who could spend their lives in studying the superstructures, and wrangling about many small uncertainties, to the great disturbance of the church's peace, and found no more need to be confirmed in the faith. In this inquiry I have most clearly, to my full satisfaction, discerned all those natural evidences for godliness or holiness, which I have laid down in the first part of this book; and I have discerned the congruous superstruction and connexion of the christian religion thereunto; I have found, by unquestionable experience, the sinful and depraved state of man; and I have discerned the admirable suitableness of the remedy to the malady: I have also discerned the attestation of God in the grand evidence, the Holy Spirit, the Advocate or Agent of Jesus Christ, viz. 1. The antecedent evidence in the spirit of prophecy, leading unto Christ. 2. The inherent, constituent evidence of the gospel, and of Christ, the image of God, in the power, wisdom, and goodness, both of Christ and of his doctrine. 3. The concomitant evidence of miracles in the life, resurrection, and prophecies of Christ, and in the abundant miracles of the apostles and other his disciples, through the world. 4. The subsequent evidence in the successes of the gospel, to the true sanctification of millions of souls, by the powerful efficacy of divine co-operation. I have spent most of my life in converse with such truly sanctified persons, and in preaching this gospel, through the great mercy of God, with such success upon no small numbers; so that I am certain, by full experience, of the reality of that holy change, which cannot be done but with the co-operation of God. I have seen that this change is another matter than fancy, opinion, or factious conjunction with a sect: even the setting up God in the soul as God, as our Owner, Ruler, and chief Good, and the devoting of the soul to him in resignation, obedience, and thankful love; the seeking of an everlasting felicity in his glorious sight and love in heaven; the contempt of this world as it pleaseth the flesh; and the holy use of it, as the way to our felicity and pleasing God; the subduing and denying all carnal desires, which would rebel against God and reason,

(id est salutis amissio,) si cum tempus adveniret, aperiatu hoc fuisse mendacium. Quid dicitis O nesci etiam fletu et miseratione dignissimi; ita non tam extimescitis, ne orte hæc vera sint, quæ sunt despectui vobis, et præbent materiam risus? Nec saltem vobiscum sub obscuris cogitationibus volutis, ne quod hodie credere obstinata renuitis pervasitate redarguat serum tempus et irrevocabilis penitentia castiget? Nonne velle hæc saltem vobis fidem faciunt argumenta credendi, quod jam per omnes terras in tam brevi tempore immensi hujus sacramenta diffusa sunt? &c. Amob. l. 2. p. 12.

^f Quæ mala stoici non audent appellare; aspera autem, et incommoda et rejicienda, et aliena natura esse concedunt; ea nos mala dicimus, sed exigua, et porro minima. Piso de Peripat. et Academ. in Cicer. de Fin. l. 5. p. 204. Cum ergo hæc sit conditio futurum ut teneri et comprehendere nullius possim anticipationis attactu, nonne purior ratio est, ex duobus incertis et in ambigua expectatione pendentibus, id potius credere, quod aliquis spes ferat, quam omnino quod nullas? Id illo enim periculi nihil est, si quod dicitur imminere, cassum fiat et vacuum; in hoc damnum est maximum,

and restoring reason to the government of the lower faculties; the denying of that inordinate selfishness, which setteth up our interest against our neighbours, and the representing and loving our neighbours as ourselves, and doing to others as we would be done by, and doing good to all men as far as we have power; the holy governing of our inferiors, and obeying our superiors, in order to these ends; living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this world, and in the patient bearing of all afflictions; and diligently serving God in our several places, to redeem our time, and prepare for death, and wait with longing for the everlasting glory, the hope of which is caused in us by faith in Christ, our Ransom, Reconciler, Example, Teacher, Governor, and Judge. This is the true nature of the religion expressed in the gospel, and impressed on the souls of sanctified men. By this effect, I know that Christ is the Saviour of the world, and no deceiver, as I know a man to be a true physician, and no deceiver, when I see him ordinarily and thoroughly perform the cures which he understandeth. He saveth us actually from the power of our sins, and bringeth up our hearts to God, and therefore we may boldly say, He is our Saviour. This witness, through his mercy, I have in myself, and is always with me, and in those whom I converse with round about me. I have also, upon just inquiry, found that the witnesses of Christ's resurrection and miracles have delivered us their testimony with a three-fold evidence: 1. The evidence of just credibility to a human belief. 2. The evidence of natural certainty in the natural impossibilities of deceit. 3. The evidence of supernatural, divine attestation, in, 1. The image of God on their hearts and doctrine; 2. Their miracles; and, 3. Their sanctifying success. And I have found that the witnesses of the miracles of the apostles themselves have also given us the same three degrees of proof of the verity of their testimony, though miracles continue not now as then: and I have looked round about me in the world, as diligently and impartially as I could, to see whether Christ, and the way which he hath prescribed us, have any competitor which may make it difficult to resolve which to prefer and follow: and as I have found that none but God alone hath absolute dominion and sovereignty over us, and is our chief Benefactor, nor fit to be our felicity and ultimate end, so I have found that there is no one so fit to be taken for our Mediator and the way to God, as Jesus Christ; none else that hath an aptitude; none else among men that is perfect without sin, that hath conquered Satan, the world, and death; that is a messenger from heaven so infallible and sure, whose doctrine and life is suited to our case: none else that is become a sacrifice for our sins, and hath risen from the dead, and ascended into glory, and doth govern and preserve us, and will judge the world, and hath power to give the Holy Ghost, both for gifts and graces; nor that actually giveth it to the sanctifying of all his sincere followers; none else that hath such a church and kingdom, condemning the world and condemned by the world, and so truly fitted to the pleasing of God, and the future fruition of him in glory. I see that Judaism is but the porch of christianity; and if Christ had not confirmed the verity of the Old Testament to me, I should have found the difficulty of believing it much greater: and as for Mahometanism, besides the common truths which it retaineth of the unity of the Godhead, the verity of Christ, and the life to come,

&c. there is nothing else which at all inviteth my understanding: and as for heathenism, the case that it hath brought the miserable world into is much to be pitied and deplored: much precious truth is revealed to us by nature, but experience telleth us of the need of more, and christianity hath all which nature teacheth a great deal more: so that christianity hath no considerable competitor.*

And as for worldly wealth and honour, superiority and command of others, the favour, applause, and praise of great ones or of the multitude, voluptuousness, and fleshly delights, &c. ease, long life, or any accommodations of the flesh; yea, learning itself, as it is but the pleasing of the fancy in the knowledge of unnecessary things; all these I have perused, and found them to be deceit and trouble: a glimpse of heaven, a taste of the love of God in Christ, yea, a fervent desire after God, yea, a penitent tear, is better than them all, and yieldeth a delight which leaveth a better taste behind it, and which my reason more approveth in the review. And the vanity of all inferior pleasures appeareth to me in the common effects; they distract and corrupt the minds of those that have the greatest measure of them, and make them the calamity of their times, the furious afflictors of the upright, and the pity of all sober standers-by, who see them turn the world into a Bedlam; and how all their honour, wealth, and sport will leave them at a dying hour, and with what dejected minds unwelcome death will be entertained by them, and with what sad reviews they will look back upon all their lives, and in what sordid dust and darkness they must leave the rotting flesh, when their souls are gone to receive their doom, before the Judge of all the world. All these are things which were past all doubt with me, since I had any solid use of reason, and things which are still before my eyes.

Wherefore, my God, I look to thee, I come to thee, to thee alone: no man, no worldly creature made me, none of them did redeem me, none of them did renew my soul, none of them will justify me at thy bar, nor forgive my sin, nor save me from thy penal justice; none of them will be a full or a perpetual felicity or portion for my soul. I am not a stranger to their promises and performances; I have trusted them too far, and followed them too long; oh that it had been less! though I must thankfully acknowledge, that mercy did early show me their deceit, and turn my inquiring thoughts to thee. To thee I resign myself, for I am thine own; to thee I subject all the powers of my soul and body, for thou art my rightful sovereign Governor; from thee I thankfully accept of all the benefits and comforts of my life; in thee I expect my true felicity and content. To know thee, and love thee, and delight in thee, must be my blessedness, or I must have none.^b The little tastes of this sweetness which my thirsty soul hath had, do tell me that there is no other real joy. I feel that thou hast made my mind to know thee, and I feel thou hast made my heart to love thee, my tongue to praise thee, and all that I am and have to serve thee; and even in the panting, languishing desires and motions of my soul, I find that thou, and only thou art its resting-place: and though love do now but search, and pray, and cry, and weep, and is reaching upward, but cannot reach the glorious light, the blessed knowledge, the perfect love for which it longeth; yet by its eye, its aim, its motions, its moans, its groans, I know its meaning, where it would be, and I know its end. My displaced soul

* Leg. Idiota contemplat. de Amore Dei.

^b Illa enim gloria quid est nisi aeternum angelorum beatorum spirituum convivium, quod est semper laudare Deum? Ad hoc vite praesentis inopia nullatenus valet contingere.

Scire autem ubi sit, et prae gustare, illud gaudio spei, sitire et esurire quod gustaveris, hac est illa quae dicitur sanctorum in hac vita perfectio. Hugo a S. Victore Enud. Theol. de Offic. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 19.

will never be well till it come near to thee, till it know thee better, till it love thee more. It loves itself, and justifieth that self-love, when it can love thee; it loathes itself, and is weary of itself, as a lifeless burden, when it feels no pantings after thee. Wert thou to be found in the most solitary desert, it would seek thee; or in the uttermost parts of the earth, it would make after thee. Thy presence makes a crowd a church; thy converse maketh a closet, or solitary wood or field, to be kin to the angelical choir. The creature were dead if thou wert not its life; and ugly, if thou wert not its beauty; and insignificant, if thou wert not its sense. The soul is deformed which is without thine image; and lifeless, which liveth not in love to thee, if love be not its pulse, and prayer and praise its constant breath. The mind is unlearned which readeth not thy name on all the world, and seeth not "Holiness to the Lord" engraven upon the face of every creature. He dotheth that doubteth of thy being or perfections; and he dreameth who doth not live to thee. O let me have no other portion, no reason, no love, no life but what is devoted to thee, employed on thee, and for thee here, and shall be perfected in thee, the only perfect, final object, for evermore. Upon the holy altar, erected by thy Son, and by his hands, and his mediation, I humbly devote and offer thee this heart: oh that I could say, with greater feeling, this flaming, loving, longing heart! But the sacred fire which must kindle on my sacrifice, must come from thee, it will not else ascend unto thee; let it consume this dross, so the nobler part may know its home. All that I can say to commend it to thine acceptance is, that I hope it is washed in precious blood, and that there is something in it that is thine own; it still looketh towards thee, and groaneth to thee, and followeth after thee, and will be content with gold, and mirth, and honour, and such inferior fooleries, no more; it lieth at thy doors, and will be entertained or perish: though, alas! it loves thee not as it would, I boldly say it longs to love thee, it loves to love thee; it seeks, it craves no greater blessedness than perfect, endless, mutual love; it is vowed to thee, even to thee alone, and will never take up with shadows more, but is resolved to lie down in sorrow and despair if thou wilt not be its Rest and Joy. It hateth itself for loving thee no more, accounting no want, deformity, shame, or pain, so great and grievous a calamity.

For thee, the glorious, blessed God, it is that I come to Jesus Christ: if he did not reconcile my guilty soul to thee, and did not teach it the heavenly art and work of love, by the sweet communications of thy love, he could be no Saviour for me. Thou art my only ultimate end; it is only a guide and way to thee that my anxious soul hath so much studied: and none can teach me rightly to know thee, and to love thee, and to live to thee, but thyself; it must be a teacher sent from thee, that must conduct me to thee. I have long looked round about me in the world, to see if there were a more lucid region, from whence thy will and glory might be better seen, than that in which my lot is fallen: but no traveller that I can speak with, no book which I have turned over, no creature which I can see, doth tell me more than Jesus Christ: I can find no way so suitable to my soul, no medicine so fitted to my misery, no bellows so fit to kindle love, as faith in Christ, the glass and messenger of thy love. I see no doctrine so divine and heavenly, as bearing the image and superscription of God; nor any so fully confirmed and delivered by the attestation of thy own omnipotency; nor any which so purely pleads thy cause, and calls the soul from self and vanity, and condemns its sin, and purifieth it, and leadeth it

directly unto thee; and though my former ignorance disabled me to look back to the ages past, and to see the methods of thy providence, and when I look into thy word, disabled me from seeing the beauteous methods of thy truth, thou hast given me a glimpse of clearer light, which hath discovered the reasons and methods of grace, which I then discerned not; and in the midst of my most hideous temptations and perplexed thoughts, thou keptst alive the root of faith, and keptst alive the love to thee, and unto holiness, which it had kindled. Thou hast mercifully given me the witness in myself; not an unreasonable persuasion in my mind, but that renewed nature, those holy and heavenly desires and delights, which sure can come from none but thee. And oh how much more have I perceived in many of thy servants, than in myself! Thou hast cast my lot among the souls whom Christ hath healed; I have daily conversed with those whom he hath raised from the dead. I have seen the power of thy gospel upon sinners: all the love that ever I perceived kindled towards thee, and all the true obedience that ever I saw performed to thee, hath been effected by the word of Jesus Christ. How oft hath his Spirit helped me to pray; and how often hast thou heard those prayers! What pledges hast thou given to my staggering faith, in the works which prayer hath procured, both for myself and many others! And if confidence in Christ be yet deceit, must I not say, that thou hast deceived me? who I know canst neither be deceived, or by any falsehood or seduction deceive.

On thee, therefore, O my dear Redeemer, do I cast and trust this sinful soul! with thee, and with thy Holy Spirit, I renew my covenant; I know no other, I have no other, I can have no other Saviour but thyself: to thee I deliver up this soul which thou hast redeemed, not to be advanced to the wealth, and honours, and pleasures of this world, but to be delivered from them, and to be healed of sin, and brought to God, and to be saved from this present evil world, which is the portion of the ungodly and unbelievers; to be washed in thy blood, and illuminated, quickened, and confirmed by thy Spirit, and conducted in the ways of holiness and love, and at last to be presented, justified and spotless, to the Father of spirits, and possessed of the glory which thou hast promised. O thou that hast prepared so dear a medicine for the cleansing of polluted, guilty souls, leave not this unworthy soul in its guilt, or in its pollution: O thou that knowest the Father, and his will, and art nearest to him, and most beloved of him, cause me in my degree to know the Father; acquaint me with so much of his will as concerneth my duty, or my just encouragement: leave not my soul to grope in darkness, seeing thou art the Sun and Lord of light. O heal my estranged thoughts of God: is he my Light and Life, and all my hope, and must I dwell with him for ever, and yet shall I know him no better than thus; shall I learn no more that have such a Teacher; and shall I get no nearer him, while I have a Saviour and a Head so near? O give my faith a clearer prospect into that better world, and let me not be so much unacquainted with the place in which I must abide for ever: and as thou hast prepared a heaven for holy souls, prepare this too-unprepared soul for heaven, which hath not long to stay on earth; and when at death I resign it into thy hands, receive it as thine own, and finish the work which thou hast begun, in placing it among the blessed spirits, who are filled with the sight and love of God. I trust thee living, let me trust thee dying, and never be ashamed of my trust.

And unto thee, the eternal Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, the communicative

Love, who condescendest to make perfect the elect of God, do I deliver up this dark, imperfect soul, to be further renewed, confirmed, and perfected, according to the holy covenant. Refuse not to bless it with thine in-dwelling and operations, quicken it with thy life, irradiate it by thy light, sanctify it by thy love, actuate it purely, powerfully, and constantly, by thy holy motions: and though the way of this thy sacred influx be beyond the reach of human apprehension, yet let me know the reality and saving power of it by the happy effects. Thou art more to souls than souls to bodies, than light to eyes. O, leave not my soul as a carrion, destitute of thy life; nor its eyes as useless, destitute of thy light; nor leave it as a senseless block, without thy motion! The remembrance of what I was without thee, doth make me fear lest thou shouldst withhold thy grace. Alas! I feel, I daily feel, that I am dead to all good, and all that is good is dead to me, if thou be not the life of all. Teachings and re-proofs, mercies and corrections, yea, the gospel itself, and all the liveliest books and sermons, are dead to me, because I am dead to them; yea, God is as no God to me, and heaven as no heaven, and Christ as no Christ, and the clearest evidences of Scripture verity are as no proofs at all, if thou represent them not with light and power to my soul; even as all the glory of the world is as nothing to me, without the light by which it is seen. O thou that hast begun, and given me those heavenly intimations and desires, which flesh and blood could never give me, suffer not my folly to quench these sparks, nor this brutish flesh to prevail against thee, nor the powers of hell to stifle and kill such a heavenly seed. O pardon that folly and wilfulness which hath too often, too obdurately, and too unthankfully striven against thy grace, and depart not from an unkind and sinful soul. I remember, with grief and shame, how I wilfully bore down thy motions: punish it not with desertion, and give me not over to myself. Art thou not in covenant with me, as my Sanctifier, and Confirmer, and Comforter? I never undertook to do these things for myself, but I consent that thou should work them on me. As thou art the Agent and Advocate of Jesus, my Lord, O plead his cause effectually in my soul against the suggestions of Satan and my unbelief, and finish his healing, saving work, and let not the flesh or world prevail. Be in me the resident witness of my Lord, the author of my prayers, the spirit of adoption, the seal of God, and the earnest of mine inheritance. Let not my nights be so long, and my days so short, nor sin eclipse those beams which have often illuminated my soul. Without thee books are senseless scrawls, studies are dreams, learning is a glow-worm, and wit is but wantonness, impertinency, and folly. Transcribe those sacred precepts on my heart, which, by thy dictates and inspirations, are recorded in thy holy word. I refuse not thy help for tears and groans; but O, shed abroad that love upon my heart, which may keep it in a continual life of love: and teach me the work which I must do in heaven. Refresh my soul with the delights of holiness, and the joys which arise from the believing hopes of the everlasting joys. Exercise my heart and tongue in the holy praises of my Lord. Strengthen me in sufferings, and conquer the terrors of death and hell. Make me the more heavenly, by how much the faster I am hastening to heaven; and let my last thoughts, words, and works on earth be likest to

those which shall be my first in the state of glorious immortality, where the kingdom is delivered up to the Father, and God will for ever be all, and in all: of whom, and through whom, and so whom, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONSECTARIES.—I. WHAT PARTY OF CHRISTIANS SHOULD WE JOIN WITH, OR BE OF, SEEING THEY ARE DIVIDED INTO SO MANY SECTS?^a

I SHALL briefly despatch the answer of this question in these following propositions:

Sect. 1. Godliness and christianity is our only religion; and if any party have any other, we must renounce it.^b

Sect. 2. The church of Christ being his body, is but one, and hath many parts, but should have no parties, but unity and concord without division.^c

Sect. 3. Therefore no christian must be of a party or sect, as such, that is, as dividing itself from the rest, causing schism or contention in the body, or making a rent unnecessarily in any particular church, which is a part.^d

Sect. 4. But when parties and sects do trouble the church, we must still hold to our mere christianity, and desire to be called by no other name than christian, with the epithets of sincerity; and if men will put the name of a party or sect upon us for holding to christianity only, against all corrupting sects, we must hold on our way, and bear their obloquy.^e

Sect. 5. What christianity is, may be known, 1. Most summarily in the baptismal covenant, in which we are by solemnization made christians, in which, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, we give up ourselves devotedly to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. 2. By the ancient summary rules of faith, hope, and charity, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue. 3. Integrally in the sacred Scriptures, which are the records of the doctrine of Christ, and the Holy Spirit.^f

Sect. 6. But there are many circumstances of religious worship, which Scripture doth not particularly determine of, but only give general rules for the determination of them; as what chapter shall be read, what text preached on, what translation used, what metre or tune of psalms, what time, what place, what seat, or pulpit, or cup or other utensils, what vesture, gesture, &c.; whether we shall use notes for memory in preaching; what method we shall preach in; whether we shall pray in the same words often, or in various; with a book, or without, with many others. In all which the people must have an obediential respect to the conduct of the lawful pastors of the churches.^g

Sect. 7. Differing opinions, or practices, about things indifferent, no, nor about the mere integrals of religion, which are not essentials, do not make men of different religions or churches (universally considered).^h

Sect. 8. Nothing will warrant us to separate from a church as no church, but the want of something essential to a church.

Sect. 9. The essential or constitutive parts of the

^a Vid. Pet. Damian. Dom. vobisc. c. 6. de unit. Eccles.

^b Psal. i.; Matt. xviii. 19; Acts xi. 26.

^c 1 Cor. xii.; Eph. iv. 3, 4, 14.

^d 1 Cor. i. 10; Acts xx. 30; Rom. xvi. 17.

^e 1 Cor. iii. 3—5; Acts xxiv. 14; xxviii. 22.

^f Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 16; Heb. vi. 1—3.

^g 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 40.

^h Rom. xiv.; xv.; Gal. ii. 13—15; Phil. iii. 16, 17.

church catholic, or universal, are Christ the Head, and all christians as the members.¹

Sect. 10. All sincere and sanctified christians are the members of the church mystical, invisible, or regenerate; and all professors of sincere christianity, that is, all baptized persons, not apostatized nor excommunicate, are the members of the church visible, which is integrated of the particular churches.

Sect. 11. It is essential to particular political churches, that they be constituted of true bishops or pastors, and of flocks of baptized or professed christians, united in these relations for holy communion in the worshipping of God, and the promoting of the salvation of the several members.²

Sect. 12. It is essential to a true bishop or pastor of the church to be in office, (that is, in authority and obligation,) appointed by Christ in subordination to him in the three parts of his offices, prophetic, priestly, and kingly; that is, to teach the people, to stand between them and God in worship, and to guide or govern them, by the paternal exercise of the keys of his church.³

Sect. 13. He that doth not nullify or unchurch a church, may lawfully remove from one church to another, and make choice of the best and purest, or that which is most suited to his own edification, if he be a free-man.

Sect. 14. But in case of such choice, or personal removal, the interest of the whole church, or of religion in common, must be first taken into consideration, by him that would rightly judge of the lawfulness of the fact.⁴

Sect. 15. If a church which, in all other respects, is purest and best, will impose any sin upon all that will have local communion with it, though we must not separate from that church as no church, yet must we not commit that sin, but patiently suffer them to exclude us from their communion.⁵

Sect. 16. True heresy, (that is, an error contradictory to an essential article of the christian faith,) if it be seriously and really held, so that the contrary truth is not held seriously and really, doth nullify the christianity of him that holdeth it, and the church state of that congregation which so professeth it. But so doth not that fundamental error which is held but in words through ignorance, thinking it may consist with the contrary truth, while that truth is not denied, but held, *majori fide*; so that we have reason to believe, that if they did discern the contradiction, they would rather forsake the error than the truth.⁶

But of this more elsewhere.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONSECTARY II.—OF THE TRUE INTEREST OF CHRIST, AND HIS CHURCH, AND THE SOULS OF MEN: OF THE MEANS TO PROMOTE IT, AND ITS ENEMIES AND IMPEDIMENTS IN THE WORLD.

So great and common is the enmity against christianity in the world, yea, against the life and reality

of it in all the hypocrites of the visible church, that the guilty will not bear the detection of their guilt; and therefore the reader must excuse me for passing over the one-half of that which should be said upon this subject, because they that need it cannot suffer it.⁷

Sect. 1. Every true christian preferreth the interest of Christ and of religion, before all worldly interest of his own, or any others.⁸

For he that setteth himself or any thing above his God, hath indeed no God; for if he be not *Maximus, Sapientissimus, Optimus*, Greatest, Wisest, and Best, he is not God; and if he be not really taken as such, he is not taken for their God; and he that hath no God hath no religion; and he that hath no religion is no christian; and if he call himself a christian, he is a hypocrite.

Sect. 2. Though we must prefer the interest of Christ and the church above the interest of our souls, yet must we never set them in competition or opposition; but in a due conjunction, though not in an equality.⁹

I add this, to warn men of some common, dangerous errors, in this point; some think that if they do but feel themselves more moved with another minister's preaching, or more edified with another way of discipline, they may presently withdraw themselves to that minister or discipline, without regard to the unity and good of the church where they are, or whatever public evil follow it; whereas, he that seemeth to deny even to his soul some present edification for the public good, shall find that even this will turn to his greater edification.

And some, on the contrary extreme, have got a conceit, that till they can find that they can content to be damned for Christ, if God would so have it, they are not sincere; which is a case that no christian should put to his own heart, being such as God never put to any man: all the trial that God putteth us to is but whether we can deny this transitory life, and the vanities of the world, and the pleasures of the flesh, for the love of God, and the hopes of glory; and he that doth thus much, shall undoubtedly be saved. But to think that you must ask your hearts such a question, as whether you can be content to be damned for Christ, is but to abuse God and yourselves. Indeed, both reason and religion command us to esteem God infinitely above ourselves, and the church's welfare above our own; because that which is best must be best esteemed and loved. But yet, though we must ever acknowledge this inequality, yet that we must never disjoin them, nor set them in a positive opposition or competition, nor really do any thing which tendeth to our damnation, upon any pretence of the church's good, is past all question. He that hath made the love of ourselves and felicity inseparable from man, hath made us no duty inconsistent with this inclination; that is, with our humanity itself; for God hath conjoined these necessary ends, and we must not separate them.

Sect. 3. The interest of the church is but the interest of the souls that constitute the church; and to prefer it above our own, is but to prefer many above one.¹⁰

Et profecto ita est, ut id habendum sit antiquissimum et Deo proximum, quod sit optimum. Cic. de Leg. lib. 2. pag. 244.

¹ I treat the reader to peruse the Lord Bacon's Considerations, and Mr. Hales Of Schism, and Mr. Stillingfleet's Irenicon, especially pag. 117, and Mr. Jer. Burroughs's Irenicon, which will all much promote his understanding in this point; and Grotius De Imper. Sum. Pot.

² Luke xv. 26, 29, 33.

³ Rom. ix. 3; xv. 7; 1 Cor. x. 31; Eph. i. 12, 14.

⁴ Eph. iv. 11—16; Col. i. 24; 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 16.

¹ Eph. i. 22; iv. 12, 15; v. 23; Col. i. 18; ii. 19; 1 Cor. v. xii. 27; Matt. xxviii. 19.

² Acts xiv. 23; Phil. i. 1; Eph. iv. 11, 12; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

³ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; xviii. 15, 18; 1 Thess. v. 12; Heb. xiii. 17; James v. 14; Acts ii. 42; viii. 1; xx. 36.

⁴ Rom. ix. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.

⁵ Tit. iii. 10; 2 John 10; Heb. v. 11, 12; 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2.

⁶ &c.; Luke xviii. 34; John xii. 16; Gal. v. 2; 1. 7—9; iii. 1, 2.

⁷ In isto factiosissimo sæculo, vix quisquam eximie doctus hæreseos suspicione carebat. Erasm. in Vita Hieronym.

Sect. 4. He that doth most for the public good, and the souls of many, doth thereby most effectually promote his own consolation and salvation.

Sect. 5. The interest of God is the ultimate end of religion, church, and particular souls.^c

Sect. 6. God's interest is not any addition to his perfection or blessedness; but the pleasing of his will, in the glory of his power, wisdom, and goodness, shining forth in Jesus Christ, and in his church.^f

Sect. 7. Therefore, to promote God's interest, is by promoting the church's interest.

Sect. 8. The interest of the church consisteth, 1. *Intensive*, in its holiness. 2. *Conjunctive and harmonice*, in its unity, concord, and order. 3. *Extensive*, in its increase, and the multiplication of believers.

Sect. 9. I. The holiness of the church consisteth, 1. In its resignation and submission to God, its Owner. 2. In its subjection and obedience to God, its Ruler. 3. In its gratitude and love to God, its Benefactor and ultimate End.^g

Sect. 10. These acts consist, 1. In a right estimation and belief of the mind. 2. In a right volition, choice, and resolution of the will. 3. In the right ordering of the life.^h

Sect. 11. The means of the church's holiness are these: I. Holy doctrine; because, as all holiness entereth by the understanding, so truth is the instrumental cause of all.

Sect. 12. II. The holy, serious, reverent, skilful, and diligent preaching of this doctrine, by due explication, proof, and application, suitably to the various auditors.

Sect. 13. III. The holy lives and private converse of the pastors of the church.ⁱ

Sect. 14. IV. Holy discipline faithfully administered; encouraging all that are godly, and comforting the penitent, and humbling the proud, and disgracing open sin, and casting out the proved impenitent, gross sinners; that they infect not the rest, imbolden not the wicked, and dishonour not the church in the eyes of the unbelievers.^j

Sect. 15. V. The election and ordination of able and holy pastors, fit for this work.

Sect. 16. VI. The conjunct endeavours of the wisest and most experienced members of the flock, not usurping any ecclesiastical office; but by their wisdom, and authority, and example, in their private capacities, seconding the labours of the pastors, and not leaving all to be done by them alone.

Sect. 17. VII. Especially the holy instructing and governing of families, by catechising inferiors, and exhorting them to the due care of their souls, and helping them to understand and remember the public teaching of the pastors, and praying and praising God with them, and reading the Scripture and holy books, especially on the Lord's day; and labouring to reform their lives.

Sect. 18. VIII. The blameless lives, and holy conference, converse, and example, of the members of the church among themselves. Holiness begetteth holiness, and increaseth it, as fire kindleth fire.^k

^c Rom. xii. 36; Prov. xvi. 4; 1 Cor. x. 31.

^d Eph. iii. 10, 21; v. 27, 29; 2 Thess. i. 10, 11; John xxi. 15—17; Matt. xxv.

^e Eph. v. 25, 26; Tit. ii. 19; 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10; i. 3, 6, 8, 14—16, 22.

^f Acts xxvi. 18; Eph. i. 18; Matt. xxviii. 19; Heb. v. 9.

^g Matt. xxviii. 20; Gal. i. 7; 2 Tim. i. 13; Acts xx. 20, &c.; 1 Tim. iv. 2; v. 17.

^h Acts xx. 1; 1 Tim. i. 18, 19; iii. 2; iv. 12; 1 Cor. v. 1; Matt. xviii. 15; 2 Thess. iii.; Rom. xvi. 16, 17; 1 Tim. v. 20; Acts xx. 2; Tit. ii. 15, 2; 1 Tim. iii. 3; John viii.; Acts xviii. 26; Rom. xvi. 3; 1 Tim. vi. 18; Tit. iii. 8.

ⁱ 1 Tim. iii. 5; Eph. v. 4; Deut. vi. 6—8; xi. 18, 19; Acts x. 2, 24; 1 Pet. iii. 2; Phil. ii. 15; 2 Pet. iii. 14; Tit. ii. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 1; Rom. ii. 24; John xvii. 21; 1 Cor. i. 10; Isa. xxxii. 1; lli. 5; xlix. 23; Hos. viii. 4, 5; Psal. ii.; Dan.

Sect. 19. IX. The unity, concord, and love of christians to one another.

Sect. 20. X. And, lastly, holy princes and magistrates, to encourage piety, and to protect the church, and to be a terror to evil-doers. These are the means of holiness.

Sect. 21. The contraries of all these may easily be discerned to be the destroyers of holiness, and pernicious to the church. 1. Unholy doctrine: 2. Ignorant, unskilful, negligent, cold, or envious preaching: 3. The unholy lives of them that preach it: 4. Discipline neglected, or perverted, to the encouraging of the ungodly, and afflicting of the most holy and upright of the flocks: 5. The election or ordination of insufficient, negligent, or ungodly pastors: 6. The negligence of the wisest of the flock, or the restraint of them by the spirit of jealousy and envy, from doing their private parts in assistance of the pastors: 7. The neglect of holy instructing, and governing of families; and the lewd example of the governors of them: 8. The scandalous or barren lives of christians: 9. The divisions and discords of christians among themselves: 10. And bad magistrates, who give an ill example, or afflict the godly, or encourage vice, or, at least, suppress it not.

Sect. 22. To these may be added, 1. The degenerating of religious strictness, from what God requireth, into another thing, by human corruptions gradually introduced; as is seen among too many friars, as well as in the Pharisees of old. 2. A degenerating of holy institutions of Christ into another thing, by the like gradual corruptions, as is seen in the Roman sacrifice of the mass. 3. The degenerating of church offices by the like corruptions, as is seen in the papacy, and its manifold supporters. 4. The diversion of the pastors of the church to secular employments. 5. The diminishing the number of the pastors of the church, as proportioned to the number of souls: as if one schoolmaster alone should have ten thousand scholars; or ten thousand soldiers but one or two officers. 6. The pretending of the soul and power of religion, to destroy the body, or external part: or making use of the body, or external part, to destroy the soul and power; and setting things in opposition which are conjunct. 7. The preferring either the imposition or opposition of things indifferent, before things necessary. 8. An apish imitation of Christ by Satan and his instruments, by counterfeiting inspirations, revelations, visions, prophecies, miracles, apparitions, sanctity, zeal, and new institutions in the church. 9. An overdoing, or being righteous overmuch, by doing more than God would have us (overdoing being one of the devil's ways of undoing). When Satan pretendeth to be a saint, he will be stricter than Christ, as the Pharisees were in their company, sabbath rest, and ceremonies: and he will be zealous with a fiery, consuming zeal. 10. Accidentally, prosperity itself consumeth piety in the church; if it occasion the perdition of the world, the church is not out of danger of it.^m

ix. 6, 8; Rom. xiii. 3, 5, 6; 2 Pet. ii.; Gal. i. 7, 8; 1 Tim. iii. 6; v. 22; iv. 15, 16; vi. 4, 5; 1 Cor. v.; 1 Tim. iii. 7; Mark ix. 38, 39; Phil. i. 15; James iii. 1, 15, 17; 1 Sam. ii.; Acts xv. 30, 31; Rom. xvi. 16, 17; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 2 Chron. xxvi. 14, 15; Ezek. xxii. 27; Hos. ix. 15; vii. 3; Zeph. iii. 3; 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8.

^m Matt. xv. 2, 3, 9, 11, 13; Col. ii. 20—22; Mark ii. 26; Luke vi. 22; xiii. 14, 15; John v. 18; xi. 49; xviii. 13; Acts iv. 6; xxiii. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 4—6, 12; 1 Tim. iv. 15; Matt. ix. 37, 38; 1 Cor. iii. 9; Acts xv. 22; Tit. i. 3; 1 Cor. xiv. 26; xv. 16; xxxi. 33—35; Matt. xv. 9, 13; Rom. xiv.; xv. 23; 1 John iv. 1; 2 Thess. ii. 2; 1 Kings xxii. 22, 23; 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15; Matt. xxiv. 24; xv. 2; xi. 13; xii. 2; Luke xiii. 14, 15; John iv. 16; Luke ix. 54; Acts xi. 36; xxii. 22; Rom. x. 2; Prov. i. 32; James v. 5, 6.

Sect. 23. II. The unity, and concord, and harmony of the church consisteth, 1. In their universal adoption, or one relation to God, as their reconciled Father in Christ: 2. In the one relation they have all to Christ their Head: 3. In the unity of the Spirit, which dwelleth and worketh in them all: 4. In their one relation to the body or church of Christ, as its members: 5. In the unity of that faith which stateth them in these relations: 6. In the unity of the baptismal covenant, which initieth them: 7. In the unity of the gospel, (in the essentials,) which is the common rule of their faith and life, and the ground of their hope and comfort: 8. In the bond of mutual, brotherly love: 9. In the concord of a holy life: 10. In the unity of the end which they all intend, and shall at last attain, the pleasing of God, and the heavenly glory.^a

Sect. 24. The means of this unity and concord are, 1. All, as aforesaid, which promote their holiness. From holiness is the centring of all hearts in God; and it destroyeth that dividing selfishness, which maketh men have as many ends as they are persons. 2. The learning and ability of the pastors, to hold the flocks together by the force of truth, and to stop the mouths of cavilling dividers and seducers; when no gainsayers are able to stand before the evidence of that truth which they demonstrate. 3. The holy lives of pastors, which keep up the love of truth and them in the people's hearts. 4. By the paternal government of the pastors, ruling them, not by force, but willingly, and in fatherly love, and a loving, familiar converse with them. 5. By the just execution of discipline on the impenitent, that the godly may see that wickedness is disowned. 6. By concord of the pastors among themselves; and the prudent use of synods or councils to that end. 7. By the humble and submissive respect of the people to their pastors. 8. By keeping up the interest and authority of the most ancient and experienced of the flock, over the young and unexperienced, who are the common causes of division. 9. By the pastors' avoiding all temptations to worldliness and pride, that they tear not the church, by striving who shall be the greatest, or have the pre-eminence. 10. By godly magistrates keeping their power in their own hand, and using it to rebuke intolerable, false teachers, and to encourage the peaceable, and restrain the railing and violence of pastors and parties against each other; and by impartial keeping the church's peace.^b

Sect. 25. Hence the causes of church divisions are discernible. 1. The increase of ungodliness and sin, which is as fire in the thatch, and possesseth all men with dividing principles; practices, and ends. 2. The disability of pastors overtopped in parts by every sect. 3. The ungodliness of the pastors, which looseneth the hearts of the people from them. 4. The strangeness, violence, or hurtfulness of the pastors. 5. The encouragement and toleration of all the most flagitious and impenitent, in undisciplined churches, which frighteneth men out of the

church as from a ruinous house, and tempteth them to an unwarrantable separation, because the pastors will not make a necessary and regular separation. 6. The discord of the bishops among themselves. 7. The people's ignorance of the pastoral power and their own duty. 8. An unruly, fierce, censorious spirit in many of the young and unexperienced of the flock. 9. The pastors striving who shall be the greatest, and seeking great things in the world, or popular applause and admiration. 10. The magistrates either permitting the endeavours of dividing teachers in palpable cases, or suffering self-seeking pastors or people to disturb the church.^c

Sect. 26. But next to common ungodliness, the great causes of the most ruining church divisions are, 1. Wars and dissensions among princes and states, and civil factions in kingdoms, whereby the clergy are drawn or forced to engage themselves on one side or other; and then the prevailing side stigmatizeth those as scandalous who were not for them, and think themselves engaged by their interest to extirpate them. 2. Mistaking the just terms of union and communion, and setting up a false centre as that which all men must unite in. Thus have the Roman party divided themselves from the Greeks and protestants, and made the greatest schism in the church that ever was made in it. 1. By setting up a false, usurping, constitutive head, the Roman bishop; and pretending that none are members of the church who are not his subjects; and so condemning the far greatest part of the catholic church. 2. By imposing an oath, and divers gross corruptions in doctrine, discipline, and worship, upon all that will be in their communion, and condemning those that receive them not, and so departing from the Scripture sufficiency. These two usurpations are the grand dividers.^d

Sect. 27. All heretics, also, who speak perverse things against christianity, to draw away disciples after them; or schismatics, who unwarrantably separate from those churches in which they ought to abide, that they may gather new congregations after their own mind, are the immediate adversaries of church union and concord.^e

Sect. 28. So are the importune and virulent disputations of contentious wits, about unnecessary things, or matters of faction and self-interest.

Sect. 29. Especially when the magistrate lendeth his sword to one party of the contenders, to suppress or be revenged on the rest, and to dispute with arguments of steel.

Sect. 30. The well-ordered councils of bishops or pastors of several churches assembled together, have been justly esteemed a convenient means of maintaining the concord and peace of christians, and a fit remedy for the cure of heresies, corruptions, and divisions.^f And when the cause requireth it, those councils should consist of as many as can conveniently meet, even from the most distant churches, which can send their bishops, without incurring greater hurt or discommodity than their presence

^a Eph. iv. 1-4, &c.; Rom. viii. 17; Eph. i. 22; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Eph. iv. 15, 16; Rom. viii. 9; x. 8, 15, 17; Gal. i. 6-8; Phil. i. 17, 27; 1 Thess. iv. 9; 1 Pet. i. 22; Eph. iii. 17; iv. 16; Heb. x. 24; 1 Cor. i. 10; 1 John iii. 22; 1 Thess. ii. 4.

^b Phil. ii. 4, 21; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Tit. iii. 5; Eph. iv. 3-5, 14-16; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Tit. i. 9, 11; Luke xxi. 15; 1 Tim. iii. 4-6; 1 Pet. v. 2, 3; Acts xv. 20, &c.; 2 Cor. i. 24; 1 Tim. v. 1; 1 Tit. iii. 10; 1 Cor. v. 1; John xvii. 21, 23; Acts xv.; Heb. xiii. 7, 17; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Pet. v. 5; Luke xxii. 24, 26, 27; 1 Pet. v. 2, 3; 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7, 11.

^c 1 Kings xv. 13, 29; 2 Kings x. 17, 28; Rom. xiii. 3-6; 2 Chron. xxviii. 23; Ezek. xviii. 30; Num. xxxi. 23; 1 Tim. iii. 6; Eph. iv. 14; 3 John 9, 10; 1 Kings xxii. 24, 25; 1 Cor. i. 11; iii. 3, 4; 1 Cor. v. 5, 12, &c.; Tit. i. 10;

1 Thess. v. 12, 14; 3 John 9. Non qui jussus aliquid facit, miser est; sed qui invitus. Senec. ep. 62. Nullum violentum est perpetuum.

^d Jam. iv. 1, 2; Phil. ii. 4, 21; 1 Kings xii. 31, 32; xxii. 27; Rev. xiii. 16, 17; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 28; Eph. iv. 7, 8, 13, 16; 3 John 9; Matt. xv. 2, 3; 1 Tim. iii. 3.

^e Acts xv. 30, 31; Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Tim. i. 19; Eph. iv. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17, 23-25; Rom. xiv. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 3-5; i. 3-7; Luke xxii. 24; 1 Kings xxii. 27; Gal. v. 15.

^f Acts xv. Surely there is no better way to stop the rising of new sects and schisms, than to reform abuses, to compound the smaller differences, to proceed mildly, and not with sanguinary persecutions, and rather to take off the principal authors by winning and advancing them, than to enrage them by violence and bitterness. Lord Verulam. Essay 58.

will countervail in doing good; and, therefore, the councils, called general, in the dominions of the christian Roman emperors, were commendable, and very profitable to the church, when rightly used. But, whereas the pope doth argue that he is the constitutive head of the whole catholic church throughout the world, because his predecessors did oft preside in those councils, it is most evident to any one who will make a faithful search into the history of them, that those councils were so far from representing all the churches in the world, that they were constituted only of the churches or subjects of the Roman empire, and those that having formerly been parts of the empire, continued that way of communion when they fell into the hands of conquerors, their conquerors being commonly pagans, infidels, or Arian heretics. I except only now and then two or three, or an inconsiderable number of neighbour bishops. There were none of the representatives of the churches in all the other parts of the world, as I have proved in my "Disputation" with Mr. Johnson; and desire the reader, who thinketh that his reply doth need any confutation, but to peruse Ortelius, or any true map of the Roman empire; and Myræus, or any *Notitia Episcopatum*, and withal the names of the bishops in each council; and then let him ask his conscience whether those councils were true or equal representatives of all the christian world, or only of the subjects or churches of one empire, with a few inconsiderable, accidental auxiliaries; and if he smile not at Mr. Johnson's instances of the bishops of Thrace, (and other such countries,) as if they had been out of the verge of the Roman empire, at least he shall excuse me from confuting such replies.

And since then Christ hath enlarged his church to many more nations, and remote parts of the world, and we are not hopeless that the gospel may yet be preached to the remotest parts of the earth, and an equal, just representative may become more impossible than it now is. Yet now such proper universal councils are so far from being the constitutive, visible head of the church, or the pope as there presiding, or any necessary means of its unity and peace, that, *rebus sic stantibus*, they are morally impossible. For, 1. Their distance is so great from Abassia, Egypt, Armenia, Syria, Mexico, New England, and other parts, to those of Muscovy, Sweden, Norway, &c., that it will be unlawful and impossible to undertake such journeys, and deprive the church of the labours of the pastors so long on this account. 2. It cannot be expected that many live to perform the journey and return. 3. The princes, in whose countries they live, or through whose dominion they must pass, are many of them infidels and will not suffer it, and many still in wars, and most of them full of state jealousies. 4. When they come together, the number of just representatives which may be proportioned to the several parts of the church, and may be more than a mockery or faction, will be so great that they will not be capable of just debates, such as the great matters of religion do require; or, if they be, it will be so long as will frustrate the work, and waste their age, before they can return, when usually the cause which required their congregating will bear no such delays. 5. They cannot all speak to the understanding of the council in one and the same language, for all the commonness of Greek and Latin; God hath not promised that all bishops shall

be able to converse in one tongue, nor actually performed it. 6. Such a council never was in any christian emperor's time; for they neither could nor did summon all the just representatives of the churches in other princes' dominions, but only those in their own.

SecT. 31. The predominancy of selfishness and self-interest in all hypocrites, who are but christians in name, and not by true regeneration, and the great numbers of such hypocrites in the visible church, is the summary of all the great causes of divisions, and the prognostics of their continuance.¹

SecT. 32. Unity and harmony will be imperfect, whilst true holiness is so rare and imperfect; and to expect the contrary, and so to drive on an ill-grounded, unholy unity, is a great cause of the division and distraction of the churches.²

SecT. 33. When differing opinions cause discord betwixt several churches, the means of christian concord is, not an agreement in every opinion, but to send to each other a profession of the true christian faith, subscribed, with a renunciation of all that is contrary thereto; and to require christian love and communion on these terms, with a mutual patience and pardon of each other's infirmities.³

SecT. 34. No christian must pretend holiness against unity and peace, nor unity and peace against holiness; but take them as inseparable in point of duty; and every tender conscience should be as tender of church division and real schism, as of drunkenness, whoredom, or such other enormous sins. James iii. 14—17.⁴

SecT. 35. III. The extensive interest of the church, consisting in the multiplication of christians, is, 1. Principally in the multiplication of the regenerate members of the church mystical. 2. And, subordinately, in the multiplication of professed christians in the church visible.

SecT. 36. It is not another, but the very same christianity which in sincerity constituteth a mystical member, and in profession a visible member of the church (which is not two churches, but one); so that all are hypocrites who are not sincere.⁵

SecT. 37. The instituted door or entrance into the church visible, is by baptism.⁶

SecT. 38. The pastors of the church, by the power of the keys, are judges who are to be admitted by baptism, and to baptize them;⁷ and the people are to take the baptized for church members, and in point of public communion, to see as with their pastors' eyes (ordinarily); though, as to private converse, they are judges themselves.

SecT. 39. Those that are baptized in infancy should at age have a solemn transition into the rank of adult members, upon a solemn, serious owning and renewing of their baptismal covenant.⁸

SecT. 40. God doth not require a false profession of christianity, but a true; but yet he appointeth his ministers to take a profession not proved false, as credibly true, because we are no heart-searchers; and every one should be best acquainted with himself; and God will have every man the chooser or refuser of his own felicity, that the comfort or sorrow may be most his own: and a human belief of them that have not forfeited their credit, especially about their own hearts, is necessary to human converse.⁹

SecT. 41. And God taketh occasion of hypocrites'

¹ Isa. ix. 17; Phil. ii. 21; Acts viii. 18, 20; 1 Tim. vi. 10; 1 John ii. 15; Gal. v. 11; vi. 12—14.

² Luke xxii. 24; Acts xv. 39; Gal. ii. 12—15.

³ Phil. iii. 15, 16; Rom. xiv. and xv.; 1 Pet. iii. 15.

⁴ Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Cor. i. 10; ii. and iii. throughout.

⁵ Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16; Eph. vi. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Rom. viii. 9.

⁶ Matt. xxviii. 19.

⁷ Acts ii. 41, 42; and viii. 37, 38.

⁸ See my "Treatise of Confirmation."

⁹ Acts viii. 37; xiii. 21, 22; ii. 41; Luke xiv. 16, 18, 21, 23.

intrusion: 1. To do good to the church by the excellent gifts of many hypocrites. 2. To do good to themselves, by the means or helps of grace which they meet with in the church.^e

Sect. 42. But the proper, appointed place which all that are not (at age) persuaded to the profession of true christianity, should continue in, is the state of *catechumens*, or *audientes*; mere learners, in order to be made christians.^f

Sect. 43. The visible church is much larger than the mystical, though but one church, that is, the church hath more professing than regenerate members, and will have to the end of the world, and none must expect that they be commensurate.^g

Sect. 44. As a corn-field; 1. Corn; 2. Straw and chaff; and, 3. Weeds and stricken ears; and is denominated from the corn, which is the chief (preserved) part; but the straw must not be cast out, because it is necessary for the corn; but the weeds must be pulled up, except when doing it may hurt the wheat: even so the church hath, 1. Sincere christians, from whom it is denominated; 2. Close hypocrites, whose gifts are for the good of the sincere, and must not be cast out by the pastors; 3. Heretics and notorious wicked men, who are impatient after due admonition; and these must be cast out, except when it may hazard the church.^h

Sect. 45. The means of increasing the church must ultimately be intended always to the increase of the church mystical, for holiness and salvation.ⁱ

Sect. 46. These means are, 1. All the fore-mentioned means of holiness, for holiness is the church's glory; the image of God, which will make it illustrious and beautiful in the eyes of men, when they are sober and impartial, and will do most to win them home to Christ. 2. Especially the great abilities, holiness, patience, and unwearied diligence of the ministers of Christ, is a needful means. 3. The advancement of arts and sciences doth much to prepare the way. 4. The agreement and love of christians among themselves. 5. Love to the infidels and ungodly, and doing all the good we can even to their bodies. 6. A spiritual, pure, rational, and decent worshipping of God. 7. And the concord of christian princes among themselves, for the countenancing and promoting the labours of such preachers as are fitted for this work.^k

Sect. 47. The hinderances, then, of the church's increase, and of the conversion of the heathen and infidel world, are, 1. Above all, the wickedness of professed christians, whose falsehood, and debauchery, and unholiness, persuade the poor infidels that christianity is worse than their own religion, because they see that the men are worse that live among them. And, 2. The badness of the pastors,

especially in the Greek and Latin churches, and the destruction of church discipline, and impurity of the churches hereupon, together with the ignorance and unskilfulness of most for so great a work, is a great impediment. 3. The defectiveness in arts and sciences. 4. The many divisions and unbrotherly contentions of christians among themselves, either for religion or for worldly things. 5. Not devoting ourselves and all that we have to the winning of infidels, by love, and doing them good. 6. A carnal, irrational, or indecent manner of worshipping God; for they will condemn that God, whose worship seemeth to them ridiculous and contemptible. 7. The discords, wars, or selfishness of christian princes, who unite not their strength to encourage and promote this noble work, but rather hinder it, by weakening the hands of the labourers at home. 8. Especially when the very preachers themselves are guilty of covetous or ambitious designs, and under pretence of preaching Christ, are seeking riches, or setting up themselves, or those that they depend on. These have kept under the church of Christ, and hindered the conversion of the world till now.^l

Sect. 48. The attempts of the Jesuits in Congo, Japan, and China, was a very noble work, and so was the Portuguese kings' encouragements; but two things spoiled their success, which protestants are not liable to: 1. That when they took down the heathen images, they set them up others in the stead; and made them think that the main difference was, but whose image they should worship: and withal, by their *agnus dei's*, and such like trinkets, made religion seem childish and contemptible. 2. But, especially, that they made them see, that while they seemed to promote religion, and to save their souls, they came to promote their own wealth, or the pope's dominion, and to bring their kings under a foreign power.^m

Sect. 49. The honest attempts of Mr. Elliot, in New England, is much more agreeable to the apostles' way, and maketh more serious, spiritual christians; but the quality of place and people, and the greatness of wants, doth hinder the multiplication of converts, and higher attempts were very desirable.

Sect. 50. The translating of fit books into the language of the infidels, and dispersing them, may, in time, prove the sowing of a holy, fruitful seed.ⁿ

Sect. 51. Prosperity useth greatly to increase the church extensively, in the number of visible members; and adversity and persecution to increase it intensively, by increasing holiness in the tried and refined; therefore, God useth to send vicissitudes of prosperity and adversity, like summer and winter, to the churches, that each may do its proper work.

aut nos impii, aut vos pii; cum ex partium sensibus pietatis debeat atque impietatis ratio ponderari? Non enim qui simulachrum sibi aliquod conficit, quod pro Deo veneretur is habendus est rebus esse deditus divinis. Opinio religionem facit; et recta de Diis mens: ut nihil eos existimes contra decus præsumptum sublimitatis appetere. Arnob. adv. Gentes, l. 7. in Bib. Pat. Auct. tom. i. p. 60. Suppose these words spoken by us to the papists. Acosta is very large and honest in this reproof and lamentation of the sins of the clergy.

^m Read Pet. Maffeus' Hist. Ind. and Epist. Jesuit. and Hist. Japon. and Chin. The king of Tenerate told Sir Francis Drake, We agree with you in religion against the Portuguese, that we must not worship stocks and stones. Fuller's Holy Sate in the Life of Sir Francis Drake, out of a MS. of one of his company. What a scandal is such worship against the christian cause!

ⁿ Acts ix. 31. As for the grand controversy of "per se aut per alium," read Grotius De Imper. p. 290, 291. "Nam illud quod quis per alium facit, per se facere videtur;" ad eas duntaxat pertinet actiones, quarum causa efficiens proxima a jure indefinita est.

^e Phil. i. 15—18; Matt. x. 1; vii. 22, 23.

^f Mark xvi. 16; Acts v. 13.

^g Rom. ix. 6; Matt. xiii. 41, 42, 47; xx. 22.

^h Matt. xiii. 28, 36; iii. 12; Psal. ii. 4; Jer. xxiii. 28.

ⁱ Matt. xiii. 28—30; 2 Tim. ii. 10; John xi. 52; 1 Tim. ii. 4.

^k Acts ii. 44, 46; iv. 32, 34; ix. 31; xii. 24; ix. 15; xx. 20, &c.; 2 Tim. ii. 21; John iv. 22—24; xvii. 24, 25; 2 Tim. ii. 25.

^l Isa. ix. 17; 1 Thess. v. 22; Rom. ii. 21, 24; 1 Tim. vi.; 1 Tit. ii. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 16, 17; iv. 15; ii. 12. Read Joseph Acosta of this at large, and Tho. D. S. Jesu de convers. gent. 1 Cor. xiv. 2, &c.; vii. 10, 11; xiv. 16, 22, 23. Read Bishop Bilson Of Christian Subjection, p. 526. Vos aris tinnitibus et tibiurum sonis—persuasmu habetis Deos; delectari et affici, irasque aliquando conceptas eorum satisfactione molliri. Nos inconveniens ductum, quinimo incredibile iudicamus, eos qui gradibus mille genus omne virtutum perfectionis transierunt summite, in voluptatibus habere atque in deliciis esse res eas, quas homo sapiens rideat, et que non alii videntur continere aliquid gratia quam infantibus parvulis et trivialiter et populariter institutis. Hæc cum ita se habeant, cumque sit opinionum tanta nostrarum vestrarumque diversitas, ubi

Sect. 52. Every true christian should daily lament the common infidelity and impiety of the world, that the interest of true christianity is confined in so narrow a room on earth; and to pray with his first and earnestest desires, that more labourers may be sent forth, and that God's name may be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will be done on earth, that it may be liker heaven, which now is grown so like to hell: but yet, to comfort himself in considering, as is before said, that as this earth is to all the nobler world but as one mole-hill to all England; so if God had forsaken all, it had been but as the cutting off a cancer from a man, or as the casting away of the paring of his nails, in comparison of all the rest.*

Therefore should we long for the coming of our Lord, and the better world, which we have in hope. How long, Lord, holy and true, how long? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly: Amen. For we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, 2 Pet. iii. 11—13.

"Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened to me; how, then, shall Pharaoh hear me?" Exod. vi. 12.

"Not to many people of a strange speech, and of a hard language, whose words thou canst not understand: surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted," Ezek. iii.

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THE CONCLUSION.

DEFENDING THE SOUL'S IMMORTALITY AGAINST THE SOMATISTS OR EPICUREANS, AND OTHER PSEUDO-PHILOSOPHERS.

THOUGH in this treatise I have not wilfully balked any regardable objections, which I thought might stick with an intelligent reader, about the truth of the things here delivered, yet those which are proper to the somatist, irreligious sect of philosophers, I thought fitter to put here as an appendix by themselves, that they might not stop the more sober in their way.

As to the subject and method of this discourse, it consisteth of these four parts: 1. The proof of the Deity, and what God is. 2. Of the certain obligations which lie upon man to be holy and obedient to this God. 3. The proofs of a life of retribution hereafter, where the holy and obedient shall be blessed, and the unholy and disobedient punished. 4. The proofs of the verity of the christian faith.

For the first of these, that there is a God, though I have proved it beyond all rational contradiction, yet I have despatched it with haste and brevity; because it is to the mind as the sun is to the eye, and so evident in all that is evident in the world, that there needeth nothing to the proving of it, but to help the reader to a rational capacity and aptitude, to see that which all the world declareth. The

common argument, from the effects to the cause, in all the entities and motions in the world, is undeniable. Whatsoever any being hath, and hath not originally from itself, or independently in itself, it must needs have from another; and that other cannot act beyond its power, nor give that which it hath not either formally or eminently; therefore he that findeth in the world about him so much entity and motion, so much intellect, volition, and operation, and so much wisdom, goodness, and power, must needs know that all these have some cause, which, formally or eminently, or in a way of transcendency, hath more itself than it giveth to others. I measured my endeavours about this subject, according as the occasions of my own soul had led me. Among all the temptations which have at any time assaulted me, I have found those so contemptible and inconsiderable, as to their strength, which would have made me doubt of the being of a God, that I am apt to think that it is so with others; and therefore, in the review of this discourse, I find no reason to stand to answer any man's objections against the being, or essential attributes or properties of God.†

And for the second point, that we all owe to this God our absolute resignation, obedience, and love, and so that holiness is naturally our duty, it doth so naturally result from the nature of God and man compared, that I can scarce think of any thing worthy of a confutation which can be said against it, but that which denieth the nature of God or man; and, therefore, is either confuted under the first head, or is to be confuted under the third.

As for the fourth particular contained in the second part,‡ (the truth of the gospel,) I find not any reason to defend it more particularly, nor to answer any more objections than I have done; for, in proving the truth, I have proved all the contradictory assertions to be false; and I have answered already the greatest objections; and after this, to answer every ignorant exception of unsatisfied persons, against the several passages of the Scripture, would be tedious, and not necessary to the end of my design. And, indeed, I perceive not that any considerable number are troubled with doubtings of the truth of the christian faith, in a prevalent degree, who are well convinced of those antecedent verities of the Deity, and of the natural obligation and necessity of holiness, and of the immortality of the soul, or of a future life of reward and punishment, and that live in any reasonable conformity to these natural principles which they profess. For when natural evidence hath sufficiently convinced a man that he is obliged to be holy, in absolute obedience and love to his Creator, through the hopes and fears of another life, he is very much prepared to close with the design and doctrine of the gospel, which is so far from contradicting this, that it doth but confirm it, and show us the way by which it may most certainly be brought to pass.

And, therefore, my observation and experiences constrain me to think, that there is no point which I have insisted on, which so much calleth for my vindication, as the third, about the life to come.

I know there is a sort of overwise and overdoing divines, who will tell their followers in private, where there is none to contradict them, that the

* Dr. Jer. Taylor, of Repent. Pref. "I am sure we cannot give account of souls, of which we have no notice." Leg. Athanas. Patri. Constantin. de necessaria Episcop. residentia.

† Si vis Deorum speciem apprehendere, proprietates anime rationalis ultime cogita, et oppositas in perfectione Diis attribue. Jamblic. de Myster. per Ficin.

‡ When Mahomet had taken Constantinople, and demanded of the patriarch an account of the christian faith, George Scholaris, alias Gennadius, then patriarch, wrote that brief summary which you may find in Mart. Crucius's Turco-Græc. l. 2; Hist. Eccles. p. 10, &c. which very well openeth the mystery of the Trinity, and of christianity, with seven reasons of it.

method of this treatise is perverse, as appealing too much to natural light, and overvaluing human reason; and that I should have done no more but shortly tell men, that all that which God speaketh in his word is true; and that *propria luce*, it is evident that the Scripture is the word of God; and that to all God's elect he will give his Spirit to cause them to discern it; and that this much alone had been better than all these disputes and reasons; but these overwise men, who need themselves no reason for their religion, and judge accordingly of others, and think that those men who rest not in the authority of Jesus Christ should rest in theirs, are many of them so well acquainted with me, as not to expect that I should trouble them in their way, or reason against them who speak against reason, even in the greatest matters which our reason is given us for. As much as I am addicted to scribbling, I can quietly dismiss this sort of men, and love their zeal, without the labour of opening their ignorance.

My task, therefore, in this conclusion, shall be only to defend the doctrine delivered in this foregoing treatise, of the life to come, or the soul's immortality, against some who call themselves philosophers. For of men so called, it is but a small part who at all gainsay this weighty truth. The followers of Plato, the divine philosopher, with the Pythagoreans, the stoics, the cynics, and divers other sects, are so much for it, that, indeed, the most of them go too far, and make the soul to be eternal both a *parte ante*, and a *parte post*: and Cicero doth conclude, from its self-moving power, that it is certainly eternal and divine: insomuch that not only Arnobius, but many other ancient christians, write so much against Plato for holding the soul to be naturally immortal, and assert themselves, that it is of a middle nature, between that which is naturally immortal, and that which is merely mortal, that he that doth not well understand them, may be scandalized at their expressions, and think that he readeth the philosopher defending the soul's immortality, and the christian opposing it. And though Aristotle's opinion be questioned by many, yet Cicero, who lived in times and places wherein he had better advantage than we to know his meaning, doth frequently affirm, that he was in the main of Plato's mind; and that the academics, peripatetics, and stoics, differed more in words than sense; chiding the stoics for their schism or separation, in setting up a school or sect as new, which had almost nothing new but words. Not only Fernelius, *de abditis rerum causis*, but many others have vindicated Aristotle, however his obscurity hath given men occasion to keep up that controversy. And if the book *De Mundo* be undoubtedly his, I see no reason to make any more question of his meaning; much less if that book be his which is entitled, *Mystica Egypt. et Chald. Philos.* which Aben Ama Arabs translated out of Greek into Arabic, which Franc. Rouseus brought from Damascus, and Moses Rovas Medicus Hæb. translated into Italian, and Pet. Nicol. Castellinus into Latin, and Patricius thinketh Aristotle took from Plato's mouth.^c

It is only, then, the Epicureans, and some novel somatists, that I have now to answer, who think they have much to say against the separated subsistence and immortality of man's soul, which I may reduce to these objections following:

I. Matter and motion, without any more, may do all that which you ascribe to incorporeal substances of souls: therefore, you assert them without ground. II. To confirm this, the brutes have sense, imagination, thought, and reason, by matter and motion only, without immortal or incorporeal substances; therefore, by sense, imagination, thoughts, or reason, you cannot prove that man hath more. III. Forms are but accidents, that is, qualities or the mode of matter, and not substances different from matter: therefore, it is so with human souls. IV. The soul dependeth upon matter in its operations, and acteth according to it, and not without it: therefore, it is material, and consequently mortal. V. No immaterial substance moveth that which is material, or is the principle of its operations: but the soul moveth the body, as the principle of its operations; *ergo*. VI. If in our dreams the thoughts do operate only according to the accidental irregular motion of the spirits, and sometimes be so unactive that we do not so much as dream, then the soul is nothing but the active spirits, or some material, corruptible thing: but, &c. *ergo*. VII. Sense is a more perfect apprehension than reason: therefore, brutes, which have sense, have as noble and perfect a kind of soul as man; or, at least, reason is no proof of the immateriality of souls. VIII. Sensation and intellection are both but reception, and the soul is but a patient in them: *ergo*, it is not a self-moving, and so not an incorporeal substance. IX. Nothing is in the understanding but what is first in the sense: *ergo*, the understanding can reach no farther than to sensible things: *ergo*, it is itself of no higher a kind. X. Corporeal objects move the soul; *ergo*, it is corporeal. For things material cannot work upon that which is immaterial. XI. If the soul were incorporeal, it would know itself to be so; but it is not only ignorant of that, but hath no true notion, but merely negative, of immaterial beings. XII. That which is generated, is corruptible; but the soul is generated, as is proved by Senertus, and many others. XIII. *Quicquid oritur interit*; that which is not eternal as to the past duration, is not eternal as to the future duration: but all christians maintain, that the soul is either created or generated, and not of eternal duration, as to what is past: and all the philosophers, or most who took it to be eternal as to future duration, went on that ground, that it was so antecedently. XIV. You give us none but moral arguments for the soul's immortality. XV. Nay, you confess, that the soul's eternal duration cannot by you be proved by any natural evidence, though you think you so prove a life of retribution. XVI. The soul and body are like a candle, where oil, and wick, and fire, (which are all,) are in *fluxu continuo*; and as there is not the same individual flame this hour as was the last, so neither have we the same individual souls: *ergo*, they are incapable of a life of retribution hereafter. XVII. If the soul be a durable substance, (as we must confess no substance is annihilated,) it is most likely to come from the *anima mundi*, or some universal soul of that orb or system of which it is a part, and so to return to it again, as the beams to the sun; and so to cease its individuation, and consequently to be incapable of a life of retribution. XVIII. The Platonists, who hold the soul's immortality, (and some Platonic divines too,) have so many fopperies about its vehicles, regions, and transmutations,

^c That Plato and Aristotle were of one opinion about the soul, Mirandula and Mars. Ficinus, (upon Priscians Theophrastus de Anima,) have largely laboured to evince. Galen is known to speak many objections against Plato, and the soul's immortality, but in other places he speaketh doubtfully: and if really Nemesius had those words out of such a book of

Galen, as he citeth, *De Ani. c. ii. p. 481*, he would then seem to have thought better of the rational soul. Plotinus's last words were, as Porphyry saith in his Life, "I am now returning that which is divine in us, to that which is divine in the universe."

as make their principal doctrine the less credible. XIX. If the soul should continue its individuation, yet its actings will be nothing like what they are in the body; nor can they exercise a memory of what they did in the body, as having not the material spirits and nerves by which memory is exercised; and, therefore, they can have no proper retribution, especially punishment, for any thing here done. XX. The belief of the immortality of the soul doth fill men with fears, and take up their lives in superstitious cares for a life to come, which might be spent in quietness, and in public works: and it fills the world with all those religious sects and controversies which have so long destroyed charity and peace.

These are the objections which I have here to answer.

Object. I. Matter and motion, without any more, may do all that which you ascribe to souls.^d

Ans. When nothing seemeth to us more false and absurd than the matter of your objection; you cannot expect that your naked assertion should satisfy us without proof: and a satisfactory proof must reach to all the noblest instances, and must have better evidence than the bold and confident affirmations of men, who expect that their conceptions should be taken for the flower of reason, whilst they are pleading against the reasoning nature itself. And to what authors will they send us for the proof of this assertion? Is it to Mr. Hobbs? We have perused him, and weighed his reasons, and find them such as reflect no dishonour on the understandings of those who judge them to be void of probability as well as cogent evidence. But after so smart a castigation as he hath received from the learned Dr. Ward, (now bishop of Exeter), and from that clear-headed primate of Ireland, Dr. Bramhal, I hope it will not be expected that I trouble myself or my reader with him here. Is it to Gassendus? he writeth for the immaterial created human soul himself; and charity obligeth me not to charge him with prevarication, whatsoever to Cartesius or any where else he writeth, which seemeth injurious to this doctrine: and if Sorberius number it with his honours, (in vita Gassendi), that Mr. Hobbs could not sufficiently admire his works, *Qui Heroem nostrum nunquam majorem apparere pronuntiabat, quam in retundendis larvis, tenues in auras tam facile diffugiuntibus, gladio impervius, nec ictum clavæ excipientibus: ita enim sentiebat vir emunctæ naris de meditationibus Cartesii et de illa Gassendi disquisitione, &c;* it was because he weighed not honour in an English balance, nor judged not of an Englishman by an English judgment, nor himself well perceived what was indeed honourable or dishonourable in his friend. If you send us to Epicurus and Lucretius, they are so overwhelmed with the number of adversaries that have fallen upon them, that it is a dishonour to give them another blow. Besides all the crowd of peripatetics, Platonists, and stoics, even the moderate latitudinarian Cicero hath spit so oft in the face of Epicurus, that when Gassendus had laboured hard in wiping it, he thought meet to let this spot alone. But because it is only this sort of men that are the adversaries with whom we do contend, I will this

once be so troublesome to the reader, as to give him first some general countercharges and reasons against the authority of these men; and next, some particular reasons against the objected sufficiency of matter and motion, to do the offices which we ascribe to souls.

And, I. When I find men dispute against man, and reason against the power of reason, I think human interest alloweth me to be distrustful of their sophistry, and to yield no further than I have cogent evidence. If man's soul be his form, he denieth man to be man, who denieth him that soul.

2. I find philosophers so little agreed among themselves, that it greatly diminisheth their authority, and requireth a man who is just to his reason, to make a very accurate trial before he fall in with any of their opinions. Their divisions are sufficiently opened and aggravated by Laertius, Cicero, and many more of themselves; and contemptuously displayed by Hermas, Arnobius, Athenagoras, Lactantius, Eusebius, and many other christians. There are few things that one asserteth, but there are many to rise up against him and contradict it. They must better defend themselves against one another, before their authority be much revered by others.

3. I find the wisest of them so conscious of their ignorance, that they take most for uncertain which they say themselves, and confess they talk but in the dark, which made the Pyrrhonians and Arcesilaus have so many followers, and Cicero, with the academics, so over-modest in disclaiming certainty and confidence, and writing by dialogues, with so much indifference and wavering as they did. I need not send you to Zanchez's *Nihil scitur*, nor to our Mr. Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, for satisfaction. The learned Gassendus's modesty is sufficient, who, if he speak of occult qualities, will ask you what qualities are not occult; and if he speak of the magnitude and distances of the stars, will tell you how little possibility of assurance is left to mortals about those things which others, with over-much confidence, have asserted; and about the case in hand, he could no better defend Epicurus, against Cicero's *Hoc esse optare, et provincias dare atomis, non disputare*, than by confessing, *Vere quidem id obijci: sed eam tamen esse ingenii humani imbecillitatem, ut obijci idem nemini non possit. De ipsis principis dicere nil aliud licet, nisi quod hæc isto, illa illo modo se habeant, ex suæ naturæ necessitate; cum ignoremus germanam causam ob quam ita se habeant: imo cum ea frustra queratur, nisi sit eundem in infinitum.* (Sec. 1, l. iii. c. 7, p. 275.) And ingenuously he confesseth, (Sec. 2, l. ii. c. 3, p. 560,) *Verum quæquid dicatur (scil. per Cartesium et Epicurum) hypothesis semper mera est, ac difficultas remanet, fierique nihil tutius potest, quam profutendo ignorantiam, totum quod videmus rerum ordinem in arbitrium, summæ opificis conferre. Dicere certe quod aliqui, solem v. g. dicere hic potius quam alibi esse, quia ejus natura ita exigit, id quidem vere dicitur; sed interim nil aliud est, quam respondere ipsum quæsitum, et dissimulando ignorantiam, videri esse animi in causam optinam parum grati.* Which is true, and applicable to many other cases. And it was ingenuously confessed lately by the very ingenious Mr. Samuel Parker, "I am lately grown such a despairing sceptic in all man's great duty and felicity: therefore, as men differ about man's nature, they will differ about his duty and felicity. They that think he is all body, will describe his work and his happiness accordingly: a truth of sad and desperate consequence.

^e The truth is, as fire is, per essentiam, a moving, enlightening, heating substance, so the soul is, per essentiam, a life, or vital principle; and, therefore, as Porphyry argueth, for the soul to die, is for life itself to die, or that which is, per essentiam, life to cease to be what it is.

^d The Platonists' opinion, that the soul is all the man, and that animus cujusque is est quisque, is incomparably more probable, and of honest tendency, than theirs that think the body is all the man. Qui putant hominem esse ex anima corpore compositum, consequenter utile a justo se jungunt: qui vero hominem esse animam conjungunt. Proclus de Anim. et Dæm. per Eicin.

What then will they hold and do, that think man is tantum corpus. For as Proclus there saith, and Cicero oft, most philosophers agree that vivere secundum suam naturam, is

physiological theories, that I cannot concern myself in the truth or falsehood of any hypotheses; for, though I prefer the mechanical hypotheses before any other, yet methinks their texture is too slight and brittle to have any stress laid upon them; and I can resemble them to nothing better than your glass-drops, from which, if the least portion be broken, the whole compages immediately dissolves and shatters into dust and atoms: for their parts, which rather lie than hang together, being supported only by the thin film of a brittle conjecture, not annealed by experience and observation," &c. And upon the like reasons, it is rejected by that eminently learned and industrious man, Dr. Willis, *De Ferment*. p. 3. *At quoniam principia sua supponit potius quam demonstrat, docetque qualis figuræ elementa ista corporum sint, non quæ ipsa fuerint, atque etiam notiones inducit valde subtiles et a sensu remotas, quæque naturæ phænomenis quando ad particularia descenditur, non satis quadrant, hac insuper habita, &c.*^f

4. And I find that the philosophers who have rejected or vilified Epicurus and his way, have been very numerous; multitudes to a few, and of the most venerable names in the ages and places where they lived; and no one sect of them so vilified by the rest, as the Epicureans were by all.

5. I find, also, that the most who in this age adhere to the Epicurean or Cartesian hypotheses, are the younger sort of ingenious men, who have received prejudice against the peripatetics, Platonists, and stoics, before they did ever thoroughly study them; but, reverencing more some person noted for much ingenuity, by his authority, have been drawn to defend what they scarce understand themselves; and that it is the mere novelty of some of these new-started notions, which maketh them so much followed; as novelties in religion are with some young and wanton wits: and, accordingly, I expect that, ere long, they will grow out of fashion, and die again, before ever they come to have such supporters as the other philosophy hath had.

6. *Respicere ad plurima*, to take in all that must be taken in, is the character of true wisdom. But I find that the Epicureans do *respicere ad pauca*; they look so much at things corporeal, that they quite overlook the noblest natures; and they reduce all to matter and motion, because nothing but matter and motion is thoroughly studied by them. And, like idle boys, who tear out all the hard leaves of their books, and say they have learned all when they have learned the rest; so do they cut off and deny the noblest parts of nature, and then sweep together the dust of agitated atoms, and tell us that they have resolved all the phenomena in nature.

7. And I find that they are very kind-natured to their own conceptions, and take those for demonstrations, which other men think are liker dreams.

8. I perceive that they are deluded by taking the *vestigia* and images of things, for the things themselves. The intellectual nature is the image of the divine, and the sensitive of the intellectual, and the vegetative of the sensitive, and the fiery of the incorporeal. And when they can prove no more in any of the lower, but such an image of the higher, they would on that advantage confound them all; and would hence conclude that brutes are intel-

lectual, and deny the differencing forms of all things.

9. I find that as they look so much at the organ, as to overlook the agent; and look so much at the particles of matter, as to overlook the different natures of it; so do they observe the second cause with so narrow a mind, as much to overlook the first: or when they have acknowledged that there is a God, they think they have done fair, though afterwards they consider not that interest of his in all operations, which their own concessions necessarily infer.

10. Lastly, I perceive that they proceed not methodically in their collections, but confound all by mixing certainties with uncertainties: whereas the first, the great, the most discernible truths, should be first congested as certainties by themselves, and the uncertainties should not be pleaded against them, nor suffered to stand in contest with them.

Perceiving all these general reasons to distrust this sort of philosophers above others, though I resolve to be impartial, I cannot willingly be so foolish as to overlook their disadvantage in the present cause.

II. The particular reasons which dissuade me from believing the Epicurean sufficiency of matter and motion, are these following:

1. They all, with whom I have now to do, are constrained to confess an incorporeal, intellectual substance, even that there is a God, and that God is such. Epicurus himself doth not deny it; yea, seemeth to speak magnificently of God, and in honour to him would excuse his providence from the minding of inferior things. For, 1. They know that matter did not make itself, and motion is but its mode; and, therefore, matter cannot be made by its own motion. Its being is in order of nature before its motion; and matter is in itself so dull a thing, and by the adversaries stripped of all forms which are not caused by motion, that if it were said to be from eternity in its duration, they will confess it could be but as an eternal effect of some nobler cause: so that at the first word they grant, that matter hath an incorporeal cause. 2. And motion, as it is found in matter, could not cause itself: though it be but the mode of matter, it is such a mode as must have a cause. And the passive matter yet unmoved, is supposed by themselves to be void of all antecedent, moving power; so that they are all fain to say that God made the matter, and gave it the first push. And so all matter and motion is reduced to a first Efficient, who is incorporeal; and, therefore, an incorporeal Being is acknowledged.^g

2. I meet with none of them who dare deny this God to be an intellectual, free Agent; so that though it be granted them, that *intelligere velle* be not in God the same thing formally as it is in man, yet it is something which eminently must be so called, man having no fitter conception or expression of it, than from these acts of his own soul. Epicurus will not make God defectively ignorant, impotent, or bad. When themselves divide all things into such as have understanding, and such as have none, of which part do they suppose God to stand? Things that are void of understanding, formally or eminently, are below the dignity of things that have understanding. So that they confess there is existent an incorporeal, intelligent, free Agent.^h

intelligentiæ cursum retardari, divinaque capessere require. Paul. Cartes. in 1^a Sent. dis. 9. p. 22.

^g Read the *Mystic. Ægypt.* and Chald. Philos. to prove that souls are not corporeal; and Nemesius and Mammertus.

^h If the soul be nothing but matter and motion, then no man is the same this year as he was the last. For matter is in fluxu continuo, as they object themselves anon: we have not the same flesh and blood to-day which we lately had; and

^f Quibusdam qui ne ignem calere putant, nisi eum manu contractarint, nihil credendum esse placet, quod supra progredientem naturam videatur. Multorum quoque studia tardantur, quod id credere nolint quod minus sub eorum cognitionem cadit: quæ errorum pravitas ex ingeniorum imbecillitate defluxit: siquidem cum sensuum angustia ex quibus hominum agnitio eruitur, in externorum sensuum genere versentur, satis notum esse debet, his tanquam compedi-

3. As they confess that this intellectual agent is the first cause both of matter and motion, so they cannot deny that he still causeth both, by his continued influx, or causing efficacy: for there can be no effect without a cause; and therefore, when the cause ceaseth, the effect must cease. The material part of a moral cause may cease, and yet the effect continue: but that moral causation continueth which is proportioned to the effect. The parent may die while the child surviveth; but there is a continued cause of the life of the child, proportioned to the effect. Matter is not an independent being. To say that God hath made it self-sufficient and independent, is to say that he hath made it a god. Suppose but a total cessation of the divine emanation, influx, and causation, and you must needs suppose also the cessation of all beings. If you say that when God hath once given it a being, it will continue of itself, till his power annihilate it: I answer, if it continue without a continuing causation, it must continue as an independent, self-sufficient being. But this is a contradiction, because it is a creature: God is no effect, and therefore needeth no cause of subsistence; but the creature is an effect, and cannot subsist a moment without a continued cause. As the beams or communicated light cannot continue an instant, if there were a total cessation of the emanation of the luminary, because their being is merely dependent; and they need no other positive annihilation, besides the cessation of the causation which did continue them. It was from one of your own poets that Paul cited, "In him we live, and move, and have our being; for we are his offspring." And nothing is more abhorrent to all common reason, than that this stone or dirt, which was nothing as yesterday, should be a god to itself, even one independent, self-sufficient being, as soon as it is created; and so that God made as many demigods as atoms. We see, past doubt, that one creature cannot subsist or move without another, on which it is dependent; how much less can any creature subsist or move without its continued reception of its Creator's influx! If you could suppose that for one moment there were no God, you must suppose there would be nothing. If I thought any would deny this, besides those inflated vertiginous brains, that are not to be disputed with, I would say more for the illustration of it.

Object. But though matter subsist not without a continued divine causation, or emanation, or efficacious volition, yet motion may continue when all divine causation of it ceaseth: because when God hath given it one push, that causeth a motion, which causeth another motion, and that another, and so *in infinitum*, if there were no stop.

Ans. 1. If this were so, it must be on supposition of a *vis motiva communicata vel impressa*; for if there had been no such, the first motion would have not been, or all have presently ceased for want of a continued cause. As there is no motion *sine vi motiva*, so none can be communicated, but by the communication of that force. Action is not nothing, nor will

the motion of this instant is not the same with the motion which succeedeth in the next; so that no man's soul, and consequently no man, is long the same. And so (as I have said after) kings will lose their titles to their crowns, and all men to their lands, as being not the same who were born heirs to them; and there must be no rewards or punishments, unless you will reward and punish one for another's faults, and they need no more to fear the pain or death which will befall them, than that which befalls their neighbour, because it is not the man that now is who must undergo it: nor should any man have a wife or child of his own one year together. If they like not these consequents, let them either prove that identifying matter and motion are permanent, or grant that some other permanent thing doth identify the person. See this as the argument of Ammonius and Numenius,

be caused by nothing: as the *delapsus gravium* would presently cease, if we could cause the *pondus* or gravity to cease; so is it in all other motions. If there be no *vis*, or strength, communicated along with the motion, there would be nothing in that motion to cause another motion, nor in that to cause another. And if it were by way of traction, if the cause cease which is the *prima trahens*, all the motion ceaseth; and so, also, if it be by way of pulsion. So that in every motion there is something more than matter and motion.

2. All motion (of things below within our reach) hath many impediments, and therefore would cease, if the first Cause continued not his powerful efficacy. It is tedious and needless to enumerate instances.¹

3. The moving power of the noblest creatures, is not purely active, but partly passive and partly active, and must receive the influx of the highest Cause, before it can act or communicate any thing. Therefore as soon as the first Mover should cease, the rest would be soon stopped, though some active power was communicated to them: as we see in a clock, when the poise is down, and in a watch, when the spring is down; the motion ceaseth first where it first began.

4. Can you constrain your reason to imagine that God is the sole, principal, active Cause, for the first touch, and, as it were, for one minute, or instant, (while he causeth the first *motus*), and is an unactive being, or no cause, ever after, save only reputative, because he caused the first. This is to say, that God was God till he made the world, and ever since he hath done nothing, but left every atom or creature to be god. Is God so mutable, to do all for one instant, and to do nothing ever after?

5. The infiniteness and perfection of God fully prove, that all continued motion is by the continuance of his efficiency. For it is undeniable, that he who made all things is every where, or present to all his creatures, in the most intimate proximity. And it is certain, that he cannot but know them all; and also that his benignity maintaineth all their beings and well-beings, and, therefore, that he is not an unactive Being; but that his power, as well as his wisdom and goodness, is continually in act. How strangely do these Epicureans differ from Aristotle; who durst not deny the eternity of the world, lest he should make God an unactive Being *ad extra*, from eternity till the creation. Whenas these men feign him to have given but one instantaneous push, and to have been *cetera otiosus*, or unactive from eternity.

Seeing, then, it cannot by sober reason be denied, that God himself is, by a continued causation, the Preserver and intimate first Mover of all things, it must needs thence follow, that matter and motion are still insufficient of themselves; and that this is to be none of the controversy between us: but only whether it be any created nature, power, or other cause, by which God causeth motion in any thing, or all things? Or whether he do it by his own immediate causation alone, without the use of any second cause, pressed by Nemesius de Anim. c. 2. p. 477. Vid. et Cleanthis argumento pro animæ corporeitate a Nemesio profligata, ibid. p. 479, &c.

¹ If the doctrine of matter and motion only were true, there would never be any true miracles in the world, but all things go on from motion to motion as the first touch did put them into a necessity; whereas, however the world hath been deluded by many fictions, yet many certain miracles there have been. Whether the removing of the mountain by faith mentioned by M. Paulus Venetus, (l. 1, cap. 18.) be true or not, and the non-dissolution of excommunicate bodies in Constantinople, mentioned in Mart. Crusius's Hist. Eccles. Turco-Græc. (l. 2.) with multitudes of the like, which most historians have, &c.; yet, certainly, that there have been some such hath been fully proved unto many.

save mere motion itself? so that the insufficiency of matter and motion to continual alterations and productions, must be confessed by all that confess there is a God.

4. It is also manifest in the effect, that it is not a mere motion of the first cause, which appeareth in the being and motions of the creature. There is apparently a tendency in the creature's motion to a certain end, which is an attractive good; and there is a certain order in all motions to that end; and certain laws, or guidances and overrulings, to keep them in that order; so that wisdom and goodness do eminently appear in them all, in their beings, natures, differences, excellences, order, and ends, as well as motion the effect of power. 1. It is certain that God who is unmoved himself, is the first Mover of all. 2. And if God were not unmoved, but by self-motion caused motion, yet he exerteth wisdom and goodness in his creation and providence, as well as motion. 1. He that is infinite, and, therefore, not properly in any place or space, or at least is limited in none, can himself, by locomotion, move himself in none; which, methinks, none should question: and they that make the world infinite, or at least indefinite, as they call it, methinks should not deny the infiniteness of God; and they acknowledge no motion themselves but locomotion, or *migratio a loco in locum*. But, saith Gassendus, (vol. 1. p. 337,) *Et certe capium omnem fugit, ut quippiam quantumvis set alteri præsens conjunctumque ipsum moveat, si in seipso immotum maneat, &c.*—Itaque necesse omnino videtur, ut cum in seri moventium quorum moventur alia ab aliis procedi in infinitum non possit, perveniatur ad unum primum; non quod immotum moveat, sed quod ipsum per se moveatur. *Answ.* You gather from hence, that it is the contexture of the most subtle atoms which is the form and first mover in physical beings. But you granted before, that God moved those atoms, and also put a moving inclination into them; and atoms are far from being *unum* or *primum*. You said before, *Sufficiat Deum quidem esse incorporeum, ac pervadere foreteque universam mundi machinam*. And if so, then *movere etiam* as well as *fovere*. Either you mean as you speak in confessing a God, or not: if not, it is unworthy a philosopher to dissemble for any worldly respects whatsoever: if you do, then it is beyond your capacity to conceive that God being unmoved moveth all things, or not; if not, why should it be beyond your capacity to conceive the same in a second order of a second spiritual being. The reason as to motion is of the same kind: if yea, then either you believe God is the first mover, or not; if not, withdraw your former confession; if yea, what locomotion (for you deny all other) can you ascribe to God, who is unbounded and infinite; what place is he moved from, and what place is he moved into? And is his motion *rectus vel circularis*? is it one or multifarious? or rather, will you not renounce all these? 2. And as God moveth being unmoved, so he doth more than move, he moveth orderly, and giveth rules and guidances to motion; and moveth graciously to the felicity of the creature, and to a desirable end. A horse can move more than a man; for he hath more strength or moving power; but he moveth not so regularly, nor to such intended ends, because he hath not wisdom and benignity or goodness as man hath. He that buildeth a house or ship, or writeth such volumes as Gassendus did, doth somewhat more than barely move, which a swallow or a hare could have done as swiftly. And he that looketh on the works of God, even to the heavens and earth, as Gassendus hath himself described them, and seeth not the effects of wisdom and goodness in the order,

and tendency, and ends of motion, as well as power in motion itself, did take his survey but in his dream. Saith Balbus, in Cicero De Nat. Deor. l. 2, p. 62, *Hoc qui existimat fieri potuisse*, (that is, for the world to be made by mere fortuitous motion of atoms, &c.) *non intelligo cur non idem pulet, si innumerabiles unus et viginti formæ literarum, aliquo conjuncturæ, posse ex his in terram excussis Annales Ennii, ut deinceps legi possint effici, quod nescio an in uno quidem versu possit tantum valere fortuna. Quod si mundum efficere potest concursus atomorum, cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur navem non potest, quæ sunt minus operosa, et multo quidem faciliora? Certe ita temere de mundo effutunt, ut mihi quidem nunquam hunc admirabilem celi ornatum, qui locus est proximus, suspexisse videantur*. Where he brings in this passage, as from Aristotle, that if we should imagine men to have lived in some dungeon or cavern in the earth, and never to have seen the sun, or light, or world as we do, and if there should be a doubt or dispute among them whether there be a God; and if you should presently bring up these men into our places, where they might look above them and about them, to the sun and stars, and heaven and earth; they will quickly, by such a sight, be convinced that there is a God. But as he truly addeth, *Assiduitate, quotidiana, et consuetudine oculorum assuescent animi neque admirantur neque requirunt rationes earum rerum quas semper vident: perinde quasi novitas non magis quam magnitudo rerum debeat ad exquirendas causas excitare*.

But I suppose it will be granted me, that the first Mover doth more than merely move, the effects of wisdom and goodness being so legible on all the world: but you will say, that to do it wisely and to attain good ends by it, &c. is but the *modus* of action with the effect; and, therefore, matter and motion rightly ordered may be nevertheless sufficient to all effects. To which I answer, that the creatures' motion requireth not only that the Creator move them, but that he place and order them, and move them rightly; and that he remove and overcome impediments, &c. Therefore, there is necessary in the first Mover, both wisdom and love as well as power: and neither his power, wisdom, or love, is locomotion in himself. And this much being proved, that in every motion there is divine power, wisdom, and love, which is more than matter and motion itself, I proceed next to inquire,

5. Do you think there is any thing existent in the world, besides matter and motion, or not? As to mere site and figure, and other such order or modes of matter, I know you will not deny them to have now a being as well as motion. But is there no different tendency to motion in the parts of matter? Is there not in many creatures a power, an inclination, or aptitude to motion, besides motion itself? Is there not a reason, *a priori*, to be given, why one creature is more agile and active than another, and why they act in their various ways? Why is fire more active than earth, and a swallow than a snail? If you say, that the different *ratio motus* is in some extrinsical agent only which moveth them, you will hardly show any possibility of that, when the same sun, by the same virtue, or motion, as you will say, is it that moveth all: and if it were so, you must go up to the first cause, to ask for the different motions of those movers; when our inquiry now is *de natura moventium et motorum Creatorum*? If you say that it is the *ratio recipiendi* in the different magnitudes or positions of the parts of matter, which is the cause of different motions, I would know, 1. Whether this difference of magnitude, and figure, and site, being now antecedently necessary to different motions, was

not so heretofore as well as now? If you say No, you feign, without proof, a state of things, and order of causes, contrary to that which all men's sense perceiveth to be now existent. And who is the wiser philosopher; he that judgeth the course and nature of things to be, and have been, what he now findeth it, till the contrary be proved; or he that findeth it one thing, and feigneth it some time to have been another, without any proof? That which is now antecedently necessary to diversity of motion, it is like was so heretofore. 2. And then how could one simple, equal act of God, setting the first matter into motion, cause such an inequality in motions to this day, if it be true that you hold, that only that which is moved, or in motion itself, can move; and that motion is all that is necessary to the diversity? 3. Either the first matter was made solid in larger parcels, or all conjunct, or in atoms. If it was made first in atoms, then motion caused not division: if it was made conjunct and solid, then motion caused not conjunction and solidity: and if the first division, or conjunction, site, and figure of matter, was all antecedent to motion, and without it, we have no reason to think that it is the sole cause of all things now.

But, surely, quantity, figure, and site, are not all that now is antecedent to motion. Doth not a man feel in himself a certain power to sudden and voluntary motion? He that sat still, can suddenly rise and go: and if you say, that he performeth that sudden motion by some antecedent motion, I answer, that I grant that; but the question is, whether by that alone, or whether a power distinct from motion itself, be not as evidently the cause? For otherwise the antecedent motion would proceed but according to its own proportion; it would not in a minute make so sudden and great an alteration. I can restrain also that motion which some antecedent motion (e. g. passion) urgeth me to. Surely this power of doing or not doing, is somewhat differing from doing itself. A power of not moving is not motion.

And what is the *pondus* which Gassendus doth add to magnitude and figure, as a third prerequisite in atoms? I perceive he knoweth not what to make of it himself. But, in conclusion, it must be no natural gravity by which the parts are inclined to the whole in themselves, but the mere effect of pulsion or traction, or both. At the first, he was for both conjunct, pulsion of the air, and traction of the atoms from the earth: but of this he repented, as seeing *impulsionem aeris nullum esse*, and was for the traction of atoms alone; than which, his friend's conceit of the pulsive motion of the sun in its diastole, or whatever other motion is the cause, doth seem less absurd. But that man that would have me believe that if a rock were in the air, or if Paul's steeple should fall, the descent would be only by the traction of the *hamuli* of invisible atoms, or by the pulsion of air and sun conjunct, must come nearer first, and tell me how the *hamuli* of atoms can fasten upon a marble rock; and how they come to have so much strength as to move that rock, (which no man can move in its proper place,) if there be no such thing as strength or power, besides actual motion; and why it is that those drawing atoms do move so powerfully earthwards, when at the same time it is sup-

posed, that as many or more atoms are moving upwards by the sun's attraction, and more are moved circularly with the earth? why do not these stop or hinder one another? and why doth not the rock as well go upwards with the ascending atoms? and when the rock descendeth, doth it carry down none of the ascendants with it? As likely as for the descendants to carry down it. Are those atoms that carry down the rock more powerful than a hundred thousand men, who could not lift it up at all, much less so swiftly? And why do not the same partial atoms bear down a feather, or the birds that fly quietly in the air; and why feel we not the power of their motion upon us? How easily can some men believe any thing, while they think that their increase of wisdom lieth in believing no more than evidence constraineth them to. If Gassendus's instance of the loadstone put under the balance to increase the *pondus* of the iron, prove any thing, it will prove something more than a traction of the hooked atoms, even the traction of nature that needeth no hooks.

And mark, I pray you, what Gassendus granteth, when he saith, *Unum omnino supponere par est, viz. quantacunque fuit atomis mobilitas ingenita tanta constanter perseverare*: so that, saith he, they may be hindered from moving, but not from endeavouring to move and free themselves from their restraint.^k What need we more than this, or what more do we plead for? It is granted us, then, that when a movable or active being is stopped from motion, it doth not thereby lose its mobile or active nature or disposition; and so, that it is not only motion that causeth motion, but that there is in *atomis mobilitas ingenita*, which continueth when the motion ceaseth. You will say, perhaps, that he meant only a passive receptivity, by which one thing is easier moved by an exterior cause than another. But you mistake him; for he taketh not *mobilitas ingenita* only passively, but also actively; and therefore saith that it endeavoureth to move and free itself. And, lib. iv. c. 2, he saith, *Non motus sed impetus, ab initio perseverat, vel nismus perpetuus*: which is as much as I desire now: for then there is somewhat besides matter and motion, even an *impetus et nismus*, which must also come from a power which, *per nismus et impetum*, doth show itself.

And, indeed, it doth not only overpass our reason, but contradict it, that mere subtility of matter, or smallness of particles, should be all the cause of motion that is found in the matter itself. Must we believe that an *alcohol impalpabile* of marble or gold, if it could but be atomized more, would be as movable as fire; or would thereby turn to fire itself; or as active as the vital and intellectual creatures; yea, turned to such a thing itself. If all matter was atoms at first, then all was fire, and all was of one kind, and equally movable: and what hath made the difference since? And if you will feign that God made some parts atoms, and some parts more gross; or that he distinguished matter *ab initio*, into Cartesius's *materia subtilis, globuli etheri*, and grosser matter, why may not we better say, that the same Creator hath distinguished matter by different natures and powers, which we find them possessed of? And by what proof do you distinguish matter into

* Those that fly to this "ingenita dispositio vel pondus," will, in other words, grant that nature, form, or quality, which they deny: and those that grant nothing to move but former motion, must needs make some degrees of motion daily to diminish in the world, one thing or other still ceasing its motion; and all motion within our knowledge, having such constant impediment, that before this time, we may think all things would have stood still, if their opinion were true. If

they say, that the sun, or some superior movers, renew the motion of things inferior, I grant it; but that is because it hath a moving nature: for if they say, that the sun itself hath not the least impediment to diminish the degrees of its motion, they speak, not only without any proof, but contrary to our observation of all things known, and to their own opinion, who make the air impeditve to other motions, and the effluvia of other globes to be impeditve to the sun.

those three degrees or sorts, any more than into two, or four, or six, or ten, or ten hundred? Who can choose but shake the head to see wise philosophers thus impose upon the world, and at the same time say it is the first duty of a man that would be wise, to believe no more than by evidence he is forced to? Yea, and at the same time to say, these are but our hypotheses, which, saith one, I acknowledge to be false; and, saith another, I cannot say is true, and yet they are our foundation; and from these our philosophical verities result, which must make you wise, who must believe nothing without proof. Alas! what is man!

And I would know whether they can prove against Gassendus, that *impetus et nisus vel conatus, is ipse motus*, when the heaviest poise is at a clock that standeth still, the poise doth not move, but it doth *niti vel conari*. Hold but a weight of a hundred pounds of lead in your hand, as immovable as possible, I am of opinion you will feel that it doth incline to motion, though it move not. Is not this inclination, then, somewhat different from motion? If you tell me again of nothing but the invisible, tractive, hooked atoms, I advise you to involve a thousand pounds of lead in a sufficient case of feathers, which, it seems, are charmed from the power or touch of atoms, and try then whether it be no heavier than the feathers are. The same, I may say, of a spring of steel, which is wound up in a standing watch or other engine; there is no proof of any motion, and yet there is a *conatus* different from motion. You will say, perhaps, that the particles in the steel are all in motion among themselves; but when will you prove it? and prove also that they are so in the lead or rock that, by gravity, inclineth to descent? and prove also that the particles are moved by an extrinsic mover only, and have no principle of motion in themselves?

Moreover, what think you is the nature of all our habits? Is there nothing in a habit but actual motion? Suppose that you sleep without a dream, or that a lethargy intercept your intellectual motion, or that other business alienate your thoughts, do you think that all your learning is thereby obliterated? or that you are after as unapt for your arts and trades, as if you had never learned them? Let a musician, an astronomer, a physician, try whether they will not return more expert than an idiot? What, then, is this habit? It is not actual motion itself, else it would be totally extinct, when the motion is but for an hour intercepted. If you say that there is other motion in us still to renew it, I answer, why should that other (e. g. the motion of the lungs or heart, or the circulation of the blood) make you an artist the next morning, any more than your neighbour, if that were all? You will grant, I suppose, that a habit is somewhat distinct from motion, but it is the effect of it only, and one of the phenomena, which we say that matter and motion are sufficient for. To which I answer, do you deny that a habit doth itself conduce to future motion, or not? If not, it is no habit: if yea, then, as to future actions, there is more than matter and motion needful, and the principles are more. And then, what reason have you to contradict us, who, finding some principles in nature which conduce to motion as much and more than habits do, do assert such principles? And how know you that former motion proceedeth not from such natures or principles, when you confess that later motions do so? If you say that habits are nothing but a *cursus motuum*, as of water, that by running in a certain channel is inclined to run that way again, I answer, they are certainly something that remain when the action ceaseth; and, therefore,

are an *inclination ad agendum*, as well as a *cursus actionum*: and they are something that are active principles, and not only so many channels which the spirits have made themselves in the brains and nerves, otherwise the numberless variety of objects would so furrow and channel the brain, that they would consume it, (as *gutta cavat lapidem*, &c.)

6. And do you know what you oblige yourselves to, when you undertake to solve all phenomena by matter and motion only? And how have you satisfied the studious and impartial world herein? I hope you will not put off all questions that are put to you, with these same two general words only. When we ask you what causeth the *descensus gravium*, do not tell us, It is matter and motion; but tell us the differences in the motion or matter, which cause this effect as different from others. What is the reason in motion that fire ascendeth? What is the reason that the *motus projectorum* doth continue? Why doth the ant take one course, and the bee another, and the fly another, &c.; what different motions are they that are in the cause? What motion is it that causeth the hen to sit on her eggs in fasting and patience, and to know her chickens, and to cherish them till they are mature, and then beat them away; and so almost of all other birds and beasts? What is the difference in motion that causeth one creature to love this food, and another that; that one eateth grass, and another flesh; that every seed doth bring forth only its proper species? What are the differences in motion which cause the difference in odour, and taste, and virtue, and shape of leaves, and flowers, and fruits, &c. between all the plants that cover the earth? That all that come of one seed have an agreement in leaf, and flower, and fruit, and odour, and taste, and virtue: e. g. germander, betony, peony, &c.; what are the different motions that cause all these differences, even in the very seeds themselves? To tell us only, in general, that the difference is all made by motion, is to put an end to learning and studies, and to give one answer to all the questions in the world, and one description of all beings in the world. You may as well tell us that you solve all the phenomena, to tell us that all things are entities, and made and moved by God. It is a fair advancement of knowledge, indeed, to cast away and deny all the noblest parts of the world, and to tell us, that all the rest is matter of various magnitude and figure, variously moved and placed. This is short philosophy; and the particular specifying differences you do not, you cannot, tell us according to your principles.

Gassendus (sec. 1, l. iii. c. 2.) denieth the transmutation of elements. Others of the atomists tell us that every hour changeth the elements, and that continual motion is continually turning one into another; and that fire e. g. is but that part of matter which falleth under such or such a motion; and that the same matter which is fire this moment while it moveth, is something else the next when that motion ceaseth; and that whatever matter falleth under the same motion, be it stone or earth, or any thing, it is presently by that motion turned to fire, as fire may be into stone or earth. But that which we expect from them is, to tell us what motion it is that maketh the different elements; and what doth constitute them; and what transmuteth them: and not to put us off with two general words, when they boast of solving all the phenomena.

We expect, also, to hear from them, how density and solidity come to be the effects of motion; and how the cohesion of the particles of gold, or marble, or glue, is caused by the mere magnitude and figure

of matter, or by the motion of it, without any other material properties.

And they must give us a better account than they have yet done, of the true cause of sense in matter and motion. They know our argument; but I could never yet understand how they answer it. We say that *Nihil dat quod non habet, vel formaliter vel eminenter*: all the objections against this maxim, they may find answered, besides others, in Campanella, *De sensu rerum*. Atoms, as matter, have no sense; they smart not, they see not, they feel no delight, &c. *Formaliter*, you will not imagine that they have sense; and they cannot have it *eminenter*, being not above it, but below it; and showing us nothing that doth transcend it, or is like it. And motion is no substance, but a mode of matter; and therefore hath itself no sense.

Object. Doth not Campanella, Telesius, &c. argue that all things have sense?

Answ. 1. Their fanaticisms are no part of our physical creed. 2. They mean, when all is done, but this much; that there is some image or participation of life in inanimates, of sense in vegetatives, of reason in sensitives, and of angelical intellection in rationals. 3. As it is said in the Mystic. Ægypt. et Chald. Philos. ascribed to Aristotle, *Et si quibusdam videtur quod elementa habent animam, illa est aliena adventitiaque eis. Cumque sint viva, vita illis est accidentaria, non naturalis: atque infort forent inalterabilia.* (l. xii. c. 11.) So the stoics deified the fire, and made it intellectual; but it was not as it is matter, but as they supposed it animated with an intellectual form. So many of the ancients thought that the angels were compounded of an intellectual form or soul, and of a fiery or ethereal body; but it is only the body that we are now inquiring of. Have atoms sense? Doth matter feel or see as such?

Object. We say not that all matter or atoms have sense, but only some part of it, which by motion is subtilized.

Answ. Still *nihil dat quod non habet*: you grant then that matter, as such, hath no sense at all, else the argument would hold *ad omnem*; and if it have none as matter, motion can give it none as mere motion, for motion hath not sense to give. Let motion attenuate the matter, and subtilize it, it is but matter still, and it can be no less than atoms; therefore show us how *materia subtilis*, or atoms, should feel or see, because of the subtilty or parvity, and by its magnitude or grossness lose that sense; tell us how and why the change of mere magnitude and figure should make a thing feel that felt not before. If you difference not matter by some natural difference of forms, or properties and virtues, you will never speak sense in proving sense to be in matter, by mere atomizing it, or moving it. The alcohol of marble feebleth no more than the solid stone; nor the air than the earth; for any proof that we have of it. The boys that whip their tops, and the women that turn their wheels, so swiftly, that the motion shall not be discerned, yet put no feeling into either, though the motion be swifter than that of the heart, or lungs, or blood.¹ What the learned Dr. Ward hath said of this, against Mr. Hobbs, I refer you to peruse, and excuse me from transcribing it. Scaliger, Sennertus, and many others, have heretofore chal-

lenged these philosophers to show the world how atoms by motion, or elements by mixture, can get that sense which neither matter, motion, nor mixture have; but we can meet with no account of it yet worth the reading; not by Cartesius, not by Regius or Berigaridus, not by Gassendus, nor any other that we can get and read. How unsatisfactory is it to tell us that *Facultas sentiendi et movendi, quæ anima sensitiva vulgo dicitur, est partium animalis in spiritibus, nervos et alia sensoria, &c. talis attemperatio et conformatio, quæ animal ab objectis variis motibus affici potest*: as Regius, l. v. c. 3, p. 267. This is an easy solving of the phenomena indeed. But *Qualis est illa contemperatio? et quomodo potest contemperatio insensibilium, sensibile constituere? Nonne dat ista contemperatio quod non habet?*

Object. Perhaps you will say, with him in Cicer. *De Nat. Deor.* that by this argument God must be a fiddler, because he maketh men that are such.

Answ. By this argument no fiddler, nor any other man, hath more wisdom than God, or can do that which God cannot do; but because God is above him in his skill, doth it follow that the names which signify human imperfection must be put on God? Can God enable a man to that which he is not able to do himself, and can he give that which he hath not to give?

Object. None of the parts of a clock can tell the hour of the day, and yet all set together can; and none of the letters of a book are philosophy, and yet the whole may be a learned system; and no atoms in a lute can make melody as the whole can do.

Answ. This is but to play with words. In all these instances the whole hath nothing of a higher kind in nature than the several parts, but only a composition, by the contribution of each part. The clock telleth you nothing but *per modum signi*; and that *signum* is only in the sound, or order of motion. And sound and motion belong to the whole, by virtue or contribution of the parts, and is not another thing above them. And that the motion is so ordered, and that man can by it collect the time of the day, is from the power of our understandings, and not from the matter of the engine at all. So the book is no otherwise philosophy at all, but *per modum signi*; which *signum* is related to man's understanding, both as the cause and orderer, and as the receiver and apprehender. So that the letters do nothing at all, but passively serve the mind of man; and so it is in the other instance. The strings do but move the air, and cause the sound which is in the ear: that this is melody, is caused only by the mind of man, who first frameth, and then orderly moveth them, and then *suo modo* receiveth the sound, and maketh melody by the aptitude of his apprehension. If you had proved that clock, or book, or lute, do make themselves, and order and use themselves, and know the time, or understand and delight in themselves, you had done something; but by the deceitful names of philosophy and melody, to confound the bare natural sound and sign, with that ordering, and that reception, which is the privilege of a mind, is unfit for a philosopher.

Moreover, I expect, from matter and motion, an account of motion's great concomitants, that is, of light and heat.^m Mistake me not, I am not undervaluing the effects of motion; I take it for a most

¹ Sane ignis, ær, aqua, terra, suapte natura carent anima: et cuicumque horum adest anima, hoc vita utitur peregrina: alia vero præter hæc nulla sunt corpora. Plotin. Enead. 4. l. 7. c. 2. p. 457.

^m Vid. Priscian. in Theophrast. proving that light is neither a body nor a quality, c. 19. But I find no satisfaction when he cometh to tell us what it is; nor will I subscribe

to Ficinus, who, with other Platonists, saith, Cœleste corpus primum luminis susceptaculum incorporea vita et intelligentia regi a qua et lumen habeat; cæterique tradat.—Si Lumen esse dicamus, radios visuales cœlestium oculorum in se videntium, perque ejusmodi radios cuncta videntium agentiumque videndo—non errabimus.

noble and observable cause of most that is done or existent in the corporeal world: but must it, therefore, be the solitary cause? I have long observed amongst wranglers, and erroneous zealots in divinity, that most of their error and misdoing lie in setting the necessary, co-ordinate causes or parts of things as inconsistent, in opposition to one another. It would make one ashamed to hear one plead, that Scripture must be proved by itself; and another, that it must be proved by reason; and another, that it must be by miracles; and another, by the church; and another, by general history and tradition, &c. As if every one of these were not necessary concurrent parts in the proof. Such work have we among poor, deluded women, and ignorant men, while the Romanists say, that they are the true church; and the Greeks say, it is they; and the Lutherans say, it is they; and the anabaptists say, it is they; as if my neighbours and I should contend, which of our houses it is that is the town. And so do these philosophers, about the principles and elements. The intellectual nature, which is the image of God, hath notoriously three faculties, understanding, will, and executive power; and men think that they cannot understand the one, without denying the other two; and the fiery nature which constituteth the sun and other luminaries (and is the image of the vital nature) hath three notorious powers or properties, light, heat, and motion; and they cannot understand motion, without making nothing of light and heat, or greatly obscuring and abusing them. Cull out into one, and set together but what Patricius hath said of light, and what Telesius hath said of heat, (and Campanella after him,) and what Gassendus and Cartesius hath said of motion, and cut off all their superfluities, and you will have a better entrance into sound philosophy, than any one book that I know doth afford you.^a I confess, that as wisdom must lead the will, and determine its acts, *quoad specificationem*, and the will must set a-work the same intellect, and determine its acts, *quoad exercitiam*; and the active power doth partly work *ad intra* in the operations of both these, and *ad extra* is excited by the *imperium* of the will; so that these three faculties (as Scheibler, Alsted, and many others, truly number them) are marvellously conjunct and co-operative; even so it is in the motion, light, and heat of the active element, or fiery, or ethereal nature.^b I know motion contributeth to light and heat, but it is as true that light and heat have their proper, co-equal, and co-ordinate properties and effects, and that heat contributeth as much to motion, at least, as motion doth to heat; indeed, in one essence they are three co-equal virtues or faculties, the *vis motiva, illuminativa, et calefactiva*.^c And so vain is their labour, who only from matter and motion give us an account of light and heat, that

I find no need or willingness to be at the labour of confuting them. Call but for their proofs, and you have confuted them all at once.

And if no better a solution be given us of the nature of light and heat, what shall we expect from them about intellection and volition? do atoms understand or will; or doth motion understand or will? If not, (as sure they do not as such,) then tell us how that which hath no participation of understanding or will should constitute an agent that doth understand and will? Set to this work as philosophers, and make it intelligible to us, if you are in good earnest.

7. But to proceed a little further with you: I take it for granted, that you confess that an intellectual, incorporeal being there is, while we confess a God; and that this sort of being is more excellent than that which is corporeal, sensible, and gross. I would next ask you, do you take it for possible or impossible that God should make any secondary beings, which are incorporeal and intellectual also? If you say, it is impossible, give us your proof. If possible, I next ask you, whether it be not most probable also? You acknowledge what a spot or *punctum* in the world this earthly globe is; you see here that man, whose flesh must rot and turn to dust, hath the power of intellection and volition; you look up to the more vast and glorious regions and globes, and I am confident you think not that only this spot of earth is inhabited; and surely you think that the glory of the inhabitants is like to be answerable to the glory of their habitations. You make your atoms to be invisible, and so you do the air and winds; when yet our earth and dirt are visible. Therefore, you take not crassitude, or visibility, or sensibility, to have the pre-eminence in excellency. Judge, then, yourselves, whether it be not likely that God hath innumerable more noble and excellent creatures than we silly men are? And will you reduce all their unknown perfections, or their known intelligence, to matter and motion only?^d

Moreover, when you observe the wonderful variety of things, in which God is pleased to take his delight, what ground have we to imagine that he hath no greater variety of substances, but corporeal only? Nor any other way of causation but by motion? When no man can deny, but he could otherwise cause the variety which we see, and fix in the creatures, *ab origine*, their different natures, properties, and virtues; what reason, then, have you to say, that he did not do so?

And can you believe that the goodness of that God, who hath made this wonderful frame which we see, would not appear in making some creatures liker and nearer to himself, than matter and motion are?

^a Leg. le Grand. Dissert. in Epicur. Philos. ad Gassend. et de communi rerum vivendi ratione ad Campanel. et de nominibus Dei soli attributis; in which he taketh atoms, or indivisible particles, for the first real, passive matter, antecedent to the distinction of elements; but fire, called also *spiritus æthereus et natura*, to be of a higher elevation, the active informer, disposer, and moderator, of all matter; and animated fire, that is, the sun and its emanations, to be the life and ruler of the material world: and that this was the sense of almost all the old philosophers, and that by their numerous names of God, they meant the same thing, as diversely operating; that is, the sun, fire, or ether, (which they took to be animated intellectuals,) as considered in its various respects to mortals. Ut docet Hermes, Mens generalis habet pro corpore ignem, et quasi igne stipatur et circumvestitur *ποῖς θεῖοις ἐχει σώμα τὸ πῦρ*; semper enim et necessarius ignis æthereus et mens universalis sibi invicem comites assident; amboque ita affines nihil constituunt aliud quam spiritum igneum, æthereum, lucidum, cælestem, et

divinum, tenebrosam hanc et informem immanis materie abyssum complementem, illustrantem et animantem. Idem ad Campanel. pag. 80. Vide quæ ex Mercur. Pimand. citat. p. 79.

^b Saith a novel philosopher himself, Ex speculis ustorius certum est calorem a sole creari intensissimum, non acceleratione motus, sed coalitione radiorum.

^c Lumen species est inter omnes species sensibiles præ cæteris intellectualem speciem representans: et in intellectu est per causam; in cælo per formæ plenitudinem; in igne per plenitudinem participationis; hinc derivatur in portiones. Ficin. in Theophrast. de Anim. c. 44.

^d Non ergo levitas et gravitas cause primi motus sunt, sed qualitates sunt elementorum; sed tamen ut etiam hoc detur, quomodo ratiocinari, opinari, judicare, gravitatis et levitatis opera esse possunt; si non sunt gravitatis et levitatis opera, neque elementorum sunt: si non elementorum, neque certe corporum. Nemesius de An. c. 2. p. 484.

But to talk no more of probabilities to you, we have certain proof that man is an intellectual free agent, whose soul you can never prove to be corporeal, and whose power of intellection and volition is distinct from corporal motion. And we have proof that there are superior intelligences more noble than we, by the operations which they have exercised upon things below.

And what should move you (who seem not to be overmuch divine, and who seem to observe the order and harmony of the creatures) to imagine, that God doth himself alone, without any instrument or second cause, move all the corporeal matter of the world? If you are serious in believing that God himself doth move and govern all, why do you question whether he make use of any nobler natures next him, to move things corporeal. And why do you, against your own inclinations, make every action to be done by God alone? I doubt not but he doth all: but you see that he chooseth to communicate honour and agency to his creatures. He useth the sun to move things on earth. Therefore, if you believe that corporeal beings stand at so infinite a distance from his perfection, you may easily judge that he hath some more noble, and that the noblest are the most potent and active, and rule the more ignoble; as you see the nobler bodies (as the sun) to have power upon the more ignoble. Therefore, to violate the harmony of God's works, and to deny all the steps of the ladder, save the lowest, is but an unhappy solving of phenomena.

Nay, mark what you grant us: you confess God to have power, wisdom, and will, and that he is incorporeal, and moveth all: and you confess that man hath, in his kind, power, understanding, and will; and is there any thing below that is liker God? If not, do you not allow us to take these faculties for incorporeal? and that those are so that are higher than we?

8. And you seem to us by your philosophy to write of nature, as the atheist writeth of God; instead of explaining it, you deny it. What is nature but the *principium motus et quietis*, &c.^p And you deny all such *principia*, and substitute only former motion; so that you leave no other nature but what a stone receiveth from the hand that casteth it, or the children's tops from the scourge that driveth them: or, rather, every turn is a nature to the next turn; and so the nature of things is mostly out of themselves in the extrinsic mover.

And so you level all things in the world; you deny all specific forms, or natural faculties and virtues. The sun and a clod have no natural difference, but only magnitude, and figure, and motion: as if so noble a creature had no differencing, peculiar nature of its own, nor any natural power or principle of its own motion, and so it moved but as a stone is moved.

Yea, you make all motions to be violent, and deny all proper natural motion at all; for that which hath no active principle of motion in its nature hath no proper natural motion as distinct from violent.

^p See Lipstorpium in his Specim. Philos. Cartes. Deus in principio mundi materiam simul cum motu et quiete creavit—Unde communissima natura lex, &c. Vid. p. 37, 38. So that nature, with the Cartesians, is nothing at all, but God's first moving act at the creation: as if he caused motion without any moving created principle; and as if spirits and fire had no more moving a nature or principle than clay; but only that their matter was either in the creation more moved by God, or since, by a knock from some other mover, put into motion, by which accidental motion clay or water may be made fire. Leg. Petr. Monsnerii, lib. de Impetu, et lib. 2. de motu natural: where the nature of motion is more exactly handled than by the Epicureans or Cartesians; though too little is

Hereby, also, you deny all vital powers; you make a living creature and a dead to differ but in the manner of motion; which, whether you can at all explain, we know not. Why may not the arrow which I shoot, or the watch which I wind up, be said to live as well as you? It hath matter and motion; and some inanimates (the air and fire) perhaps have as subtle matter, and as speedy motion, as is in you. Why doth not the wind make the air alive, and the bellows the fire? In a word, you deny all intelligences, all souls, all lives, all natures, all active qualities and forms; all powers, faculties, inclinations, habits, and dispositions, that are any principles of motion: and so all the natural excellency and difference of any creature above the rest. A short way of solving the phenomena.

Lastly, with nature you deny the being of morality. For if there be no difference of beings, but in quantity, figure, motion, and site, and all motion is locomotion, which moveth by natural necessitating force, then a man moveth as a stone, because it is irresistibly moved, and hath no power to forbear any act which it performeth, or to do it otherwise than it doth. For if there be no power, habits, or dispositions, antecedent to motion, but motion itself is all, then there is one and the same account to be given of all actions, good and bad; I did it because I was irresistibly moved to it, and could no more do otherwise, than my pen can choose to write. There is, then, no virtue or vice, no place for laws and moral government, further than they may be tacklings in the engine which necessitateth: whatsoever is done amiss, is as much imputable to God, the first Mover, as that which is done well. If you shoot an arrow which killeth your friend, the arrow could not hinder it; if you make or set your watch amiss, though one motion causeth another, yet the error of all is resolved into the defect of the first cause. They that killed Henry III. and Henry IV. kings of France, may say, that as the knife could not resist the motion of their hand, so neither could they the motion of the superior cause that moved them, and so on to the first. No traitors or rebels can resist the power which acteth them therein, any more than the dust can resist the wind which stirreth it up. And so you see what cometh of all the government of God and man, and of all laws and judgments, justice and injustice, right and wrong: and how little cause you have to be angry with the thief that robbeth you, or the man that cudgelleth you, any more than with the staff. But of this I refer you to the foresaid writing of Bishop Bramhal against Mr. Hobbs, allowing you to make the most you can of his reply.

We are certain, by the operations of things, that there is a difference in their natural powers and virtues, and not only in their quantity, figure, and motion. God hath not made only homogeneous, undifferenced matter; there are plainly now exceeding diversities of natural excellencies, virtues, and qualities, in the things we see; and he that will say, that

said de vi moventis, in comparison of what is said de impetu mobilis. Leg. l. 2. p. 76, 77, &c. de causa intrinseca motus localis naturalis; et p. 78, his Seven Reasons against Gas-sendus, his Doctrine of Gravitation by the Traction of Atoms; and his Confutation of all the Extrinsic Causes, viz. Causa prima sola, aer, terræ vis magnetica, (vel per qualitatem diffusam, vel per vim sympathicam, vel tractionem filamentorum) virtus cæli pellens, detrusio per lucem, et generans; and as easily may the Cartesia. reason be confuted, which Lipstorpium so magnifieth, and the impetus innatus is the reason which be assigneth, p. 80, 81, &c. Vid. exceptiones Jo. Bap. du Hamel. contra Cartes. in conciliat. p. 148, 151, 170, 209, 210.

by motion only God made this difference at first, doth but presumptuously speak without book, without all proof to make it credible, and taketh on him to know that which he knoweth that he knoweth not. Is not the virtue and goodness of things as laudable as their quantity and motion? Why, then, should we imagine so vast a disproportion in the image of God upon his works, as to acknowledge the magnitude and motion incomprehensible, and to think that in virtue and goodness of nature they are all alike, and none is more noble or more like himself than a clod of earth? We see that the natures of all things are suited to their several uses. *Operari sequitur esse*; things act as they are. There is somewhat in the nature of a bird, or beast, or plant, which is their fitness to their various motions. If only motion made that fire to-day, which yesterday was but a stone, why doth not the strongest wind so much as warm us? or why doth it so much cool us? Why doth not the snow make us as warm as a fleece of wool? The wool doth move no more than the snow, and the matter of it appeareth to be no more subtle. Indeed, man can give to none of his works a nature, a life, or virtue, for the operation which he desireth. He can but alter the magnitude, and figure, and motion of things, and compound and mix them, and conjoin them: and these Epicureans seem to judge of the works of God by man's. But he who is Being, Life, and Intelligence, doth accordingly animate his noble engines, and give them natures and virtues for their operations; and not only make use of matter and weight where he findeth it, as our mechanics themselves can do. Debasing all the noblest of God's works, is unbecoming a true philosopher, who should search out the virtues and goodness, as well as the greatness of them.

But I have been longer in answering this first objection than I can afford to be about the rest, unless I would make a book of this, which I call but the conclusion. I will add but this one thing more; that in case it were granted the Epicureans, that the soul is material, it will be no disproving of its immortality, nor invalidate any of my former arguments for a life of retribution after this. To which purpose, consider these things:

1. That where matter is simple, and not compounded, it hath no tendency to corruption. *Object.* Matter is divisible, and therefore corruptible, how simple soever. *Ans.* It is such as may be divided, if God please, and so the soul is such as God can destroy. But we see that all parts of matter have a wonderful tendency to unity, and have a tendency to a *motus aggregativus* if you separate them. Earth inclineth to earth, and water to water, and air to air, and fire to fire. 2. All philosophers agree to what I say, who hold that matter is eternal, either *a parte ante*, or *a parte post*: for if matter be eternal, the soul's materiality may consist with its eternity. 3. Yea, all without exception do agree, that there is no annihilation of matter when there is a dissolution. Therefore, if the soul be a simple, uncompounded being, though material, it will remain the same. This, therefore, is to be set down as granted us, by all the infidels and atheists in the world. That man's soul, whatever it is, is not annihilated when he dieth, if it be any kind of substance, material or immaterial. And they that call his temperament his soul, do all acknowledge that there is in the composition some one predominant principle, more active or noble than the rest; and of the duration of this it is that we inquire, which no man doth deny, though some deny it to be immaterial. But this will be further opened under the rest of the objections. The reasons of my many words in answer-

ing this objection, I give you in the words of a late learned conciliator: *Philosophie Platonice explicationi diutius immorati sumus, quod res maximas et cognitione dignissimas complectatur. Habet id quoque præ cæteris, quod ad æternas et primitivas rationes mentem erigat, eamque a fluxis et perituris rebus avocatum, ad eas quæ sola intelligentia percipiuntur convertat. Quæ quidem in re infinitum prope momentum est: nam obruiamur turba philosophorum, qui nimis fidunt sensibus, et nihil præter corpora intelligi posse contendunt. Atque ut mihi videtur, nulla perniciosior pestis in vitam humanam potest invadere, nihil quod magis religioni adversetur.* Joh. Bap. Du Hamel. in Consens. veteris. et novæ Philos. Prefat.

Object. II. By sense, imagination, cogitation, reason, you cannot prove the soul to be incorporeal, because the brutes partake of these, whose souls are material and mortal.

Ans. I. It is easy for men, that set themselves to say all they can, either with Mr. Chambre, to extol the brutes as rational; or with Gassendus, to talk of the whispers and consultations of the ants; or with Telesius and Campanella, to say that every thing hath sense; or, on the other hand, with Cartesius, to deny all to a brute which belongeth not to an engine. But our converse with them doth teach all men to judge of their natures as between both these extremes, unless by study and learning they learn to know less than they did before, and do but study to corrupt their understandings, and obliterate things that are commonly known. I doubt not but the minerals have something like life, and the vegetatives have something like to sense, and the sensitives have something like to reason; but it doth not follow that therefore it is the same. But this is so copiously written of by very many, that I supersede my further labour about it.

2. If it were so, that the apprehensions of a brute might be called reason or intellect, yet the difference betwixt it and human intellect is so great, as may easily prove to those that have their reason in free use, that they are several species of creatures, made for several uses and ends, and none of the twenty arguments which I used are at all debilitated by this. If a bird have reason to build her nest, and to feed her young, yet she hath none to build cities and castles, or to use navigation, or any of the arts; much less to set up government by laws, and to write systems of philosophy and other sciences; and least of all to inquire after God, the cause of all things, or to hope for blessedness in another life, or to escape a future misery, or to be ruled in this life by the interest of another. Beasts think not of God, nor of loving him, seeking him, pleasing him, or enjoying him, or of being judged by him. I know the perverse wrangler will ask me how I know this, and I can answer him no better than thus: as I know that a stone doth not see or feel, or that my paper doth not talk, because they manifest no such thing; and these are all operations which they that exercise are apt to manifest, and things that in their nature are unapt to be long hid. Campanella, who hath written, *de sensu rerum*, to prove brutes rational, and plants sensible, hath yet in his *Atheismus Triumphatus* written more for the excellency of human nature, and the soul's immortality, than any infidel can soundly answer.

3. And how prove you that the souls of brutes exist not after death? Of their individuation we shall say more anon. But there is no part of their substance annihilated, as you will confess; nor any part of it abased below the same nature which it had in the composition: only the constituting parts are separated, retaining their several natures still. All

men that confess that brutes are sensible, do confess that there is some one predominant part in their composition, which is the principal cause of sense; whether it be the finest atoms, or the *materia subtilis*, or *globuli caelestes*, or elementary fire, or Aristotle's quintessence analogous to the celestial, starry substance, or yet an incorporeal soul: whatever it is, it is not annihilated, nor the nature of the simple essence destroyed.*

4. And here let me venture to tell you once for all, that I never found cause to believe that any mortal man[†] is so well acquainted with the true difference between a corporeal and an incorporeal substance, as to tell us certainly wherein it doth consist; and to lay the stress of this controversy upon that difference. I know what is said of *moles et extensio, et partes extra partes*; of divisibility and impenetrability; and so on the contrary side. But how much of this is spoken in the dark? Are you certain that no true matter is penetrable? If you say, that which is so we call not matter, and so make the controversy, *de nomine*, only intelligible, I must pass it by. And are you sure that no matter is indivisible; and that no spiritual, incorporeal substance is quantitative, extended, or divisible? It now goeth for current, that light is a body; and Patricius, that so judgeth, doth take it to be indivisible, *in longitudine radiorum*, and to be penetrable; and that it cannot penetrate other bodies; and it is hard to be sure that diaphanous bodies are not penetrated by light. I know, Gassendus and others think that it passeth but through the pores of the glass or crystal; but I have heard of no engyscope that hath perceived pores in glass. In cloth they are certainly discernible, and large, and numerous, when yet the light doth not penetrate it as it doth the glass: Gassendus saith, the reason is, because the pores of the glass, and other diaphanous bodies, are all one way, so that the light is not intercepted by their irregularity; and he giveth us a proof of his opinion, because that if you set white papers on each side the glass, there will be umbles on one side, and light reflected on the other: I have oft tried, and seen indeed abundance of such umbles; but I as plainly see that they all answer the squirts or sanded faults that are in the glass (the bigger sort of which are all as visible as the shades). And surely all the rest of the glass is not pores, or nothing. And if the pores lie all one way, how cometh it to pass, that a glass of water, or a ball of crystal, is equally perspicuous every way: look which way you will, it is all alike; therefore it must be every way equally porous. But I would know whether we have any atoms smaller than the body of light which thus penetrateth the glass and crystal. I think they all make it the most subtle matter; and yet Gassendus thinketh that they are bodies, and such as have their *hamuli* too, which flow from the loadstone to the iron: and if so, then those bodies must be more penetrating than light, for they will pass through a brick wall,

and operate by their attraction on the other side, where no light can pass. And whether the air be penetrable by light, is scarce well cleared or understood. They that think there is no vacuum, I think, with Gassendus, can never prove that there can be any motion, unless the air or some bodies are penetrable. Let them talk of a circulation, with Cartesius, as long as they will, somebody must *cedere* before the next can move; and no one can give way till the motion, or cession, begin at the utmost part of the corporeal world. My understanding is past doubt that there must be an *inane*, or a penetration; and yet, on the other side, I am satisfied that entity is the first excellency, and that something is better than nothing. And therefore if rarity be only by the multitude and greatness of interspersed vacuities, and the rarity and subtilty of matter be but the scantiness or smallness of its quantity in that space, then it would be but next kin to annihilation, and the rarest and most subtle matter would be, *cæteris paribus*, the basest, as being next to nothing. For instance, Sir Kenelm Digby telleth Gassendus, from two accurate computers, that gold, in the same space, is seven thousand six hundred times heavier than air: so that air is, in the same space, seven thousand six hundred times nearer to nothing than gold is: and the whole air betwixt us and the heavens hath interspaces that are vacuous, to the same proportion of seven thousand six hundred to one: and then we may well say that *datur inane*; nay, *quare*, whether it be more proper to say, that all between us and heaven is a vacuum, or not, when it is to be denominated from the space which so far exceedeth all the rest as seven thousand six hundred to one? And, then, if the ether be something more subtle, it must be still more near to nothing, and consequently be most vile. But I am satisfied that dung is not so much more excellent than light, as it is more gross. And that these terrestrial bodies are not the most noble, nor have most of entity or substance, because they are more gross.[‡] Therefore, though Gassendus put off Sir K. Digby, by saying only that the said disproportion is no inconvenience, I see not how these inconveniences will be answered. I am satisfied that nothing is not so good as entity, and yet that the most subtle and invisible substances are the life of the world, and of the greatest excellency and force. But what will hence follow about penetrability I know not; but I know that it is little about these things, which men understand, of what they say. The fiery nature seemeth, as Patricius saith, to be some middle thing between corporeal and incorporeal. And I much doubt whether *materia* be a *summum genus*, and whether the lowest degree of things incorporeal, and the highest degree of things corporeal, suppose fire, or that which is the matter of the sun, do differ so much more than gradually, as that mortals can say, that one of them is penetrable and indivisible, and the other not. There have been some philosophers that have

* See Sir W. Raleigh (Hist. l. 1.) of fire, making it certainly a thing unknown, and probably quiddam medium between things corporeal and incorporeal.

† Hence it is that the wisest philosophers differ in this point, whether any proper matter be found in the soul of man. Microbius Ethnoph. (l. 1. c. 13. p. 23, 24,) hath instanced in many that are for some materiality. Eam sententiam inter veteres probavit apud Macrobius, Heraclitus Physicus, cui anima est essentia stellaris scintilla: et Hipparchus apud Plinium qui est celi pars; et Africanus apud Ciceronem, qui detrahit animum ex illis sempternis ignibus, qui sidera vocamus; quæque globosæ et rotundæ divinis animatæ mentibus circulos suos orbisque coëfficiunt celeritate mirabili: et Seneca, qui obdesse eam ex illo cælesti spiritu ait, et Plato ipse, qui alicubi animum vocat *ἀνθρώπινος ὄργανος*, radians et splendens vehiculum: et Epicetus qui astra vocat no-

bis *φύλα καὶ συγγενή στοικεία*, amica et cognata elementa: Ipeusque cum peripateticis Aristoteles, qui eam quinta essentia constare et *ἀνάλογον τοῦ πύμπτου σώματι*, in animabus inesse dicit. Inter nostrates Scaliger quoque vocat animum naturam caelestem, et quintam essentiam alia quidem a quatuor elementis natura præditum, sed non sine omni materia. Eadem opinio aridet Roberto de Fluctibus, &c. Lege rationes Carpentarii in Dec. 1. Exerc. 7, contra porositatem diaphanorum. Dicit Plato universæ naturæ animam porrectam esse a centro orbis terræ usque ad extremas oras celi: non ut locum ista notet porrectio, sed extensionis quandam modum, quem mens et ratio assequatur. Nemes. de Anim. c. 2, p. 457.

‡ I hope we shall not have philosophiam staticum, and judge of essences and excellences by the balance.

thought that sensibility was as fit an attribute to characterize matter or bodies by, as any other; but then they meant not, by sensible, that which man can perceive by sense, but that which is a fit object for senses of the same kind as man's, supposing them elevated to the greatest perfection that they are capable of in their kind. And so air and atoms, being of the same kind as other matter, may be visible to a sight of the same kind as ours, if it received but the addition of enough degrees. And, for aught I know, this is as wise philosophy as that which is more common. I am sure it is more intelligible.

And for divisibility, they have demonstrations on both sides that a *punctum* is divisible, and that it is not. One thinketh, that if three be set together, it is possible, at least, for God to divide just in the midst. Another, with Gassendus, thinketh that it is unlike to be true, that every part should be as much or more than the whole, and a point as much as all the universe: and that if a point may be divided into infinite parts, it is infinite in magnitude, and therefore bigger than the world. And is it any marvel, if indivisibility, then, be an unfit property to know a spirit by, when they are not agreed about it as to bodies? Certain it is, that there is a true individuation of souls, and so a numeral division of them. That which is your soul is not your neighbour's. And it is certain, that created spirits are not infinite as to extent. And what division God can make upon them, is more than I can tell.

Scotus thinketh, that the subject of physics is not *corpus naturale*, but *substantia naturalis*: and so that angels are moved *motu physico*. Scaliger, Scheibler, &c. say, that angels have extension and figure; that is, extension *entitative*, distinct from extension *quantitative*. Vid. Scalig. Exercit. 359. s. 4. The *termini essendi*, saith Scheibler, being no other than are signified *per inceptiorem, seu dependentiam ab alio et divisionem*: and that no creature is immense, but hath *finitas adessendi* according to which it is determinate to a certain space. He saith, that angels are finite; 1. *Essentia*: 2. *Numero*: 3. *Potestate*: 4. *Quantitate*, *h. e. non esse immensos*. And that they are *in spatio intelligibili*. He saith also, (Exerc. 307.) *Unum primum est: alia dependent igitur. Ergo sua natura omnia præter unum sunt corruptibilia. Tanetsi sunt entia absoluta a subjecto et termino, non sunt absoluta a causa*.

Damascene saith, (De Orthod. fid. l. ii.) "That God only is a spirit by nature, but other things may be spirits by indulgence and grace."

The doctrine of Psellus is too gross, and largely delivered by himself.*

Eugubinus, Niphus, and Vorstius, were of the same mind, that angels were corporeal.

Augustine himself saith, that, *Anima respectu incorporei Dei corporea est*. De Spir. et Anim. c. 2.

Cæsarius (in Dialog. i. p. 573, B. P.) saith, *Ἀσώματα μὲν οἱ ἄγγελοι καθ' ἡμᾶς σωμα δὲ καθ' ἑαυτοὺς, ὡς ἄνεμος, ἡ πῦρ, οὐ καπνός, ἡ ἀήρ. σώματι γὰρ ὑπάρχοντι λεπτά καὶ ἄλλα ἐξω τῆς ἡμέτερας παχύτητος*. And he applieth to them the apostle's words, "There are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial."

Arnobius is a little too gross herein, and almost all the ancients, especially the Greeks, that speak of that subject, take angels for more subtle, purer bodies.

I know not what Athenagoras meaneth to call the devil, *ὁ τῆς ὕλης καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ εἰδῶν ἀρχὴν*—*Materia ejusque formarum princeps, et alii ex illis qui circa primum mundi fundamentum erant peccarunt*, &c. p. 71. And hence he and others talk of their falling in love with virgins, &c.

And when Faustus Rhegiensis wrote a book, to prove that angels and souls were but a purer, subtle sort of bodies or matter, Claudianus Mammertus largely and learnedly confuteth him, who pretended that all the ancients were on his side: yet doth the same Mammertus think, that though angels, *quoad formam*, be incorporeal, they had bodies also which were fire, or of the nature of the stars. Which Cæsarius also seemeth to mean, when he saith, that, "Not only that which is here with us below is fire, but also those higher powers seem to be fire, and kin to that which is with us, as our souls are kin to angels." Dialog. l. q. 58, 59. p. 584. And (qu. 60.) he saith, "That the shepherds, when they will boil flesh, (in the fields where they have no fire,) do use to fill a glass vessel with water, and hold it directly opposite to the sun, and then touch dried dung with it, and it will kindle fire." And having thus proved the sun to be fire, he saith, (Dial. 2. q. 195,) that *Omnibus creatis levior est ignis natura: ideoque angeli etiam hanc sortiti sunt: qui faciunt angelos suos spiritus, et ministros suos ignis flammam*. And (q. 107.) he saith, that "the star which led the magi to Christ was an angel." It would be tedious to cite all out of Tertullian, Lactantius, and all the ancients, that was written to assert that angels were *corpora tenuiora*; and out of those that came after them, and confuted them, who yet wrote that they were the souls of fiery bodies.

And abundance of our writers of physics, metaphysics, and logic, do tell us, that angels have *materia metaphysicam*, and in a certain sense may be called corporeal. And the sum of all is, when they determine the questions about their locality, extension, or quantity, that they have their *ubi*, their quantity and extension, which are the properties of bodies, *suo modo, vel modo metaphysico*, as bodies have their *modo suo physico*; being not immense or infinite any more than bodies. How far the name of nature belongeth to them, see Fortunius Licetus, De natura primomovente. And Scheibler, with others, maketh the difference of extension to be this, that angels can contract their whole substance into one part of space; and therefore have not *partes extra partes*. Whereupon it is, that the schoolmen have questioned how many angels may sit upon the point of a needle?

For my part, I profess, that as my understanding is fully satisfied by the operations and effects, that there are such invisible, potent substances, which we call angels and spirits; so it is utterly unsatisfied in the common properties of penetrability, and impenetrability, extension, or discreteness, and indiscernibility, or indivisibility, as the characters to know them by. And as I think that *materia* had been as fit a name as another, for that part or notion of spiritual substances which is distinguished from their form, if custom had so pleased to use it; so I think that such substances as we call spirits or immaterial, may be well said to be compounded of metaphysical or spiritual matter and form; and this in consistency with such simplicity as belongeth to a creature. And I remember not what apt word we have instead of matter, to supply its place in Latin, which taketh not in the notion of the form; for the word matter signifieth no real being, but only a partial, inadequate conception of real beings, *quoad hoc*, which have all something more which is essential to them. There is no such thing existent, as matter without form or peculiar nature. And the matter and form are such *partes intelligibiles* as can neither of them exist alone: therefore, as it is not fit to make too eager a controversy, *de nomine materia, vel materialis*; so, I think, that it is little that we know of any substances

* In Ficinus's Collections, lib. de dæmonibus.

at all, but what their accidents and effects reveal. Matter we know by the quantity, figure, colour, heat or cold, density or rarity, hardness or softness, levity or weight, &c. And forms of differencing natures we know by their operations: but that either matter or form is known to us immediately by itself, and is the *objectum sensus per se et immediate*, I cannot say by any observed experience of mine own.

Would you have me to go further yet? I shall then adventure to say, that as I feel no satisfying notion to difference the highest simple being, called material, from the lowest next it, called immaterial, but what is in and from the forms; so I think that it is too slippery a ground for any man to satisfy himself or others by, to say only that one is material, and the other immaterial. Matter, as I said, being but a *pars intelligibilis*, or inadequate conception of a thing, is not to be a genus in any predicament. And if substance express the adequate conception, it must comprehend something answerable to matter, with that differencing nature called the form; and what name besides matter to give to that part of the conception of a substance, which is contradistinct from the form, philosophers are yet but little agreed in: some name there must be when we speak of any created substances; for the name of substance must not confound these distinct conceptions. Therefore, *materia metaphysica vel spiritualis* is the term, that hitherto men are fain to use.

Moreover, it is the form that doth difference and denominate. How then can you sufficiently difference corporeal and incorporeal from the material cause, by calling one physical and the other hyperphysical, or metaphysical? Doth any man's understanding perceive the true, positive difference by these words? Is matter as opposed to *nihil reale*, and is *ens creatum* (or as it expresseth our half-conception both of corporeal and incorporeal substances) differenced so discernibly, or *toto genere, vel tota specie*, without a form to make the difference. Doth *mole immunis et mole prædita* speak a formal difference or not? If not, what place hath it in *arbores Porphyrii vel Gassendi*? And if it do not, you make the matter of substances *ab origine* differenced in *se* without any forms to difference them; that is, the physical and the metaphysical matter. But if those words do express a formal difference, you should find some other to expound them by: for sure *mole prædita* expresseth no form intelligibly; and *mole immunis* is but a mere negation of quantity.

Differences, therefore, that are fetched from matter here, or the material part of substance, are hardly made intelligible: and we have so little acquaintance with spiritual substances in their naked matter (for unless you will take *obvia* which is better than substance, I know not how else to call it,) that we speak but by rote when we talk of indivisibility, and unextensiveness, and impenetrability, as the notifying differences; because they are things beyond our understandings.

Is there a difference between intellectual and spiritual beings among themselves or not? Doubtless, there is, as the case of angels, devils, and the souls of men declare. Is this difference among any of them specific and formal? It is commonly so concluded, as between angels and men. Is there any agreement in substance, or in another essential part, where there is a formal difference? I know none that notify the other essential difference of the substance of men's souls and angels; but they commonly confess that both are spirits, not differenced

materially otherwise than in degrees of purity and dignity, which how far it belongeth to the form I pretermitt. But there can be no specific difference in the matter considered without that form which specificheth. At least, some agreement there is; and of spirits which are of different forms or species, there must be some one name for that in which they still agree. If you say that it is in substance, you must then take substance as we do matter, for an inadequate conception, or only the *pars intelligibilis* of a being as without the form; but that is not the common acception of it; nor is it then fit for the place assigned it in *ordine prædicamentali*.

From all this, I am not about to injure any man's understanding, by building my conclusions upon any questionable grounds: I do but right your understandings so far, as to remove all uncertain foundations, though they be such as seem to be most for the advantage of my cause, and are by most made the great reasons of the soul's immortality. And it is not my purpose to deny, that as angels are compounded *ex genere et differentia*, so the general nature of angels greatly differeth from the nature of corporeal things: as God can make multitudes of corporeal creatures, formally or specifically different, of the matter of one simple element only, (as air, or fire,) without material mixture; so he can either make an element of souls, either existent of itself, of which he will make individuals, yea, species formally diverse, or else existent only in the species and individuals, as he please. But then we must say, that as fire, and air, and water, do differ formally, as several elements, so the spiritual element, or general nature, hath a formal difference from the corporeal, called the material.⁷ Hence it will follow, 1. That angels and human souls have a double form, as some use to call it, that is, general as spirits, which is presupposed as the aptitude of their metaphysical matter, by which they differ from bodies; and specific, by which they are constituted what they are, and differ among themselves: unless you deny all such formal difference among them, and difference them only by individuation and accidents; as several drops or bottles of water taken out of the same sea. 2. And it will seem plain that our differencing characters, or properties, between spirits and bodies, must be sought for in their different forms, which must be found in the noble operations which flow from the forms, and not from uncertain accidents. Therefore my design in all this is but to intimate to you, how lubricous and uncertain, and beyond the reach of man's understanding, the ordinary characters from such accidents are, and that it is better to fetch the difference from the operations.

Saith Georg. Ritschel, Contempl. Metap. c. 6. p. 40, 43. *Difficile est rebus materialibus immersis substantiam immaterialem concipere—Et licet pro certo non constet an menti angelicæ omnis simpliciter materialitas repugnet; certum tamen est elementarum nostram ab illis abesse; atque divinam essentiam ab omni esse materia secretam æterna ejus et immutabilis habitudo convincit, nisi per materialitatem forte substantiam intelligas.* (Sect. 15.) *Dubium quidem nullum est immaterialem mundum essentiarum varietate intelligibilium æque admirabilem et augustum esse, atque mundum corporeum videmus: sed in quo illa consistat diversitas, nobis indicio certo non percipitur. Nimirum si præter te et lumbricum atque scarabæum animal aliud nullum vidisses, audires autem essem alia innumera genera, diversitate naturæ et forma penitus discrepantia, tum vagas quidem confusæque de diversitate volvere cogitassentia est individua solum: sed qualitates materialesque; formæ secundum corpora sunt divisibiles.*

⁷ Porphyry, De Occasion. per Ficin. holds that Anima quidem medium quiddam est inter essentiam individuum, atque essentiam in vera corpora divisibilem. Intellectus autem es-

iones posses: non posses autem illas tot bestiarum, piscium, reptilium, avium, species suo vultu et coloribus signare: ila quid spiritus sit immaterialis ex te capere, qui mentem immaterialem habes, qualemcumque notitiam potes, non potes autem in te perspicere in quo precise illa varietas consistat.

To come nearer to the application of what is said to the present objection, 1. The souls of men and brutes, we see, do not differ in *genere entis*, nor in *genere substantiæ*, nor in *genere principii vitalis*, nor in *genere sentientis*. 2. The matter of both, whether it differ as a metaphysical and physical, or how, is much beyond our knowledge. 3. The great diversity of operations doth show the great diversity of their powers, and forms, and inclinations. 4. This sheweth the diversity of their uses and ends, for which they were created. 5. It is certain that no substantial principle in either of them is annihilated at death. The souls of brutes have the same nature after death as they had before, and the souls of men have the same nature as before: they are not transformed into other things. 6. Therefore, about both of them, there is nothing left of doubt or controversy, but only, 1. About the perpetuated individuation; 2. The future operations; and so the habits, viz.: 1. Whether the souls of men or brutes, or both, do lose their individuation, and fall into some universal element of their kind? 2. Whether they operate after death, as now? There is nothing else about their immortality that common reason can make a question of. And for the souls of brutes, whether they remain individuate, or return to a common element of their kind, is a thing unknown to us, because unrevealed; and unrevealed, because it is of no use and concernment to us. Our own case concerneth us more, and therefore is more made known to us by God, as will further appear in that which followeth.

Object. III. Human souls are but forms; and forms are but the qualities or modes of substances, and therefore accidents; and therefore perish when separated from the bodies.

Ans. The world of learned men do find themselves too much work, and trouble others with controversies about names and words, and especially by confounding words and things, and not discerning when a controversy is only *de nomine*, and when it is *de re*:^a and they have done so about forms as much as any thing. The word form is usually liable to this ambiguity: in compounded beings, it is sometimes taken for the active, predominant part or principle, and sometimes for the state which resulteth from the contemperation of all the parts. Which is the fittest to be called the form, is but a question *de nomine*. Gassendus himself confesseth this ambiguity of the word, and having pleaded that all forms except man's intellectual soul, are but modes or qualities of bodies, and accidents, he addeth, (sec. I, l. vi. c. I.) *Si formæ nomine spiritum quendam et quasi florem materiæ intellexeris, cujusmodi fere concipimus animam in æquo, tum forma dici potest substantia, immo et corpus tenuissimum, quod crassius pervadat, perficiat et regat. At si formæ nomine intelligitur dispositio ac modus quo tam substantia illa spirituosior quam crassior reliqua se habet, et ad quam facultates actionesque naturales consequenter tum posse qualitatem censeri ac dici.* Whether the souls of brutes be only the spirits, or the *flos materiæ*, or not, it is granted by him, and by almost all men, that in mixed bodies there is one part more subtle than the rest, which is the most active, powerful, predominant part, and which doth *corpus pervadere, perficere, regere*. He thinketh that this is but that subtle matter which

others call fire; but others think, upon the reasons before given, that it is a superior nature, and that the spirits or fiery nature, is but its nearest instrument, because no subtilty will make atoms sensible or appetitive, which in their proper nature have no such thing. But whatever becomes of the controversy, whether the animal principle in brutes be material or immaterial, it is granted us, and is certain, that in all mixed beings, there is a difference of the constitutive parts. As the fiery nature, such as the sun is of, is active in comparison with the other three elements, which to it are passive; so the vital principle in brutes is active, powerful, and regent, as to the rest of the compounding parts. And it is certain, that the name of a form is, by contenders, taken sometimes for that regent, active principle or substance, (be it what it will,) and sometimes for the temperament resulting from all the parts. In engines, where there is no principle or part which is notably predominant, the name of the form is given to the ordered conjunction of all the parts; so in a watch, the spring, though the beginning of motion, is not so fitly called the form of the watch, as the order of the whole frame: but in living things, there is more room for a competition between the regent part and the temperament, which of them should be called the form. Now it is undeniable with all men, that both in men and brutes that regent principle is a substance, and that the contemperation, or order of the parts, is but their mode, and maketh no other kind of being than *ordo civitatis vel reipublicæ* is, which ceaseth upon the dissolution. And the form of simple beings, corporeal or incorporeal, elements or spirits, is neither another substance, distinct from the physical and metaphysical matter, nor yet an accident or mode; but that peculiar nature, consisting in certain powers or virtues, by which, as essential to it, that being is specifically differenced from others; which some call an essential quality, and some a substantial quality, and some a substantial form, because it is the perfection and essential nature of the substance in *specie*, and not another substance besides it.

Thus, Burgersdicius, (however in his Physics he saith as others,) in his Metaphysics, (l. i. c. 25, s. 6—9,) saith that *Forma substantialis est quæ materiam complet eamque informat, atque ita constituit substantiam corpoream: forma accidentalis est additamentum completæ substantiæ inherens, et cum illa constituens. Ens concretum atque unum per accidens.* And he addeth that *Forma substantialis non per se est substantia: substantia enim per se subsistit, &c. Quid ergo erit substantialis forma? Nihil aliud quam substantialis modus. Forma formis debetur, quod res corporales tales res sint, iis etiam ex parte debetur quod sint: quia esse non potest concipi absque tali aut tali esse et tale esse est ipsius esse complementum.* And yet the same man saith, (ibid. l. ii. c. 17, s. 13, p. 304,) *Resp. Animas vegetativas et sensitivas unitas quidem esse corpori ex elementis confecto, sed mediante spiritu vitali et animali. Ideoque facultates earum animarum non esse temperationes primarium qualitatem, sed ipsam substantiam animarum, quatenus spirituum ope elementari corpori alligantur.*

If, then, you take the word form for the order of the parts, I say that man's soul is not his form in that sense, nor is his form a substance; but if the regent, predominant, active, vital, intelligent principle be called the form, so the form is a substance, and the soul is that form.

Here we must not confound *formam corporis*, *formam animæ*, et *formam hominis*. 1. The form of Adam's body, before it had received a soul, was but the contemperation or order of all the parts by which it was

^a Lege Plotinum de Anim. En. 4. l. 3. c. 391. sect. 26.

apt to receive a soul, and to be actuated by it, as *corpus physicum organicum*. 2. The form of the soul itself (e. g. in its separated state) is that *vis naturalis intelligendi, volendi, et exequendi*, by which it is essentially differenced from all other kinds of being (commonly comprehended under the name of reason alone). 3. The *forma hominis*, taken for the state of the parts contemplate and ordered, is that said state or order, and not the soul: but taken for the vital, intelligent, regent part, or principle, it is the soul itself. So that the soul is not the *forma corporis*, nor the *forma hominis* in the one sense; but it is the *forma hominis* in the other; and its own differencing nature is its own form.

The like ambiguity there is in the word quality, used in the objection. As I was never satisfied with the order or number of Aristotle's ten predicaments, so especially I never understood him in the predicament of quality itself. As it is a very hard thing to know what those are that are by him, and commonly called qualities; so I think that name too general and defective, to signify the nature of them aright. And I supposed ever that his *forma et figura* differ much more from the other species of quality, than most of the predicaments do from one another, (of which see Burgersdicius Metaph. l. ii. c. ult. et Gassendus in loc.) Judicious Mr. Pemble, *de origine formarum*, pleadeth hard that *Principia constitutiva, are materia (vel subjectum) et accidentia; et principium transmutationalis est contrarium qualitatum pugna: that, forma, excepta humana, non est substantia, nec materialis, nec immaterialis, sed accidens vel accidentium mixtura dictum temperamentum, et quod accidentia per se et immediate agunt, et non in virtute formæ substantialis*. That is, quod qualitates immediate hærent in materia, et a qualitatibus immediate pro fluunt operatione set operandi vires. Quod qualitates omnes primæ, (which he maketh five; lux, calor, frigus, humiditas, siccitas,) et aliquæ secundariæ, tenuitas, crassities, gravitas, levitas, fluor, consistentia, creationis die primo existierunt: quod qualitates omnes activæ generant sibi simile, et ita sui diffusivæ et similitum generativæ sunt, ut necessario materiam sibi proportionatam efficiunt. Quod animæ vegetativæ in plantis et sensitivæ in brutis sunt tantum temperamenta nobiliora qualitatum actuosiorum in materia subtili, pura, spirituosiore.

Telesius maketh the same principles, *materia, calor, et frigus*, as to the chief; but he maketh *calor et frigus* to be substances, *vel formæ substantiales, et non tantum accidentia*. So that they that agree that it is qualities that are the active forms, are never the more agreed what they are, nor what the word qualities doth signify. And what if, by the word quality, Pemble do mean the very same thing as many others do that call them forms, when they speak of vegetatives. And what if, by substance, Telesius mean the same that Pemble doth by accidents? Is not the world, then, troubled with ambiguity of words? He that will consider them well, may suspect that they mean as I conjecture. An active power, or principle, being the chief cause of operations, alterations, and discrimination, is the thing that they all mean by all these names. And the followers of Democritus, especially Gassendus and Cartesius, do not improbably argue that it is some substantial being which maketh that change or effect upon our senses, which, as there received, is a quality. So that unless Mr. Pemble can better tell us what *lux et calor* are, than by calling them qualities, he hath given the understanding no

satisfaction at all: much less when he nakedly asserteth, without any proof, that sensation doth not *superare naturam primarum qualitatum*, that are none of them sensible themselves. And when he hath no other answer to this argument, but that *non minus miranda sunt in inanimatis*, which he giveth not one instance or word to prove. When Aristotle, &c. Scaliger, Sennertus, and abundance more, have said much to the contrary.

I conclude, that for all that is here said, and whether you call them our forms or not, (as you may or may not, in several senses,) human souls are those parts of man which are simple, pure, invisible, active, powerful substances; and therefore, being not annihilated, must needs subsist in their separated state.

Object. IV. The soul is material, and consequently mortal, because it dependeth upon matter in its operations, and consequently in its essence.*

Ans. 1. I have proved already, that if you did prove the soul material, you had not thereby at all proved it mortal: unless you mean only that it hath a *posse mori vel annihilari*; which may be said of every creature: for simple matter, which hath no repugnant parts or principles, hath not only a *posse non mori*, but an aptitude in its nature, *ad non moriendum*. Remember your friends that make the world, or matter, at least, to be eternal. They thought not that materiality was a proof of either annihilation or corruption.

Object. If it be material, it must be compounded of matter and form, and, therefore, is corruptible.

Ans. True, if that matter and form were two several substances, and were one repugnant to the other. The soul and body are different substances; but the metaphysical matter and form of the soul, being but the *genus et differentia*, are not two substances, much less repugnant; and therefore have never the more a tendency to corruption.

2. The soul useth matter, and dependeth no otherwise on it than its instrument. It doth not follow that a man is a horse, because he dependeth on his horse in the manner of his riding, and his pace; nor that I am inanimate, because in writing I depend on my pen, which is inanimate. If you put spirits of wine into water or whey, as its vehicle to temper it for a medicine, it doth not follow that the spirits are mere water, because they operate not without the water, but conjunct and as tempered by it. If the fire in your lamp do not shine or burn without the oil, but in manner and duration dependeth on it, it doth not follow that fire is annihilated when the candle is out, or that it was but oil before: no, nor that it ceaseth to be fire afterwards, as Gassendus must needs confess, who holdeth that the elements are not turned into one another, sect. i. l. 3. c. 2. Fire ceaseth not to be fire, when it goeth out of our observation.

The noblest natures use and rule the inferior. God himself moveth and useth things material, and yet is not, therefore, material himself. Yea, if *motus* be in *patiente et recipitur ad modum recipientis*, you may conjecture how far God's own operations upon the creatures may be called dependent as to the effect, as being *ad captum et modum creature*. And the sun doth move and quicken all passive matter here below, *ad modum recipientis*, with great variety through the variety of the matter; and yet it followeth not that the sun is itself such passive matter.

3. The soul hath operations which are not upon matter at all, though matter may possibly be an antecedent occasion, or prerequisite. Such is the apprehension of its own intellect and volitions,

* Against the soul's dependence upon matter, the Platonists write excellently; Plato himself, and Plotinus, and Jamblichus, Proclus, &c. Anima per essentiam est mobilis ex seipsa; sed conjuncta corpori quodammodo evasit etiam mobilis aliunde; sicut enim ipsa sua presentia dedit corpori ultimum ex se movendi vestigium, sic et ipsa propter corporeum contubernium conditionis notam subiit mobilis aliunde. Proclus de Anim. et Dæmon.

and all that it thence gathereth of God, and other intellectual natures and operations, of which I must say more anon.

Object. V. No immaterial substance moveth that which is material, as a principle of its operations : but the soul moveth the body as the principle of its operations ; *ergo*.

Ans. I. I have already said, that if you proved the soul material, it would not prove it mortal.

2. As the body hath various operations, so it is moved by various principles or powers. As to locomotion, and perhaps vegetation, the *materia subtilis*, or finest atoms, as you will call it, or the fiery matter in the spirits, as I would call it, is an active being, which hath a natural power to move itself and the rest. But whether that motion do suffice to sensation, is undecided. But, certainly, there is another inward principle of motion, which guideth much of the locomotive, and overruleth some of the natural motion by a peculiar action of its own, which is called intellect and volition, as I have proved before. When I go to the church, when I write, or talk, the spirits are the nearest sufficient principle of the motion as motion ; but, as it is done in this manner, to this end, at this time, with these reasons, it is from the intellectual principle.

3. And thus I deny the major proposition, and I prove the contrary. 1. God is the first Principle of all motion in the world, and the first Cause of material motion, and yet is not material. 2. What the lower and baser nature can do, that the higher and nobler hath power to do (*suppositis supponendis*) : therefore, if a body can move a body, a soul can do it much more.

But, saith Gassendus, *Causis secundis primum agendi principium est atomorum varia mobilitas ingenua, non incorporea aliqua substantia*. *Ans.* Angels are *causæ secundæ* ; souls are *causæ secundæ* ; animated bodies of men are *causæ secundæ* : prove it now of any of these in your exclusion, if you can. But he saith, *Capere non licet quomodo si incorporeum sit, ita applicari corpori valeat, ut illi impulsus imprimat ; quando neque ipsum contingere, carens ipsa tactu seu mole qua tangat, non potest. Physicæ actiones corporeæ cum sint, nisi a principio physico corporeoque elici non possint. Quod animi autem humana incorporea cum sit, et in ipsum lamen corpus suum agat, motumque ipsi imprimat, dicimus animam humanam quæ est intellectus seu mens, atque adeo incorporea, non elicere actiones nisi intellectuales, seu mentales et incorporeas. Et quum est sentiens, vegetans, præditaque vi corporum motrice atque adeo corporea est, elicere actiones corporeas, &c.* And of angels and devils he saith, That it is known by faith only that they are incorporeal, and perhaps God gave them extraordinary bodies, when he would have them move or act on bodies.

To this I answer, 1. Who gave those atoms their ingentile mobility, and how ? You say that *Capitulum omnem fugit ut quippiam aliud moveat, si in seipso immotum maneat*. If so, then it seemeth that either God was moved when he moved atoms, or that he never moved them. How, then, came they to be moved first ? But you confess that God put into them their mobility. You say, *De Deo alia ratio est, quoniam infinitæ virtutis cum sit, et ubique præsens, non ullo sui motu, sed nutu solo agere et movere quilibet potest*. If you think not as you speak, it is unworthy of a philosopher ; if you do, then it is strange that you should overthrow your own reasoning, and excuse it no better than thus. If the reason why incorporeal spirits cannot move bodies be that which you allege, because only a body can be applied to a body to make impression on it, then God can less

move a body than man's soul can ; because his purest essence is more distant from corporeal grossness than our souls are, at least the reason would be the same. And to say that God is every where, and of infinite virtues, maketh him nevertheless a spirit : and created spirits (if that be enough) may have power or virtue enough for such an effect. Doubtless, if God move bodies, the spirituality of an agent hindereth not the motion.

2. But why should it, *captum omnem superare*, that a nobler and more potent nature can do that which a more ignoble can do ? Because I cannot know how a spirit by contact can apply itself to matter, shall I dream that therefore it is incapable of moving bodies ? Clean contrary, I see that matter of itself is an unactive thing, and were it not that the noble, active element of fire, which, as a lower soul to the passive matter, and a thing almost middle between a spirit and a body, did move things here below, I could discern no motion in the world but that which spirits cause, except only that of the parts to the whole, the aggregative motion which tendeth to rest. The difference of understandings is very strange : it is much easier to me to apprehend that almost all motion should come from the purest, powerful, active, vital natures, than that they should be all unable to stir a straw, or move the air, or any body.

Object. VI. The soul is, in our sleep, either unactive, as when we do not so much as dream, or acteth irregularly and irrationally, according to the fortuitous motion of the spirits ; *ergo*, it is no incorporeal, immortal substance.^b

Ans. 1. I suppose the soul is never totally unactive. I never awaked since I had the use of memory, but I found myself coming out of a dream ; and I suppose they that think they dream not, think so because they forget their dreams.

2. Many a time my reason hath acted for a time as regularly, and much more forcibly, than it doth when I am awake : which sheweth what it can do, though it be not ordinary.

3. This reason is no better than that before answered ; where I told you, that it argueth not that I am a horse, or no wiser than my horse, because I ride but according to his pace, when he halteth, or is tired. Nor doth it prove that when I alight, I cannot go on foot. He is hard of understanding that believeth that all the glorious parts of the world above us have no nobler intellectual natures than man. Suppose there be angels ; and suppose one of them should be united to a body, as our souls are, we cannot imagine but he would actuate it, and operate in it according to its nature ; as I write amiss when my pen is bad. The same I say of persons lethargic, apoplectic, delirant, &c.

Object. VII. Reason is no proof of the soul's immateriality, because sense is a clearer and more excellent way of apprehension than reason is ; and the brutes have sense.

Ans. 1. I have said enough to the case of brutes before.

2. The soul understandeth bodily things, by the inlet of the bodily senses : things incorporeal (as I shall show more anon) it otherwise understandeth. When it understandeth by the help of sense, it is not the sense that understandeth any thing. If brutes themselves had not an imagination which is an image of reason, their sense would be of little use to them. We see, when, by business or other thoughts, the mind is diverted and alienated, how little sense itself doth for us ; when we can hear as if we never

^b See in Aristotus' *Histor.* de 70. p. 879, the King's Quest. 19, about dreams ; with the answer, how far dreams are in our power.

heard, and see, and not observe what we see, yet it is true that the more sense helpeth us in the apprehending of things sensible, which are their objects the better and surer we perceive them by the understanding. As the second and third concoction will not be well made, if there be a failing in the first; so the second and third perception, in the fantasy and intellect, will be ill made, if the first deceive or fail them. But this proveth not either that the first concoction, or perception, is more noble than the third; or that sensitives without reason have any true understanding at all; or that sense, fantasy, and reason, are not better than sense alone. But these things need not much disputing. If sense be nobler than reason, let the horse ride the man, and let the woman give her milk to her cow, and let brutes labour men and feed upon them, and let beasts be your tutors, and kings and judges commit to them the noblest works, and give them the pre-eminence, if you think they have the noblest faculties.

Object. VIII. Sensation and intellect are both but reception; the passiveness, therefore, of the soul doth show its materiality.^c

Ans. A short answer may satisfy to this objection.

1. All created powers are partly passive, how active soever they be. For being, *in esse et operari*, dependent on, and subordinate to, the first Cause, they must needs receive his influence, as well as exercise their own powers. As the second wheel in the clock must receive the moving force of the first, before it can move the third.

2. It is an enormous error about the operations of the soul, to think that intellection, yea, or sensation either, is mere reception, and that the sensitive and intellectual power are but passive. The active soul of man, yea, of brutes, receiveth not its object as the mark or butt receiveth the arrow that is shot at it. It receiveth it by a similitude of nature, and by an active attendance, and embracement, yea, by an active appetite, *sicut fœmina marem, vel potius sicut esuriens cibum*: yea, it moveth towards its object, and meeteth it. It actively welcometh it, and improveth it; as I said even now, a scholar that in his studies so far diverteth his thoughts, that he knoweth not that the clock hath struck at his ears, and knoweth not what those say that talk by him, doth show that some active attendance is necessary to almost all perception. He that feeleth not that his understanding doth *agere* as well as *pati*, when he is studying, reading, or writing, is a stranger to himself. How oft have I read over many lines when I have thought of something else, and not known one word that I have read? Is inventing, compounding, dividing, defining, &c. no action? I never felt cause, from any experience of my own, to believe that I was a mere patient in any thought that was ever in my mind. Nay, the Epicurean that supposeth thoughts to be but a dance of atoms, called spirits, doth think that those atoms or spirits are notably active. Cartesius's *materia subtilis* is eminent in activity. Do you think that every dead object which I think on, with my eyes shut, in the night, is so much more alive than I; and so much more active than my mind, that it must be accounted the sole agent, and my mind the patient. They know little of a mind that talk in this strain.^d

^c Read Priscian's Theophrast. de Anim. with Facinus's Notes, which show how far the sense is active.

^d Sensus principium mediæque et finem sentiendæ rei individue comprehendit, et actio est, iudiciumque perfectum, et in præsentis momenti simul totus existit, etsi non absque passione aliqua instrumenti sensus efficitur non tamen est hæc passio sensus; quo fit ut patiamur et vigilantes et dormientes nec tamen sentiamus. Theophrast. de Anim. ut supra.

I know Cartesius telleth us, that the eye hath no fire or light in it, except, perhaps, the eye of a cat or owl. But if the study of matter and motion had left him any room for the consideration of other things which he passed over, he would, by a little search, have found that the eye doth close with its primary object, light, by mere connaturality, because it participateth of light itself, in its own constitution. It is fire in the eye, even in the visive spirits, which meeteth the fire or light without, and by union causeth that which we call sight. And seeing that experience forced him to confess it of cats and owls, how could he think that all other eyes or sight were quite of another kind? Some men have been able to see in the dark, and had sparkling eyes, almost like cats. The degree here differenceth not the species. If this *materia subtilis*, or *globuli atherei*, be fire, he might have allowed some of that to the visive spirits in man, as well as in owls. Saith Ficinus, in Theophrast. de Anim. c. 14, *Primum luminosus est celeste: secundum est igneum: tertium inter composita quod quasi fulget ut ignis. Primum luminale est oculus præcipue radiosus, in animalibus, quæ nocte vident; sed alii quoque oculi quamvis minus, sunt tamen luminales.*

Nemesius, l. pro Immort. Anim. in Bibl. Pat. p. 505, approveth Plato's judgment: *Plato inquit per confusionem splendorum res aspicit existimat, ut id lumen quod ex oculis proficiscitur aliquo usque in aerem, qui ejusdem est secum genus effluat. Quod vero a corporibus manat contraferatur, et quod in aere est, qui interponitur, facileque, diffunditur et vertitur, simul cum oculorum igne extendatur. Et Galenus (inquit) de visione cum Platone consentit in 70 de consens.* And he saith himself, That the sun sendeth its light by the air, and the light in the eye streameth also into it; which is to seeing, as the nerves are to the brain for feeling. Porphyry saith, That sight is the soul itself discerning itself in all things. But if there were any doubt in the point of sight, which is performed both by active spirits, and an active object, light, yet, methinks, that when I feel a stone, much more when I meditate on a mountain, all should confess that my sense and intellection is like to have more action than that stone and mountain. And if you say only, that spirits first moved move others, and so touch the intellectual organs, or spirits, I have partly answered that before, and shall answer it more anon. We have great reason to ascribe the most of action to that part which is most subtle, vigorous, and active.

Object. IX. There is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the sense, from which it receiveth all its knowledge by the ideas of the fantasy; therefore, the soul can reach no higher than to corporeal, sensible things; therefore, it is but such itself.

Ans. The antecedent is false, and both the consequents. Had he limited his assertions to corporeal objects, I should easily acknowledge to Gassendus, that *Omnia quæ in mente habetur idea ortum ducit a sensibus. Et omnis idea aut per sensum transit, aut ex iis quæ transeunt per sensum formatur. Et quæ idea propriis acquiritur sensibus perfectior est ea quæ ex facta ab alio descriptione formatur. Qualis idea rei, talis definitio.* But that these things will not hold true as he delivereth them, universally, I think I

Leges Mars. Ficinus De Volupt. c. 1—3, &c. Platonis dogma defendentem, scil. Voluptatem esse Actum vel Motum. Priscian in Theophrast. De Anim. c. 3, saith, Anima quidem cum sit forma vivens et sensualis, agit circa illa quæ sibi offeruntur. Vitaliter atque sensualiter: et quia est in corpore, usque ad certum spatium operatur.

^e See Alcinoüs De doctr. Plat. cap. xviii. to the same purpose.

shall make plain, and confute this objection, to the satisfaction of any one that knoweth himself.

Ortum ducere a sensu is an ambiguous phrase: the sense may be the occasion, *sine qua non*, of that whereof it never had the least participation in itself. I desire you but to distinguish between the intellect's object and its act, and those objects which it knoweth by the mediation of other intrinsic objects, and those which it knoweth by the mediation of its own act. These differences are past all doubt. When the eye seeth these lines and this paper, the light, and lines, and paper, are each one thing, and the sight of them is another. I see the light, and thereby the paper, but I see not my sight; my sight is not the object of my sight; it may be said, that the object is in my sight, but not that my sight is in my sight; yet, by seeing, I perceive not only what I see, but that I see; and I perceive much more plainly that I see, than what I see. I may doubt of a thousand objects which I see, what matter, shape, or colour they are of; but I doubt not at all of the act of seeing; that, right or wrong, some sight I have, or that I see the light; so is it with the intellect. This book is one thing, and the understanding it is another thing. The book is the object of my understanding; but, at least, *in primo instanti*, my understanding is not the object of my understanding; but by understanding, I have an immediate perception that I understand. And, as Cartesius truly saith, the act of intellection is more perceived than the object: I am more certain that I think and understand, than I am of the nature of that which I think of and understand. If any say, that the act of intellection is the object of another intellection, because *intelligo me intelligere*, and so that *intellectio non est tantum actus intellectus, sed etiam est in intellectu*, and that the intellect doth understand its own act, *intrusive*, as some speak, or by reflection, as others, though doubtless the first perception that I understand is not by reflection, but by that same act of understanding something else, as sight doth not reflect upon itself to get a perception that I see. I will enter no controversy about any of these notions of the manner of our understanding our own act of intellection, which doth not concern the present business. But it is most certain that *actus intelligendi nunquam fuit in sensu*; when the object of intellection did pass through the sense, the act of intellection did not; nor the intellection or perception of that act of intellection did not; nor the intellection of the common nature of an intelligence, which from hence I gather; nor the intellection of particular intelligences, as angels; nor my intellection of any man's intellect or intellectual act, whose nature I gather from mine own; nor the conception I have of a Deity, as the most perfect intellect; nor the perception which I have of my own volition of my own felicity, or of the means thereto as such, nor of the pleasing of God, nor of another man's good; nor my perception of the nature of the will hence gathered; nor my conception of the volitive power in other persons; nor my conceptions of the volitions of God, of angels, &c.; nor my conception of intellectual or moral habits, nor of the will's natural inclinations: none of all these were ever in the sense, nor passed through the sense; some of them (which Gassendus "*De Ideis*" doth overlook) are, without any idea at all, properly so called, as the first perception of the act of my own understanding and will, by understanding and willing other things, as we perceive that we see *non videndo ipsum visum, sed alia videndo*; and that idea which we have of all the rest is fetched from this perception of our own acts, and not from any thing which ever was in the sense; the soul, by knowing itself, doth gather

the knowledge of all higher intellectual beings, which is its most considerable, worthy knowledge. I hope I have given you instances enough, and plain enough; and you see now what truth there is of *nihil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu*.

D'Orbellis distinguisheth knowledge, largely taken, into *sensitive et intellective*; and both of them into *abstracte et intuitive*. Knowledge intuitive is of an object as itself present, when a thing in its present existence is the moving object of knowledge. Knowledge abstractive is when the species of the thing doth move us to know the thing itself; and that whether the thing itself be present or absent, and have existence or not. The example of intuitive, sensitive knowledge or perception which he giveth, is the eye seeing colours. The instance of abstractive sensitive knowledge is as the fantasy imagineth colours. The instance of intuitive, intellective knowledge is, the saints seeing the glory of God in heaven, and he might have instanced in many other things. The instance of abstractive, intellective knowledge is the understanding's knowledge of the quiddity of colours by means of the species. To which may be added, that abstractive knowledge is either *per speciem propriam*, or *per speciem alienam*. In this life the soul knoweth its own acts either intuitively, or by an act, if possible, yet nearer to its essential power, that hath no usual distinguishing name. It knoweth its own powers, inclinations, and habits, neither by a knowledge, in proper and strict sense, intuitive or abstractive: for it is not by a proper species, but it is its natural, innate power of discerning this principle, that *quicquid agit potest agere quod agit*; by arguing *ab actu ad potentiam et naturam*. But in the large sense, as Cartesius useth the word, this may be called an idea. The mind knoweth God, and angels, and other men's souls, in this large sense also by an idea, but not *per speciem propriam, sed alienam*; that is, not by a species of God and angels, but by an idea borrowed from our own intellections and volitions. But this is not an idea that ever passed through the senses. And Gassendus might have thought on it, whether it be not an idea in the intellect, if not without the fantasy, at least over and above the idea in the imagination, when he denieth that there is any such intellective ideas.

2. But what if there had been nothing in the intellect but what passed through the sense? It would no more thence follow that the intellect is no more noble, spiritual, or immortal than the sense, than it will follow that the king is no better than his porter, because none cometh to him till he let them in; or that the animal spirits are no more noble than the teeth, or than the natural heat; or the third concoction is no more excellent than the first, because nothing cometh to the third concoction, but what was masticated, swallowed, and passed the first and second concoction: of which before.

3. And even, by the help of things sensible, Epicurus can reach the knowledge of insensible atoms; and Cartesius, of his subtile matter, and *globuli caelestes*: why, then, by things sensible, may we not reach the knowledge of spiritual substances and powers?

Yet, after all this, I am much of their mind who think that it is not actual knowledge that is born with us; nor is there any true idea or picture of any thing innate in our understandings; and I think that if, *per possibile vel impossibile*, you suppose a man born without any one sense, that he would have had no actual knowledge at all, though that is uncertain. Because, as if I had not seen any thing objective, I should not have perceived that I could see; so if I had never known any other object, I could not have known what it is to know: and other objects have

no way, that I know of, to the intellect, but through the sense (though what the active spirits would have done upon the fantasy, I cannot possibly understand). But all this only concludeth, that the senses' reception is the way to the intellection of things sensible; and that it was a necessary occasion, *sine qua non*, to the perception of our own intellectual act, because thus necessary to the act itself; but not that any idea of our own intellection, or any of all the things fore-instanced, was received through the senses.

Object. X. That which things corporeal work upon, is corporeal; for it cannot be conceived how bodies can work upon that which hath no body. But things corporeal work upon the soul; *ergo*, it is itself corporeal.

Ans. 1. I largely before showed, that our uncertainty of the just consistence of metaphysical matter, or incorporeal substance, doth make all such arguings to sound like dreams.

2. I have showed that spiritual powers receive not impressions as dull matter doth, by a mere passive power, but by an activity and outgoing; it worketh indeed upon that which it receiveth, much more than any such matter can be said to work upon it; nay, matter doth not properly work upon it at all, but only affordeth it matter to work upon, and occasion to exercise its active power. As the stone, or tree, doth not work upon the sight, but the sight by the help of light doth work upon it. As the eye can see a dunghill, and yet be of a nobler kind; and God and angels can know beasts and worms, and yet be incorporeal. So man can know things inanimate, and yet be animate; and things insensible, and yet be sensible; and things irrational, and yet be rational; and things corporeal, and yet be incorporeal. And this by the activity and extent of its power, and not by any passive, debasing defectiveness at all.

Object. XI. That is not incorporeal which neither knoweth itself to be incorporeal, nor hath any notion but negative of an incorporeal being: but such is man's soul.¹

Ans. 1. If the soul know not itself to be an immortal spirit, what maketh almost all the world to judge so of themselves? Inasmuch, that those men that under pretence of philosophy deny it, are fain to study very hard, and take many years' pains to blot out this light of nature from their minds, because they cannot be ignorant of it at easy rates. The understanding will not lose its natural light, nor suffer such verities to be obliterated, but by a great deal of industry, and by the engines of abundance of false notions, which are sought after to that use. As Cicero saith of the Epicureans, they learn those things; *quæ cum præclare didicerunt nihil sciunt.* (Piso. de Fin. 5. p. 204.) They learn diligently to unlearn the truth, that when they have learned much they may know little.

2. Hath man no notion but negative of an incorporeal being? I showed you before why the notion of materiality should not be here used for a cheat or blind. But look back on what I said, even now, and you will see that, as Cartes truly saith, "We have not only positive conceptions of a mind, but the first, the clearest, and the surest conceptions of it in the measure that is fit for our present state."

Quest. 1. Have you not a positive conception of intellection and volition? If not, you are unfit for any controversies about them, and cannot own your own humanity.

Quest. 2. Have you not a clearer perception that you think, and know, or reason, either right or wrong, than you have what that thing is that you think or reason about?

Quest. 3. Have you not a sure and positive conception that *omnis actus est alicujus actus, et quod nihil, nihil agit*, and therefore that you are an intelligent, volitive being?

Quest. 4. Have you not a positive, sure conception, that *quicquid agit agere potest*, and that nothing doth that which it cannot do; and therefore that your souls are beings potentiated for intellection, volition, and execution?

Quest. 5. Have you not a positive, sure conception that you have a natural inclination to these acts, and a pleasure in them, and that they are natural and perfective to you, and, consequently, that your souls are beings that have not only a power, but a *vis et inclinatio naturalis*, or a power that is natural, and active, and inclined to these particular actings.²

Quest. 6. Have you not a positive, sure conception that the end and highest object of these acts and inclinations, are things above sense, viz. yourselves or minds in the first place, and then the things above you, the first Being, Cause, and Mover of all; the infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, who is your Maker and your End? If you find no such thing, the Lord have mercy on you; for every honest man may find it.

Quest. 7. Have you not a positive, sure conception that such as the operations are, which flow from the essential powers or faculties, such in nobility, and excellency, and nature, is the substance thus potentiated and acting?

All these are clear, undeniable, positive conceptions of the soul, which, set together, are thus much: that the mind or soul of man is a noble essence, above the reach and nature of sense, naturally potentiated and inclined, as an active being, to intellection, volition, and seeking after things celestial and everlasting, especially God himself, his ultimate End. All this is positive, clear, and sure; and you would think this enough, 1. If you did consider what Lud. Vives saith; that God hath given man a soul to use, rather than accurately to know; or to know so far as is necessary to use: as your child may have the use of his knife, or clock, or watch, or clothes, without knowing what metal they are made of, or how to compose and make the like, as long as he can but do that with them which is necessary to their use. Often saith Seneca, *Necessaria ignoramus, quia superflua didicimus*. 2. If your minds were not by sense deluded and captivated to such fixed ideas of things corporeal and gross, as to overlook all other beings, and measure all substance by such gross ideas. 3. If you well considered that you know in any respect little more of things corporeal, and in some respect much less. Let us see wherein it is that you know more; either as to the sensible or insensible parts of such beings. As for the substances, as such, you confess they are but *per accidens*, the objects of sense, and that, as stripped of their accidents, you have no positive, true conception of them; and as for the accidents, you are no whit agreed either what they are, or how many. Of all things, you are most unanimous in that of quantity, moles, or extension; but what a poor kind of knowledge is it, to know that this or that is *quantum*, and not to know what it is that is *quantum*. What light, colour, sapor, odour are, and what all the senses that

¹ Vid. Paul. Cortesium, in Sent. 1. Dis. 1. p. 7. et Dis. 2. p. 8. That spiritual things are better known than corporeal, and of the knowledge of God.

² Porphy. de occas. inq. Anima est essentia inextensa, immaterialis, immortalis, in vita habente a seipsa vivere atque esse simpliciter possidente.

perceive them, you are as much disagreed as if this age had been the first that had debated it. The same I may say both of qualities in general, and of all other in particular, except figure, which properly belongeth not to that predicament. Of all the rest there is the like disagreement; even time and place, which, truly, are nothing but *entia rationis*, are disposed by you in the first place, and are two of Gas-sendus's four predicaments. About the number either of principles or elements, there is no agreement; no, nor what any one of the elements are: who hath told us what is the form of earth, or water, or air; or described them otherwise than by their qualities? And then differ you as much about those qualities! Who hath told us any thing of the naked matter or form of fire, such as the sun and luminaries are, any otherwise than by its acts and powers, or virtues of motion, light, and heat, as we describe to you the soul of man? And if you go to the invisible part of matter, it would make a man rather sick than wise, to read men *provincias dare atomis*, as Cicero speaketh; and to think with what bold, unreasonable fiction they number them, as shaped and figured; and figure and shape them to the uses which they have feigned for them; and then use them and conduct them, and vary their motions, as confidently and seriously as if they had given us any proof of any of this, and indeed expected to be believed: nay, we must know how the corners of atoms (pardon the contradiction) came to be filed or worn off by motion, and so reduced to greater subtilty. And Gas-sendus, after all the fabric which he buildeth upon atoms, saith, That atoms have not of themselves a moving force, but from God's first motion. S. I. c. viii. p. 280. *Non quod Deo necesse fuerit creare seorsim atomos, quas deinceps in partes grandiores, grandioresque ex his, mundus constaret, compingerit; sed quod creans materiam massam, in corpuscula exolvibilem, atque adeo ex corpusculis tanquam minimis extremisque particulis compositam, concreasse illi ipsa corpuscula censetur.* Ibid. So that they know not indeed whether God created matter first in atoms disjunct, or in more large and bulky parts; and so whether motion did divide grosser and greater parts into atoms, or whether it coagulated atoms into greater bodies. But the sum is, that they only affirm, that whatever bodies God made, they are divisible into atoms; that is, into parts by man indivisible. A great mystery sure, that the whole is divisible into smaller parts! And what the nearer is any man by this, for the discerning of any of their wild hypotheses? In a word, God hath given man knowledge for his benefit and use, to the ends of his being and life; and so far as we have use for it, we may know all things about us; but to humour our wanton fancies he is not obliged. And because we have more use for the faculties of our souls than for fire and water, or any outward thing, he hath given us the first and surest knowledge of them; whatsoever self-contradicting somatists say to depress this knowledge, and advance that knowledge of bodies which their own disagreements do confute. Sure I am, if that be a probable opinion which hath divers learned men for it, almost all things are probable in philosophy; and if that be improbable which hath multitudes of learned men against it, almost all things are improbable.

Object. XII. That which is generated is corruptible; but the soul is generated; *ergo*, &c.

Ans. I. If, by corruptible, you mean that which hath a *posse perire*, or a certainty of perishing, if God uphold it not, I grant it of the whole creation; but if you mean that which in its nature is so fitted to dissolution, perishing, or decay, as that God seem-

eth to intend it to such an end, or must miraculously preserve it, or else it will perish, or that which eventually will perish, then we must not so easily dismiss you.

2. The word generated is of so great ambiguity, and generation itself a thing so little understood by mortals, that this reason doth but carry the controversy into the dark, and argue *ab obscuriore et minus noto*; which is the way of a wrangler, and not of one that would reveal the truth. Either generation is the production of some new substance, not existent before, so much as in its matter; or it is only the composition of pre-existent substances. If it be the latter, then you may prove the possibility and probability of the dissolution of the frame, and separation of those several substances. But you will confess yourselves, that each part retaineth its proper nature still; and that if one were a more noble and active element than the rest, it is not annihilated, but remaineth so still without debasement. Therefore, if their opinion were true, who hold the pre-existence of that purest part of man, which we call his soul, either in a common element, or individuate, no reason can think that the dissolution doth any more than separate the parts of man, and return that soul to its pre-existent state; where, still, it will be as noble a creature as it was here.

But if generation do produce a substance *de novo*, which did no way pre-exist, then it is either a corporeal substance, or a spiritual or incorporeal: whichever it be, can you give a reason why this should perish at the dissolution, any more than if it had pre-existed? If the nature of it be the same, why should not the duration be the same? One of the two you will confess it, either a corporeal substance or an incorporeal, if it be at all a substance; and you confess that no substance is annihilated, or perisheth, otherwise than by dissolution of parts. If the reason of your major be because the thing generated hath a beginning, and did *oriri de novo*, so did all matter and substances that be created; or, if you suppose them all from eternity, yet do but suppose them to be created, and have had a beginning, and yet to be the same as if they had been eternal, and you will see that there will be the same reason to prove their continuance, as long as their nature and their dependence on God are both the same.

But, it may be, you will form your objection better, and say, that generation produceth no new substance, but only a composition, order, and temperament of pre-existent substances: but souls are generated; *ergo*, they are no substances, but the order and temperament of pre-existent substances.

Ans. I never saw any thing like a cogent proof of the major; and most christians think you can never prove the minor.

A substance may be called new, either because it is made of nothing, as in creation, or because it ariseth to its natural state of perfection *ex semine vel natura fecunda*, where it was only virtually and seminally before.

Before you can prove your major, even in the first sense, you must be better acquainted with the nature of God, and of spirits, and of generation, than you are; I cannot imagine what show of proof you can bring to prove that, universally, no generation causeth a substance totally new, unless you will go to Scripture, (which you believe not,) and plead from Gen. i. that "God then ended all his works, and, therefore, doth create no more." But, I. He may cause them totally *de novo*, without such a creation as is there spoken of; for he may, by an established law of nature, adjoin his producing influx to the act of a creature, ordinarily, and so difference

it from that proper creation. 2. No man can prove that God hath there said one word to assure us, that he will never create any thing hereafter. Cannot a workman look on his house, and see that it is well done, and say, I have finished it, without obliging him never to build another, nor to make any reparations of that as there is cause? May not God create a new heaven and earth? May he not create a new star, or a new plant, or animal, if he please, without the breaking of any word that he hath spoken? For my part, I never saw a word which I could discern to have any such signification or importance. The argument from Gen. i. is no better than theirs, who, from Christ's *consummatum est*, do gather, that his death and burial which followed that word, were no part of his satisfactory, meritorious humiliation.

On the contrary, there have been both philosophers and divines, who have thought, that God doth, in *omni instanti*, properly create all things which he is said to conserve: of whom the one part do mean only, that the being of the creatures is as dependent on his continual causation, as the life of the branches is on the tree, but that the same substance is continued, and not another daily made. But there are others who think that all creatures are in *fluxu continuo*, not per locomotum, but ab *entitate ad nihilum*, and that they are all but a continual emanation from God, which, as it passeth from him, tendeth to nothing, and new emanations do still make such a supply, as that the things may be called the same; as a river, whose waters pass in the same channel; as they think the beams or light of the sun do in *omni instanti oriri et festinare ad nihilum*: the stream being still supplied with new emanations. Were it not for the overthrow of individuation, personality, rewards and punishments, that hence seemeth to follow, this opinion would seem more plausible than theirs, who groundlessly prohibit God from causing any more new beings.

But though, no doubt, there is unto all beings a continual emanation or influx from God, which is a continued causation, it may be either conservative of the being first caused, or else restorative of a being continually in decay, as he please: for both ways are possible to him, as implying no contradiction; though both cannot be about one and the same being, in the same respect, and at the same time. And our sense and reason tell us, that the conservative influx is his usual way.

2. But it is commonly, and not without reason, supposed, that generation produceth things *de novo* in another sense; not absolutely, as creation doth, but *secundum quid*, by exalting the seminal virtue into act, and into perfection. New individuals are not made of new matter now created; but the corporeal part is only pre-existent matter, ordered, compounded, and contempered; and the incorporeal part is, both *quoad materiam suam metaphysicam*, et *formam vel naturam specificam*, the exaltation and exurgency of that into full and perfect existence, which did before exist in *semine virtuoso*.

When God had newly created the first man and woman, he created in them a propagating virtue and fecundity: this was, as it were, *semen seminis*: by this they do first *generare semen separabile*, which *suppositis supponendis*, hath a fecundity fit to produce a new *suppositum vel personam*; and may be called a person seminally or virtually, but not actually, for-

mally, and properly; and so this person hath power to produce another, and that another in the same way. And note, that the same creating word, which said, "Let there be light;" and, "Let us make man;" did say also to man, as well as to other creatures, "Increase and multiply:" not, Create new souls or bodies, but by generation, "Increase and multiply," which is the bringing of many persons out of two, and so on, as out of a seminal pre-existence, or virtual, into actual, formal existence.

He knoweth not the mysteriousness of this wonderful work of God, nor the ignorance of mankind, who knoweth not that all generation of man, brutes, or plants, hath much that is to us unsearchable. And they that think it a dishonour to a philosopher, not to undertake or pretend to render the just causes of this and all other the phenomena in nature, do but say, I will hide the dishonour of my ignorance by denying it; that is, by telling men that I am ignorant of my ignorance, and by aggravating it by this increase, and the addition of pride, presumption, and falsity.

This much is certain, 1. That whatsoever distinct parts do constitute individuals, which are themselves of several natures, so many several natures in the world we may confidently assert, though we understand not whether they all exist separately, or are found only in conjunction with others.

2. We certainly find in the world,^h 1. An intelligent nature. 2. A sensitive nature. 3. A fiery, active, vegetative nature. 4. A passive matter, which receiveth the influx of active natures, which is distributed into air, and water, and earth.

3. The most active nature is most communicative of itself, in the way of its proper operations.

4. We certainly perceive that the sun and fiery nature are active upon the air, water, and earth, which are the passive elements. And by this activity, in a threefold influx, motion, light, and heat, do cause the sensible alterations which are made below; and so that it is a kind of life, or general form, or soul to the passive matter.

5. We also find that motion, light, and heat, as such, are all different *tota specie* from sensation; and therefore, as such, are not the adequate causes of it. And also that there is a sensitive nature in every animal, besides the vegetative.

6. Whether the vegetative nature be any other than the fiery or solar, is to man uncertain. But it is most probable that it is the same nature, though it always work not to actual vegetation, for want of prepared matter. But that the sun and fiery nature is, *eminenter*, vegetative; and therefore, that vegetation is not above the nature of fire, or the sun, and so may be an effect of it.

7. In the production of vegetatives by generation, it is evident that, as the fiery active nature is the nearest cause efficient, and the passive is the matter and recipient, so that this igneous nature generateth as in three distinguished subjects, three several ways. 1. As in *parentibus et semine*, into which God, *ab origine*, in the creation, hath put not only a spark of the active, virtuous, fiery nature in general, but also a certain special nature, differencing one creature from another. 2. The sun and superior globes of the fiery nature, which cast a paternal, though but universal influx, upon the foresaid semen. 3. The *calor naturalis telluris*, which may be called, as Dr.

^h The Platonists' method of progression is thus summed up in Plotinus Ennead. 4. l. 3. p. 384, and out of him by Ficinus: Sicut æris Summum primum omnium igitur, ab infimo ignis, sic cælum summum corpus primo animatur ab anima que est ultimum divinum: ipsum bonum est quasi centrum: mens, lumen inde emicans et permanens: anima, lumen de lumine

se movens: corpus, per se opacum illuminatur ab anima; sed anime in cælo, secure illuminant; sub cælo non sine cura. Est utique aliquid vel centrum; penes hoc autem circulus ab ipso micans: præter hæc et alius circulus, lumen de lumine: ultra hæc insuper non amplius luminis circulus, sed jam luminis indigus alius, propriæ lucis inopia. Inqui. Plot. ibid.

Gilbert and others do, its soul or form; which is to the seed as the *anima matris* is to the infant. And all these three, the fiery nature of the *semen*, of the sun, and of the *calor naturalis telluris*, are generally the same; and, by their agreeableness, do meet in co-operation for generation.

8. Herein all three, as conjunct, are the cause of life as life, the sun, the seed, and the *calor telluris*, communicating conjunctly what in their natures they all contain; that is, an active nature, having a power, by motion, light, and heat, to cause vegetation and its conjunct effects. But the *calor et motus solis*, and the *calor telluris*, are but universal causes of life as life; but the *virtus seminalis* is both a cause of life in *genere*, and a specifying cause of this or that sort of plants in *specie*. The reason why, e. g. an oak, an elm, a rose-tree, and every plant is what it is, in *specie*, being to be fetched from the seed alone, and the Creator's will.

9. Though the seed be the chief, or only specifying cause, (why this is *adantum*, and that *betonica*, and that *calendula*, &c.) yet the sun and earth, the universal causes, do contribute much more to the life as life, than the seed itself.

10. This fiery, or solar, active nature is so pure, and above the full knowledge of mortals, that we have no certainty at all, whether, in all this generative influx, it communicate to vegetatives from itself a pre-existent matter, and so draw it back to itself again by circulation, or whether it do only by the substantial contact of its active streams, cherish, and actuate, and perfect the substance which it findeth in *semine et materia passiva*; or whether, *per influxum virtutis*, it operate only by that which is commonly called quality, without any communication or contact of substance.

11. In all this operation of the solar or fiery nature in generation, it is, *quid medium*, between the passive matter and the animal nature; and is plainly an image of the animal nature and its operations; so like it, that it hath tempted many to ascribe all animal operations only to the solar or fiery nature, and hath caused wise men to doubt whether this nature be to be numbered with things corporeal or incorporeal; and to place it between both, as participating in several respects of both.

12. If the sensitive nature be really above, or specifically different from the fiery, we may, in what is said, conjecture much at the order of the generation of things sensitive, viz. by a threefold cause co-operating, one specifying, and two universal and cherishing. The specifying is the *virtus seminalis maris et feminae* conjunct, and of neither alone; the same God which blessed the single seed of a plant with the gift of multiplication, blessed only the conjunct seeds of male and female animals with that gift; the superior or universal cause, is either some *anima universalis ejusdem naturae*, or God immediately. By an *anima universalis*, I mean not an *anima totius mundi*, but of that superior vortex, or part, which this earth belongs to. Either this is the sun, or some invisible soul. If it be the sun, it is not by its simple, fiery nature before mentioned; because sensation seemeth to be somewhat, *tota specie*, different from motion, light, and heat; and then it must prove that the sun is compound, and hath a superior form and nature, which either *formaliter*, or *eminenter*, is sensitive; and that by this it is that it animateth inferior sensitives. But of this we mortals have no certainty. It seemeth very improbable, that a worm, or fly, should have a nature superior to any that the sun hath; but probabilities are not certainties; there are things highest and things lowest, in their several kinds. But re-

member, that if it should be the sun, it is by that nature superior to fire, by which it doth it: the maternal universal cause of the sensitive life is the mother. Whether the spirits of a sensitive creature have more in them than the spirits of a plant; and do more by nutrition than cause vegetation; whether they nourish sensitive life as such is doubtful, but if they do so, they be but a universal, and not a specifying cause, that is, the cause of life as life, but not of the *vita bovis, equi, canis, felis, aquile, quæ talis*. And, therefore, if the late-discovered trick of passing all the blood of one animal into another, be prosecuted to the utmost trial, possibly it may do much to the advantage of life and sense as such; but never to the alteration of the species, to turn a dog into a swine, or any other sort of animal.

13. Whether the sensitive nature be most refined corporeal, or totally incorporeal, is past the reach of man to be assured of.

14. The foresaid difficulty is greater here than in the vegetative generation, viz. Whether, in the multiplication of sensitive souls, there be an addition of substance communicated from the universal causes, or a greater quantity or degree of matter, physical or metaphysical, propagated and produced into existence by generation, than there was before? It seemeth hard to say, that a pair of animals in Noah's ark had as much matter or substance in their souls, as the millions since proceeding from them; but whether such souls have quantitative degrees; or by what terms of gradation the souls of millions are distinct from one, besides the number; or whether God in the blessing of multiplication, hath enabled them to increase the quantity of matter which shall serve for so many more forms; are things which we cannot fully understand.

15. In the like manner, we may rise up, and conceive of the generation of mankind. We are sure that he hath an intelligent nature, much nobler than the sensitive. And we know that *homo generat hominem*: and we know that in his generation there is a universal cause and a specifying cause: for though there be but one species of men, yet there are more of intelligences; and that one may have a universal cause, producing that and other effects, and a universal, special cause. We know that because he is generated, the specifying cause is the fecundity, or propagating power of the parent, generating a separable seed, which seed, in conjunction, as aforesaid, *et suppositis supponendis*, is *semen hominis*, and is man seminally and virtually, but not actually: that is, hath both passive and active power, and virtue, by reception of the influx of the universal cause, to become a man. The universal inferior or feminine cause, is the mother's body and soul, or the whole mother, in whom the infant is generated and cherished. I call it universal; for it is only the semen that specifieth; and, therefore, by a false or brutish semen a woman may produce a monster. The universal, paternal cause is certainly God, *ut prima*, and it is probable, also, *ut sola*: for he made man's soul at first by that immediate communication, which is called breathing it into him; and the intellectual nature, though specified into angels and men, is the nearest to God that we have any knowledge of: and therefore reason will not teach us to look to any intermediate universal or superior cause, because there is no created, superior nature to the intellectual; and it is absurd to go to the inferior to be the cause of the superior. If any will needs think, that under God, there is some universal intellect, (not of the whole universe, for that is plainly improbable, but of our system or vortex,) they must take it to be some angelical intelligence, as Aristotle, or the sun: no

man can prove either of these to have any such office. And for the sun, it is certain that it is not possible, unless itself be an intelligence: and though to human reason it seem very likely, that so glorious a corporeal nature as the sun should not be destitute of as noble a form, as a lump of clay, a human body, doth possess, that so there may be a proportion in God's works between the nobility of matter and form; yet all this to man is utterly uncertain; nor doth any man know whether the luminaries are animated with either sentient or intelligent souls, or not. He that most confidently asserteth either, and scorneth the contradictor, doth but tell you that he is ignorant of his ignorance. But if it should prove true, as many of the fathers thought, and Mamertus, *ubi supra*, asserteth, that angels have fiery bodies which they animate, and so that the sun is animated with an intelligence, it would not follow, that, as fiery or as sensitive, but only as intellective, it were a subordinate universal cause of complete human generation, and that *sol et homo generant hominem*; save, only, *quoad corpus*, which is but *secundum quid*. But that God is the universal Cause is unquestionable, whether there be any subordinate or not.

16. And here it is no wonder if the doubts arise which were in the cases of the forementioned generations: whether God as the universal Cause produce new metaphysical matter for new forms: whether millions of souls since generated have not more such metaphysical matter than the souls of Adam and Eve alone: how souls may be said to have more or less such matter or substance: whether he educe all souls, *e virtute et fecunditate primarum*, by giving them a power without any division or diminution of themselves, to bring forth others by multiplication; and so cause his creature to participate of his own fecundity, or power of causing entities, &c. But such difficulties as these, which arise not from uncertainties in theology, but are the mere consequents of the imperfection of human intellects, and the remoteness, depth, and unrevealedness of these mysterious works of God, should turn no man from the holding of other plain revealed truths. As that man generateth man: that God is the chief specifying Cause by his first making of man, and giving him the power and blessing of propagation, which he still maintaineth, and with which he doth concur: that man is the second specifying cause in the exercise of that power of generation which God gave him: that God is the chief universal Cause; and to the production of an intellectual nature, as such, doth unspeakably more than man: that the mother, as cherishing the *semen utriusque parentis*, is the maternal universal cause, &c. We know not fully how it is that one light causeth a thousand, without division or diminution of itself; and what it is that is caused *de novo*. It is easy to say, that it is but the motion of one part of the atoms, or *materiala subtilis*, moving another, which was all pre-existent: but few men that can see through a smoke or dust of atoms, will believe that the sun, and other fiery bodies, which show themselves so wonderfully to us by motion, light, and heat, have no peculiar nature, power, or virtues to cause all this, but mere magnitude and figure: and that those corpuscles which have so many hundred degrees of magnitude, and figures, should not fall into as many hundred such bodies as we call elements, rather than into two or four.

Suppose, which we may, *ad verum exquirendum*, that there were no more fire in the universe than one candle: it having the same nature as now it hath, that candle would turn cities and all combustible matter into fire. But of the generation of man, *quoad animam*, I refer the reader to Sennertus's Hypomnemata, to omit all others.

And now I would know what there is in generation that should be against the immortality of the soul? Will you say, it is because the soul hath a beginning? I have answered before, that so have all creatures. Is it because it proveth the soul material? 1. If it did, I have showed that you yourselves hold a perpetuity of matter. 2. But it doth not so. If you say, that incorporeal spirits generate not; I answer, That is but a naked, unproved assertion. If you say, that angels do not; I answer, that, 1. That is not because they are unable or unapt, if God thought it fittest for them: nor, 2. Can any man prove *de facto* whether they do or not. Christ saith, "They marry not," but he saith not whether they at all propagate their species or not. I know the negative is taken for certain; and I say not that it is not true, but that it is not certain or at all known, and, therefore, an unfit supposition to argue from, against the immortality of the soul. And I must confess, that, for my part, as I have oft read, *formæ se multiplicant*, and that the fire can more multiply or increase itself than earth; and as I know that the more noble any nature is, the more like it is to God, and, therefore, more potent, more active, more fecund, and productive; so I should far rather think that the angelical nature can propagate itself than the human, if God had not told me the latter, and said nothing *pro* or *contra* of the former. And, therefore, make no doubt, but if it do not, which no man knoweth, it is not because things material are more able, but for other reasons unknown to us. Whether, because God will have this lower world to be the *nidus vel matrix colorum*, and the seminary of heaven, and all multiplication to be here, or what it is, we know not.

But if it be, on the other side, concluded, that the whole substance of a soul doth proceed directly and immediately from God, it doth make no great alteration in this case, or any of the coincident cases about human propagation; if you consider, 1. That it is impossible that there should be any substance which is not totally from God, either immediately or mediately; and that what is said to be mediately from him, hath in it as much of his causation as if there were no medium; for God is not a partial cause, but a total in *suo genere*; and he is as near to the effect, as if there were no second cause. 2. That the somatists themselves say, that in the generation of plants and animals, which they suppose to be totally corporeal, there is not the least degree of substance produced *de novo*, and, therefore, there is none but what was totally of God, and the parents do but cause instrumentally the uniting of matter pre-existent. Therefore, if, in the generating of man, the parents do but instrumentally cause the uniting of substance which is totally from God, though not pre-existent, it little differenceth the case as to the consequents. 3. Especially considering that what God doth, he doth by an established law of nature; as in his making of the world, he made the sun a *causa universalis* constantly to send forth the emanation of light, heat, and moving force upon passive matter, and thereby to produce effects diversified by

i Nemesius de Anima, (which goeth under the name of Greg. Nyssen,) while he endeavoureth to prove the pre-existence of souls, doth thus peremptorily conclude: Si animæ ex ortu sunt mutuo, ratione providentiæ sunt, et caducæ sunt ut cætera quæ ex propagatione generis oriuntur: si sunt ex

nihilo, Creatio hæc est, neque verum est, cessavit Deus ab omnibus operibus suis: non ergo nunc animæ sunt. But there is no appearance of a just proof in any thing that he saith against either of the opinions which he opposeth,

the preparations and reception of that matter; as to soften wax, to harden clay, to make a dunghill stink, and a rose smell sweet; to produce a poisonous and a wholesome plant, a nightingale and a toad, &c.; and this without any dishonour to the sun. So, if God, the Father of spirits, the central Efficient of souls, have made it the original law of nature, that he will accordingly afford his communicative influx, and that in human generations, such and such preparations of matter shall be as receptive of his emanations for such and such forms, or spiritual substances, and that he will be herein but a universal Cause of souls as souls, and not of souls as clean or unclean; and that this shall depend upon the preparation of the recipient, whether it be the body, or a sensitive foregoing principle, still keeping at his pleasure, as a voluntary agent, the suspension or dispose of the effect, this would make no great alteration, neither as to the point of original sin, nor any other weighty consequent.

Object. XIII. Omne quod oritur interit: That which is not eternal as to past duration, is not eternal as to future duration: but the soul is not eternal as to past duration; *ergo*.

Ans. I confess this argument will prove that the soul is not immortal *ex necessitate sue nature*, without dependence on a voluntary preserver. And, therefore, Cicero, after most other philosophers who use the major for a contrary conclusion, mistook in this, that he thought the soul was as natural an emanation from God, as the beams or light is from the sun; and, therefore, that it was naturally eternal both *a parte ante* et *a parte post*: which made Arnobius, and other ancients, argue as much against the Platonists' immortality of the soul, as against the Epicureans' mortality; so that, as I said before, one would think that they were heretical in this point that doth not mark them well. But it is only this natural eternity which they confute: and when the philosophers say, that *omne quod oritur interit*, they can mean, or at least prove, no more but this, that it is not everlasting *ex necessitate nature*. But yet, 1. It may be in its nature fitted to be perpetual; 2. And by the will of the Creator made perpetual. Every creature did *oriri de novo*; and yet every one doth not *interire*.

Object. XIV. Among all your arguments for the soul's immortality, there are none but moral ones.

Ans. Morality is grown so contemptible a thing with some debauched persons, that a very argument is invalidated by them, or contemned, if they can but call it moral. But what is morality, but the modality of naturals? and the same argument may be natural and moral. Indeed, we call that a *causa moralis* oft-times which doth not necessitate the effect; and, yet, sometimes even moral causes do infallibly and certainly produce the effect; but causation and argumentation are different things, and so is an effect and a logical consequence. Will you call the consequents of God's own wisdom, justice, veracity, goodness, &c. uncertain, as coming from a moral cause? The soul is an intellectual, free agent, and adapted to moral operations; and this is its excellency and perfection, and no disparagement to it at all. And if you will better read them over, you will find that my arguments are both physical and moral; for I argue from the acts or operations of the soul to its powers and nature, and from its acts and nature to its ends, with many such like, which are as truly physical *media*, as if I argued from the nature of fire and

earth, that one, if not hindered, will ascend, and the other descend; and other men have given you other arguments in their physics and metaphysics.^k

Object. XV. You seem to confess that you cannot prove the endless duration of the soul by an argument from nature alone; but only that it shall live another life, which you call a life of retribution.

Ans. I told you that a great probability of it I thus prove: God hath made the soul of a nature not corruptible, but apt to perpetual duration; *ergo*, he thereby declareth his will, that he intendeth it for perpetual duration; because he maketh nothing in vain, either for substance or quality. It may be, some other will think, that this argument will infer not only a probability, but a certainty.

And if you go back to your objection of materiality, I now only add, that Aristotle and his followers, who think that the heavens are corporeal, yet think that they are a *quinta essentia*, and simple and incorruptible; and, therefore, that they shall certainly be everlasting. And he taketh the souls of brutes to be analogous to the matter of the stars; and so to be of that everlasting *quintessence*: and can you, in reason, say less of rational souls.

2. It is sufficient that I prove, by natural evidence, a life of retribution after this; which shall fully make the miserable ungodly ones repent tormentingly of their sin, and fill the righteous with such joys as shall fully recompense all their labour and suffering in a holy life; and that I moreover prove that duration of this life, and all the rest, by supernatural evidence.

Object. XVI. Both soul and body are like a candle *in fluxu continuo*; and we have not the same substance this week or year as we had the last, there being a continual consumption, or transition and accretion: *ergo*, being not the same, we are incapable of a life of future retribution. Will you reward and punish the man that is, or the man that was?

Ans. It is a foolish thing to carry great and certain truths into the dark, and to argue against them, *a minus notis*, from mere uncertainties. As to your simile, I confess that the oil of your candle is still wasting, so is the wick; but not, that new is added to make it another thing, unless it be a lamp. I confess that the lucid fume, which we call the flame, is still passing away; but whether the fiery principle (in its essence not visible, but only in its light) be not still the same, till all the passive matter be consumed, is more than you know. So, also, if you argue from the vegetative life of a tree: whether the same principle of vegetation, enlarging itself, continue not to the end to individuate the tree, though all the passive elements, earth, water, and air, may be in *fluxu* and a transient state? It is certain, that some fixed principle of individuation there is, from whence it must be denominated the same. The water of the hasty river would not be called the same river, if the channel that it runs in were not the same; nor your candle be called the same candle, if some of the first wick or oil, at least, did not remain, or the same fire continue it, or the same candlestick hold it. And what is it in the tree which is still the same; or what in the bird that trieth about, which is still the same? When you have searched all, you will find nothing so likely as the vital principle, and yet that something there must be.

2. But doth not the light of nature, and the concurrent sense and practice of all the world, confute you; and tell you that, if you cannot understand

^k Would you see physical arguments for the soul's incorporeity and immortality? Among a multitude that have done it, I desire you to read Plotinus, En. 4. l. 7. Of the Immort. of the Soul, whose arguments I premit, because I would

not be tedious in transcribing that which is already so well written, abating their peculiar conceits. Vid. et Savonarol. l. 1. c. ult.

what the individuating principle is, yet that certainly some such there is, and doth continue. Why, else, will you love and provide for your own children, if they be not at all the same that you begat, or the same this year as you had the last? Why will you be revenged on the man that did beat you, or hang the thief that robbed you, or do justice on any murderer or malefactor, seeing that it is not the same man that did the deed? If he transpire as much as Sanctorius saith, and his substance diminish as much in a day as Opicius saith, certainly a few days leave him not the same as those transitory parts. Surely, therefore, there is something which is still the same: else you would deny the king his title, and disoblige yourselves from your subjection, by saying that he is not at all the same man that you swore allegiance to, or that was born heir to the crown: and you would, by the same reason, forfeit your own inheritance. Why should uncertain, philosophical whimsies befool men into those speculations, which the light and practice of all the world do condemn as madness; but arguing, *ab ignotis*, will have no better success. Of the individuation of bodies in the resurrection I spake before.¹

Object. XVII. If the soul be a substance, we must confess it not annihilated: but it is most like to proceed from some element of souls, or universal soul, either the *anima mundi*, or rather the *anima solis*, vel *hujus systematis*; and so to be reduced to it again, and lose its individuation, and consequently to be incapable of retribution.²

Answ. I. That the soul which we speak of is a substance, is past all controversy: for though, as I have showed, there is truly an order or temperament of the parts, which he that listeth may call the form, the life, the soul, or what he please, yet no man denieth but that there is also some one part which is more subtle, pure, active, potent, and regnant than the rest; and this is it, whatever it is, which I call the soul. We are agreed of the thing; let them wrangle de nomine, who have nothing else to do.

2. That this substance, nor any substance else, is not annihilated, as I have said, is past dispute.

3. Therefore, there is nothing indeed in all this business, which is liable to controversy, but this point of individuation, which this objection mentioneth, and that of action and operation following. And I must confess that this is the only particular in which hereabouts I have found the temptation to error to be much considerable. They that see how all waters come from the sea, and how earth, water, air, and fire, have a potent inclination to union, and when the parts are separated, have a *motus aggregativus*, may be tempted to think it a probable thing that all souls come from and return unto a universal soul or element, of which they are but particles. But concerning this, I recommend to the sober reader these following considerations:

1. There is in nature more than a probability that the universe hath no universal soul, whatever particular systems or globes may have.³ For we find that perfection lieth so much in unity, and as all things are from one, so as they go out from one, they go into multiplicity, that we have great cause to think that it is the divine prerogative to be *unicus universalis*. He is the *unicus universalis* in entity, life, intelligence, &c. As he hath made no one monarch of all the universe, no, nor of all the earth; nor any one head of all the church that is not God,

whatever the Roman vice-god said; nor hath given any one a sufficiency hereto, whatever a self-idolizer may imagine of himself: so he hath not given away or communicated that prerogative which seemeth proper to the Deity, to be a universal mind, and consequently a universal parent, and king, yea, more, to be *omnia in uno*. Having no sort of proof that there is any such thing, finding it so high and divine a prerogative, we have little reason to believe that there is any such thing at all in being.

2. If you mean, therefore, no more than a universal soul to a particular system, or vortex in the world, that universal will be itself a particular soul, individuated, and distinct from other individuals. And, indeed, those very elements that tempt you, might do much to undeceive you. There is of fire a special unity, by which it differeth from other elements; but there is no universal aggregation of all the parts of fire. The sun, which seemeth most likely to contend for it, will yet acknowledge individual stars, and other parts of fire, which show that it is not the whole. The water is not all in the sea: we know that there is much in the clouds, whatever there is elsewhere above the clouds. We have no great cause to think that this earth is *terra universalis*. I confess, since I have looked upon the moon through a tube, and since I have read what Galileus saith of it, and of Venus, and other planets, I find little reason to think that other globes are not some of them like our earth. And if you can believe an individuation of greater souls, why not of lesser? The same reasons that tempt you to think that the individuation of our souls will cease, by returning into the *anima systematis vel solis*, may tempt you to think that the *anima systematum* may all cease their individuation, by returning into God; and their existence, too.

3. If this were left as an unrevealed thing, you might take some liberty for your conjectures. But when all the twenty arguments which I have given do prove a continued individuation and retribution, it is deceitful and absurd to come in with an unproved dream against it, and to argue, *ab ignoto*, against so many cogent arguments.

4. And we have proved supernatural revelation to second this, which is evidence more than sufficient to bear down your unproved conjectures.

5. If it had been doubtful whether the soul's individuation cease, and nothing of all the rest is doubtful, yet this would not make so great a difference in the case as some imagine; for it would confess the perpetuity of souls, and it would not overthrow the proof of a retribution, if you consider these four things:

1. That the parts are the same in union with the whole, as when they are all separated. Their nature is the same, and, as Epicurus and Democritus say of their atoms, they are still distinguishable, and are truly parts, and may be intellectually separated: the same individual water which you cast out of your bottle into the sea, is some where in the sea still, and though contiguous to other parts, is discernible from them all by God. The *hæccetis*, as they say, remaineth.

2. That the love of individuation, and the fear of the ceasing of our individuation, is partly but put into the creature from God, *pro tempore*, for the preservation of individuals in this present life. And partly it is inordinate, and is in man the fruit of his fall,

viduatione Animarum, as also the following pages, proving that our souls are not parts of the Anima Mundi; et Sect. 8. p. 377. Quomodo animæ differant: et quomodo sint immortales in forma propria restantes?

³ Read the note in the foregoing page, (p. 197.)

¹ The sum of their reasons, who think that bodies at the resurrection are identified only by the soul's identity, you may see in Thom. White's Theolog. Institut. To. 2. li. 3. Lect. 4. p. 239, 340.

² Read Plotinus in Ennead. 4. p. 374, Ed. Basil. De Indi-

which consisteth in turning to selfishness from God. And we know not how much of our recovery consisteth in the cure of this selfishness; and how much of our perfection in the cessation of our individuate affections, cares, and labours. Nature teacheth many men, by societies, to unite as much as possible, as the means of their common safety, benefit, and comfort; and earth, water, air, and all things, would be aggregate. Birds of a feather will flock together: and love, which is the uniting affection, especially to a friend who is fit for union with us in other respects, is the delight of life. And if our souls were swallowed up of one common soul, as water cast into the sea is still moist and cold, and hath all its former properties, so we should be still the same; and no man can give a just reason why our sorrows or joys should be altered ever the more by this.

3. And God can either keep the ungodly from this union for a punishment, or let them unite with the infernal spirits, which they have contracted a con-naturality with, or let them, wherever they are, retain the venom of their sin and misery.

4. And he can make the resurrection to be a return of all these souls, from the ocean of the universal nature, into a more separated individuation again. I only say, that if it had been true, that departing souls had fallen into a common element, yet on all these reasons, it would not have overthrown our arguments for a life of full retribution. God, that can say at any time, This drop of water in the ocean is the same that was once in such a bottle, can say, This particle of the universal soul was once in such a body, and thither can again return it. But the truth is, no man can show any proof of such a future aggregation.

And to conclude, the Scripture here cleareth up all the matter to us, and assureth us of a continued individuation yet more than nature doth, though the natural evidences before produced are unanswerable.

And as for the similitude of light returning to the sun, it is still an arguing *a minus noto*: we know not well what it is; we know not how it returneth; and we know not how the particles are distinguishable there. They that confess souls to be indivisible, though the individuals are all numerically distinct, must on the same ground think that two or many cannot by union be turned into one, as they hold that one cannot be turned into two, or into several parts of that one divided.

Object. XVIII. The Platonists, and some Platonic divines, have so many dreams and fopperies about the soul's future state, in aerial and ethereal vehicles, and their durations, as make that doctrine the more to be suspected.

Ans. 1. Whether all souls hereafter be incorporate, in some kind of bodies which they call vehicles, is a point which is not without difficulty. A sober christian may possibly doubt whether there be any incorporeal, simple essence in a separated existence, besides God alone. Those that doubt of it, do it on these grounds: 1. They think that absolute simplicity is a divine, incommunicable perfection. 2. They think that Christ is the noblest of all creatures; and that seeing he shall be compound of a human soul and body, though glorified and spiritual, to eternity; therefore, no angel shall excel him in natural simplicity and perfection. 3. Because it is said, that we shall be equal with the angels; and yet we shall, at the resurrection, be compounded of a soul and body. 4. Because it is said, that he made his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. 5. Because the ancient fathers, who first thought angels to be subtle bodies, were confuted by those, as Mammertus forementioned, who asserted them to be fiery bodies,

animated with incorporeal souls. 6. Because they read of the devil's dwelling in the air, as one cast down; therefore they think that he hath an airy body, instead of an ethereal or fiery. 7. Because they see the sun so glorious a creature, in comparison of a body of flesh; therefore they think that the symmetry and proportion among God's works require, that bodies and forms, or souls, be suitable. 8. Because they know not what else becometh of the sensitive soul of man, when he dieth, which they take to be but a subtle body; and therefore think it goeth, as a body or vehicle, with the rational soul. 9. Because they mistake that difficult text, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 8, think, by the seventh and eighth verses, that it speaketh of the instant after death; and thinking, by the first and second verses, that (as Beza and most think) it speaketh of a celestial body as our clothing, and not of a mere state of glory to the soul.^a

I name their reasons, that you may be charitable in your censures; but the truth is, they talk of unrevealed or uncertain things, which do but trouble the heads of christians to no purpose, who may live better, and speed better, by following the naked precepts of christianity, and hoping for such a glory as Christ hath plainly described, without prying into that which doth less concern them to be acquainted with.

And Satan knoweth that overdoing is one way of undoing. Thus men on all extremes do harden one another. As in these times among us it is notorious, that the men of one extreme in church affairs do harden the other, and the other harden them. And as fanaticism riseth from the disliking of sensuality and profaneness, incautelous, and sensual, and profane men run into hell to avoid fanaticism; even so the brutish grossness of the somatists driveth some philosophers into Platonic dreams; and the Platonic fictions harden the Epicureans in a far worse way. Lactantius, *De Ira Dei*, (c. 13.) thinks, that Epicurus was moved to his opinion against providence, by seeing the hurt that good and religious men endure from the worse sort here in this world. But why should you run out on one side the way, because other men run out on the other? Why do you not rather argue from the doctrine in the sober mean, that it is true, than from the extremes that the truth is falsehood, when reason will allow you to conclude no more than that those extremes are falsehood? But surely, I had rather hold Plato's *anima mundi*, or Aristotle's *intellectus agens*, and his moving intelligences, than Epicurus's atoms and motion only. And I had rather think, with Alexander Arphrod. that *omnis actio corporis est ab incorporeo principio*, yea, or the stoics' doctrine of intellectual fire doing all, than Gassendus's doctrine, that no incorporeal thing can move a corporeal, or that atoms and their motion only do all that we find done in nature.

When I look over and about me, I find it a thing quite past my power, to think that the glorious parts above us are not replenished with much nobler creatures than we. And therefore if the Platonists, and the ancient Platonic fathers of the church, did all think that they lived in communion with angels, and had much to do with them, and that the superior intelligences were a nobler part of their studies than mere bodies, they shall have the full approbation of my reason in this, though I would not run with them into any of their presumptions, and uncertain or unsound conceits.

Saith *Æneas Gazæus*, (p. 778.) when he had told us that Plato, Pythagoras, Plotinus, and Numenius,

^a Plotinus' *Ennead*. 4. de Anima, hath a great deal of doctrine in it, much wiser and wholesomer than that of Epicurus and the atomists.

were for the passing of men's souls into brutes; but Porphyry and Jamblichus were against it, and thought that they passed only into men; *Ēgo quidem hac ipsa de causa filium aut famulum ob id quod commiserint peccatum puniens, antequam de ipsis supplicium sumam, præmoneo, ut meminerint ne posthac unquam in eadem mala recurrant. Deus autem quando ultima supplicia decernit, non edocet eos qui peccatum causas, sed scelorum memoriam omnem tollet?* (Vide p. 382.) For this reason, and many others, we assume not their conceit of the soul's pre-existence, and think all such unproved fancies to be but snares to trouble the world with. We think not that God punisheth men for sin in another world, while he totally obliterate the memory of the other world, and of their sin; when he hath told us, that in Adam all die; and by one man's disobedience many are made sinners, and so condemnation passed upon all, Rom. v. Nor will we, with Origen, thus tempt men to look for more such changes hereafter, which we can give them no proof of. Nor will we distribute the angelical hierarchy into all the degrees which the pseudo Dionysius doth; nor with the gnostics, Basilidians, Saturninians, Valentinians, and abundance of those ancient heretics, corrupt christianity with the mixture of fanatic dreams, about the unrevealed powers and worlds above us, either worshipping angels, or prying into those things which he hath not seen, (and are not revealed,) vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, (or without cause puffed up by the imagination of his own flesh, as Dr. Hammond translateth it,) Col. ii. 18. Nor will we make a religion with Paracelsus, Behmen, the Rosicrucians, or the rest, described by Christ. Beckman, (Exercit.) of the philosophical whimsies of an over-stretched imagination: and yet we will not reject the saying of Athenagoras, (Apol. p. 57,) *Magnum numerum angelorum et ministrorum Dei esse fateamur; quos opifex et architectus mundi Deus verbo suo tanquam in classes ordinavit centuriarumque, ut elementa, cælos, mundum, et quæ in mundo sunt, vicesque, et ordinem omnium moderarent.* Though we may add, with Junilius Africanus, that "whether the angels meddle with the government of the world of established creatures, is a difficult question."

Object. XIX. If the soul do continue individuate, yet its actings will not be such as they are now in the body, because they have not spirits to act by: and, as Gassendus thinketh, that the reason of oblivion in old men is the wearing out of the *vestigia* of the former spirits, by the continual flux or transition of matter, so we may conceive that all memory will cease to separated souls on the same account; and therefore they will be unfit for rewards or punishments, as not remembering the cause.^p

Answ. 1. If Gassendus's opinion were true, men should forget all things once a year, if not once a month, considering how many pounds of matter are spent every twenty-four hours. And why, then, do we better, when we are old, remember the things which we did between nine or ten years old, and twenty, than most of the later passages of our lives, as I do, for my part, very sensibly.

2. What is man's memory, (for with brutes we meddle not,) but *scientia præteritorum*? Is not remembering a knowing of things past? Surely, we

^p See Plotin. (Ennead. 4 l. 3. p. 185,) showing, that in separated souls, reason is so powerful, that it, ex tempore, conceiveth all things propounded by the intellect; and that souls in heaven converse without voice, but demons and souls that are in the air converse by voice. Vid. Porphy. de Occasionibus de Passionibus Animæ et Corp.

^q Plotin. (ubi sup. p. 391, sec. 26,) showeth that memory is more pertinent to the soul than the body, and oft without the body; (et sec. 29, &c. et c. 31, 32,) the difference be-

may perceive that it is; and that it is of the same kind of action with the knowing of things present; and therefore we make not memory a third faculty, because it is the same with the understanding.

3. We have little reason to think, that the surviving soul will lose any of its essential powers, and grow by its change not only impotent, but another thing. Therefore, it will be still an intelligent power. And though remote actions and effects, such as writing, fighting, &c. are done by instruments, which being removed, we cannot do them without; yet essential acts are nothing so, which flow immediately from the essence of the agent, as light, heat, and motion of the fire: if there be but due objects, these will be performed without such instruments: nor will the Creator, who continueth it an active, intelligent power, continue it so in vain, by denying it necessities for its operations. There is like to be much difference, in many respects, between the soul's actings here and hereafter: but the acts flowing from its essence immediately, as knowledge, volition, complacency, called love, and displacency, &c. will be the same. How far the soul here doth act, without any idea or instrument, I have spoken before. And the manner of our acting hereafter no man doth now fully understand; but that which is essentially an intellectual, volitive power, will not be idle in its active essence, for want of a body to be its instrument. If we may so far ascribe to God himself such affections or passions, as the ingenious Mr. Samuel Parker, in his Tentam. Phil. (l. ii. c. 8. p. 333, &c.) hath notably opened, we have no reason that *scientia præteritorum* is not to be ascribed to a soul, when it is separated from the corporeal spirits.^q

Or, if the soul out of the body were as liable, as it is by diseases of the body while it is in it, to the loss of memory, yet all those arguments which prove the life of retribution hereafter, do fully prove that God will provide it a way of exercise, and prevent all those hinderances of memory which may make his judgment and retribution void. Again, therefore, I say, to argue from things unknown, against clear evidence, in matters that our own everlasting joy or sorrow is concerned in so deeply, is a folly that no tongue can express with its due aggravations.

Object. XX. The belief of the immortality of souls doth fill men with fears, and draw them to superstition, and trouble the peace of kingdoms by unavoidable sects, in the prosecution of these things which are of such transcendent weight; when otherwise men might live in quietness to themselves and others, and in promoting of the public good.^r

Answ. This is the maddest objection of all the rest; but in our days there are men found that are no wiser than to make it. I have answered it fully in divers popular treatises, as that called "A Saint or a Brute," &c.

1. The greatest and best things are liable to the worst abuses. Thus you may argue against reason, that it doth but fill men's brains with knavish craft, and enable them to do mischief, and to trouble the world, and to live themselves in cares and fears, &c. Upon many such reasons, Cotta, in Cic. De Nat. Deor. doth chide God for making man a rational creature; and saith, he had been happier without it. And were it not for this wit and reason, we should

tween the sensitive and rational memory: (et l. 2,) he sheweth that the soul in heaven forgetteth these trifles, not through ignorance but contempt.

^r Sic ille (Strato) Deum opere magno liberat, et me timore: quis enim potest cum existimet a Deo se curari, non et dies et noctes divinum numen horrere? et si quid adversi acciderit, (quod cui non accidit,) extimescere ne id iure e venerit. Cic. Acad. quest. l. 4. p. 44.

have none of these evils which you have here now mentioned. Why, then, is not reason, as well as religion, on that account to be rejected?

On the same reason, philosophy and learning may be accused, as it is with the Turks and Muscovites. What abundance of sects, and voluminous contentions, and tiresome, consuming studies have they caused? Witness all the volumes of philosophers and school-men.

On the same account you may cry down kings, and civil government, and riches, and all that is valued in the world: for what wars and bloodshed have there been in the world for crowns and kingdoms! what hatred and contention for honour and wealth! If you could make all men swine, they would not stir for gold or pearls; or if they were dogs, they would not fight for kingdoms; and if they be blind and impious worldlings, they will not be zealous about religion, unless to dispirit it, and to reduce it to the service of their fleshly interest, which is the hypocrite's zeal. No man will contend for that which he valueth not.

But, 2. Consider that though dogs will not fight for crowns, they will fight for bones, and sometimes need men of reason to stave them off. And though swine fight not for gold, they will fight for druff, and burst their bellies if they be not governed. And though unbelievers and atheists trouble not the world to promote religion, they set families, towns, and countries, and kingdoms together by the ears, for their worldly pelf and fleshly interest. Inquire whether the wars of the world be not most for carnal interest, even where religion hath been pretended; and hearken, in Westminster-Hall, and at the assizes, whether most of the contentings there are such as are caused by religion, or by the love of the world and of the flesh. And where religion seemeth to be a part of the cause, it is the atheists and ungodly that are commonly the chief contenders; who think it not enough to hope for no life to come themselves, but they cannot endure other men that do it, because they seem wiser, and better, and happier than they; and by their holiness gall their consciences, and condemn them.

3. The extremity of this objection's impudency appeareth in this above all: that it is most notorious, that there is no effectual cure for all the villainies of the world but true religion; and shall the cure be made the cause of that disease? 1. Read and judge in nature and Scripture, whether the whole matter of religion be not perfectly contrary to the vices of the world. Will it trouble kingdoms, or disquiet souls, to love God above all, and to honour and obey him, and be thankful for his mercies, and to trust his promises, and to rejoice in hope of endless glory; and to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to do no injustice or wrong to any; to forbear wrath and malice, lust, adultery, theft, and lying, and all the rest expressed in this treatise. 2. Is it not for want of religion that all the vices and contentions of the world are? Would not men be better subjects, and better servants, and better neighbours, if they had more religion? Would not they lie, and deceive, and steal, and wrong others less? Do you think he that believes a life to come, or he that believeth it not, is liker to cut your purse, or rob you by the highway, or bear false witness against you, or be perjured, or take that which is not his own, or any such unrighteous thing? Is he liker to live as a good subject or servant, who looketh for a reward in heaven for it, or he that looketh to die as a beast doth? Is he liker to do well, and avoid evil, who is moved by the effectual hopes and fears of another life, or he that hath no such hopes and fears,

but thinketh that if he can escape the gallows there is no further danger? Had you rather your servant that is trusted with your estate, did believe that there is a life to come, or that there is none? Nay, why doth not your objection militate as strongly against the thief's believing that there will be an assize? For if the belief of an assize did not trouble him, he might quietly take that which he hath a mind to, and do what he list; but this fills his heart with fears and troubles. 3. Compare those parts of the world, (Brazil, and Soldania, &c.) which believe not a life to come, (if any such there be,) with those that do, and see which belief hath the better effects. 4. What is there of any effectual power, to restrain that man from any villany which he hath power to carry out, or policy to cover, who doth not believe a life to come? 5. And if you believe it not, what will you do with reason, or any of your faculties, or your time? How will you live in the world, to any better purpose, than if you had slept out all your life? What talk you of the public good, when the denying of our final, true felicity, denieth all that is truly good, both public and private?

But so sottish and malignant an objection deserveth pity more than confutation. Whatever religious persons did ever offend these men with any real crimes, I can assure them, that the cure had been to have made them more religious, and not less; and that the true belief of a life to come is the end, the motive, the poise of all wise and regular actions, and of love and peace, of right government and obedience, and of justice, mercy, and all that is lovely in the world.

An Objection about the World's Eternity.

Having said thus much about the point which I thought most considerable, I shall answer an objection about the world's eternity, because I perceive that it sticks with some.

Object. We find it the harder to believe the Scripture, and the christian doctrine, because it asserteth a thing which Aristotle hath evinced to be so improbable, as is the creation of the world, within less than six thousand years. When no natural reason can be brought to prove that the world is not eternal.

Ans. 1. It is you that are the affirmers, and, therefore, on whom the natural proof is incumbent. Prove, if you can, that the world is eternal. Were it not tedious, I should, by examining your reasons, show that they have no convincing force at all.

2. There is so much written of it, that I am loth to trouble the reader with more. I now only again refer the reader to Raymundus Lullius, desiring him not to reject his arguments if some of them seem not cogent, seeing if any one of all his multitude prove such, it is enough.*

3. I now only desire that the controversy between the christian and the infidel may be but rightly stated; and to that end do not charge christianity with any schoolman's, or other confident person's, private opinions, nor suppose Christ or Scripture to determine any thing which they do not determine. 1. Christianity and Scripture do not at all determine, whether the whole universe was created at the same time when this, our heaven and earth, was; but only that the system or world which we belong to, the sun, and moon, and stars, and earth, were then created. Nay, a great part of the ancient doctors, and of the most learned late expositors on Gen. i. do expound the heavens which God is said to create, as being only the visible heavens, and not including the angels at all; and others say, that by "in the be-

* Vid. Paul. Cortes. in 2 sent. d. 1. p. 30, 31.

ginning," is meant *ab initio rerum*, and that the heavens there meant being the angelical habitations, and the earth as without form, were both *ab initio rerum* before the six days' creation, which began with the making of light out of the pre-existent heavens or chaos. I think not this opinion true; but this liberty christian doctors have taken, of differing from one another in this difficult point. But they utterly differ about the time of the creation of angels, (on Gen. i. and on Job i.) and, consequently, whether there were not a world existent when this world was created.¹

2. Or if any that seeth more than I, can prove the contrary, yet it is certainly a thing undetermined by Scripture and the christian faith, whether there were any worlds that had begun and ended before this was made. That God is the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, is most certain; but whether this heaven and earth, which now is, was the first which he hath made, is a thing that our religion doth not at all meddle with. They that, with Origen, affirm that there were antecedent worlds, are justly blamed on one side, not for speaking things false, but things uncertain and unrevealed, and for corrupting christianity by a mixture of things alien and doubtful; and those who affirm that there were no antecedent worlds, are as much culpable on the other side, if not more, on the same account, and upon further reasons. On the one side, we know that God needeth nothing to his own felicity, but is perfectly sufficient for himself, and that he createth not the world *ex necessitate nature*, as an agent which acteth *ad ultimum posse*; and, on the other side, we know, that though he hath a goodness of self-perfection, unspeakably more excellent than his benignity, as related to man, (not that one property in God is to be said more excellent than another in itself, but that, *quoad relationem*, there is an infinite difference between his goodness in himself, and his goodness only as related to his creatures, and measured by their interest,) yet we confess that his fecundity and benignity are included in his own goodness; and that he delighteth to do good, and is communicative; and that he doth good *ex necessitate voluntaria*; *ex nature perfectione*, without coercion; it being most necessary that he do that which his infinite wisdom saith is best; which made Tho. White "de Mundo" say, that God did necessarily make the world, and necessarily make it in time, and not *ab eterno*, and yet all this most voluntarily, because he doth necessarily do that which is best in the judgment of his wisdom. And we deny not, that if a man will presume to give liberty to his reason, to search into unrevealed things, that it will seem to him very improbable, that he who is *actus purus*, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, and who now taketh pleasure in all his works, and his delights are with the sons of men, should, from all eternity, produce no creature till less than six thousand years ago; when a thousand years with him are but as a day; and that he should resolve to have creatures to all eternity, who, as to future duration, shall be so like to himself, when, from all eternity, he had no creature till, as it were, five or six days ago! Christians are apt to have such thoughts as these as well as you, when they look but to rational probabilities; but they hold that all these matters, whether there were antece-

dent worlds, and how many, and of what sort, and of what duration, whether this was the first, are matters unrevealed, which they ought not to trouble the world or themselves with prying into, or contending about: and they find that they are unfruitful speculations, which do but overwhelm the mind of him that searcheth after them; when God hath provided for us, in the christian faith, more plain, and sure, and solid, and wholesome food to live upon.

3. And if it be unrevealed in Scripture, whether, before this, there were any other world, we must confess it unrevealed, whether there were any emanent or created entity which God did produce from all eternity, considered *quoad durationem* only; for the Scripture saith no more of one than of the other. And if there were one moment, dividing eternity only imaginarily, in which there had been nothing but God, we must equally confess an eternity in which there was nothing but God; because eternity hath no beginning.²

4. But christianity assureth us of these two things: 1. That, certainly, there is no being besides God but what was created, produced, or totally caused by him; and that if any creature were eternal as to duration, yet it is after God in order of being, as caused by him, as the shadow is after the substance, and the beams and light are after the sun; or, rather, as the leaves would be after the life of the tree, if they were conceived to be both eternal: one would be an eternal cause, and the other but an eternal effect. 2. It is certain that this present world, containing the sun, and moon, and heavens, and earth, which are mentioned, Gen. i. is not from eternity; and, indeed, reason itself doth make that, at least, very probable, as revelation makes it certain, which will appear when I have opened the philosophers' opinions on the other side.

2. Among yourselves there are all these differences, and so we have several cases to state with you:

1. Some think that this present system of compounded beings is from eternity; 2. Others think, that only the elements and heavens, and all simple beings, are from eternity; 3. Others think that fire or ether only, as the active elements, are from eternity, or the incorruptible matter of the heavens; 4. Others think that matter and motion only were from eternity; 5. Others think that only spiritual, purer beings, intelligences, or minds, were from eternity, and other things produced immediately by them; 6. And there have been those heathen philosophers who held that only God was from eternity.

Among all this variety of opinions, why should any one think the more doubtfully of christianity, for denying them, which all the other deny themselves: is it a likely thing that any individual mixed body should be eternal, when we know that mixed bodies incline to dissolution; and when we see many of them, *oriri et interire*, daily before our eyes? And if man and beast, as to each individual, have a beginning and end, it must be so as to the beginning of the species; for the species existeth not out of the individuals, and some individual must be first: and as Bishop Ward argueth against Mr. Hobbs, "If the world be eternal, there have infinite days gone before, e. g. the birth of Christ: and then the whole is no greater than the parts, or infinity must

numquam asseritur, quod excitat eam, et ad seipsum ejus mentem velut ex profundo quodam somno convertit, &c.

¹ Luminis nature non constat quod angeli facti sint in tempore, et non fuerint ab eterno: nam imprimis per lumen nature cognoscimus, exemplo soli et luminis, effectum posse coævum esse sue cause: unde nulla repugnancia est, ex parte Dei vel ex parte creature, ut hæc sint Deo coæva. Scheibler Met. de Angel. See also Durandus, Ariminenensis, Aquinas, Pererius, Suarez, &c.

¹ Some think, because they read much in Plato of the making of the world, that his opinion was not for its eternity: but I doubt they are quite mistaken. Alcinoüs in li. de doct. Plat. saith too truly, Cum vero mundum Plato genitum inquit, haudquaquam sic eum sensisse credendum est, ut aliquod olim tempus ante mundum præcesserit; verum quia semper in generatione perdurat indicatque substantiæ suæ causam præstantiorem. Animam præterea mundi, quæ semper exitit, haud efficit Deus; sed ornat: eaque ratione eam facere non-

consist of finite parts." The heavens and the earth, therefore, which are compounded beings, by the same reason, are liable to dissolution, as man is; and therefore had a beginning. So that the truth is, there is no rational probability in any of your own opinions, but those which assert the eternity of some simple beings, as matter, or intelligences, or an *anima universalis*. Now, consider further, that if ever there was a moment when there were no individuals, or mixed beings, but only some universal soul or matter, then there was an eternity when there was nothing else (for eternity hath no beginning): and then, will it not be as strange to yourselves, to think that God should, from all eternity, delight himself in matter unformed, (if that be not a contradiction,) or in an *anima simplex et unica*, without any of all the variegated matter and beings which we now find besides in nature, as that he should eternally content himself with himself alone? If all individuals of compound beings were not from eternity, what was? Either the egg or the hen must be first (as the old instance is). If you will come to it, that either *anima unica*, or atoms unformed, were eternal, why should not God as well be without these, as be without the formed worlds? *

What shall a presumptuous mind now say to all these difficulties? Why, return to modesty: remember that as the bird hath wit given her to build her nest and breed her young, as well as man could do it, and better, but hath no wit for things which do not concern her; so man hath reason for the ends and uses of reason, and not for things that are not profitable to him; and that such looks into eternity about things unrevealed do but overwhelm us, and tell us that they are unrevealed, and that we have not our reason for such employments.

And what is the end of all that I have said? Why, to tell you that our religion doth not only say nothing of former worlds, but, 2. That it also forbiddeth us to say yea or nay to such questions, and to corrupt our minds with such presumptuous searches of unrevealed things. And, therefore, that you have no reason to be against the Scripture on this account; for it doth not determine any thing against your own opinion, if you assert not the eternity of this present world or system; but it determineth against your presumption, in meddling with things which are beyond your reach.

And withal it giveth us a certainty, that as in one sun there is the *lux, radii, et lumen*; so, in one God, there is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, eternally existent, and self-sufficient; which quieteth the mind more than to think of an eternity of an *anima* or *materia*, which is not God.

All this I have here annexed, because these philosophical self-deceivers are to be pitied, and to have their proper help: and I thought it unmeet to interrupt the discourse with such debates, which are not necessary to more sober readers, but only for them who labour of this disease: and I know that when they read the first leaf of the book, which proveth that man hath a soul or mind, they will rise up against it with all the objections which Gassendus, Mr. Hobbs, &c. assault the like in Cartesius with, and say, You prove not this mind is any thing but

the subtler part of matter, and the temperament of the whole: to whom I now answer, 1. That it is not in that place incumbent on me, nor seasonable, to prove any more than I there assert. 2. But I have here done it for their sakes, more seasonably, though my discourse is entire and firm without it.

And I desire the unbelieving reader to observe, that I am so far from an unnecessary encroaching upon his liberty, and making him believe that christianity condemneth all those conjectures of philosophers which it asserteth not itself, that I have taken the liberty of freely conjecturing in such cases myself, not going beyond the evidence of probability, or the bounds of modesty; and that I think them betrayers of the christian cause, or very injurious to it, who would interest it in matters with which it meddleth not; and corrupt it, by pretending that it condemneth all the opinions in philosophy which themselves are against. Nor am I one that believeth that christianity will allow me that zeal, which too hastily and peremptorily condemneth all, that in such points do hold what I dislike. I do not anathematize as heretics all those who hold those opinions which either Stephanus, or Guilielm. Episc. Parisiensis, condemned in their Articul. contra varios in fide errores: though I think many of them dangerous, and most very audacious, e. g. *Quod intelligentia matrix cæli fluit in animas rationales sicut corpus cæli influit corpus humanum: quod scientia intelligentiæ non differet a substantia ejus. Quod intelligentia sola voluntate movet cælum: quod omne quod non habet materiam est æternum. Quod intellectus non est forma corporis nisi assistens: quod anima separata non paritur ab igne: quod anima separata manet animal vivum, &c.* I can no more charitably bear such opinions, than those that so severely then condemn'd them. Though yet, I think, that in this age, it is one of the devil's chief designs to assault christianity by false philosophy.

Pretend not, then, your by-opinions to prejudice you against christianity in the main; much less against those natural verities, which all wise, and sober, and honest philosophers are agreed in. When Xenocrates, *de morte*, (translated by Ficinus,) had, in the name of Socrates, told Axiochus what Gobrias told, of an inferior place, whither souls went at death, and of their judgment, and of the torment, *Ubi homines impii omniformibus suppliciis cruciati perpetua punitione vexantur*, he disclaimeth the imposition of the belief of so much; but selects his certainty, *Ego ratione coactus hoc solum plane firmiterque cognosco, animam omnem immortalem existere, et eam, que pura ex his locis abierit, sine tristitia vivere: quamobrem sive sursum sive deorsum tendas, Axioche, beatum fore te oportet, si modo pie sancteque vixeris.* N. B. And he holds to this: *Non in mortem, sed in ipsam immortalitatem migras: neque bonis privaberis, sed integra bonorum possessione fruieris: nec voluptates mortali corpori mixtas percipies amplius, sed omni prorsus tristitia vacuas: illuc inquam proficisceris ex hoc carcere liber, ubi quæta omnia, et a tristitia senectutis semota. Ubi exultatio sancta, vitæque malorum nescia, et tranquilla pace nutrita, naturam rerum speculans, et arcana philosophiæ contemplanis; haud sane ad turbæ theatricæ gratiam, sed ad perspicuæ veritatis objectum.*

Alexandri Lybici Philocomi, Demostrati, et Lydi plurimos libros circumferebant, et revelationes quasdam Zoroastri, Zostriani, Nichotei, Allogenis, Mesi, aliorumque ejusmodi palam ostendentes, et deceptum multos, et ipsi decepti jam fuerant:—Ego vero Porphyrius argumentationibus multis ostendi, librum Zoroastri ab illis inscriptum adulterium nominum esse, et ab eis confictum qui struebant hæresin: ut institutiones sue esse Zoroastri veteris crederentur. And hereupon Plotinus wrote his book against the gnostics.

* Read in Bib. Pat. the dispute of Zachary Mitilene with Ammonius and a physician, about the world's eternity. How nearly the Manichees of antiquity agreed with the Platonists', see in Nemesius De Anim. p. 487, 488, &c.

† Nor do I here press you with the authority of a Hermes, Zoroaster, or Orpheus, as knowing how little proof is given us that the writings are theirs which are fathered on them; and giving some credit to Porphyry himself, who, in the life of Plotinus, telleth us that there were then, Ex antequa philosophia egressi hæretici, Adelphei Acylinque sectatores, qui

If you are not wise enough to be christians, why will you not be as wise and honest as the better sort of heathens: must we have so much ado to reason debauched hypocrites and apostates, to that which nature taught so many, who yet did but in part improve it? Believe this much, which a Xenocrates or Socrates could teach you, and live accordingly, and you will not be blinded and deceived with so many beastly lusts, which hinder your belief, and will drown you in perdition. Or rather come to Christ, who will better cure those lusts than Socrates, or Plato, or any philosopher could do. But, alas! Epicurus had more court and country disciples than the manly sort of philosophers, however the wise men vilified him in the schools; and his apostles, while they condemn the doctrine of incorporeal spirits, do so often animate themselves with those corporeal spirits, which the hearers of Christ's disciples thought they had drunk in, Acts ii. that they are more fool-hardy, and pot-confident, than their wiser adversaries; and get that with audacity, that I say not impudency, which others lose by humble modesty: for, saith Cicero, (de Fin. l. ii. p. 100,) *Est tanti philosophi tamque nobilis, audacter sua decreta defendere.* And this doctrine so befriendeth sin, that sin will befriend it; and then it is not like to want entertainment. For, as Cicero, (ibid.) *Qualis est ista philosophia, quæ non interitum afferat privatitas, sed sit contenta mediocritate vitiorum?*—in magnis interduum versatur angustis, ut hominum conscientia remota, nihil tam turpe sit, quod voluptatis causa non videatur esse facturus. Deinde ubi erubuit (vis enim est permagna natura) confugit illuc ut neget accedere posse quicquam ad voluptatem nihil dolentis.—Luxuriam non reprehendit, modo sit vacua infinita cupiditate et timore. Hoc loco discipulos querere videtur, ut qui Asoti esse velint, philosophi fiant.

I have cited more out of Cicero than any other in this treatise, and yet, when I think how far our apostates are below him, seeing they despise the words of Christ, I will once more use the words of Cicero to convince them, shame them, or condemn them. Tuscul. Qu. l. i. p. 229. *Quorsum igitur hæc spectat oratio? Quæ sit illa vis et unde sit intelligendum puto. Non est certe nec cordis, nec sanguinis, nec cerebri, nec aliorum. Anima sit animus, ignisve nescio; (he doubted whether the Platonists or stoics were in the right); nec me pudet ut istos fateri me nescire quod nesciam: illud, si ulla alia de re obscura, affirmare possem, sive anima, sive ignis, sit animus, eum jurarum esse divinum. N. B. Cicero dare swear that the soul is divine, though he doubt of the immateriality; and our apostates deny both. And reciting its operations, he saith, (p. 239.) *Prorsus hæc divina mihi videtur vis, quæ tot res efficiat ac tantas. Vigere, sapere, invenire, meminisse; ergo animus, qui, ut ego dico, divinus, ut Euripides audeat dicere, Deus est: et quidem si Deus aut anima aut ignis est, idem est animus hominis. Sin autem est quinta quædam natura ab Aristotele inducta primum, hæc et Deorum est et animorum. Animorum nulla in his terris origo inveniri potest: nihil enim est in animis mixtum, atque concretum, aut quod ex terra natum atque fictum esse videatur: nihil ne aut humidum quidem, aut stabile, aut igneum: his enim in naturis nihil inest quod vim memoriae, mentis, cogitationis habeat: quod et præterita teneat, et futura provideat, et complecti possit præsentia; quæ sola divina sunt: nec invenietur unquam unde ad homines venire possit, nisi a Deo. Singularis est igitur natura quædam, atque vis animi sejuncta ab his utilitatibus notisquæ naturis: itaque quicquid est aliud quod sentit, quod sapit, quod volit, quod viget, cæleste et divinum est, ob eamque rem æternum sit necesse est: nec vero Deus ipse qui intelligitur a nobis, alio modo intelligen-**

potest, nisi mens sobria quædam, et libere, segregata ab omni concretione mortali, omnia sentiens, et movens, ipsaque prædita motu sempiterno; hoc e genere atque eadem e natura est humana mens. So that, though he suspected it to have been some pure materiality, it was but such as he thought God had, and consisted with its eternity. *Ubi igitur aut qualis ista mens? (scil. Deus) ubi tua, aut qualis, potesne dicere? An si omnia ad intelligendum non habeo, quæ habere vellem, ne eis quidem quæ habeo, mihi per te uti licebit? Non valet tantum animus, ut sese ipse videat: at ut oculus, animus sese non videns alia cernit.*

Page 226, he saith of them that plead for the soul's mortality: *Præclarum nescio quid adepti sunt, qui dicerent se, cum tempus mortis venisset,otos esse perituros. Quid habet ista res aut letabile aut gloriosum? sed plurimi contra nituntur, animosque quasi capite damnatos morte muleant: neque aliud est quidquam cor incredibilis his animorum videatur æternitas, nisi quod nequeunt qualis animus sit vacans corpore intelligere, et cogitatione comprehendere: quasi vero intelligent qualis sit in ipso corpore! quæ conformatio! quæ magnitudo! qui locus. Hæc repulenti isti qui negant animum sine corpore se intelligere posse: videbunt, quem in ipso corpore intelligent! Mihi quidem naturam animi intuenti, multo difficilior occurrit cogitatio, multoque obscurior, qualis animus in corpore sit, tanquam alienæ domi, quam qualis cum exierit, et in liberum cælum, quasi in domum suam venerit. Si enim quod nunquam vidimus, id quale sit intelligere non possumus. Certe et Deum ipsum, et divinum animum corpore liberatum, cogitatione complecti non possumus.*

Page 225. *Atque ea profecto tum multo puriora, et dilucidiora cernuntur, cum, quo natura fert, liber animus pervenerit. Cum nihil erit præter animum, nulla res objecta, impedit, quo minus percipiat, quale quidque sit; quamvis copiose hæc dicremus, si res postularet, quam multa, quam varia spectacula, animus in locis cælestibus esset habiturus.*

Page 210, 211. *Ipsi majorem gentium dii qui habentur, hinc a nobis profecti in cælum repertiunt: multi de diis prava sentiunt: id enim vitioso more effici solet: omnes tamen esse vim et naturam divinam arbitrantur: nec vero id collocuto hominum, aut consensus efficit: non institutis opinio est confirmata; non legibus; omni autem in re consensio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est. Hæc ita sentimus natura duce, nulla ratione, nullaque doctrina: maximum vero argumentum est naturam ipsam de immortalitate animorum tacitam judicare, quod omnibus curæ sunt, et maxime quidem, quæ post mortem futura sint. N. B. Abiit ad deos Hercules; nunquam abiisset nisi cum inter homines esset, eam sibi viam munivisset. Quid in hac republica tot tantosque viros ad rempublicam interfectos cogitasse arbitramur? Eisdem ut finibus nomen suum quibus vita terminaretur? Nemo unquam sine magna spe immortalitatis se pro patria offerret ad mortem. Nescio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quasi sæculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idque maximis ingenii, altissimisque animis et existit maxime et apparet facillime: quo quidem dempto quis tam esset amens, qui semper in laboribus et periculis viveret?*

This maketh me think of Augustin's saying, *Si anima mortalis est, Epicurus in animo meo palmam habet.* (Confess. l. vi. c. ult.)

Quid si omnium consensus (inquit Cic. ib.) naturæ vox est, omnesque qui ubique sunt consentiunt esse aliquid quod ad eos pertineat qui e vita cesserunt, nobis quoque idem existimandum. Etsi, quorum aut ingenio aut virtute animus excellit, eos arbitramur quia natura optima sint, cernere naturæ vim maxime; verisimile est cum optimis quisque maxime posteritati serviat, esse aliquid cujus si post mortem sensum sit habiturus. Sed, ut deos esse natura opinamur, qualesque sint

ratione cognoscimus: sic permanere animos arbitramur consensu omnium nationum. N. B. Qua in sede, qualesque sinu ratione descendunt est.

Page 232. Hæc igitur et alia innumerabilia cum cernimus, possumus dubitare, quin his præsit aliquis vel Effector, si hæc nata sunt ut Platoni videtur, vel si semper fuerint ut Aristotele placet, moderator tanti operis et muneris? Sic mentem hominis, quamvis eam non videas, ut Deum non vides, tamen ut Deum agnoscis ex operibus ejus, sic ex memoria rerum et inventione et celeritate motus, omnique pulchritudine virtutis vim divinam mentis agnoscito. In quo igitur loco? Ubi ubi sit animus, certe quidem in te est. Quæ est ei natura? Propria puto et sua. Sed fac igneam, fac spirabilem! Nihil ad id de quo agimus: illud modo videlo: ut Deum noris, etsi ejus ignores et locum et faciem: sic animum tibi tuum notum esse oportere, etiamsi ejus ignores et locum et formam: in animi autem cognitione dubitare non possumus, nisi plane in physicis plumbei sumus, quin nihil sit animus admistum, nihil concretum, nihil copulatum, nihil coagmentatum, nihil duplex. Quod cum ita sit, certa nec scerni, nec dividi, nec discerpi, nec distrahi potest: nec interire igitur. Est enim interitus quasi discessus et secretio ac directus earum partium, quæ ante interitum junctio aliqua tenebantur. His et talibus adductus Socrates, nec patronum quæsit ad judicium captis, nec judicibus supplex fuit, adhibuit liberam contumaciam, a magnitudine animi ductam, non a superbia: ut supremo vitæ die de hoc ipso multa disseruit, et paucis ante diebus, cum facile posset educi e custodia, noluit: et cum pene in manu jam mortiferum illud teneret poculum, locutus ita est, ut non ad mortem trudi, verum in cælum videretur ascendere. Ita enim censebat itaque disseruit: Duas esse vias, duplicesque cursus animorum et corpore excedentium: nam qui se humanis vitiis contaminassent, et se totos libidinibus dedissent—eis devium quoddam iter esse, seclusum a concilio deorum. Qui autem se integros castosque servassent, quibusque fuisset minima cum corporis contagio, seseque ab his semper sevocassent, essentque in corporibus humanis, vitam imitati deorum, his ad illos a quibus essent profecti reditum facili patere. Cato autem sic abit e vita, ut causam moriendi nactus se esse gauderet. Vetat enim Dominus ille in nobis Deus injussu hinc nos de migrare. Cum vero causam justam Deus ipse dederit, ut tunc Socrati, nunc Catoni, sæpe multis: ne ille mediis fidius vir sapiens lætus ex his tenebris in lucem illam excesserit: nec tamen illa vincula carceris ruperit; leges enim velant.

Page 227. Licet concurrant Plebei omnes philosophi (sic enim ii qui a Platone et Socrate, et ab illa familia dissident, appellandi videntur) non modo nihil unquam tam elegantur explicabunt, sed ne hoc quidem ipsum quam subtiliter conclusum sit, intelligent. Sentit animus se moveri: quod cum sentit, illud una sentit, se via sua, non aliena moveri: nec accidere posse, ut ipse unquam a se deseratur: ex quo efficitur æternitas.

I have been tedious, and will therefore only add his application, p. 233, 234. *Tota philosophorum vita, commentatio mortis. Nam quid aliud agimus cum a voluptate, id est a corpore, cum a re familiari, quæ est ministra et famula corporis, cum a rebus, cum a negotio omni sevocamus animum? Quid inquam tum agimus, nisi animum ad seipsum, advocamus? secum esse cogimus? maximeque a corpore abducimus: scernere autem a corpore animum, nec quidquam aliud est quam emori discere. Quare hoc commentemur, mihi crede; disjungamusque nos a corporibus, id est, consuescamus mori. Hoc et dum erimus in terris erit illi cælesti vitæ simile. Et cum illuc ex his vinculis emissi feremur, minus tardabitur cursus animorum: quo cum venerimus, tum denique viveamus: nam hæc quidem vitæ mors est, quam lamentari possem, si liberet.*

And how the somatists were then esteemed, he

addeth, *Cateræ veniunt contradicentium, non solum Epicureorum, quos equidem non despicio; sed nescio quomodo, doctissimus quisque contemnit. And among christians, they will never recover their reputation.*

I know that some doubting christians are ready to say, as Cicero's auditor, who saith, that he had often read Plato; *Sed nescio quomodo dum lego assentior; cum posui librum, et mecum ipse de immortalitate animorum cepi cogitare, assensio omnis illa elabitur.* But this is because the truth is not sufficiently concocted, nor the conjoined frame of evidences entirely and deeply printed on the mind; and so diversions alienate the mind from the just apprehension of some of those evidences which it had formerly had a glimpse of, and leave it open to the contrary suggestions. He that is surprised when his prospective glass, or telescope, is not with him, will not see those things which by their help he saw before. And the remembrance of former convictions in the general, will hardly satisfy a man against his present different apprehension, though he be conscious that he had then more help than now. I have found, myself, a far clearer apprehension of the certainty of the life to come, and of the truth of the gospel, when I have come newly from the serious view of the entire frame of convincing evidences, than I can have at other times, when many particulars are out of the way, or much worn off my apprehensions.

These passages I have cited out of heathens, to convince or confound those that, under the gospel, with their hearts, tongues, or lives, deny those truths which the light of nature hath so far made clear. Remembering both those symbols of Pythagoras: *De rebus divinis absque lumine ne loquaris, et de Diis rebus divinis, nihil tam mirabile dicatur, quod non debeas credere;* and his verse (translated by Ficinus):

“Corpore deposito cum liber ad æthera perges,
Evades hominem, factus deus ætheris almi.”

Alcinous, reciting “Plato's Reasons for the Immortality of the Soul,” (cap. 25,) mentioneth seven reasons; 1. “*Anima cuiusque adest, vitam affert, utpote illi naturaliter insitam: quod vero vitam præstat, mortem minime suscipit: ergo immortalæ existit.*” 2. *Anima cum per corporis sensus ad illa quæ sensibilia sunt descendit, angitur et turbatur; nec similis esse potest illius cujus præsentia turbatur.* 3. *Anima ipsa natura corpori dominatur. Quod autem natura sua regit, et imperat, divinæ cognatum: ergo anima Deo proxima immortalis est, &c.* And because it may be objected, that, by the first reason, the souls of brutes would be immortal, he answereth that, but so doubtfully and darkly as is not worth the reciting. But, though Alcinous incline to the negative of the immortality of the animæ brutorum, Porphyrius is pe-remptory for the affirmative, upon the supposition of their rationality.

The stoic philosophers bear, also, as full a testimony against the atheist, and the deniers of humanity, as the rest; for though Cicero thank them for nothing, and rebuke them for denying the soul's eternity, and giving us but *usuram* ut cornicibus, a longer and not an everlasting life, yet some of them seem to be of another mind, and the rest rather think that the souls of men will participate in the world's periodical revolutions, than be at all annihilated or deprived of felicity. The paucity of their writings which have come down to us, and the malice of the Epicureans with whom they were at the greatest odds, did make them represented as if they had held more unreasonable opinions, and been more sour and inhuman than indeed they were. And some who of late times condemn them for that in

which they agree with the doctrine of Christ, do seem to mean christianity while they exclaim against the severities of stoicism, and mean the church while they name but the porch. Certainly, if Cicero himself, who is offended with their schism, do represent their opinions aright, and if we may judge of the rest by his speeches of Cato, and by the writings of Seneca, Epictetus, and Antonine, and if Barlaam hath truly collected their ethics, there were no men that spake and lived so like christians, who were strangers to Christ. He that would see the difference between them and the Epicureans, let him but read the *Præloquium*, before his Antoninus, of Mr. Gataker; that man of admirable learning, humility, and piety, not to be named without love and honour, nor in this age without tears. Of Antoninus himself, he saith, *Certe quæcunque Dominus ipse Christus in concionibus collationibusque suis historię evangelicę inseritis (de mali cogitatione etiã abstinenda, de affectibus vitiosis suppressendis, de sermone otioso non insuper habendo, de animo cum primis excolendo, et ad imaginem divinam effingendo, de beneficentia simplicissime exhibenda, de injuriis æquanimiter ferendis, de admonitione et increpatione cum moderatione cautioneque accurata exercendis, de rebus quibuscumlibet, adeoque vita ipsa, ubi res ratioque poscit nihili habendis, de aliis denique plerisque pietatis, charitatis, æquitatis, humanitatis, officiis quam exquisitissime obeundis exequendis) præcepta dedit: apud nostrum hunc eadem, perinde acsi illa lectississet ipse, in dissertationum commentationumque harum congerie inspersa passim, nec sine vehementia et vivacitate insigni quę in præcordia ipsa penitus penetret. Lector quicvis sedulus advertet, ingenius agnoscat.*

The sum of their doctrine, different from the Epicureans, he thus reciteth, and, by citations, copiously proveth: *Numen celeste rerum humanarum curam gerere: nec universi tantummodo, sed hominum etiã singulorum, et rerum quoque singularium; rebus humanis præsto esse, generique humano, non ad bona vere sic dicta duntaxat, sed et ad vitę hujus commoda, et adminicula suppetias ferre. Deum itaque ante omnia colendum; ad omnia invocandum, per omnia cogitandum, in omnibus agnoscendum et comprobandum, de omnibus laudandum et celebrandum; huic uni in omni negotio simpliciter obsequendum; ab ipso quicquid obvenierit animo prompto ac lubenti excipiendum atque amplectendum, nihil melius, nihil convenientius, nihil conducibilius, nihil opportunius, aut tempestivius, quam illi, quicquid existat, quod ipse voluerit, existimandum: quocunque ducere visum fuerit, citra tergiversationem aut murmurationem, sponte sequendum; locum stationemque quęcumque is assignaverit, strenue tuendum, enixe tenendum, etiamsi mortem milites oppellere oporteret. Hęc de numine stoici et erga numen affectu.*

De homine et officiis. Hunc et cordatus diligere et curare et sustinere, injurięque omni (ut quę impietatis etiã notam inurit) abstinere; et beneficentia prosequi, nec sibi soli genitum censere se, aut vivere, sed in commune bonum ac beneficium, cunctis pro facultate viribusque semet exhibere, re ipsa, reique bene gestę conscientia, (nec hac etiã ipsa quãdamtenus reputata,) citra vestem, aut mercedis spem commodive proprii intuitum, contentum agere; a beneficio uno præstito ad aliud transire, nec unquam beneficiendo defatisci; sed vitę telam, tanquam vivendi fructus hic sit; beneficiis sibi invicem continenter annexis, ita totum pertexere, ut nusquam interveniat hiatus ullus vel minimus; beneficii loco, quod benefecerit habentem; sibi que profuisse existimantem: si alii cuiquam usui esse poterit; nec extra se providere quicquam vel laudis humane, vel lucelli, aut occupantem aut expellentem: ad hęc nihil mentis cultu antiquius, nihil honesti studio potius aut pretiosius habere: ab eo denique quod officii sui esse norit, nulla vel

vitę, nedum alius rei cuiuscumque, cupidine abducendum, nulla mortis cruciatibus illius, ne dum damni aut detrimenti formidine abigendum se permittere. Hęc stoicorum præcepta sunt.

When will the whole tribe of the Epicureans ever give the world such a prince as Antonine, who taught the world that a prince should be a philosopher; and that self-government, and a well-ordered mind and life, is the first point in the government and well-ordering of the commonwealth; and that monarchy may be so used, as to consist as well with the people's interest and liberty, as the most accurate Venetian democracy: the only hurt that ever he was charged to do being this, that he lived so well, that he seemed somewhat to hinder the succeeding lustre of christianity, even in Constantine and Theodosius themselves.

And as for the Stoics' great doctrine of virtue's self-sufficiency to felicity, which Plato and Aristotle also own against the Epicurean felicity of pleasure, it is undoubtedly a very great and sacred theological verity; but it implieth a higher truth, which I have vindicated in this treatise, viz. that man hath an ultimate end above himself, and that God, for all that he is perfect, and can receive no addition of fe-

Whether God or ourselves, virtue or pleasure, be chiefly to be loved.

licity, is both his own and our End, though *intendere finem* is not spoken univocally of God and man; and that his goodness, as essential in himself, and as his own perfection, is, in the order of our conceptions, much higher than his benignity or goodness, as related to the good of man. I have read some late self-esteeming writers, (who love not to be named by way of opposition,) who have undertaken the defence of the Epicurean heresy, that pleasure is formally both man's felicity and his ultimate end: but their reasonings for it are not half so handsome and adapted to deceive, as the discourse of Torquatus in Cicero de Finib. is, which indeed may seem very plausible, till Cicero's excellent answer is compared with it. It is a fair pretence to say, that a good man is pleased with nothing but that which is good, and that true pleasure is to be found especially in virtue, and that temperance and chastity should be more pleasant than excess and luxury; and yet that the best men, when they do any great and excellent work, do therefore do it because it pleaseth them. But the truth is, that *bonum qua bonum est objectum voluntatis*, good and appetible are the same; it is not first good because it pleaseth us, but it pleaseth us because it is esteemed by us to be good. And the greatest good should greatest please us, because it is first the greatest good; and as God in himself is infinitely better than any delight or felicity of ours, so is he, therefore, to be more the object of our delight. And as the good of the world, or of kingdoms, or of thousands, is better than the pleasure of one individual person, so should it be better loved, and more delighted in. For if good, as good, be appetible and delectable, then the greatest good must have the greatest love and pleasure. And nature itself telleth us, that he that would not rather be annihilated than the world should be annihilated, or would not lose his life and honour, to save the life, and honour, and felicity of king and kingdom, is no good member of civil society, but a person blinded by selfishness and sensuality. Therefore, man hath something above himself, and his own pleasure, to seek and to take pleasure in. How far you can congruously say, that you take pleasure in your pleasure, and so make your own pleasure the object, yea, the only ultimate object of itself, I shall not now stay to inquire. But certain I am, that though our love, which is our complacency in the beloved object, is our *actus finalis*,

yet it is not the *objectum finale* to itself; but God himself, the infinite Good, is that final object; and the public good is a more noble and excellent object than our own. And though it be truly our felicity to love God, yet we love him not chiefly because it is our felicity to love him, but because he is chiefly good and lovely; and then, in the second instant, we love our own love, and delight even in our own delights. Indeed, the sensitive life, as such, can seek nothing higher than its own delight: but the rational life is made to intend and prosecute that end, which reason telleth us is best, and to prefer that before ourselves, which is better than ourselves.* And therefore the Epicurean opinion, which maketh pleasure our highest end, doth show that the sect is sensual and brutish, and have brought their reason into servitude to their appetites and lusts. And nature itself doth abhor the notion, when it is brought into the light; and will hear him with some horror who shall speak out and say, God is not to be chiefly loved for himself, nor as he is best in himself, nor as my ultimate objective end, but only to be loved next myself, as a means to my felicity or pleasure; as meat, drink, ease, and sport, and lust are. And virtue or holiness is not to be loved chiefly for itself, that is, as it is the image of God, and pleasing to him, but as it conduceth to my pleasure. As Cicero excellently noteth, there is a great deal of difference between these two; To love virtue as virtue, and so to take pleasure in it because it is virtue; and, To love virtue for pleasure's sake, more than for its own: for he that doth so, must say as Cicero chargeth Epicurus plainly to say, That luxury is not to be discommended if it be not unpleasant; for the end is the measure and rule to judge of all the means. If pleasure as pleasure be best, then to him that so contrives it, to live more pleasurably in whoredom, and drunkenness, and theft, and murder, than in godliness and honesty, it will be better so to do: and virtue, and lust, or wickedness, will stand in competition only in the point of pleasure; and then, which think you will have the greater party, and what a case would mankind be in? I am persuaded that the well studying the excellent discourse of Cicero on this point, and the reasons which the Stoics and the rest of the philosophers give against the plebeian philosophers, as Cicero calleth them, may much conduce to help many divines themselves to a righter understanding of the same controversy; as in theology they have otherwise worded it. Whether God or our own felicity be most to be loved? and yet without running into the fanatic extreme, of separating the love of God and ourselves, and calling men to try whether for his glory they can be willing to be damned. Only when you read the philosopher saying, that virtue in and for itself is to be loved as our felicity; elucidate it by remembering, that this is, because that virtue in itself is the image of God, and by our felicity they mean the perfection of our natures, in respect of the end for which we were made. And that, as the excellency of my knife, or pen, yea, or my horse, is not to be measured by their own pleasure, but their usefulness

ness to me, because I am their end; so is it as to man's perfection, as he is made for God, and related to him, for all that he hath no need of us, seeing he can be pleased in us. Thus this philosophical controversy is coincident with one of the greatest in theology.

Though I have displeased many readers, by making this treatise swell so big, by answering so many objections as I have done, yet I know that many will expect that I should have made it much greater, by answering, 1. Abundance of particular objections from Scripture difficulties; 2. And many discourses of several sorts of persons, who contradict some things which I have said. But I supersede any further labour of that kind, for these following reasons:

1. It would fill many volumes to do it, as the number and quality of the objections do require. 2. Those that require it are yet so lazy, that they will not read this much which I have already written, as esteeming it too long. 3. They may find it done already by commentators, if they will but have the patience to peruse them. 4. I have laid down that evidence for the main cause of godliness and christianity, by which he that well digesteth it, will be enabled himself to defend it against abundance of cavils, which I cannot have time to enumerate and answer. 5. The scribbles of self-conceited men are so tedious, and every one so confident that his reasons are considerable, and yet every one so impatient to be contradicted and confuted, that it is endless to write against them, and it is unprofitable to sober readers, as well as tedious to me, and ungrateful to themselves. To instance but in the last that came to my hands, an *Inquisitio in Fidem Christianorum hujus seculi*: (the name prefixed I so much honour, that I will not mention it:) p. 3, he calleth confidence in error by the name of certainty, as if every man were certain that hath but ignorance enough to overlook all cause of doubting. P. 13, he will not contend if you say, that it is by divine faith, that we believe the words to be true which are God's; and by human faith, by which we believe them to be words of God. He saith, that faith hath no degrees; but is always equal to itself: to believe is to assent, and to doubt is to suspend assent; *ergo*, where there is the least doubt, there is no faith; and where there is no doubt, there is the highest faith; *ergo*, faith is always in the highest, and is never more or less: and yet it may be called small when it is *quasi nulla*, (that *quasi* is to make up a gap,) in respect of the subject, or at least hardly yielded; and in regard of the object, when few things are believed. P. 26, he maketh the Calvinists to be enthusiasts, that is, fanatics, because they say, that they know the Scripture by the Spirit: as if, subjectively, we had no need of the Spirit to teach us the things of God; and, objectively, the Spirit of miracles and sanctification, were not the notifying evidence or testimony of the truth of Christ. The same name he vouchsafeth them that hold that the Scripture is known by universal tradition to be God's word, and every man's own reason must tell him (or discern) the meaning of it. And he concludeth, that if every

* Even in friendship with men, it is commonly said, that we must have more respect to our friend than to ourselves. And therefore Cicero pleadeth, that Epicurus's opinion is inconsistent with true friendship. However that stand, I am sure, in our love to God, we must love him more for himself, than for our own ends and benefit. Therefore it is, that I distinguished love before, from obedience as such, as being somewhat more excellent, and the final grace. And Proclus (de Anim. et Dæmone) discerned this distinction, when he saith, *Belli finis est justitia: pacis autem aliud quiddam excellentius bonum, amicitia, scilicet, atque unio finis enim universæ virtutis est ut tradunt Pythagorici. Aristotelesque*

confirmat; ut omnibus jam factis amicis, justitia non ulterius egeamus, quando, viz. sublatum fuerit, meum, et non meum. And if this be true of the love of man, much more of the love of God. Which they also may do well to consider of, who most fear the cessation of that individuation of souls, which consisteth in the distance that now we are at: for though, doubtless, there will continue an individuation, yet, union is so much of the felicity, perfection, and delight of souls; union, I say, with God, as we are capable, and with one another, that we should rather be afraid lest we shall not be near enough, than lest too much nearness should confound us.

one may expound the Scripture, even in fundamentals, then every man may plead against all magistrates, in defence of murder, or any other crime, as a rational plea; and say, Why should you punish me for that which God hath bid me to do? As if God would have no reasonable creature, but brutes only to be his subjects. As if a man could knowingly obey a law, which he neither knoweth, nor must know the meaning of, and is bound to do he knoweth not what. And as if the king's subjects must not understand the meaning of the fifth commandment, nor of Rom. xiii. 1, "Honour thy father and mother;" and, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," and not resist. Or, as if kings must govern only dogs and swine; or might make murder, adultery, idolatry, and perjury, the duty of all their subjects when they pleased, because none must judge of the meaning of God's law by which they are forbidden: or, as if it were the only way to make men obedient to kings and parents, to have no understanding that God commandeth any man to obey them, nor to know any law of God that doth require it. Or, as if all our pastors and teachers were not to be so useful to us as a sign-post; nor we were not to learn of them or of our parents any thing that God, either by nature or Scripture, ever taught us: or, as if a child or subject, who is required to learn the meaning of his ruler's laws, to judge of them *judicio private discretionis*, were thereby allowed to misunderstand them, and to say that they command us that which they forbid us; and because the king forbiddeth us to murder, he alloweth us to say, You proposed it to my understanding, and I understand it that you bid me murder, and therefore you may not punish me. As if he that is bound to judge by a bare discerning what is commanded him, and what forbidden, were allowed to judge, *in partem utramlibet*, that it is or it is not, as please himself. As if when the king hath printed his statutes, he hath forfeited all his authority by so doing; and his subjects might say, Why do you punish us for disobeying your laws, when you promulgated them to us, as rational creatures, to discern their sense? Will it profit the world to write confutations of such stuff as this? or must a man that is not condemned to stage-playing or ballad-making, thus waste his time? Do the people need to be saved from such stuff as this? If so, what remedy, but to pity them, and say, *Quos perdere vult Jupiter hos demanat, et si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*.

And yet to do no more wrong to the Scriptures, than to councils, and bulls, and statutes, and testa-

ments, and deeds, and bonds, he concludeth, "Of all writings whatsoever, that by the mere words of the writer you cannot be certain of his sense, though they be common words, and you take them in the common sense." So that if any doubt arise about my words, if I resolve it by writing, I cannot be understood; but if I spake the same syllables by word of mouth, it would serve the turn. As if no man could be sure of the sense of any law, or testament, or bond, or covenant, which is committed to writing, nor of any exposition of them, if once it fall under pen or press. As if God's writing the Ten Commandments had left them unintelligible, in comparison of his speaking them: then farewell all historical certainty. Hath every single priest himself any assurance of the sense of the council, the canons, the pope's decretals and bulls, but by the way of writing? And so the poor people must, instead of the church, believe only that priest that orally speaketh to them, though he have no certainty of the matter himself. If this doctrine be made good once, it will spoil the printers' trade, and the clerks', and the courts of record, and the post-office too.

But, p. 51, he maketh the consent of the universal church to be the only sure communication of christian doctrine in the articles of faith; yea, the consent of the present age concerning the former. But how the consent of the whole church shall be certainly known to every man and woman, when no writing can certainly make known any man's mind, is hard to tell a man that expecteth reason. And that you may see how much the subject of this treatise is concerned in such discourses, he addeth, "That if the church had at any time been small, its testimony had been doubtful; but (saith he) it testifieth of itself that christians were never few;" and therefore it is to be believed. But we will have no such prevaricating defences of christianity. The major is the infidel's erroneous cavil; the minor is a false defence of the faith. The church never said that christians were never few: it hath ever confessed the contrary, that once they were few; and yet it hath proved against the infidel, that its testimony was not doubtful, having better evidence of their veracity than numbers.

You may perceive by these strictures upon this one discourse, what an endless task it would be to write confutations of every man that hath leisure to publish to the world his opinions, which are injurious to the christian verity. And, therefore, no sober reader will expect that I or he must be so tired, before he can be satisfied and settled in the truth.

MORE REASONS
FOR
THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,
AND
NO REASON AGAINST IT:

OR,
A SECOND APPENDIX TO THE REASONS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

- BEING
- I. AN ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM AN UNKNOWN PERSON, CHARGING THE HOLY SCRIPTURES WITH CONTRADICTION.
 - II. SOME ANIMADVERSIONS ON A TRACTATE "DE VERITATE," WRITTEN BY THE NOBLE AND LEARNED LORD EDWARD HERBERT, BARON OF CHERBURY, &c. AND PRINTED AT PARIS, 1624, AND AT LONDON, 1633 RESOLVING TWELVE QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY.
-

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
SIR HENRY HERBERT, KNT., &c.

SIR,

THE reasons are many which induced me to presume to direct these papers first to you, and to tell the world how much I honour you: first, my personal, ancient obligations to you; secondly, principally, your approved wisdom and moderation, and taking part with the ways of charity and peace, in your most public capacity, in these trying times; thirdly, your relation to the noble author, on whose writings I here animadvert; which, as it is your honour to be the brother of so learned and ingenious a lord, and the brother of so excellently holy, as well as learned and ingenious a person, as Mr. George Herbert, orator to the university of Cambridge, and a faithful pastor in the English church; so it obligeth me the more to give you an account of this animadversion. It is long since I sought after the book, as provoked by the title and the honour of the author's name, and received it from you as your gift. The premised letter from an unknown person of the same name, occasioned me to review it: the sad case of many of my acquaintance, and the increase of infidelity of late, especially among debauched, sensual gallants, and the danger of England hereby, and the temptations against which the best of christians have need of help, were the reasons of my presumption; it being my calling to propagate and vindicate the christian faith. I am so far from writing against his whole book, that I take most of his rules and notions, *de veritate*, to be of singular use; and had so great a wit had but the internal conditions due to such an intellectual apprehension, as his and your holy and excellent brother had, no doubt but our supernatural revelations and verities would have appeared evident to him, and possessed his soul with so sweet a gust, and fervent, ascendant, holy love, as breatheth in Mr. G. Herbert's poems; and as would have made them as clear to him in their kind, as some of his *notitia communes*. The truth is, as he was too low to us, who number not our divine revelations with the *veresimilia*, but with the certain verities; so he was too high for the atheistical sensualists of his age: and I would they would learn of him, that the being and perfections of God, the duty of worshipping him, and of holy conformity and obedience to him, and particularly all the Ten Commandments, the necessity of true repentance, and the rewards and punishments of the life to come, with the soul's immortality, are all *notitia communes*, and such natural certainties, as that the denial of them doth unman them. To know this, and to live accordingly, would make a great alteration in our times; and christianity could not be disrelished by such that so know and do. I may well suppose that your approbation of the cause I plead for, will make it needless to me to apologize for my boldness in meddling with such an author, while I do it with all tenderness of his deserved honour. I remain,

Your obliged servant,

RICHARD BAXTER.

Jan. 17, 1671.

I. IN ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM AN UNKNOWN PERSON, CHARGING THE HOLY SCRIPTURES WITH CONTRADICTION.

THE LETTER.

SIR,

I WAS right glad when I first heard that you had written and put to print a book of the reasons of the christian religion, and I did immediately buy the book, hoping that, in the reading and perusing of it, I might have received satisfaction as to any doubt or scruple, and an answer satisfactory to all objections that in reason may be raised against the grounds of the said christian religion; because I did think you to be as able to say and write as much as any man in that thing, having, as I thought, studied it as much as any that I had heard of; but, in the reading and perusing it, I, contrary to my expectation, found it to be short of giving me satisfaction.

For the greatest occasion of any doubt or scruple in any thing tending or relating to the christian religion, that I at any time had or have, were from that variousness and contrariety, if not contradictions, which are, or at least seem to be, in the writings of the apostles and evangelists, and other books received for Scripture.

But you, in answer to that objection, p. 412, say, "Nothing but ignorance maketh men think so: understand once the true meaning, and allow for the errors of printers, transcribers, and translators, and there will no such thing be found."^a

But you neither tell me which are those errors, nor yet how I may know them.

1. Therefore, I humbly pray you, in writing, to tell me, whether that which is written in the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel, ver. 8, 9, where Matthew writes, "That Joram begat Ozias, and Ozias begat Joatham," be any error of the transcribers, translators, or printers, or the contrary to it, which is written in the second book of the Kings, and in the books of the Chronicles; if not, how may they be understood? for in those books it is written, "That Joram was father to Ahaziah, and Ahaziah was father to Joash, and Joash was father to Amaziah, and Amaziah was father to Azariah, and Azariah was father to Joatham;" by the account of which books, there is above a hundred years between the death of Joram, the son of Jehoshaphat, and Joatham.

2. And, secondly, whether that which is written by Luke in his Gospel, chap. xxiv. ver. 9, 10, 22, 23, where Luke writes, "That Mary Magdalene, and other women, told the disciples, that they had seen a vision of angels, which said, that Jesus was risen from the dead, and was alive;" whether this be any error of the transcribers, translators, and printers, or any of them; or the contrary, which is written by St. John in his Gospel, for he writes, chap. xx. ver. 2, "That Mary Magdalene told two of the disciples, and said to them, They (I suppose meaning the adversaries) have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him."

If not, how may I understand them to be both true testimonies or reports, for it seemeth by Luke, ver. 11, 12, and 23, 24, of his 24th chapter, that Mary and the other women had told those things of

their seeing the angel, which said that Jesus was risen and alive, before that Peter ran or went to the sepulchre.

3. And, thirdly, whether that which is written by Matthew, in the 28th chapter of his Gospel, that the angel said to Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo! I have told you.

"And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them." See Matt. xxviii. 1, 5-9.

Whether, I say, was this which is written in St. Matthew's Gospel, that I have here transcribed, said to the women, and that the women returned from the sepulchre to tell the disciples, before that Mary Magdalene said to him that she supposed to be the gardener, "If thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away," John xx. 15; or whether there be any error of transcribers, translators, or printers in those texts; if not, how may I understand them to be true reports?

Sir, I shall trouble you with no more but these few places which I have proposed in three questions or particulars, although there are several other texts, that I do not understand how they may be reconciled; but if you shall, by strength of argument grounded upon sound reason, make appear that it was nothing but ignorance hath made me to think that those testimonies agree not, but are contrary one to the other; and that they may be so understood as that no such thing will appear in them, then I shall be ready, and will with you conclude, and say so too, and for the future suppose that other places of those books which are received for Scripture, as seem to be contrary to one another, may be reconciled, though I do not understand how.

But, on the contrary, if you do not endeavour by such sound and plain arguments to make it appear that these texts here transcribed by me, may be understood so as that no contradiction is in them, I must think that it was nothing but ignorance that made you say that which you have said, in answer to that and some other objections.

Therefore, I humbly and earnestly pray and beseech you, both in defence of your own writings, as also in defence of those books in which you say you think that no one error or contradiction in any matter can be proved, to make it appear in truth and plainness.

If you judge I have erred from the truth, I hope you will endeavour to convert me from the error of my way, if any such be; which if you shall do, no doubt but it will be a good work. See James v. ult.

Sir, It is your advice, that in such kind of scruples, the doubtful should apply himself for satisfaction to some minister; therefore do I write to you, and if you shall not give me a gentle and plain answer, I shall be discouraged to make my scruples known to any other; therefore, in expectation of your plain answer, I remain

Your loving friend in the bond of peace.

^a Page 149 of the present volume.

THE ANSWER.

SIR,

Two sorts of persons use to trouble me and others with their objections against the christian religion. First, some papists, who profess to believe it, but in design do act the part of infidels, that they may loose men from all religion, in hopes to bring them over to theirs, when they have taken them off all other. For he that can make another man believe that he was hitherto totally misled is likeliest to become the master of his faith; for men are apt to think that none can so easily and certainly show them the truth, as he that hath showed them their error. And when men once think, that according to the grounds of the reformed churches, they can have no certainty of faith, they will the easilier be brought to the way of those men, who promise them that certainty which they make them believe that others want.

Secondly, the other sort are infidels, who of late are grown numerous and audacious, and look so big, and speak so loud, as to acquaint us that it is not they that are silenced in their speaking place, nor driven five miles from every city and corporation.

Which sort you are of, I know not. I read your name, and that you are a sojourner; but finding that you write not as a tender doubter, who desireth to be concealed, but as a confident gainsayer of the christian verity, and not knowing how safely to send a letter to the place where you say you sojourn, I have thought that it will be most pleasing to you to come to you by the same way, as the book did which you except against, which was written upon the provocation of a paper scattered among the scholars of Oxford, when the Oxford oath and act were made in the time of the great plague, as by one that was unsatisfied in the grounds of christianity; but I strongly suspected was written by a papist, it was made so suitable to their designs.

In two things you have not dealt righteously and ingenuously with me.

1. In that you have not answered the grounded proofs of the christian verity, which I have laid down, but nibble at the answer to some objections, which is not the way of a lover of the truth.

2. In that you take no notice of, or make no answer to, the second part of my answer to that same objection, about supposed contradictions in the Scriptures; where I showed you at large, that if that which you object were granted, it would not overthrow the certainty of the christian faith. Both those should have been done by an impartial man.

The method which the nature of the cause requireth me now to use, in my answer to you, shall be in the manifesting these following propositions:

Prop. 1. That if it could not by us be proved that every word of the Scripture is true, nor the penmen infallible or indefectible in every particle, yet might we have a certainty of the christian religion.

Prop. 2. That yet all that is in the Scriptures as the word of God, is certainly true; and no error or contradiction can be proved in it, but what is in some copies by the fault of printers, transcribers, or translators.

Prop. 3. That he that first proveth the truth of the christian faith by solid evidence, may and ought to be certain of that truth, though he be not able to solve all seeming contradictions in the Scripture, or answer all objections which occur.

Prop. 4. The true method of one that would arrive at certainty, and not deceive himself and others, is to lay, first, the fundamental proofs, and examine them

till he is thereby confirmed, and afterwards to try the by-objections as he is able; and not to begin first at the answering of such by-objected difficulties, and judging of all the cause thereby. Of these I shall now speak in order.

And, whereas, you bespeak plainness and gentleness in the answer, I shall grant you the first as far as in such haste and brevity I am able; and the second as far as the nature of the cause will bear. But if you account all christians deceived fools, you must not expect to be called wise, or that I should flatter you, and tell you that apostasy is a state of safety; for I, that believe Heb. vi. and x. must think that this were not gentleness but cruelty, and worse than to kill you for fear of displeasing you.

Prop. 1. If it could not by us be proved that every word of the Scriptures is true, nor the penmen infallible or indefectible in every particle, yet might we have a certainty of the christian religion.

The reason is, because every particle in the Scripture is not an essential part of the christian religion, no, nor any integral part, if you take the christian religion strictly, for the doctrine of necessary belief, desire, and practice; and that part which is indeed the essence, yea, or integrity, of christianity, may be certainly proved and believed, without our being able to prove the certainty or truth of all the rest which is in the Scriptures.

The holy Scriptures contain all our religion, and somewhat more; that is, the accidents and appurtenances of it. As the body of a man, besides the parts essential and integral, hath its accidents; such as are the hair and the colour, and some humours, which are for beauty and other uses, though not parts. So far are the papists from being in the right, who think that the christian religion is not all, but part, contained in the Scriptures, that there is more than all that is necessary to salvation, even the appurtenances which have an aptitude to the adorning and promoting of the rest.

To know who was the father of every person mentioned in the Bible's genealogies; to know what age each person was of, whose age is there mentioned; to know the name of every person and every town; to know how far each city was from another whose distances are there expressed; with a multitude of such-like historical, genealogical, chronological, topographical, physical, incidental passages, is but an appurtenance, and not strictly a part, essential or integral, of the christian faith, of holiness or religion.

Yet, remember, that we maintain as certain, that they are all liars who accuse God of lying; and that, whatever some ignorantly talk to the contrary, God cannot lie. See the excellent Amesius's disputation of this question, *An falsum subesse potest fidei divina*, after his *Medulla Theologiæ*; which book, with his *Cases of Conscience*, and *Alstedius's Encyclopædia*, may, after the Scriptures and Concordance, make a good divine, and be a better library than the fathers of the fourth council of Carthage were acquainted with. He that thinketh God can lie, destroyeth the *objectum formale fidei divina*, and, therefore, can have no faith. If God could lie in one thing, we should never be sure that he revealeth the truth, unless by sense itself and after-experience. All faith goeth upon such a syllogism as this, *Whatsoever God saith is true*: but this God saith; *ergo*, it is true. So that whosoever believeth every word in the Scripture to be God's word, must believe it all to be true, or he can believe none of it at all.

But, yet, it is possible for a man to believe one part of the Bible to be God's word and not another part; which needeth no proof.

Because that many of the ancient churches, for a

certain time, doubted of, yea, received not the epistle of James, Peter 2nd, the Heb. Apocal. &c. and yet were truly of the christian religion.

First, we deny not but that there are many false and wicked sayings, historically recited in the Scripture; as, the saying of Cain, Pharaoh, Gehazi, the false prophets, the devil, of Job, to Christ, &c.; but the Scripture is nevertheless true, for it is true that all these untruths were spoken.

Secondly, The disciples of Christ were not absolutely and in all things infallible, as all christians do confess. They were not as perfect in knowledge as now they are in heaven. Either Paul or Barnabas was mistaken about the fitness of Mark to go with them.

Thirdly, There was a greater assistance of the Spirit promised them, when "two or three of them were assembled in Christ's name," than when they proceeded singly, Matt. xviii. 18: but there can be nothing above perfect infallibility and impeccability to them all.

Fourthly, We confess that Christ's disciples were not indefectible or sinless. As their understandings, so their will, and lives, had still some imperfections. Mark, Paul, and Silas, did not all perfectly do their duties in the case they differed about. Peter did amiss, in avoiding the gentile christians, when Paul blamed him openly, Gal. ii. ; and Barnabas and others did not do well, in being drawn away to the same dissimulation. When Paul saith of Timothy, "I have no man like-minded," and of others, "They all seek their own," he took not all christians that had the Spirit to be perfect: "If any man had not the Spirit of Christ, he was none of his," Rom. viii. 9; and the very wrangling, declining Galatians had received the Spirit, Gal. iii. 1-3; and so had the wrangling Corinthians Christ in them, 2 Cor. viii. 5.

Fifthly, We confess that he who is either infallible or defectible, liable to error or sin, is of himself capable of being deceived, and of deceiving others. If he were infallible in respect of the knowledge of all the truth, yet while he can sin, of himself considered, he can be heedless, rash, careless, partial, and for by-respects speak too little or too much. It is the devil's last method, to undo by overdoing, and so to destroy the authority of the apostles by over-magnifying them; therefore we will not use his methods, nor deny any of this.

Sixthly, Moreover, we confess that it is possible for a good christian to doubt whether those that were but evangelists, as Mark and Luke, had the same promise of the Spirit's infallible assistance with the apostles; seeing we find not that promise so expressly any where made to them: and, thereupon, he may possibly think that some errors may consist with their measure of the Spirit, as it did with many christians who had the same Spirit.

Seventhly, And we do not believe that the extraordinary operations of the Spirit were always equally in the apostles themselves; we suppose the prophets could not always prophesy; nor those that spake with tongues use that gift at their own pleasure; nor yet those that did miracles, healed the sick, or raised the dead: but, that the Spirit wrought, as in various sorts and measures in several persons, (1 Cor. xii.) so also, at various times and in various measures in the same person. Whereupon, it is possible for a good christian to doubt whether every word in Scripture was written then, when the writer had the gift of infallibility and indefectibility.

Eighthly, And we do confess ourselves, that the apostles were not the infallible Spirit given them for every use or thing that they had to do; but for those matters about which they had special need of

it and use for it, to fulfil their office. The Spirit was not so necessary for them to discern those things by, which the common sense and understanding of a man was sufficient to discern. They could taste sweet from bitter, feel heat from cold, discern light from darkness, without an infallible, extraordinary Spirit. And so being eye and ear witnesses of what Christ did and said, of his words, his miracles, his resurrection, his ascension, they might infallibly know them by ordinary means. And so a good christian may doubt whether they had the Spirit infallibly, to transcribe and cite every passage in the Old Testament, visible to all, or to relate the things which they saw done with their eyes; or to report the history of several actions which were then done: as, what was the place and power of Herod, Archelaus, Pilate, Felix, Festus, &c. and such other parts of common history.

Ninthly, And we all confess that the words are but as the body of the Scripture, and the sense as the soul; and that the words are for the sense: and there is more of the Spirit's assistance in the sense and soul of the Scripture, than in the words and body; and that there is in the phrase and method somewhat of blameless, human imperfection; and that as David was not stronger than Goliath, nor his weapons more excellent in themselves, but God would overcome strength by the means of the more weak; so, an Aristotele may be more accurate in method, and a Demosthenes, Varro, or Cicero, in words and phrase, than an apostle: and they may be left to the imperfections of their several gifts, diversified by nature or education, in their style. And God may hide that from the wise and prudent, which he revealeth to babes; and by the foolishness of preaching, may save believers, and confound the wisdom of the world, and by things that are not, bring to nought things that are, that no flesh may glory in his sight; nor do we say, that no man may seek or attain more logic, philosophy, or grammar, than he findeth in the Scriptures.

Tenthly, As protestants receive not so many books as canonical as the papists do, so some protestants have not received so many as the rest; and so, may possibly err, in thinking that some part of the Scripture is not the word of God; and, consequently, may think it of more uncertain credit.

Eleventhly, Some have thought that Matthew, being at first written in Hebrew or Syriac, and after translated into Greek, that the translator being unknown, the credit of the translation must be the less certain, because they know not whether the translator was one that had the promise of infallibility, though doubtless they err who so conclude.

Twelfthly, Some think, that as certainly there are a great number of various readings, which all prove that some of the copies err; so it is uncertain to us, whether all those which we have, may not in some words or particles differ from others which we have not, and from the autographs, seeing each scribe had not a promise of infallibility.

Thirteenthly, If some particular books of Scripture were not extant, or never known to some men, yet the rest may teach those same men all the christian religion to their salvation: therefore, if they may be christians, and saved without knowing of that particular book, they may possibly be so, without knowing that it is canonical, or of divine and certain truth.

Fourteenthly, Yea, more, no doubt but it is possible to be saved, and to be good christians, without being certain what is contained in any one book of the Bible totally; for he that cannot read, may possibly not hear the whole book from another, at least, so as to understand and remember it; and yet he may

hear the same doctrines out of another book : yea, more, it is past doubt that a man may, in some cases or circumstances, be a true christian who knoweth not that there is any Scripture which is God's infallible word : for first, so all the believers of the old world were saved, before Moses wrote the law ; and the christian churches were gathered, and thousands converted to Christ, many years before a word of the New Testament was written. Secondly, and all the thousands and millions of christians who cannot read, do know that there is such a book, which hath such words in it, but on the credit of other men. Thirdly, and we know not but the papists, who are too great undervaluers of the Scriptures, and lock it up from the laity, and over-magnify tradition, may keep thousands among them without the knowledge that there is a book which is God's word, and yet may teach them the christian religion by other means, after to be mentioned. And it seemeth, by the Epist. Jesuit. and Maffieus Histor. Indic. and other writings, that in Japan, Congo, China, and other countries of the East, they did teach them only by creeds, catechisms, and preachings, and I remember no knowledge that they gave to most of them of the Scriptures ; and yet, the most cruel torments and martyrdoms, never before heard of, which the christians in Japan endured, (of which, see Varenus's history,) doth put all sober readers past doubt, that there were many excellent christians. And if other means may make men christians, who are never told of the holy Scriptures, then, those same means, with the Scriptures, may make them christians, who are made believe, that all Scripture passages are not the infallible dictates of God's Spirit.

I have given you instances enough to prove that many may be christians and have a certain faith, who are not certain of all things in the Scriptures ; and, therefore, though all these persons are herein defective or erroneous, yet that christianity may be otherwise known and proved : yea, though the case of the Scriptures were as these mistaking persons think. And I told you how many ways, besides Scripture, the sum and necessary substance of christianity is delivered down from the apostles to the world : Reas. of Christ. Rel. p. 336, 337. First, in the very successive being of christians and churches, who are the professors of this doctrine. Secondly, in a succession of pastors, whose office was to preach it. Thirdly, in a succession of baptism, which is that solemnizing the christian covenant, in which the sum of the gospel is contained. Fourthly, in the three breviate or symbols of the christian religion, the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue, which all the christian churches still used. Yea, every one that was baptized at age (and the parent for the infant) did openly make profession of the christian faith, and of religion in all the essential particulars. Fifthly, in the church's use of catechising those who were to be baptized, that they might first know that religion which they were to enter. Sixthly, in that constant communion of all the churches in their solemn assemblies, and setting apart the Lord's day to that use, where, in their worshipping of God, they expressed and exercised their religion. Seventhly, in the constant preaching of the gospel by the pastors. Eighthly, in the constant celebration of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, wherein the sum of the gospel was recited and expressed. And the custom was also to repeat the profession of their belief. Ninthly, the frequent disputations of the christian pastors for their religion against all heathens, infidels, and heretics. Tenthly, the writings of the said pastors, apologies, doctrinal, historical, commentaries, devotional. Eleventhly, the confes-

sion and sufferings of the martyrs. Twelfthly, the decrees, canons, and epistles of councils or assemblies of the christian pastors. Thirteenthly, and after these, the decrees and laws of christian princes ; in all which, we have no need of any peculiar tradition of the church of Rome. Fourteenthly, yea, we may add the confessions of adversaries, who tell us part of the christian's religion ; as Pliny, Celsus, Julian, &c. All these ways set together, told men what christianity was. Fifteenthly, but the fullest and surest discovery of it, was by the holy Scripture of itself, which was constantly read in the assemblies of the christians. In all this, I have but told you by how many ways and means, materially, the gospel doctrine was made known.

Now the great question is, whether, by all these means, we might come to a certainty of the truth of the christian faith, in case we could not prove every word or particle of Scripture to be God's word, and so to be true. They that deny it, say, " That he that can mistake or be deceived in one thing, may be so in another ; and we cannot take his word for certain, who sometimes speaketh falsely, for we can never be sure that he speaketh the truth." But I affirm the thing questioned, and shall show the mistake of this reason of the adversaries.

First, It must be remembered that we ascribe infallibility, primitive and absolute, to God and no other. Therefore we are certain that so much is true as is God's word.

Secondly, We are certain that all that is the word of God, which he hath set his seal or attestation to, which I have largely opened in the book which you oppose ; all that which hath the antecedent, and constitutive, and concomitant, and subsequent attestation of God there opened, we are certain is of God.

Thirdly, We are certain that the person of Christ and his own doctrine had all this four-fold divine testimony ; and therefore that Christ and his doctrine are of God, and true : and consequently, that Christ was the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, the Head of the church, and whatever he affirmeth himself to be.

Fourthly, We are certain that the apostles, as preachers of this gospel and performers of the commission delivered them by Christ, had the same attestation in kind as Christ himself had : they had the same spirit. Though the antecedent testimony by prophecy was not so full of them as it was of Christ, yet the gospel which they preached and left in writing, first, hath in it still visibly to the eye of every truly discerning person, the image of God's power, wisdom, and goodness. Secondly, the same gospel, as preached and delivered by them, had the concomitant testimony of abundant certain miracles, prophecies, and holy works. Thirdly, the same gospel maketh that impression on the souls of true receivers, which is the image of God's power, wisdom, and goodness, and so proveth it to be of God. The concurrence of these three is a full and certain proof.

Now, if there be any doubtfulness in any of this, it must be first, either what it is that these attestations prove : secondly, or whether they are really divine attestations : thirdly, or whether divine attestations are a certain proof of truth.

To begin at the last. I. If divine testimony be not a certain proof of truth, then there is no possible proof in the world ; for there is no veracity in any creature, but derivative from God ; and then it must be either because a lie is as perfect and good as truth, which humanity, reason, and all the world contradicteth, and human society abhorreth, there being no savages so barbarous as to think so, or be-

cause God is imperfect, either in wisdom to know what is true and fit, or in godness to choose it, or in power to use it; that is, that God is not God, or that there is no God, and, consequently, no being; for an imperfect God, an unwise and ill, an impotent being, is no God: and, verily, all our controversies with the infidel, and the impious, and the persecutor, must finally come to this, whether there be a God.

II. And that these were really divine attestations, I have fully proved in the treatise. First, they are divine effects, and the divine *vestigia*, or image. Secondly, and such as none can do but God. None else can give that full, antecedent testimony of prophecy; none else could have done what Christ did, in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension; none could heal all diseases, work all miracles, raise the dead with a word; none else could do what the apostles did, in tongues, and miracles, and wondrous gifts—and these wrought by so many, before so many, for so long a time. No other doctrine could itself bear God's image of power, wisdom, and goodness so exactly, nor make such an impress of the same image on the souls of men: nay, though this same doctrine, by the Spirit of God, be adapted to such an effect, yet would it not do it, for want of powerful application, if God, by the same Spirit, did not set it home: so that the sanctification and renovation of souls is a divine attestation of this sacred gospel. And, besides all the past testimonies of Christ's and his apostles' miracles, here is a double testimony from God still vouchsafed to all true believers to the end of the world: the one is God's image on the holy Scriptures; the other is the same image, by this Scripture, and the Spirit that indited it, printed on all true christians' souls. Divine power, wisdom, and goodness, hath imprinted itself first upon the sacred word, or doctrine, and by that produceth unimitably, holy life, light, and love, in holy souls. True christians know this: they feel it: they profess it: they have this Spirit in them, illuminating their minds, sanctifying their wills, and quickening them to vital operation and execution; and this is Christ's advocate and witness still dwelling in all his members. I speak not of an immediate, verbal, or impulsive revelation in us, but of a holy, indwelling nature, principle, operation, conforming the soul to God, and proving us to bear his image. This is Christ's witness in us, that he is Christ indeed, and true; and this is our witness that we are the children of God: and it is our inherent earnest and pledge, first-fruits and foretastes, of the glory which Christ hath purchased and promised. If you know no such thing in yourselves as this, you have resisted the Holy Ghost or quenched the Spirit: and if you would not have him dwell and operate in your heart, no wonder if you cannot see him in the holy word: and if you would not consent that he rule your mind and life, no wonder if you deny him also in that word which he did make to rule you.

If you question the real existence of these several testimonies of God's Spirit, first, those that were given to Christ and his apostles, I have plainly proved to you in the treatise, were delivered down to the world three ways. 1. By the most credible human testimony, to produce a human faith. 2. By such a connexion and such circumstances of those human testimonies, as amount to a natural infallible certainty, as we have of the wars in England, and that there was such a man as King Charles, King James, &c. and that our laws were made by the king and parliament, that London was burnt, that there is such a city, &c. even to them that see not any of these. 3. By new divine attestations to

these attestations: so that there concurrerth, first, a full human faith; secondly, a natural certainty; thirdly, a divine faith, to the ascertaining us, that Christ did die, rise, ascend, work miracles, give the Spirit, and by it the apostles wrought the like.

Secondly, And the other two testimonies still show themselves; they are yet in being. The sacred gospel is among us, and on it the life, light, love, fore-described. The believers, sanctified by this gospel, are among us; and have within them the impressed life, light, love. We see it, where distance, selfishness, prejudice, or malignity hindereth not, shining, though as through a lantern, and working, though imperfectly, in others; and they that have it, may so feel it in themselves, as will preserve them against the cavils of unbelievers.

As the great Creator hath his standing testimony in the natural conscience of mankind, which, in despite of the devil, shall keep up some natural religion in the world; and they that have not a written law, are a law unto themselves, showing that God hath a law in their hearts; so the gracious Redeemer hath his standing witness in the sanctified, even his Holy Spirit, the divine nature, the new creature, the image of God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, dwelling in them, by divine life, light, and love, so as shall keep up a church of holy ones to Christ, in despite of all the powers of hell, even the spirits of death, of darkness, and of malignity; and so much for the validity of God's attestation.

III. All, then, that remaineth doubtful, or further to be spoken to, is, what it is that God hath thus attested by the Holy Ghost.

And, first, we are sure it is not nothing; it is not nothing that all this is done for; nor nothing that maketh this change on souls. Secondly, we are sure it can be no less than the truth of the person, office, and doctrine of Christ himself; he hath certainly, by this, proved his own verity and veracity; for his own miracles and resurrection were seals affixed hereunto. Thirdly, we are sure that the same gospel spoken by himself, was confirmed also when spoken or written by his disciples. Else the same should be sure and not sure. Fourthly, we are sure that the apostles' miracles, &c. confirmed all their commissioned work. I have proved this in my "Treatise of the Lord's day." Whatever Christ promised them the Spirit, for that he gave them the Spirit for. He that findeth his promise with the performance, may know that it was the promise which was performed. Therefore, our work is to find out that promise.

And, first, we find their commission, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, "Go and disciple me all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you." And the promise is, "Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world." And, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Advocate will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that he shall speak; and he shall show you things to come: he shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and show it unto you," John xvi. 7, 12—15. "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, till ye be endued with power from on high," Luke xxiv. 49. So, Acts i. 5, 8, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be wit-

nesses to me, both in Jerusalem, and to all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." "I have given to them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, so I have also sent them into the world; and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth," John xvii. 8, 17, 18. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," John xiv. 26.

Add to these, the texts which mention the performance of these promises; as John xx. 22; Acts ii.; Acts xv. 28; Heb. ii. 3, 4. "So great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him: God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." "The things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the gospel unto you, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," 1 Pet. i. 12. "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about by Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ," Rom. xv. 19, 20. "This only would I learn of you; received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. iii. 2.

By all this it is evident, that the Spirit was given them, to enable them to understand the gospel, and to preach it to the world; to remember all that Christ had taught them; to help them to deliver the covenant of grace, and draw men into it, and baptize them; to gather churches, and to teach them to observe all that Christ had commanded them, and made part of his laws. To teach them all truth, which was evangelical, or part of their ministerial office. To enable them to be most certain and full in their testimony of what they had heard from Christ, and seen him do, which was part of the gospel. In a word, to perform all their proper office.

I do not at the present suppose you to take these texts for the word of God; for I must suppose you to be an infidel: but I only offer them as part of the certain historical evidence, concurring with all the forementioned history and evidence of the fact, to prove what it was which the apostles' miracles were used to confirm. This same gospel they preached every where, when they wrought these miracles. And if they confirmed not the gospel, or christian religion, they confirmed nothing. So that it being certain that this Spirit and miracles were real, and certain that they were the testimony of God, and certain that it was the truth of Christ's person, actions, doctrines, sufferings, resurrection, ascension, and covenant, and commandments, which they attested, and all that is properly the gospel or christian religion, what hindereth our certainty of all this? If it were a doubt whether the Spirit attested more, it is never the more doubtful, whether he attested thus much. The apostles constantly preached this gospel; they baptized persons into the new covenant; they opened the articles of the faith to them, and caused them to profess that faith; they engaged them into the promise, and directed them in the practice of a godly, righteous, and sober life: and they confirmed all this by miracles. And is not all this then made sure? Yea, before they wrote any of the Scriptures.

And now to the objection, "He that speaketh falsely in one thing, is to be believed certainly, or as infallible, in nothing." I again answer, it is a blind

objection. God only is absolutely infallible. All men are fallible in some things: we are not to believe that the apostles could err in nothing at all. Peter knew not what he said, when he talked of dwelling on the mount. They could err, and they could sin; and he that sinneth, erreth; they were not absolutely perfect: but it is in certain particulars, even in the declaration of the gospel, that God would not suffer them to err or to deceive. Those words which the Holy Ghost did by inspiration dictate to them, it is certain that all those words the same Holy Ghost attested; that is, to all the word of God.

And thus much being past doubt, what if we were now at a loss about some appurtenances of the gospel, whether there were any of the Spirit's dictates, or any part of the word of God; or any proper part of that which the apostles were commissioned for, and spiritually enabled to teach? What if, in some points, which they could know by common sense infallibly as well as other men, any one should think that they were left merely to that certainty of sense? What if one be uncertain which are the parts, and which but the appurtenances of the gospel, in some things which salvation is not laid on; or were uncertain whether the Spirit did determine the speaker's tongue or pen about every such appurtenance; what is this to the invalidating of any of the rest? If, indeed, when they speak by the Spirit's revelation, they speak falsely at any one time, we could never be sure that they spake true. But when we are sure that all is true which they spake by the Spirit, and sure that they spake the gospel or delivered the christian religion by the Spirit, and are only not sure whether every word in genealogy, or by-circumstances, were spoken by the Spirit, nothing will follow hence, but that every word of God is true, and every word of the apostles which was a word of God: and it is perverseness to argue, they may err when they speak their own words as men; therefore, they may err when they speak God's words by the Spirit.

First, The testimony of the internal sanctifying Spirit is infallible. And so much as this Spirit attesteth to me is true; and I am sure that this Spirit attesteth the truth of the gospel in me; for the substance of the gospel is imprinted on my heart, and by the impression I know the seal; but what if I find on me no part of God's image which was made by the name of Joram's father or son; what if I feel no testimony of the Spirit in me, which tells the age of such or such a man there named; nor can prove, by the Spirit in me, how far Bethany was from Jerusalem? What if the mention of Paul's cloak and parchments did not sanctify me; must I be uncertain of that which did?

Secondly, What if I read a promise in the Scripture that God will never fail me nor forsake me; but will preserve me in safety to his kingdom? If I were uncertain whether this promise extended to every hair of my head, so that none of them should perish, or to the preservation of my colour, and such like accidents; will it follow that I cannot be sure that I myself, my soul, my person, shall not be forsaken?

What if I have a promise that all things shall work together for my good; and I am uncertain whether sins, or my own follies or rashness, or the creeping of every worm in the world, or the shaking of every leaf, be numbered with those "all things;" must I be uncertain, therefore, whether any thing shall work for my good, or whether sufferings for Christ shall do it?

Thirdly, What if I be uncertain, whether the

vegetative faculties, or soul in man, be material or immaterial; must I be as uncertain whether man have an immaterial or incorporeal soul? and whether the intellectual powers be such or not?

Fourthly, What if I be in doubt, when the law doth summon a man to any place, or command him any office, whether it meant that he shall not change his clothes, or leave them off, nor cut his hair or nails, but bring all with him; doth it follow, that I must be as uncertain whether the person himself must come or not?

Fifthly, What if I be disputing whether a tree be wood, and I cannot tell whether the leaves, their ribs, or stalks, be truly wood or not; must I therefore be uncertain of all the rest?

Sixthly, What if we dispute whether all the king's officers are to be obeyed, and it be a doubt to me, whether a prelate or an apparitor be the king's officer; can I therefore be assured of no others?

Seventhly, When a witness sweareth to any writing, that it is true, or to any interrogatories, if I be uncertain whether it be the true spelling or syntax of the words, or the propriety of every phrase or every circumstance of the matter which he attesteth; must I therefore be uncertain whether he attest any thing at all?

This one consideration may show the unreasonableness of such conclusions; that all systems, physical and moral, have their great essential or principal parts, and their smaller integrals, and their accidents, which are no proper parts. And the great and principal parts, are few, plain, discernible, and necessary to the being, or the greatest ends; the integrals are numerous, small, hardly discernible, and necessary only to perfection; the accidents, are some of them, yet of a lower nature, less necessary, and less discernible. At the master trunks, it is easy to know which is a vein, and which an artery, and which a nerve, and what is their number; but when you go to their extremities, they will appear innumerable, small, and scarce discernible. I can know many grand trunks, or boughs, a tree hath, when I cannot know the number of the thousands of sprigs at the extremities, nor just where the woody nature ceaseth, and the leaves or frutex doth begin. So I can easily know in the frame of grace, that faith, hope, and love are the fruits of the Spirit, and so is every true part of holiness; but, to know of every particular thought, whether it be the fruit of the Spirit, and a real part of holiness or not, is not so easy.

Even so in our present case we can easily prove that all that is God's word, and uttered and sealed by his Spirit, is true. But to come to a full certainty of every book, whether it be truly canonical, and every copy that varieth in some readings from others, or of every genealogical, chronological, topographical, or historical word; every phrase, location, order of sentences, citation of the prophets, whether it were certainly all done by the infallible inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is a thing that requireth more knowledge than every true christian hath, as not having the same clearness and notoriety of evidence as the gospel or substance of christianity hath. Not but that all God's word is true, and all truth is equally truth, it having not a *magis et minus*; but all truth is not equally notorious or evident.

Prop. 2. Yet all that is in the Scriptures expressed as God's word, is certainly true; and no error or contradiction is in it, but what is in some copies, by the failing of preservers, transcribers, printers, or translators.

The reason why I have premised the former propositions is, first, for your own sake; secondly, for

the sake of many infidels that now have the same misapprehensions; thirdly, and for the sake of many thousand weak, dark, and tempted christians; that you may not think that you may renounce christianity, if you could prove a contradiction or mistake in the Scriptures; there being greater certainty of our religion, than of every single word in the Bible. And that every christian may not think that he must needs doubt as much of christianity itself, and of all the gospel, as he doth whether such a text be God's word, or have any contradiction to another; and that he can have no more certainty of the gospel, than he hath of Joram's son, or whether Matthew did rightly apply the prophecy that Christ should be called a Nazarene, Matt. ii. 23, or the name of Jeremy, Matt. xxvii. 9, or whether Jude be canonical, and the epistle to Laodicea, and Clemens Rom. ad Cor. not canonical; or whether Enoch's prophecy, cited by Jude, be divine; with many such like. We need not spread the sails so wide to the temptations of Satan, as if we must let go all, if we doubt of the divine authority of any one word.

But yet that indeed every word is divine and sure, which is delivered as God's word, I now assert.

My meaning in that limitation is this: there are some passages (as I said) spoken only historically, and contain the narration of some words of the devil, as to Job, Christ, and, as most think, to Saul at Endor, &c.; and some words of wicked men, and some words of weak and common persons; and all these are not mentioned as the words of God; as the words of Job's friends, which God reproved; the words of the old prophet that lied in the name of the Lord to the young prophet to his destruction; the words of Jonas, "I do well to be angry;" and the words of Christ's enemies, persecutors, &c. Yea, the mention of the old prophet remembereth me, that all words spoken as in God's name, and that by a pretended, yea, by a real prophet, are not, therefore, the words of God; Micaiah only may say true, while Zedekiah, and all the rest of Ahab's prophets, may lie, as in the name of the Lord. Balaam, and the aforesaid old prophet, and many such, may say true, when God's Spirit doth inspire them, and yet lie at another time in God's name. And what Paul meaneth, by his "Not the Lord, but I," I leave to consideration. Whether, in 1 Cor. xiv. all those that he correcteth for a disorderly using even the miraculous gifts of tongues and prophesying, &c. had their timing and ordering of their gifts from the same Spirit that gave them the gifts, you may judge. And some protestant expositors have doubted whether James and the rest were guided by the Spirit, when they persuaded Paul to go into the temple, to show the Jews that he observed their law; though I think that counsel was of the Spirit, because Paul concurred in obeying it. But one instance I more doubt of myself, which is, when Christ and his apostles do oft use the Septuagint in their citations out of the Old Testament, whether it be always their meaning to justify each translation and particle of sense as the word of God and rightly done; or only to use that as tolerable, and containing the main truth intended, which was then in use among the Jews, and therefore understood by them; and so best, as suited to the auditors. And so whether every citation of numbers or genealogies from the Septuagint, intended an approbation of it in the very points in which it differeth from the Hebrew copies; such plain exceptions being premised, I assert, that all that is said in the Bible as by the Spirit of God, by men that had the promise of his Spirit, and especially by the apostles, is certain truth, and hath no contradiction in its parts.

Before I give you my reasons, I think it meet to

remove all ambiguity of the words infallible or certain, that I may be rightly understood.

First, the consent of all sober divines and philosophers teaching us to distinguish between objective and subjective certainty, that is, the certain truth of the thing, and the certainty of our own apprehension of it.

Secondly, the word certain, when applied to the apprehension, sometimes signifieth an infallible apprehension, and sometimes a clear and strong apprehension, excluding both deceit and doubts; and by some abusively to a strong apprehension, which excludeth doubts, but not deceits. Thirdly, in the object, infallibility sometimes signifieth nothing but verity, which whoever believeth is not deceived; and sometimes it signifieth also such clear evidence, as is, in its kind, sufficient to banish all considerable doubting. And now I conclude:

First, Whatever is true, is objectively certain and infallibly true; so far as that no man in believing it true, is therein deceived or mistaken. All truth is certain, infallible truth in itself.

Secondly, Few truths in the world are so evident, as that a blinded, prejudiced, indisposed person, may not be ignorant of them, or err about them.

Thirdly, All truths in the Scripture have not equal evidence that they are the word of God, though all that is known to be the word of God, if equally so known, have equal evidence in the formal reason of faith, that they are true.

Fourthly, All known truth is infallibly known: that is, he that knoweth it is not deceived, nor can possibly be deceived, by taking it to be true; so that, as infallibility signifieth not being deceived, all true knowledge is subjectively infallible and certain; that is, it is true.

Fifthly, No man can know that infallibly, which is not objectively certain: that which is not true, cannot be known to be true. The strongest and most confident belief of a falsehood, is a false belief, and more than fallible or uncertain.

Sixthly, All God's word being equally true and infallible, the belief of it is also equally true and infallible. But being not all equally intelligible, evident, (to be his word,) and necessary, the understanding and belief of every part is not equally easy, strong, past doubting, or necessary.

Sevently, There is a superficial belief of divine revelations, even the gospel, which a natural man may have by extrinsic means. And there is a more clear apprehension which a more common sort of grace may produce: but that belief which is so clear and powerful, as truly to sanctify and save the soul, must be the effect of the special operation of the Holy Ghost, who yet hath a course of appointed means in which we must receive it.

Eighthly, The reason of this necessity of the Spirit's operation of faith, and then by faith, is not because the gospel wanteth due ascertaining evidence, or an aptitude to convince and sanctify a soul, for it is highly rational, though mysterious, and good. But because, by corruption and pravity, the mind of man is so indisposed to know, believe, and love truths of such a nature, as that there is need of a special, internal, higher operator, to set home the work as the hand of a man setteth the seal upon the wax, and to do that by it, which the bare word alone, with the excellentest preacher, cannot do.

Ninthly, Yet is no wicked infidel excusable, that saith, "If I cannot believe it, I will not believe it;" because, first, it is his pravity which is his disability; secondly, he is more able for a common, superficial belief, than for a special, effectual belief; thirdly, and if he did by the help of that common belief do what he might, and God appointeth him in the use of means to obtain a special faith through grace, he

should find that God hath commanded no man to labour and seek after grace in vain; and if any man have not that grace and power, which is of necessity to his faith and salvation, it is long of himself, who useth not his commoner power and grace as he might use them. And so much to prevent misunderstanding.

Now, my reasons why I take every history, chronology, genealogy in Scripture as certainly true, and every other word which is spoken by a true prophet and apostle as by the Spirit, and not disowned by the Scripture itself, but especially such as you accuse in the gospel, are these:

First, *a priori*, because it seemeth to me that the writing of the whole books of the New Testament by them, was done in the discharge of the commission given them by Christ; and he promised his apostles his Spirit for the performance of all their commissioned office work. This writing is part of the preaching which Christ sent them for. And no doubt but the Spirit did cause them to write all the substantial part: and therefore we have reason to think that the smallest parts are from the same author, and that he assisted them in the least as well as in the greatest. Yea, the very accidents may have a perfection in their place, though less perfect in themselves. Though all the evangelists use not the same method, or order, nor repeat Christ's sayings in the same terms, yet in respect to the whole frame, it may be best that there should be that diversity of words and order, to preserve and declare the same sense and things. And even their plain and less accurate style and method may be best, as fittest to its use and end.

Secondly, *a posteriori*, there is no caviller that yet hath proved any falsehood or contradiction in any passages of the Scripture; though the clearing of some of them require more than vulgar knowledge.

Thirdly, Saving the controversies about the few questioned books, and some few sentences and words, the church, which received the Scriptures as God's word, did receive the whole as his word, and as certainly true in every part.

Fourthly, Because that spirit of miracles in the apostles, and that spirit of holiness in us, which attesteth the christian religion, doth receive it and attest it as found in the sacred Scripture, though not as there alone; and it putteth no exception against any part of the sacred record; therefore, while it particularly attesteth the chief parts, it inferreth an attestation to the smallest. (For that word or line, which is not strictly a part but an accident of the christian religion, is yet a part of the Bible, which containeth it.)

Fifthly, And though all the reasons, which I have given, prove that the truth of the christian religion may be certainly proved, though we could not prove every by-expression in the Scripture to be true; and though we deny not but the penmen manifested their human imperfections in style and method; yet if each passage were not true, it would be so great a temptation to the weak, and make it so difficult to know in some points what is true, in comparison of what it would be, if all be true, that we have no reason to imagine this difficulty to ourselves, while it is unproved.

And having said this, I am here in order to answer your objections; which yet you should not have expected from me, whilst so great a number of books are already written, which have done it; and why should you bid me to write that again, which is written already, unless you had confuted what is written? If you understand Latin, you may find a multitude of such seeming contradictions reconciled, in Sharpus, Magrius, Althamer, Cumeranus, but

most fully in abundance of commentators: if you understand not Latin, you may read enough in Dr. Hammond, and many other annotators and commentators, Mr. Cradock's Harmony, &c. And you may have enough that understand Latin to translate you the solutions, as out of Spanhemii Dub. Evangel. Grotius, Jansenius, Chemnitius, and such others. And whereas you tell me that I invite men to go to some minister for satisfaction, I do so; but if I had invited all men in England to seek to me, you may imagine how many of them I must fail, though they should never so much resolve to be infidels, and to perish unless I satisfy them.

But you greatly encourage me to a particular answer, by promising me, that "you will trouble me with no more but these few places," and that if I clear these from your imputation of contradiction, you "will conclude" as I do, and suppose the other places reconcilable.

I. Your first case is of "Joram begat Ozias," &c. Matt. i. 8, 9. Answ. Here are two difficulties to be resolved; first, whether Joram begat Ozias (called also, Azarias). Secondly, why Matthew leaveth out Ahazariah, Joas, and Amaziah.

And for the first, is it not strange that you should number this with contradictions? Are we not all called the children of Adam; and Abraham called the father of all the Jews? Is there not a mediate as well as an immediate generation and progeny? Is not *causa causæ, causa causati*? Did not your great-grandfather beget you in *causa*, while he begat him who begat him who begat you immediately? What more common among the Hebrews, than to call posterity the children of their ancestors? Even Christ is called the Son of David. And use is the master and expositor of words. And you were born too late, to teach either God or the world, in what sense to use words so many hundred years ago. This language was well understood by them who used the like.

And secondly, For the next question, you must understand the scope of the author and his undertaking, if you will understand his words. Matthew's design was not to name every person in all these periods of time, from whom Christ descended; but first to show, for memory's sake, how the line of Christ's progenitors may be mentioned by three fourteens in three several periods of time; one from Abraham to David, and one from David to the captivity, and one from thence to Christ; therein commemorating as many as God was pleased hereby to make memorate, to their honour, and to show the truth of the descent of Christ from Abraham and David. Secondly, and God is not bound to give us a reason, why he omitteth any of their names; but this probability is obvious, that seeing Matthew would for memory keep himself to the number of fourteen, none were fitter to be left out than the posterity of Athaliah, and so of Ahab and Jezebel; which God hath foretold should be blotted out or abolished, 1 Kings xxi. 21, 22. And, therefore, he that would have the names of the wicked to rot, would not here honour them with a place among the progenitors of Christ: and yet the second commandment limiting God's visiting the sins of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation, it is no wonder that the omission doth extend no further; and so suitable is God's word to his providence, that these three men were all cut off by the sword, whose memory is here cut off by Matthew.

II. As to your second pretended contradiction: first, remember that it was none of the purpose of any of the evangelists to say all that could be said, even of the sayings and doings of Christ himself,

much less of any others; and, therefore, if that be said in one, which is not said in another, it is no wonder: and you must remember what Dr. Hammond hath noted of Luke, that (Luke i.) professing that he received his knowledge from others, though directed by the Holy Ghost, he delivered the things themselves, with less respect to the time and order, when every thing was said and done, than the other did observe, it being not his design to tell the time and order of each.

These things premised, set them all together and you will find that, first, Mary Magdalene, Johanna, Maria Jacobi, and Salome, having bought spices, and going to anoint the body of Jesus, said, "Who will roll away the stone for us?" And when they came they found the stone rolled away by an angel that sat upon it. Secondly, that angel, with another, speaks to the women, saying, "Fear not; I know you seek Jesus that was crucified: why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord was laid." Thirdly, then the women run and tell the disciples, "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him." Fourthly, Peter and John run to the sepulchre, and saw the clothes and returned. Fifthly, Mary Magdalene being come back, stood weeping at the door of the sepulchre, and looking in, she saw two angels, one at the head, another at the feet of the place where Jesus lay; who say, "Woman, why weepest thou? She said, They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Sixthly, having said this, she looked behind her and saw Jesus, not knowing him, who said, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She thinking him to be the gardener, answered, If thou hast taken him away, tell me where thou hast laid him," &c. "Jesus said unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended, &c. But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to," &c. Seventhly, Mary runs and tells this to the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and what he said to her: but they believed her not. Eighthly, either at the same time before Mary was gone, or, perhaps, after she had overgone them to tell the disciples, Jesus met the rest of the women, and said to them, "All hail: and they laid hold upon his feet, and worshipped him. And Jesus said to them, Fear not, go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me." Take all the evangelists, and tell me, first, whether here be any more than all set together say? Secondly, whether in all this there be any contradiction?

But if you should take Dr. Hammond's shorter supposition: First, that Mary and the women came to the sepulchre, and find that, before they came, the stone was rolled away by an angel, who had affrighted the keepers. Secondly, they go in and miss the body. Thirdly, Mary runs and tells Peter and John. Fourthly, they run and satisfy themselves, and return to the rest. Fifthly, the woman staying at the sepulchre seeth the angels; first one, on the stone, and on the right side of the monument; and then two, one at the head and another at the feet of it. Sixthly, the angels speak all that the evangelists mention; and Mary to them. Seventhly, she turneth back and seeth Jesus, who speaketh to her, and to the rest, what is recorded. Eighthly, then she goes and telleth all to the disciples. If this order be supposed, what contradiction is here?

Where you say, in Luke, the women told the disciples of the angels first, before Peter went, I answer: first, whether we suppose that they first told them of the words of the angels that were without the sepulchre before Peter went, and after of the

angels within the sepulchre, which might be the same angels, but not the same apparition; or whether you only suppose Luke, as in Christ's doctrine, so in these by-matters of fact, to intend only to deliver the matter, and not to tell just the time and order: there is no untruth nor contradiction in either supposition.

III. Your third question is fully answered in the answer of the former. According to the first harmony or supposition, Matthew only mentioneth one of the apparitions of the angels, and one of Mary's goings to the disciples; and so this written in Matthew was partly before Mary's seeing Christ, viz. the angel's first appearance; and partly after, viz. her going the second time, upon the second appearance of the angels, to tell them.

According to the second harmony, Mary's speech to Christ was after the angels' appearance, even as they were turning away from the angels to go tell the disciples the second time; Jesus met them, and Mary, at first, took him for the gardener; but quickly knew him, and had from him the words which you recite.

And, now, consider whether you deal reasonably with Christ, and with your own soul, upon such poor cavils as these, to argue against the christian faith, and plead for apostasy; when the gospel hath all the divine attestations and evidences, which I have opened in my treatise, and you are not able to confute them: which leadeth me to my third proposition.

Prop. 3. He that first proveth the truth of the christian faith by solid evidence, may and ought to be certain of the truth, though he be not able to solve all seeming contradictions in the Scriptures, or answer all objections which occur; yea, certain of every particle thereof.

This I prove by these following arguments:

Arg. 1. From the consent of all mankind; who are forced thus to conclude, in all arts and sciences: there being none of them so plain and sure, but somewhat may be said against them, which few, if any man, can answer; and *incommodum non solvit argumentum* must be their reply.

Arg. 2. From the nature of objects, and the imperfection of man's knowledge. If we could be sure of nothing till we can answer all objections against it, we must come to Zanchez's *Nihil scitur*: nothing in all the world can be sure. Can no man be sure that there is any such thing as motion, till he can answer the objections that would first prove no vacuity, and then no penetrability, and then an impossibility till a cession begin at the extremity of natural beings, and continue unto the supposed mobile? Shall we say that a wheel cannot possibly turn round, because no one part first giveth place to the other to succeed it? Will you be able to answer all the difficulties tossed in the schools, or but those mentioned in Mr. Glanvil's *Scep sis Scientifica*, before you will be sure of any thing of those matters, where these difficulties are found?

He that can answer all objections, first, is supposed not only to know, but to know the matter in some perfection; and can none know certainly but those, who be they, that know in such perfection? Secondly, yea, they are supposed to know all other matters which may any way relate to the matter in hand; and shall no man know any thing certainly, till he knoweth all things? For instance,

First, What if the question be, Whether there be a God, the Creator of all; cannot I be sure of this till I can answer Aristotle's objections of the world's eternity, and all the rest which every atheist will allege?

Secondly, What if the question be, Whether God

be most wise; cannot I be sure of it by the notorious effects of his wisdom, till I can answer him that saith, he that maketh fools, and permitteth so much madness and confusion in the world, and leaveth mankind in so great ignorance, is not perfectly wise?

Thirdly, What if the question be, Whether God be perfectly good; cannot I be sure of it till I can answer all their objections, who say perfect goodness would make all things perfectly good, and would not let the world lie in so much wickedness, nor so many tormenting diseases to afflict us, nor the innocent horse and ox to be laboured, tired, tormented, and killed by us at our pleasure? &c.

Fourthly, What if the question were, Whether God be almighty; cannot I know it till I can answer them who say, that he that cannot make an infinite world is not infinite in power; he that hath a will which men can violate; he that endureth all the sin in the world, which he hateth, and the ruin and misery of so many millions, whom he loveth, is not almighty?

Fifthly, What if the questions, Whether man be a rational creature; whether he have any free will; whether brutes have reason; whether plants and stones have sense; and I know none of these till I can answer all the objections of the somatists against the soul; and all the objections of Hobbs against free will; and all the objections of Chambré for the reason of beasts; and all that Campanella hath said *de sensu rerum*?

In a word, what shall we know in the world if we can know nothing till we can solve all difficulties and objections? therefore I add,

Prop. 4. The true method of one that would arrive at certainty, and not deceive himself and others, is to begin at the bottom, and discern things in their nearest, intrinsical, and most certain evidences; and, afterwards, to try the by-objections as he is able; and not to pore first upon the objected difficulties, and judge of all the cause by those.

The plain truth and case of christians is, that if God had not done more for them by giving them his Spirit by the gospel, and experience of its truth in the effects, than their teachers have done by a right instructing them in the evidences of faith, or than the reason of the most doth in a clear discerning of those evidences in the thing or word itself, it were no wonder if apostates were more numerous than they are, when so many build on the sand, and are strangers to the true foundation, and will never see the evidences of the christian verity in itself; no wonder if poor objections shake them, that never understood the nature and reasons of their own religion. If the tree grow all in top, which exposeth it to the winds, and little in the roots, which must hold it fast, no wonder if it be overthrowen. When men never know the great, clear evidences of the christian religion, but take it up by custom, education, and on the credit only of the time and place in which they live, no wonder if every seeming weakness, error, or contradiction in Scripture, make them doubt.

First, Look to all learning, arts, and sciences. Do not learners that would know, begin at the elements and foundation? Do we not begin in grammar with our letters, syllables, words, and chief rules, and in all arts and science, with the elements and principles?

Secondly, And reason telleth us that the points that are most necessary, clear, and certain, must be held accordingly with a more clear, assured confidence, than those that are unnecessary and dark: and that uncertainties must be reduced to certainties, and not certainties to uncertainties: and that all

arguing should be a *notiore*, and not a *minus notis*. And as I said before, as the trunks of the tree, the veins, the arteries, the nerves are few and visible, and easily and surely known, when the thousands of little branches are hardly visible or numera-ble; so is it with the schemes of truths. He, therefore, that will begin at these numerous small branches, will dote rather than know or learn.

As in the former instances. First, when I see with my eyes the effects of power, wisdom, and goodness in all the visible works of God, I am sure that it is perfect power, wisdom, and goodness, which is the cause of this. I am certain that nothing can give that which *formaliter*, or *eminenter*, it hath not to give, nor can the effect exceed the total cause. I am certain that he from whom all creatures, power, wisdom, and goodness doth proceed, must needs himself be more great, and wise, and good, than all the world of creatures set together, which he hath made. To this fundamental certainty, therefore, I must hold if I will not dote, whatever little objections or prattlings may be used against it.

Secondly, Eternity is a thing incomprehensible, which quite swalloweth up my understanding; and many little things be said against it. But I am certain that nothing can make nothing; and if ever there had been nothing there never would have been any thing: and to this certainty I will hold.

Thirdly, A holy life hath a great many of cavilling objections raised against it by corrupted nature. And shall I there begin to make my trial of it? No, I am first sure that a rational, free agent and subject of God, is bound to obey him, and that the greatest good should be greatest loved, and that we are totally our Creator's own, and should be totally devoted to him. I am sure I cannot love the infinite good too much, nor be too good, nor do too much good to others in the world, nor make too sure of my own felicity, nor too much seek my ultimate end. And shall not this assurance hold me fast against all the snarlings and prattlings of the doting, drunken world?

So here, I have in the Treatise opened those grounds on which we may be certain of the necessity of this holiness, of the life to come, and of the truth of the christian faith and hopes. And because God in mercy hath not put off the world with the skeleton of a bare creed, but also given them the complete body of sacred Scriptures, to be a full, perpetual record of this truth, shall I turn his mercy to a snare and sin, and question all, even the articles of the faith, because in the Scriptures there are some things accidental to religion, and some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unskilful wrest to their destruction? This is but to be devils to ourselves, and foolish enemies of our own peace and comfort: as Cicero speaks against them that pleaded for the soul's mortality, as if it were a desirable thing.

You have nothing else that suiteth the nature and interest of a man, and agreeth with the nature and interest of God, to set against the christian religion in competition. If you would have no religion, you would have no hopes, no safety, no business or comfort, but bestial, in this world, and you would be no men. If you would have nothing but nature, and

the holiness which nature clearly calleth for, you would have health in an unhealed body, and health without the physician and his means. The Mediator is the way to the Father, and if you would love God and be happy in his love, and have the pardon of your sins, you have little reason to reject him that cometh to procure, reveal, and communicate that love and pardon, which must win your hearts to the love of God. And if you would not die in desperation, but have the hopes and foresight of a better life, you have little reason to quarrel with a messenger from heaven, which bringeth life and immortality to light. As bad as christians are, if personal quarrels and malignity blind you not, and if you will not take the enemies and persecutors of christianity for christians, merely because they assume the name, you may easily see that serious christians, who live according to their profession, are persons of another kind of excellency than all the unbelieving world.

I know that from some self-conceited, ignorant, well-meaning persons, I must look to be reviled and called a betrayer of christianity, because I plead not for it in their way, and give you any other answer to your objections, than that when God giveth you the Spirit, you shall know that the Scripture hath no contradictions, and that christianity is the true religion: till then you cannot know it, nor must I give you reasons for it. But I do my work, and let who will wrangle and revile.

How far the sayings of some are true or false, That the Scripture is the only means of faith, or saving knowledge of God; that it is *principium in-demonstrabile*, as first principles of knowledge are in nature; that (as others say) it hath evidence of credibility, but not evidence of certainty, as if evidence of divine credibility or faith were not evidence of certainty; that faith hath not evidence, but evidence evacuateth faith, or the merits of it, with such like, a man of understanding may gather from what is said: and I must not be so tedious as particularly here to resolve them, having done it in preface to the second part of the "Saints' Rest," edit. 2, &c. long ago. And though I have written nothing here which some men cannot make an ill use of, and some men will not turn to matter of cavil and reproach, I will not therefore leave it out whilst I expect that the good, which truth is fitted to, is greater than the evil, which by accident and abuse will follow it.

And because you seem confident, and think me bound to answer you, and consequently all others, not knowing how many hundreds may trouble me in the like kind, I send you this in print, that other men's mistakes and infidelity also may have the same remedies. But I shall conceal your name and dwelling, lest the shame of your sin should hinder your patient application of the remedy, save only by telling you that it is long ago since I read a noble and learned lord, who in a Latin book *De Veritate (contra Veritatem)* said much against the certainty of faith: but it was all but learned froth and vanity. I rest

A servant of Christ,

And desirer of your faith and salvation,

R. BAXTER.

Decemb. 28, 1671.

THE SECOND PART OF THIS APPENDIX,

BEING

SOME ANIMADVERSIONS ON THE FORESAID TREATISE, "DE VERITATE," RESOLVING SEVERAL QUESTIONS THERE INCLUDED OR IMPLIED.

HAVING let fall the mention of that noble author's Treatise, it came into my mind, that it, having never been answered, might be thought unanswerable, and so the more considerable. Therefore I adjoin so much of my animadversion, as the cause in hand requireth.

And, first, I must give the author the honour of his great learning and strength of wit. Secondly, I must confess that the teachers of the church have been too often such, as have given him the scandal which he so often expresseth, as more regarding their interest than truth, and not making clear the truth which they have taught, and often wronging it by their omissions, or additions, or unsound explications. Thirdly, I confess the body of his Treatise containeth many very considerable things, in order to the disquisition of truth; especially about the suitableness of the faculties to the object, the conditions requisite to a true apprehension, and somewhat about the nature of truth itself; though that which he calleth *veritas apparentiæ*, I had rather call *evidentia veritatis rei*. And I am not willing to think that I have as many different faculties as there are different plants in my garden, or books in my study, or sentences in those books; and in several things I miss that accurateness which he pretendeth to; but these I shall pass by.

He saith, p. 217, *An vero aliud (præter pœnitentiam) et quidem convenientius detur medium, unde justitiæ divinæ fit factum satis non est hic in animo exponere, — Hoc solummodo dicimus, (quicquid in adversam partem a quibusdam suggeratur,) quod nisi sola pœnitentia et fide in Deum, vitia et scelera quæcunque eliminari possint, et justitiæ divinæ bonitas divinæ adeo sit hæc ut non sit alterius quo provocetur, nullum universale ita patere, vel olim potuisse remedium, ut fuerit quo confugeret misera ex peccati sensu languentium turba, vel haberet unde gratiam et pacem illam internam conciliaret; et tandem in id deveniendum sit, ut quosdam, immo longe majorem hominum partem inscios nedom invitos, et creaverit et damnaverit Deus Opt. Max. Quod adeo horrendum, et providentiæ, bonitati immo et justitiæ divinæ incongruum sonat, ut mitiori immo et æquiori sententiâ dicendum sit, totum humanum genus ex pœnitentia semper habuisse media unde Deo acceptum esse potuit; quibus si exciderit, non jam ex Dei bene placito, sed ex proprio hominum peccato, perditionem uniuscujusque extitisse nec per Deum destitisse quo minus salvi fierent.* The first question then is,

Quest. 1. Whether, if Christ, and not only our repentance and belief in God, be taken for a sacrifice, and price given to God for man's redemption, it will follow, that most of the world are damned by God's will, without any remedy to which they could have recourse for salvation?

Ans. First, It is strange that men should be left remediless, if Christ, and not only their repentance, be the remedy. Surely if Christ had given sinners nothing, yet he hath taken nothing from them.

Secondly, We all confess the universal necessity of repentance; but this is partly co-ordinate, as the end, and partly subordinate, as an effect, and therefore not contrary to the necessity of a Redeemer. Repentance is our conversion, and our begun recovery from sin; and will it follow that the physician is unnecessary, because health and recovery are necessary? yea, and sufficient in their kind.

Thirdly, How doth it follow that the remedy was not universal, when redemption by Christ was universal? Christ so far died for all men, as by his death he procured them any grace. But he procured grace, though not equal grace, for all; you confess a universal grace, and yet an inequality of benefits; we say, that grace was procured by Christ; do we narrow it at all, by saying Christ procured it?

Fourthly, I perceive some men's misexplication of these things was your snare and scandal. First, We distinguish between Christ's procurement of our pardon and salvation by his sacrifice and merit with God, and Christ as the object of man's faith, or as believed in by man. We do not make the latter so universally necessary as the former. For we hold that infants are saved, that believe not. But we hold, that no one is saved for whom Christ did not satisfy God's justice, and merit salvation. Secondly, And that thus much causelessly offend you not, we say, that this satisfaction and merit consisteth not in an identity or gradual proportion of Christ's pains or sufferings to all mankind, but in an aptitude of his sacrifice and righteousness to attain the ends of God, the Sovereign of the world, the demonstration of his truth, holiness, and righteousness, together with triumphant love and mercy, better than the remediless damnation of all the sinning world would have done. Read but Mr. Truman's "Great Propitiation," which sheweth you the true ends of the sacrifice of Christ, and this unjust offence will vanish. Thirdly, And we maintain, as is said, that the merit and propitiation wrought by Christ, is not to make our repentance needless, but to procure it, and to make it effectual to its ends. He giveth us repentance, and remission of sins. You confess that we may and must make a new covenant with God upon our repentance: in that covenant God promiseth us grace, as we consent to be his servants and children. Now if Christ did procure, and, as God's general Administrator, give us that promise of pardon and salvation to the truly penitent, doth not this more oblige us to repentance, and not less? And the merit of repentance, if you will so call it with the ancients, is quite of another order, rank, and nature, than the merit of Christ. It is one thing for the innocent Son of God to merit repentance and pardon to all that will repent, and another thing by repenting, through his grace, to perform the condition of the further grace of pardon or salvation. Fourthly, And yet further to heal your unjust offence, we do not hold that Christ maketh God more merciful than he was, or that his redemption is the first cause of our recovery and sal-

vation, causing God to be willing, who was unwilling before; but that God's love and mercy and his own good will is the first cause, which gave us Christ for a Redeemer as a second cause, an effect of his love, and the head of all the means of our recovery; and the true meriting cause of that grace and salvation which God will give us. Nor so meriting as to change God, but so meriting as to remove the impediments of his grace as to the communication, and as to become the fittest instrument of the Father's love and mercy, by whom to govern the lapsed world, and to communicate grace and life to sinners. Fifthly, And yet fuller to satisfy your objection, we hold, that all mankind is brought by Christ under a covenant of grace, which is not vain, or repealed by God; but as their abuse of the grace of the covenant may cast them out. For as a covenant of entire nature, or innocency, was made with all mankind in innocent Adam, so a covenant of grace was made with all mankind in lapsed Adam, (Gen. iii. 15,) in the promised seed, and renewed again with all mankind in Noah. No man can prove either a limitation of this covenant to some, (till the rest, by violating it, became the serpent's seed, at least,) nor yet that ever God did abrogate it, as it was made to all the world. Sixthly, And we further acquaint you, that it was not the existent humanity of Christ that procured grace and life to the world, for those about four thousand years before his incarnation. The mere decree and promise did serve for man's salvation all that time, without the existence of his humanity. Seventhly, Therefore, when you grant a necessity of believing in God, as merciful, you must needs include Christ in his divine subsistence, for you must needs grant that the eternal *Λόγος*, or Wisdom of God, must be the fountain and determiner of all those means by which his love and mercy would communicate recovering grace and life to man. You will not divide God as the object of our faith, and leave out the wisdom that must manage all. Eighthly, And yet further to remove your scandal, we maintain that the Jews themselves were not bound to believe many that are now articles of our faith, that Christ "was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, descended to *hades*, and rose again the third day;" and that his very death and resurrection were not believed by his own apostles till he was risen. Nor understood they the article of the Holy Ghost. So that before a more general belief in the Messiah did serve the Jews themselves: that all this is so, we are satisfied by this evidence. First, By the silence of the Old Testament in the matter, giving us no proof that ordinary, much less, all believers, had such a particular knowledge of the office of Christ; and what is not revealed is not to be believed. Secondly, From Heb. xi. where faith is described, as in its latitude, to be the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for, and a believing that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and a looking for a better country, and for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; and a believing the word and faithfulness of God, &c. And the Holy Ghost, when he purposely described the faith which the ancients had been saved by, would never have left out the chief, or any essential part. The same I say of Rom. iv.; 2 Cor. iv. 18; v. 1, 6, 7; James i. &c. Thirdly, The text expressly telleth us, first, of Christ's death and resurrection, and, consequently, the offering himself a sacrifice for sin, and ransom for the world, and dying for us, that the apostles themselves were ignorant of it till after his resurrection. When Christ told them that he must be killed and raised again the third day, Peter took

him, and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee," Matt. xvi. 21, 22. "The Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men: but they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not," Luke ix. 44, 45. Again, "All things written in the prophets, concerning the Son of man, shall be accomplished, for he shall be delivered to the gentiles, and be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit on, and they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken," Luke xviii. 31—34. So, "We trusted this had been he that should have redeemed Israel—O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself," Mark ix. 32; Luke xxiv. 21, 25, 26. Here you see that they knew not that he must die for our sins, rise again, and ascend to glory; and that it is no proof that all that were justified before understood these things, because that Moses and the prophets had foretold them, for the apostles themselves understood it not in Moses and the prophets. Secondly, they understood not aright the doctrine of his intercession, and that he must go to the Father, and then be their High Priest, and that they must come to God by him, and ask in his name: for it is said, "Now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? but because I have said these things to you, sorrow hath filled your hearts—but it is expedient for you that I go away," John xvi. 5—7. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name." "At that day ye shall ask in my name," John xvi. 24, 26. As for them that say that the apostles knew that they were to come to God only by a Mediator, as all the faithful did of old; but yet they knew not that they must come to him by Christ, and in his name; First, There was no mediator existent but God before the incarnation, though there was to be a mediator after. Secondly, This implieth that the apostles knew not Jesus to be the Christ, and that they went to God by some other mediator, which are both false. Thirdly, And if by mediation be meant the satisfactory price of his sacrifice, they knew not that he was to die, and to be a sacrifice for sin. Fourthly, And it is plain that they understood not rightly the nature of his spiritual kingdom and reign, but had got an opinion of an earthly kingdom for the Jews' deliverance and exaltation: that Christ abideth for ever, (John xii. 34,) in opposition to his heavenly abode, was then a common opinion. "We hoped this had been he that should have redeemed Israel," Luke xxiv.: one would have sat on his right hand, and another on his left; and they strove who should be greatest. "Lord, wilt thou, at this time, restore the kingdom of Israel?" Acts i. When the Advocate was to be sent, he was to teach them all things, and to testify of Christ, and to convince the world of the sin of their unbelief, and of the righteousness and truth of Christ, and of his judgment, or kingdom and power, as consisting, (*quoad exercitium*), in the debellation or dejection of the kingdom of Satan, and destroying the works of the devil, John xvi. By all which, and much more, it appeareth that the apostles, though then in a state of justification, had a very general and defective knowledge of the office of Christ; and that, though his prophetic office was ordinarily believed, (John iv. the Samaritan woman

could say, When the Messiah cometh, he will tell us all things,) and a temporal kingdom expected, yet his spiritual kingdom, and especially his priestly office, by his sacrifice, death, resurrection, heavenly intercession, (for all the old types and sacrifices,) was little understood by the disciples. Yea, he sometimes forbade them and others to tell men that he was the Christ, because the great evidences of his resurrection, ascension, and Spirit, by which it was to be evinced, were yet to come. And we believe not that all that were saved before had more knowledge than the apostles, so that though all the faithful Jews believed in the promised seed, even the Messiah, as one that was to be sent to be their Deliverer and Saviour, yet it was by a faith that was very general, and far from that distinctness which, after the resurrection of Christ, was required of all to whom the gospel was promulgate; which I have said the more of to you, lest you think that we hold what we do not, and so take occasion to err by supposing us to err. Clemens Alexandrinus, Justin Martyr, Arnobius, Lactantius, and other old christians, do go yet further than yet I have conceded to you.

And our very learned Dr. Twisse doth argue that God could have saved the world without a Redeemer, if he had pleased, because he saved the faithful under the Old Testament without any existent mediator, except God himself, or any existent sacrifice, or merit, or intercession of him, and because he saveth infants without faith. But for the first, I take it to be, at best, too great temerity or audacity to dispute whether God could have done things better or otherwise, which he has done so well (of which I said more in my premonition before my treatise, called, "The Unreasonableness of Infidelity;" though I know that Wallæus and many other learned protestants say the same). And as for infants, they are not saved without the sacrifice and grace of the Redeemer, though they know him not; nor are they in the covenant, without the faith of their parents or owners, which is as their own. And if the spirit of the prophets be called the Spirit of Christ, (1 Pet. i. 11,) and the reproach of Moses was the reproach of Christ, (Heb. xi. 26,) we may much more conclude of the ordinary believers before his coming, that Christ's interest, and his Spirit's operations and help extended much further than men's understanding of him, his undertaking, and his future work. No doubt but the eternal *Λόγος* that had undertaken man's redemption, and thereupon was our Lord Redeemer, gave even to Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Antonine, Epictetus, Plutarch, &c. what light and mercy they had, though they understood not well from whom or upon what grounds they had them.

Ninthly, And also we hold that the Jews were not the whole of God's kingdom, or church of redeemed ones in the world, as I have fully proved elsewhere, but that as the covenant was made with all mankind, so amongst them God had other servants besides the Jews; though it was they that had the extraordinary benediction of being his peculiar sacred people. Tenthly, And we hold, that as the Jews had by promises, prophecies, and types, more means to know God, and the Messiah to come, than other nations, so they were answerably obliged to more knowledge and faith than other nations were, that had not, nor could have, their means.

If, then, all the world be under the first covenant of grace, and if you confess this to proceed from the wisdom and goodness of God, and that men are bound so to believe, and if Christ since his incarnation hath diminished none of the mercies of God to the world, but rather greatly increased them, and so

where the gospel is not preached, nor cannot be had, they that refuse it not are in no worse case than they were before, how can you say that they are remediless, if Christ be the Ransom and Remedy?

We know that all men partake of a great deal of mercy from God, after the notorious demerit of their sin. We know that this mercy telleth them aloud, that God dealeth not with them according to the first law of innocence; they see he pardoneth them, they feel that he pardoneth them in part; that is, he useth them not as they deserve. We know that all his mercies oblige them to hope that he will yet be further merciful; and to repentance, obedience, thankfulness, and love. We know that the heathen are not left as the devils, without remedy, but all the nations are under divine obligations, to use certain means, which have a tendency to their recovery: and we know that God biddeth no man to use his means in vain.

Fourthly, Let us, therefore, first, debate this case with any unbeliever that hath your objections, whether you have any fault to find with the christian doctrine of the way of man's salvation, for the first four thousand years, before the incarnation of our Lord? If you have, First, Is it with the author? Secondly, Or with the terms and conditions of life? First, The author then was none but God. The eternal *Λόγος*, Wisdom, and Word, did interpose to prevent the execution of strict justice, by resolving to glorify love and mercy. Do you deny the being of God's eternal Wisdom or Word? Do you deny him to be God himself, or a divine subsistence, and dream that it is but some accident in God? No, your fair description of God (p. 210) dischargeth you from the imputation of so gross an error.

You will say that the divine Power and Goodness interposed as well as the *Λόγος*, Wisdom, and Word. True: *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*; but so that each hath an eminency in his own work, though not as separated or a solitary principle or cause. The Father, and divine vital active power, was eminently glorified in the creation; the Son, and divine Wisdom, is eminently glorified in the making of the remedying medicine; and the divine love and Spirit is eminently glorified in the operation of it, to the health and salvation of the soul. The Son, and the Wisdom or Word, doth not finish all the work himself, but with the Father and divine power, sendeth the Holy Spirit, and communicateth to man the love of God: and all together will be glorified in our glorification.

Secondly, And if it be the terms of life that do offend you, First, It is either the terms of satisfying the justice of God; Secondly, Or the terms of conveying the benefits to man.

First, For the first, there is nothing in it to give offence. For we dream not of any extrinsical agent or action, much less that which was not existent till four thousand years after, having any proper casualty to change God's mind or will; the sum of the christian doctrine, about the interposition and redemption by the Son for man upon his fall, is but this: as if God should say, I will not destroy or damn sinful man remedilessly, according to the strict terms of the law of innocence, which he hath broken; but will give him a remedying covenant of grace; because I will, in the fulness of time, provide better for the glorifying of my truth and holiness, wisdom and goodness, justice and mercy, than the remediless destruction of mankind would do, even by the incarnation, doctrine, sacrifice, merits, &c. of the eternal Word. So that this grand work of God is the cause of his subordinate works; but not the cause of any real, but only relative or denominative, mutation in him-

self. This all sound christians are agreed in; and can this offend you?

Secondly, And for the terms of communication of grace to man, it is either, First, The new covenant as a gift of pardon and life; Secondly, Or the conditions which it requireth of man.

First, The former you neither do find fault with, nor can do, that God should give the world a recovering and pardoning law. Secondly, The second is all that is here liable to your exception. And what do you think amiss in that? First, Not that repentance is one of the conditions of further grace; for that you plead for. Secondly, Not that *fides in Deum misericordem*, (faith in God's revealed mercy, as pardoning sin,) is required of man; for that also you plead for.

But you would have his goodness and mercy to be a sufficient satisfaction to his justice. Ans. First, I hope you will not exclude his wisdom, because you abhor atheism as folly. Secondly, And I hope you will distinguish between the prime satisfying cause, and the satisfying means: these plainly differ. The prime satisfying cause is God's wisdom, contriving and determining of the fittest way to communicate his love and Spirit; but the prime satisfying means is Jesus Christ, who was to do that which was fittest to attain the aforesaid ends.

But that which you will except against is, that the belief in Christ's future incarnation was made then necessary to salvation. Ans. First, See that you feign not the christian doctrine to say more of this than indeed it doth, which I have opened to you before. I told you how narrow the apostles' own faith was before Christ's resurrection. We know that all the believing Jews knew not so much as they, nor so much as the prophets, and more illuminated men; and we know that the rest of the world had not so full a revelation as the Jews. But we know that all that had the notice of his promise, were to believe the truth thereof; and those that had not the word of promise made known to them, had the possession of many such mercies as that promise gave, and as intimated much of the same grace, which the promise did; therefore none could be bound to less than to believe that God, of his mercy, would pardon sin, and save penitent believers, by such a means of securing the honour of his holiness, truth, and justice, as his infinite wisdom should provide. This much you cannot deny. And that the promise of the victorious seed, though it seem too obscure to bind men to so distinct a faith as ours is, was, by tradition, told to Adam's posterity; and that they had a general belief of such an expiation for some time, seemeth intimated in the early and almost universal use of sacrificing, of which I shall speak more anon. Hitherto, then, I have vindicated the christian doctrine of man's salvation, for the first four thousand years.

Secondly, And is there any thing since which should make it more offensive to you? First, As to the person of Christ, I have said enough in my treatise, "The Reason of Christian Religion." Verily, I think it far harder to confute those that feign all the world to be animated by God, as the universal soul, and to conceive how God, who is most intimate to all things, in whom we live, and move, and are, should not be as nearly united to all things as christians believe him to be to the human nature of Christ, though undoubtedly it is not so, than that he should have that near union with his human nature.

Secondly, And as to Christ's work, I have so largely showed you the necessity, the reasonableness, and the harmonical congruities, that I will not repeat them. In a word, the New Testament is the doctrine of the eternal Λόγος, Wisdom, or Word of God incar-

nate, to communicate the divine Spirit and love to man, to be a sacrifice for sin, the conqueror of Satan, death, and sin, the head over all things to the church, the author of redemption, the grand administrator of the new covenant, the reconciler and restorer of man to God, the teacher, ruler, and high priest of the church, in order to this our restoration and salvation.

Thirdly, But if it be the time of his coming that doth offend you, I have answered that, and further add: First, What is there in foolish man that should encourage him to dream that he better knoweth the fittest season for God's works than God himself. Secondly, Man was not all the while before without the benefits of this designed and undertaken redemption: he was still under a covenant of grace. Thirdly, Consider well that God did not intend to give mankind, that had so heinously sinned, by preferring the devil's work before his, a present and a perfect pardon, but only to give a new law and covenant, which should be a conditional gift of pardon, to be obtained in full perfection in time, and by degrees we had made ourselves voluntarily the slaves of Satan, and God would not deliver us all at once: we had forfeited the heavenly assistance of the Holy Spirit, and God would not give it us all at once. Man's time of healing the wounds of his own sin, is the time of this life; and the perfect cure will not be done till our entrance into the perfect world. And as it is with individual men, so it is with the world of all mankind. Grace imitateth nature, and doth all by degrees; darker revelations were meet for the infancy of the world, and clearer at noon-day; and ripper knowledge fitter for its maturity. And when Satan, by divine permission, had played his part, and seemed to triumph over the sinful world, it was time for Christ to come, by power, wisdom, and goodness, meanly clothed, to cast down his temples and altars, to subdue his kingdoms, and to triumph over the triumpher.

Fourthly, But if it be the present conditions of the new covenant since Christ's resurrection that offend you, viz. that the world is required to believe in him, I have answered that, and now add: First, Remember what I said before, that no man's condition is made worse by Christ than it was before his incarnation. They that neither have nor could have the covenant of grace in the last edition, are under it as they were before in the first edition, further than as their after-sins have deprived them of any of its benefits. Therefore, the coming of Christ hath not narrowed the church, nor repealed or diminished any grace that before was given; but added much more. Secondly, When there was more grace to be given, it was needful that the condition should be suited to it. Would you rather be without the graces and benefits, than be obliged to believe? Would you be cured by one, that you would not believe, nor take for your physician? Would you be taught by one that you will not believe nor take for your teacher? Would you be ruled by one that you will not believe is your ruler? And I have proved to you that God biddeth no man believe either without a meet object or meet evidence of the credibility; yea, the certain verity of that which he is commanded to believe. And the belief required of us is but a means to our love of God, and our belief of the everlasting glory; and, consequently, is needful to our further duty, to our perfection, and our felicity. Do you not think, yourself, that the greatest demonstrations of the divine love are fittest to breed love in us to God; and is not this wonderful work of man's redemption, a wonderful demonstration of God's love? If you say that it is incredible because wonderful and incomprehensible, I answer you, it is the more credible,

because so wonderful. I cannot believe that any thing is a work of God, especially one of his great transcendent works, which mortal man can comprehend. The work of the Father, and of Omnipotency in creation, is wonderful: will you, therefore, say that there is no world? The work of the Holy Ghost, in regeneration, is wonderful, &c. especially in our perfection in glory: and will you say, therefore, that there is no sanctification or glorification? So the work of the Son, and divine Wisdom and Word incarnate, is wonderful; and it is the fitter to be thought a work of God.

And would you not say yourself, that if God should send an angel from heaven, to tell you his will, and tell you what is good and evil, and to tell you the certainty of the life to come, and the joys thereof, would it not be a singular help to your belief of all these things revealed, if he did but give you sufficient proof that he is sent of God? What perverseness is it, then, to quarrel with God's greatest mercy as incredible, merely because it is wonderful and great, and therefore fit for God to give! Therefore, observe here the error of those men that overlook the benefit, and taking all duty for a burden, dispute against the necessity of the duty: whereas all our duty is our benefit, like the duty of feasting, rejoicing, receiving money or honour when given us. And the true state of our question should be, whether all they that, by the gospel, have the offer of a Saviour and salvation, and all those treasures of mercy, which are brought to mankind by Christ above what they had before his incarnation, are bound to believe that procurement and offer, and to accept so great a gift? When the same men that question this can be willing to accept of wealth and honours, without disputing whether they may not live without them, and will say, *Quis nisi mentis inops oblatum respuit aurum?* And he that can make a sorry shift with a candle, will not dispute whether it be his duty to open his windows, and let in the light of the sun: it is riches of mercy which all they dispute against, who think they speak against the necessity of some difficult duty.

Thirdly, And remember again, that yourself confess an inequality of God's benefits, and that he is not bound to give them to all alike, though there were no inequality of demerit in the receivers. If, then, he give more to the church by Christ incarnate, than he did before his incarnation, or more than he giveth to the world that never hear the gospel, their eye should not be evil because he is good; much less ours, who receive the benefit.

Fourthly, And I am glad that all that you require of God for all the world, is but that their salvation or damnation may be brought to their own free choice, and not their perdition be a thing unavoidable by God's mere will, without their culpable mischoosing. And all this we maintain as well as you: and you can never prove that the christian religion doth deny it. Nay, tell me if you can what mercy your doctrine giveth to all the world, which ours giveth them not? Do you say that they are not under the mere law of innocence made with Adam, but under the law of grace, which after was given him? So do we. But you say, that this law of grace is the law of nature. Let not names abuse us: it is not the law of innocent nature. But it is so fitted to man's lapsed state, and doth also so fitly express the gracious nature of God, and also hath such evidences in God's merciful providence, and dealing with the sinful world, that in all these respects, if you call it the law of lapsed and reprieved nature under its reparation, we will not contend about the name.

But you say, that all men may be saved if they

reject not their salvation: so say we, that all should be judged according to that means and law that is given them, their consciences accusing or excusing them in the day when Christ shall judge the world, as the gospel telleth us. And none perish now for the mere sin of Adam, nor merely for want of the innocency required by the first law; but for the refusing and abusing some mercy purchased by Christ, which had an apt tendency to their repentance and recovery.

But you lay the main stress on this, that all men may be saved by true faith in God, and true repentance, without believing in a crucified Christ. And we say that no man in the world shall perish that hath true faith in God, and true repentance; for all such do love God as God, and do devote themselves to his glory, to obedience, and love; and do hate sin as sin, and so are holy. And God cannot cast that soul into hell that loveth him and beareth his image. Holiness hath so much of God and heaven in it, that this would be to cast heaven and God's image into hell, and to jumble heaven and hell together. Do we not, then, grant you as much as you can reasonably desire? Tell us but what heathens or Mahometans are holy, truly penitent for all sin, and devoted to God in obedience and love, and we will grant you that they shall all be saved.

But you were aware that we would tell you that this repentance and holiness is not a thing which sinful man is so easily brought to; and therefore the question must be whether really these heathens do truly repent, and love God as God, or not?

Ans. First, Here you may perceive that though before you did but require that salvation be brought down to the sinner's choice, yet now that will not serve the turn: yea, though faith in God and true repentance were the terms that, you were satisfied, should be imposed on all, yet now you are loth to stand to that, unless we grant that all these men have the power so to believe and repent. Well, if by power you mean a natural faculty, we grant that they have the power of intellect and volition. And if it be the object that is in question, we grant that the object of that faith and repentance, which you mention yourself, is certain and existent. And if it be the evidence of the object that is in question, we grant that the being, power, wisdom, goodness, holiness, truth, justice, and mercy of God, are revealed to mankind by an evidence sufficient in its kind, if their souls be but rightly disposed to receive it: and that sin to be repented of is discernible in themselves, is doubtless. Amyraldus largely labour-eth to prove, that as God bindeth no man to natural impossibilities, that is, to any act without, First, A faculty that can do it; Secondly, An object; Thirdly, Evidence of that object: as not to see, First, Without an eye; Secondly, That which is not in being; Thirdly, Or that which is a thousand miles off, or in the dark, without light: so that all heathens have, First, The natural faculty; Secondly, An object which would save them if truly believed in and loved, that is, God; Thirdly, A revelation of this object, and that *τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ* is such an object as would procure their felicity, if duly apprehended. See also Mr. Trueman's "Treatise of Natural and Moral Impotency."

But, indeed, when all is done, the wit of man that is offended with God, as if he gave not all men a power to be saved, will not be satisfied if that be granted, unless also he actually save them. Should we grant you all the rest, if some yet are damned when God could have saved them, it will not satisfy them that will be above God, and will judge their Judge.

But because you seem satisfied with less, suppose all the question come to this, Whether or no those that never had the gospel, do ever come without it to true faith in God, and true repentance, and so to be saved?

Ans. First, And when we have granted you what you first desired, that none perish but those that are wilfully impenitent, and believe not truly in God, why must the controversy be carried to men's hearts and acts? I can read God's law, but I cannot know or read the hearts of millions whom I never saw. Must I be obliged to know the thoughts of every man in China, Tartary, Japan, or the antipodes? Secondly, What number is it that you put the question of, and whose repentance you assert? Is it all, or but some? If all, he must be mad that believeth it, that all men are true penitent believers in God. If but some, First, Would not your wit quarrel still with God for damning all the rest? Secondly, And must it be the greater part or the lesser? or would you know on what number, or where to find satisfaction? And what have we to do to judge another's servants? To their own master they stand or fall.

Secondly, And methinks you should easily grant, at least, First, That repentance and holiness is far easier to them that have the gospel, than to them that never heard it. Secondly, And that they are far more common. And so that far more christians are holy and saved than of others. For, First, Tell me, if God should send an angel from heaven as aforesaid, with miraculous evidence of his mission, to call men to repentance and believe in God, and glory, would it not be easier for those men to repent, than for others? Nay, would not you the easilier believe in Christ yourself, if you had but such an angel to confirm you? Why, then, should not the word of Christ, who by his miracles, resurrection, and the donation of such a Spirit to his servants, proved his mission from the Father, be a help to our faith and repentance? Especially when his word hath a self-evidencing light also in the image and superscription of God upon it. Secondly, You will not deny but that the difference of common, lower means, doth make repentance much easier or harder to one than another. Take one man that is born in Brazil, or Soldania, or among any other savage people; or that is bred up in a tavern, ale-house, or whore-house, or gaming-house, among those that make a scorn of godliness; and take another that is bred up to learning, labour, and godliness, among them that by doctrine and example do honour and command a godly, righteous, sober life; and hath not one of these abundance more hinderances to his repentance than the other? Thirdly, And will not sense and experience make you certain that the christian part of the world hath more such helps than all the rest? Is there not more reason, learning, sobriety, doctrine, all sorts of teaching there than among the rest? Were it but that christianity hath furnished the world with more helps to repentance and holiness, the case were clear. Fourthly, And a little acquaintance with the world, and the history of it, may fully satisfy you, that *de facto*, there are actually far more knowing, penitent, holy persons among christians, than among any others. When, therefore, the fact itself is undeniable, and we see that more souls are healed by Christ in the church, than in the world without, what need we any greater evidence?

And if there were no more in it than this, that the actual knowledge or belief of Christ incarnate, doth make so great an addition to the helps and hopes of sinners, and maketh conversion from sin to God, and salvation, so much more easy and common, (as Aquinas

Cont. Gent. argueth,) should not this be received with the greatest thankfulness, rather than with unreverent, arrogant contradiction?

But I proceed to overthrow your fundamental error, "That repentance alone, with the mercy of God, is a sufficient satisfaction for our sins to divine justice."

First, If it be but proved that, *de facto*, God hath required and provided another sacrifice for satisfaction, then you cannot call repentance alone sufficient. But this is proved fully.

Secondly, If the great work of our redemption by Christ, have all those blessed ends, tendencies, and effects, and bring all those benefits to mankind, which in the treatise forementioned I proved. If it was so actual a demonstration of God's wisdom and love, of his holiness and truth, his justice and mercy, as is there manifested and proved; if it have brought men such helps to repentance and holiness as are forementioned, how perverse will it be then to say, that our repentance was sufficient without the sacrifice, and merit, and intercession, and administration, which did procure and bestow it! How absurd it is to say, that the cure of our disease is sufficient for us, without the physician, the medicine, the apothecary, the application, which we see, by certain experience, are the things that work this cure! And which you yourself cannot deny, but that they effect this cure of repentance or holiness, far more easily and commonly than it is ever wrought without them. Nay, it is certain that the grace of Christ is absolutely necessary to repentance and holiness in any one in the world, whatsoever be thought of the necessity of the knowledge of Christ incarnate.

II. *Quest.* Whether the *notitiae communes* be not many more than this learned and noble writer doth enumerate, viz: First, That there is one only God, at least supreme, whom he very well describeth by his attributes. Secondly, That this God is to be worshipped and prayed to, religion being *ultima hominis differentia* (p. 214). Thirdly, That the due conformity of our faculties (that is, their holiness and rectitude) is the chief part of God's worship; especially gratitude. Fourthly, That all vices and crimes must be expiated by repentance. Fifthly, That after this life there is another life of rewards and punishments.

Ans. All these are excellent concessions, as being not only truths, but such *notitiae communes* without which a man is scarce a man, but unmannered. Except that the fourth doth erroneously assert the fore-disproved sufficient satisfactoriness in our repentance. And that this is not a *notitia communis*, I further thus manifest:

First, By all human laws and justice, no king will make such a law as this, Let all the subjects be traitors, murderers, oppressors, perjured, never so long, and repent at any time before they die, and all shall be forgiven. Mere repentance will not save such persons from the gallows. Secondly, And as to more private justice, no man giveth his children and servants such a law, Disobey me, burn my house, seek my death, and do all the mischief you can, and repent at last, and you shall be forgiven. Therefore, mere repentance is not sufficient satisfaction, according to the *notitiae communes* of mankind. Thirdly, The reason of the thing doth prove it: because it is not sufficient to secure the ends of government. Should such a law alone be made, that men shall be forgiven all the villainies of their lives, if they will but repent at last, First, It would encourage the most in the world to live in all manner of wickedness: if the hearts of men are fully set in them to do evil, because sentence against an evil

work is not speedily executed, but delayed; how much more, if they were sure it should never be executed! Secondly, The laws and lawgiver would be contemned, and lose their ruling power. Thirdly, The common good would be prostituted, and cast away utterly, and no man should live in safety and peace, because of the dominion of wickedness.

Object. Doth not christianity then introduce these evils, which giveth pardon to all the penitent?

Ans. No: First, Because that only christianity doth acquaint us of a further satisfaction to justice than man's repentance, by which all these ends of government may be obtained better than by our perdition. Secondly, Because it giveth us no assurance of life and time of repentance, but calleth us to be always penitent and ready. Thirdly, Because it telleth us of the blindness of the mind, the power of sin, and hardness of the heart, by which repentance becometh so great and hard a work, that without God's grace it will not be done; and his grace is to be diligently sought in the use of means; and is so little at our command, as that the resisting of the Holy Ghost may cause us to be forsaken of God, and given over to our own hearts' lusts, to walk in our own counsels, Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12. Fourthly, Because God doth not totally and perfectly pardon all sin, when he doth pardon the everlasting punishment, though some in their ignorance will say so, and revile those that will not be as ignorant. He pardoneth not temporal chastisements and death: he remitteth not the sad penalties of a temporary and partial desertion by his Spirit; horrors of conscience and fears of hell: he remitteth not the temporal punishment by magistrates, but commandeth justice to be done even on the penitent, even to the loss of life itself. Fifthly, And his mercy is so great, that through Christ he will forgive the eternal punishment, and will judge men as he findeth them, and not as they have been before conversion: so that without Christ you cannot imagine how God should neither send one to hell or misery that loveth him, and hath his image; nor yet expose his government, laws, and the common good, to so much mischief, as the proclamation of a pardon to all villanies that are but repented of at last, alone would cause.

Object. But if the king must not save a traitor or murderer, because Christ died and satisfied for him, why should you say that God doth so?

Ans. First, Because Christ's sacrifice and merits were not to satisfy the king, but God. Secondly, Because that God who is satisfied by them, hath told us how far and with what exceptions he is satisfied: not so far as to excuse men from the laws of men, or temporal justice, chastisement, or death; but to save them from everlasting misery, and procure them everlasting happiness, and to sanctify their unremitted, castigatory penalties, to the furtherance of these ends.

And that there are more *notitiæ communes* about religion than the five fore-named is easily manifested. It is as common a truth that all men are sinful and depraved, even from the first, (however it came to pass,) that they are indisposed to the certain duties and ends which their nature was formed for. That God is the universal Governor of man, by moral means; that he is just and true; that God only can make known to us what is pleasing to himself, and what reward or punishment he will retribute; that man's darkness is so great, that he learneth all this from nature alone, with great imperfection, doubtfulness, and dissatisfaction: that, therefore, a further supernatural revelation, which is sure, would be a great confirmation and satisfaction to men's minds. And, therefore, almost all the world

do hearken after oracles, prophecies, visions, or some such further revelation, as conscious of the unsatisfactoriness of their natural light. That all God's revelations are certainly true. That whatever revelation hath, First, On the doctrine of it, no contradiction to natural truth, but the clear impress of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, as its self-evidence; Secondly, And maketh the same impress by divine co-operation on men's souls in sanctifying them; Thirdly, And was attested by a multitude of evident uncontrolled miracles, resurrection, raising the dead, giving to multitudes a spirit of miracles, &c.; this revelation hath God's seal and witness, and can be from none but God. These, and many more, which I have recited in my treatise, are naturally known verities: as you very well confess all the ten commandments to be (going a little further than I see myself, while you make one day in seven, as separated to God's worship, to be such, which elsewhere I have delivered my mind how far it is a natural or supernatural notice).

III. *Quest.* Whether the *notitiæ communes* are the only certainties in religion?

Ans. No: can you possibly deny all certainty of discourse and conclusions? *Ex vero nil nisi verum sequitur.* Will you condemn the judge as condemning a malefactor upon uncertainty, when he thus argueth: All wilful murderers must be put to death; this is certain in the law. This man is a wilful murderer, proved certainly by confession, evidence, and witness; therefore this man must be put to death. So I argue, whatever doctrine is attested by a multitude of certain uncontrolled miracles, and by the divine impress on itself, and the divine image wrought by it on all that truly receive it, is attested by God himself, and is certainly true. But the doctrine of christianity was so attested; *ergo*, it is attested by God himself, and true.

The major is a *notitia communis*, or naturally known truth. The minor was known by sense itself to the first witnesses; and that was as natural a notice as any man is capable of, and as sure, whatever the papists say against it for transubstantiation: nothing can be sure, if all sound men's senses, with their just objects and conditions, are not sure in their perceptions; and how sure the distant believers are, I have largely opened in the treatise; therefore the conclusion must be sure.

Object. But, say the misinformed unbelievers, that which all mankind believeth, or knoweth, hath its evidence in nature itself; but beliefs of pretended revelations, oracles, and visions, are as various as countries almost, and therefore uncertain.

Ans. First, To the last part, First, I answer, in your converse with men, you will think him unnatural, unsociable, mad, that will either believe all things or believe nothing. There is credible truth, and there is incredible falsehood: and will you believe that either God saith all that every liar fathereth on him, or else that he never revealeth his will to mankind, any otherwise than by his common works. When God hath made a revelation of his will to the world, the devil's usual way of hindering the belief of it is by imitation, and by putting such names and colours on falsehood, by false prophets, as God doth on the truth. Shall we therefore conclude, that either all, or none, is the word of God; or that God saith not true, unless the devil say true also?

Secondly, And will you mark the gross error of such reasoners about the *notitiæ communes*? First, It is certain that no actual knowledge, conceptive or intellectual verity, is born in man; infants know not these common notions at all. As the eye is not born with the actual species of all things afterward seen,

but only with a seeing power and disposition; so these are called common notions, because man's intellect is so able and disposed to know them, as that they will be known easily upon the first due evidence or notification of the object, and therefore almost all men know them. Secondly, It is certain, that this knowing faculty in man, as this noble lord saith, requirerh its proper conditions for its true apprehension of the object. Now some men's understandings have the help of these conditions far more than others have (he nameth to you the conditions himself). Thirdly, It is certain, that the understanding performs not all its apprehensions at once, or at first, but by degrees, and in time, as the objects are duly presented. As an infant seeth not the first day all that ever he must see, nor a scholar learneth not the first day all that he must learn. Fourthly, It is certain, that the latter apprehensions are as sure, if not more clear, than the first; as he that lived twenty years at home, and afterwards travelleth to London, doth as certainly then see London, as before he did his father's house; so a scholar doth afterwards as certainly understand Horace, Virgil, or Homer, as at first he understood his primer. Fifthly, It is certain, that as particular notices are multiplied, *quoad actus*, in time by use and information, so the knowing disposition of the faculty is increased; and the notice of a thousand truths doth so advance the understanding, and befriend other truths not yet received, that such a man can know more afterwards in a day, than an ignorant man can learn in a year. Sixthly, By all which it is a most evident thing, that to make common notions to be the only certainties, is a weakness below a rational man; and it is to make the intellect of an infant to be the standard or measure of all certain, intellectual verities, and to make the scholar, even before he goeth to school, as wise, as to child certainties, as his master, and to make a new-born child to have seen as many objects as Drake, or De Noort, or Sandys, or Ludovicus Romanus, in all his travels. In a word, the *notitiæ communes*, being the very lowest degree of knowledge, are thus equalled with the wisdom of the greatest philosopher, or divine, or judge: was this learned lord, when he wrote this book, sure of nothing but these common notions in religion? Seventhly, To which I might add, that even in men's natural capacities, there is a wonderful difference: as idiots know little, so dullards not much; and must the wisest go no higher than these? Eighthly, And will lawyers, statesmen, physicians, philosophers, make this consent of all mankind the test of all their certainties? If not, why should we do so in our search after the greatest verities, which are most worthy of all the study of our lives?

Nothing visible is so analogous to man's soul as fire; the nature of which is to be ever of an active, illuminative, and calefactive faculty; but both exercise it in such various degrees as the fuel doth occasion. There is fire in a flint or steel, yea, in all things; but is it the best way to know what fire is and can do, by judging of it only as it is in a stone? No: but take your steel, and strike the flint, and add the combustible fuel, and that which is in a stone can set a city on fire. And, *nil agit quod agere non potest*, whatever act is produced, proveth an antecedent power. So, if you would judge what man's soul is, and can do, and what truth is in the intellect, it is not in fools, but in the wise, that you must discern it.

And by this, those may see their error, who are tempted to think that man's soul is but highly sensitive and imaginative, or not made for heavenly and holy employments, because so many ignorant and wicked people are otherwise disposed: whereas the power, and so the nature of man's soul, is certainly

gathered from what the wisest do attain: because nothing can act beyond its power. And if the attainments and acts of some men's souls do prove such a power in them, all souls of men are of the same species, and therefore the rest might attain it, if they had the same objects, evidences, excitations, and improvements. I think all this is plain truth.

Ninthly, And if, by believing, you will heartily give up your souls to Christ and his Spirit, you will find that there is yet a more excellent addition of knowledge and certainty to be obtained, than by all other means could be procured: at least, as to the intention and clearness of the act, if not as to the extension of it to more objects.

IV. *Quest.* Whether the aforesaid common notices do make up all the religion of the catholic church? And, whether the catholic church be all the world believing these common truths?

Answ. The question is either, *de nomine ecclesiæ*, or, *de re*. As to the name, the word is not used in God's word for any but the society of believers, as separated from the unbelieving and ungodly world. As for men themselves, every one may use this and other words in what sense he please. But how aptly you may judge.

Quoad rem, I have told you before, how far all the world are capable of salvation, if that be the question; and I add: the kingdom of God is a word of a larger sense, but the church of God, properly so called, is narrower, being *cætus evocatus*. The kingdom of God signifieth, First, All that, *de jure*, are obliged to subjection and obedience; and so all mankind on earth are of his kingdom, even rebels: Secondly, Or it signifieth all that consent to subjection and obedience, and profess it; and these are, First, Such as profess subjection to God under some lame, defective, false conception; as one that alloweth them to worship idols under him, or to live in wickedness; or one that governeth not the world by a law, or will not make a retribution hereafter; or as one that will pardon and save men, only for their superstition, or without a Saviour; and thus, almost all heathens and infidels are of God's consenting kingdom, *secundum quid*, *eatenus*, so far as this cometh to, and no more. Secondly, Or such as profess subjection and love to God, as truly described, and as reconciled to man, and saving them by Christ our Mediator; and these are *quoad actum*: First, But oral, or unsound, not cordial professors; and such are hypocritical christians, who are, *simpliciter*, of the visible church: Secondly, Or sincere consenters, who are, *simpliciter*, of the essential, mystical church of the regenerate. Now, when we thus open the case as to the thing, there remaineth, besides the controversy *de nomine*, no more than, how far heathens are under a covenant of grace, and how far they are capable of salvation, of which I have said enough before.

V. *Quest.* Whether all revelation for religion must be but *notitiarum communium symbolum*, a creed containing these common notices or truths, as is asserted, p. 221.

Answ. I have said enough against this before. First, What need God send a prophet or an angel to tell the world that which they all knew certainly before? Secondly, Full experience assureth us, as I have proved in the treatise, that mankind hath need of more. Thirdly, More tendeth to perfect man's understanding, and consequently, his will and life; this is undeniable: and man's perfection is his felicity and end; and therefore, more than those common notices is needful to his end. Fourthly, Else, as is said, you will reduce all the world to the measure of that part which is the lowest, the unwisest,

and the worst. You would not, in wealth, or health, be equalled with the basest, poorest, or the sickest; nor yet in wit, and knowledge of other matters, with the most foolish; and why, then, in the knowledge, love, and practice of holiness?

VI. *Quest.* Whether, as some others say, all supernatural revelations be to be tried by the common notions known by nature.

Ans. First, It is supposed that all that pretend to prophecy and revelation, are not to be believed, and therefore that we must try the spirits, whether they be of God; and that all trial of things unknown must be made by some fore-acknowledged principles, if it be a conclusion that must be known. Secondly, It must, therefore, next be understood, whether the truth of the gospel be to be known as a simple term, or a self-evident proposition, or as a true conclusion: First, The first kind of knowledge only apprehendeth the words and sense, but not the verity: it is the truth of the doctrine that we inquire of. Secondly, Many divines assert the second way, and say, it is *principium indemonstrabile, like est vel non est*. Doubtless, this is not true, as to the natural evidence of the proposition, principle, or doctrine; but I think, that in the very hearing or reading, God's Spirit often so concur, as that the will itself shall be touched with an internal gust or savour of the goodness contained in the doctrine, and at the same time, the understanding with an internal irradiation, which breedeth such a sudden apprehension of the verity of it, as nature giveth men of natural principles; and I am persuaded, that this, increased by more experience, and love, and inward gusts, doth hold most christians faster to Christ than naked reasoning could do; and, were it not for this, unlearned, ignorant persons were still in danger of apostasy, by every subtle caviller that assaulteth them; and I believe, that all true christians have this kind of internal knowledge, from a suitableness of the truth and goodness of the gospel to their now quickened, illuminated, sanctified souls. Thirdly, But yet, I believe, that this is not all the knowledge of the truth of the gospel which we have. There is a common belief of its truth by other means, which most usually goeth before this generative, spiritual reception and belief: usually, they that are converted to holiness by the gospel, are such as had some belief of it before, and not such as took it to be false to that moment. And after conversion, it is to be known as a certain demonstrable conclusion, and so the faith of wise and settled christians is most rational; and they are thus made capable to defend it against temptations and adversaries, and to preach it rightly to unbelievers.

Thirdly, The premises from which this conclusion is proved, The gospel is true, are both of them the truths of infallible evidence, viz. whatsoever doctrine is attested by so many and such miracles extrinsically, by the self-evidencing impress of divine power, wisdom, and goodness intrinsically, and by the effecting the like impression in holy life, light, and love, on the souls of all sincere receivers, is certainly true, being attested by the Spirit of God: but such is the doctrine of the gospel; *ergo*, it is true, as attested by the Spirit of God. I said before, the first is a natural verity. The second proposition is partly of sense, and partly of internal and partly external experience, as is largely manifested.

Now, as to the question, First, No doubt but our natural faculties must be used in trying supernatural truth.

Secondly, No doubt, he that disputeth with or preacheth to an unbeliever, so as to prove what he delivereth to be true, must deal with him upon some

common principles which both parties are agreed in, or else there is no room for proof or for dispute.

Thirdly, But some persons are so ignorant of those certain principles which infer the truth of gospel revelation, that they have need first to be convinced of them; which must be done by inferring them from the first truths, or some principles which they do confess. Fourthly, And as a man would convince others, by the same method and arguing, he must convince himself, and try the truth which he is in doubt of.

Fifthly, But if any should mean, First, That nothing is true in the gospel but these common principles of nature; Secondly, Or that nothing else can be proved true; Thirdly, Or that it would prove any pretended prophecy, vision, or revelation true, so be it they do not contradict the common truth; all these are palpable untruths.

VII. *Quest.* Whether these common verities infer not the truth of christianity?

Ans. This is sufficiently answered in the last. Perhaps the few verities mentioned by the author are not enough to prove christianity by: but that it hath true evidence in sense and reason is manifested heretofore: and I believe that he that will, by just argumentation, follow on the christian cause with an unbeliever, if he can hold him to the point from rambling, and suppose him capable of historical evidence, may drive him to yield, or to deny common principles; yea, to deny that God is God, and that man is man; and consequently, that there is any being. But the evasion will be by denying notorious matter of fact, which, therefore, must be proved by its proper evidence.

IX. *Quest.* Whether they are necessary conditions of the certain knowledge of a divine revelation. First, That it be made immediately to myself. Secondly, And that I feel a divine afflatus in the reception, as is said elsewhere.

Ans. No: a revelation made to others, may be certainly notified to me; else, if an angel from heaven should appear to all men in the town and country save one, or if all save one saw a thousand miracles to confirm a revelation, yet that one could not be sure of it. But I have, by abundance of arguments, in a peculiar disputation in a treatise, called "The Unreasonableness of Unbelief," long ago fully proved the negative. And, again, in my "Reasons of the Christian Religion:" therefore, I will not weary the reader with repetitions.

X. *Quest.* Whether any concurrence of moral evidence, at least such as gospel revelation hath, do truly amount to natural or certain evidence? *De Rev. et Verisim.*

Ans. This question, too, I have plainly decided in "The Reasons of the Christian Religion." I now add, First, The name of moral evidence is here taken by those that use it, for that which dependeth on the credit of a voluntary agent as such: and the name of natural evidence signifieth that which dependeth on the nature of the object in itself considered. But I somewhat doubt whether all that use the distinction do commonly understand the difference, or what they say.

Secondly, Note that the act or effect of a voluntary agent, hath, nevertheless, a natural evidence when it is done or existent. If I voluntarily speak, or write, or go, my action is naturally evident to those that see and hear it, as present sensitive witnesses of it. If I freely build a house, it is, nevertheless, naturally evident when it is built. All things existent in the universe were made by God as a free Agent, and yet are, nevertheless, naturally evident.

Thirdly, Every thing that is, when it is, if corpo-

real, is naturally evident to those that have their faculties in those conditions that are necessary, and have the object in its necessary magnitude, cogitation, detection, site, distance, medium, and abode.

Fourthly, The judgment that is made upon sense itself faileth, as this noble author hath well opened, when either the object, the evidence, the sense, or the intellect, want their necessary conditions or qualifications, else not.

Fifthly, The fountain of all freedom and morality is the will of God; and yet the moral evidence of truth, which is in God's word, when known to be his word, is as sure as any natural evidence of the thing, there being the surest natural evidence, *ab effectis*, at least, that there is a God most perfect, that cannot lie.

Sixthly, The essences of all things are but imperfectly evident to us; the existences of corporeal things that are present and duly qualified, are fully evident. The existence of things absent beyond the reach of sense, is evident only to the discursive intellect; not by the immediate, natural evidence of the things themselves, but by a borrowed evidence from causes or signs; discourse improving the fundamental common truths, for the knowing of the rest, by proving a certain connexion between them. The preterition of things, and the futuration, are both, like the distant existence, unknown to sense, and the immediate apprehension of the intellect, and therefore must both be known also by collection as conclusions in discourse, or not at all.

Seventhly, Man was not born to know only things present in their existence by sense, but also to know things absent, things as past, and things as future. And herein he chiefly differeth from a brute.

Eighthly, Though the understanding is most confident of things sensible and present, yet about things absent, past, and future, it often doubteth more, and is less satisfied in its own conclusions from natural principles than from moral. Because sometimes the natural principles themselves, though not the first, yet the second or third, may be so obscure as to leave the mind unsatisfied. Secondly, And the connexion among many particulars may be obscure and doubtful. Thirdly, And in the long series of collection or arguing, the understanding suspecteth its own fallibility: so that when conclusions are far-fetched, though from natural principles, the mind may be still in doubt about them: and on the contrary, when in the way of revelation, the grounds are clear, and the understanding hath fewer collections to make, and a shorter journey to go, it may be far better satisfied of the truth.

Ninthly, Man's own necessity is the reason why God doth give us supernatural revelation, and call us to know by the way of believing: for, First, Most men are naturally dull. Secondly, Few have leisure, by learning, to improve their intellects. Thirdly, And fewer have leisure and disposition to exercise them by long searches and argumentation upon every thing that they should know. Fourthly, And therefore where revelation was not, few were wise or virtuous; and the philosophers themselves were all to pieces among themselves; and their disagreements and doubtfulness tended to the gulf of utter scepticism. Now, as nothing is more necessary than religion, as you well profess, so religion consisteth very little in the sensible apprehension of present existences, but in the knowledge of things absent, or insensible things past, and especially things to come, the happiness to be attained, and the misery to be escaped. Now, if all the poor, unlearned men and women in the world, must have known all these things only by natural discourse, how little religion

would have been in the world, when the philosophers knew so little themselves! And though your learning and understanding made the immortality of the soul so clear to you, and the rewards and punishments of another life, as that you number it with the common notices; yet were not the old philosophers themselves so commonly agreed on it as they should have been, much less all the common people. And if you say that now almost all the world believeth it, I answer, it is God's great mercy that it is so. But consider whether it be not more by the way of believing, than of natural instinct or knowledge: for all the christians, and all the Mahometans, who believe the words of Moses and Christ also, take it by the way of believing; and so do most of the heathens. The Japonians have their Amida and Zaca: the Chinese, the Indians, the Siamenses, the Peguans, &c., have all their prophets; and the very savages of all the West Indies, or America, have their idols, oracles, or wizards, whom they far more depend on than their natural discourse about things invisible, past, or future. So that, really, if commonness go with you for a proof that any point is of natural instinct and certainty, as a *notitia communis*, this will be one of the chiefest of them, that religion consisting in the notice of, and due respect to, things absent, invisible, past, and future, is to be maintained in the world by divine revelation and faith, and not by the immediate evidence of things, nor by mere discursive collections from things so evident. So that man's weakness, with the quality of the objects, maketh revelation so necessary, that without it the vulgar, who are the main body of the world, would have next to no religion; and, on the contrary, how easy, and pleasant, and satisfactory, is it, for all these poor people, yea, to the most learned, to have these mysterious truths brought by revelation to their hands! Now, through God's mercy, all our common people, women and children, servants and day-labourers, may know more with ease, than ever Democritus, Epicurus, Antisthenes, Zeno, yea, Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle, could reach by all their studies to the last; more, I say, of religious, necessary knowledge.

Tenthly, And this being so necessary and so great a mercy to mankind, I wonder that you put it not among your common notices, that God being perfect in love and wisdom, and having made man purposely to be religious here, and happy hereafter, will certainly provide for his religion and happiness, so necessary and so excellent a means as revelation is. God being the Father and lover of light and of souls, and the devil being the prince and friend of darkness; consider whether you may not strongly infer from the very nature of God, and the nature and necessity of man, and the other communications of God's mercies to the world, that he will certainly give them this great mercy also.

Eleventhly, It is certain that God hath ways of communicating light to man's understanding immediately, and not only by extrinsic, sensible objects. The Father of spirits who communicateth so much to the corporeal world, is not further from souls, nor more out of love with them; but (if there be any difference) may rather be thought to hold a nearer more immediate communion with them than with bodies, and to be himself to the mind, what the sun is to the eye, and more.

Twelfthly, It is certain that God can give the standers-by, that have no revelation immediately themselves, a fuller satisfactory attestation or proof, of the truth of another man's revelations. He that denieth this, maketh God to be impotent.

Thirteenthly, It is certain that the attestation which I described in "The Reasons of Christian Religion,"

was such, supposing that such were given, viz. in the antecedent testimony of fulfilled prophecy, the constitutive testimony of God's Spirit apparent in the effects on Christ's person, and on his gospel, and the concomitant testimony of all his miracles, and resurrection, and ascension. And the subsequent testimony of the Spirit on the apostles, their miracles and doctrine, and on the souls of all serious Christians to the world's end. These are things, set all together, First, Which none but God could do. Secondly, And which God would not do to deceive the world. Thirdly, Yea, which God would not permit to be done to deceive them in so high a matter; because he is the omnipotent, omniscient, gracious Governor of the world; and if these testimonies were not of God, it were impossible to know any testimony to be of God; and seeing we can have no surer, it would be man's duty to believe, and obey, and be ruled by a lie. And if it be our duty to believe God to be so defective either in power, wisdom or goodness, holiness, truth, justice or mercy, as to rule the world, and the best of the world in the greatest matters, by lying and deceit, as if he wanted better means; what wit can devise any remedy against such deceit as shall be so attested as aforesaid? Or if deceit can be perceived, how can it be man's duty to believe it, seeing man's intellect is naturally made for truth, and abhorreth falsehood? And how can it be good to obey deceit and lies? And when the devil is the father of lies, what blasphemy is it to charge them on God! By this it will be apparent, that the question must be, in the upshot, whether there be a God or no God? and so whether there be any thing or nothing?

Fourteenthly, There is some moral, historical evidence of the truth of things past, which is as certain and much more satisfactory than the natural evidence of conclusions, raised by a long series of argumentation; yea, some which is truly a natural evidence, though it depend on the credit of free agents. The proof and reasons I have given in the treatise. First, The will, though free, is *quædam natura*, and hath its natural propensity to known good, as the understanding also, and hath its natural propensity to truth. And the understanding is not free, of itself, but acteth *per modum naturæ*. Secondly, There are some of the acts of the will itself, which are so free as yet to be necessary: as to will good, *sub ratione boni*; to will our own felicity, and nill our own misery; to will life and pleasure, with a simple complacency, though not always by election; to will all that is fully discerned to have *omnimodam rationem boni*, and nill all that is discerned to have *omnimodam rationem mali*. Now it oft falls out that historical narratives shall proceed from some of these necessary acts. Salvation, life, and goodness, and the necessary means of all, may be the motives. Thirdly, There are other acts of the will, which though they are not absolutely necessary, are yet so near to necessary, that they always go one way, except in some very rare, extraordinary case. As for example, It is not of absolute necessity that a man feed or clothe himself, or that he murder not himself; but yet he will ordinarily do the first, and forbear the latter, because he is necessarily a lover of himself and life, and therefore will not cast himself away, nor destroy himself, without some conceived cause. Fourthly, There are no causes extant in *reum natura* for the commonness of some such actions: therefore it is certain they will not be done, because there can be no effect without its cause; and the turning of the will to a man's known corporeal destruction is an effect which hath no common cause. Therefore it is a point of more natural evidence and

certainly, than many conclusions from natural premises are, that all the people of Europe or England will not to-morrow kill themselves, nor go naked, nor famish or wound themselves, &c. And consequently that formerly all never did so, since it was notoriously so much their interest to do otherwise. For there was no cause to produce such an effect.

If it must be a miracle, *rebus sic stantibus*, which should make all the Europeans or the English to go naked to-morrow, or to kill themselves, when it is natural to them to do the contrary, or not to do this, for a miracle is the overpowering of nature. But the antecedent is evident to reason from experience; *ergo*, &c. There may be causes for one man's actions, which can never fall out to all, or to very many.

All the physicians in England never did persuade all men against physic, nor all the lawyers against law; nor all the covetous men in England, the labourers, or beggars, were never against receiving meat, drink, and money; because there never was a cause of such effects: and as it must be a great, powerful, common cause, that must do this; so also, if the question be, whether ever there were a parliament in England; whether ever they made laws with the kings; whether our statutes were made by such kings and parliaments as they are ascribed to? &c.; there is such a concurrent consent of competent witnesses as could not be to it were it false, because it would be an effect without a sufficient cause. Yea, against the tendency or disposition of man's nature, which would have caused the wills of some to contradict it, except a miracle had hindered them. For, among so many, there are cross interests notorious. Some men's interest is against the thing, while other men's is for it: and to make multitudes go against their apparent interest, and friends and enemies of the event to agree, must be done by the power of truth, or by a miracle; supposing the case such as they could not be all deceived in.

Fiftiethly, But there is yet a fuller natural evidence of the truth of some reports; even when, besides the report, there remain some visible, unimitable effects of the reported actions, which could be caused by nothing else. As if their fathers told the grandchildren of Noah of the deluge, they might see such effects of it, as might assure them that it was true. If the parents of the man born blind (John ix.) were told by him that his eyes were cured, when they saw it in the effects they must believe it: if uncontrolled history tell our children that London was burnt and new-built, that Paul's church was burnt, &c. that multitudes died of the plague the year before, &c.; when they see the city, the church, the graves, the change of the inhabitants, the proved testaments of the deceased, besides uncontradicted testimony, here is a natural evidence to assure it.

Sixtiethly, Though some half-witted philosophers boast much of the certainty of their physics in comparison of morality, the truth is, the most of physics are mere uncertainties, and the wisest see it, and busily pull down others' doctrines, but confess they are yet but searching and groping by extrinsic effects and experiments to know what to set up in the stead; and so did others before them: and long may they so search before they find. Whereas, there is a more satisfying evidence in much of morality, as being natural to mankind, and such as will no sooner cease to be believed, than man will cease to be man; whereon all the affairs of the world are turned, and converse, societies, and all the private comforts of nature are maintained. God hath made known to us what pleased him, according to his own wisdom, and not at our direction or choice. And he hath chosen that for us which is most useful. It is

more useful to us to know how to live well, and how to be happy, and how to please and glorify God, and do good to one another, than to know God's skill or mysteries in his works; to know what is in the centre of the earth, or how the active nature doth operate on the passive, whether cold be a privation or positive, what is the cause of the continued *motus projectorum*, whether light and heat be bodies or substances, whether they penetrate other bodies, &c. As it is more useful for me to know how to keep my clock in order, than how to make one, to know how to plough, sow, eat, drink to my health, than to know by what mysterious operations the corn or other things do grow, and my food is digested, &c. Therefore, this learned lord doth truly and wisely enumerate his *notitiæ communes* in morality and religion as certainties, the denial whereof doth unman us. God hath left such instincts, powers, inclinations, and conscience in human nature, as shall naturally, though with some degree of freedom in the exercise, be an insuperable witness in the world to his faith, and to our common principles and duties.

Seventeenthly, The historical evidence of the gospel of Christ is such as hath all the advantages before described, in its kind. He lived and preached, and wrought his miracles frequently, before thousands, friends and foes: his miracles were never controlled, as Moses did the magicians', by greater, nor by any certain truth which they contradicted: the eye-witnesses themselves were unbelieving, till forced by cogent evidence: they delivered his doctrine, miracles, resurrection to the world, not only by credible report, and to the ruin of their worldly pleasures and interests, with the loss of their lives, and all this merely for the hopes of a reward in heaven, from God, that well knew whether all were true or not; but also they did all in the power of the same Spirit which Christ did work by, doing such miracles as Christ had done: and this not a few, nor in a corner, but in many countries of the world, and that by many thousand christians in one kind or other, tongues, healing, prophecy, or the like, as well as the apostles. The certainty of which fact is attested by the very existence of all the churches converted by it, with all their baptisms, professions, and the rest of the tradition before named. No christian of all this multitude, by any terrors, death, time, was brought at the last to repent and say, that he had deceived the world by a lie. Many apostates falling off for fear of sufferings, but none with any such recantation: no adversary confuting the history, but commonly confessing most of it with more such evidence, which I have opened in the treatise, and must not oft repeat lest I be tedious. And that which is still the natural evidence is, that there is still existent, First, On the sacred gospel; Secondly, On the souls and lives of all serious christians by its impress, the inimitable image of the divine power, wisdom, and goodness, life, light, and love, as the divine attestation. Only as this noble author requireth to all true conceptions and intellections, so do we to this, that there be but the necessary conditions in the mind of the receiver.

And whereas he saith, that commonly miracles are reported a hundred years after; here it was otherwise: the Jews were enraged by them for fear of the Romans. The apostles and others wrought them openly; Matthew and John, that wrote Christ's history, lived with him, and saw what they wrote; so did Peter and James; Paul wrote what he saw and heard from heaven; Luke wrote the acts of Paul which he saw, being his companion in travels. The thousands were converted, and churches in many countries planted, not by bare words, but by

the conviction of the miracles of the apostles themselves: so that every church and christian was a history of them. And all this they were moved to, with the hopes of heaven, where truth is known, to deny the world, and mortify the flesh, and suffer whatever the gospel would inflict, to preserve their hopes and comforts founded in this word of faith.

XI. *Quest.* Whether the common custom of sacrificing throughout the world in all generations, were not their actual confession that the sinner deserved death, and that God's justice required punishment or satisfaction? and proceeded not from divine revelation in the beginning, when God had newly made the covenant of grace? and so was delivered down by tradition? For my part, it cannot come into my understanding, why else men should think that God is pleased or appeased by the creature's death; or how this should become so common throughout the world? And the two exceptions confirm this to be truth: First, Some savages in America use no sacrifices; but they are such as know not God, or so savage as to have lost all ancient tradition.

Secondly, All the Mahometans and christians use no bloody sacrifice. But that is because, First, Christians believe that sacrifices were but types of Christ, and that he put an end to them by his perfect sacrifice. Secondly, And Mahometans received it from Christ, being but christians degenerate first into Arians, and then into Mahometans, and still professing to take Christ for the Word and Son of God, and his word as true; only hating the christians for saying that he is very God. But of this, instead of writing after so many, I only refer you to their writings: and especially to Dr. Owen's Latin Tractate on this subject.

XII. *Quest.* Whether interest make the judgment of divines, in the cause of faith, more suspicious or contemptible than other men's? I put this question with respect to those words in the preface. *Sed neque auspiciatores ubique posterioris istius seculi Scriptores dicendi sunt. Fit ita ut pro regionum et fidei diversitate in id potissimum incumbant, ne illos domi male mullet inopia, adeoque non tam quid in se verum, quam quid sibi ipsis utile exquirant. Non est igitur a larvato aliquo vel stipendioso Scriptore, ut verum consummatum operariis. Illorum opprime interest, ne personam deponant, vel aliter quidem sentiant. Ingenius et sui arbitrii, ista solummodo præstabit author.*

Ans. First, It is not to be denied that there are multitudes of such carnal pastors in the churches, that are christians for the ease, honour, and wealth. Secondly, But that this should be so with all, I shall disprove; and prove that none on earth are so credible in this case as divines. First, Because they have made it the business of their lives to search out the truth; and, therefore, (some of them,) must be supposed to have the greatest advantages to know it. So that, for ability, they have no sort of men that are competitors; for diligence and helps are the improvers of understanding: and all men are found best at their own profession; lawyers in the law, physicians in medicine, philosophers in philosophy, &c. And for yourself, your next words are, *Nobis tamen ad alia omnia fere quam literarum studia (uti oportuit) exequenda, otium fuit. Partim armis in diversis regionibus, partim quinquenniali legatione, partim negotiis tum publicis tum privatis, vacavimus. And is not this your disadvantage? Who is a good linguist, lawyer, physician, &c. that hath had but little leisure for his studies?*

Secondly, And as for will and interest, it is notorious that thousands of the ministry have so little set by worldly interest, as that it is upon the terms of greatest self-denial to the flesh that they take up

and exercise their office, being moved only by the great interest of their own and others' souls: their voluntary, diligent labours, and holy lives, their contempt of the world, may convince any of this, that are not blinded by prejudice or malice. There are few learned men in the reformed churches but might far better use their studies and labours, if they took that for best which is most profitable, advancing, or pleasing to the flesh.

Thirdly, You had a brother of your own, so holy a man, as his sincerity was past exception, and so zealous in his sacred ministry, as showed he did not dissemble; and, I suppose, had it been necessary, you would have so maintained him, that he should not have fled from truth for fear of poverty.

Fourthly, What can you think of all those that gave up their lives for the christian faith and hopes? Did they go upon such carnal grounds as you mention?

Fifthly, The revolutions of states, and the diversity of sentiments, and especially the interests of the carnal part, do bring it to pass, by God's overruling of all, that usually the most serious christians and pastors are the sufferers of the age they live in: so that how much hath God done hereby, to confute such suspicions and accusations! There are now in England learned and worthy men, in church preferments, which doubtless do not so love them, as to buy them with the loss of truth, and that to keep up a religion against their consciences. But if you did so accuse them, sure the many hundred silenced ministers now in England, that live in poverty, and many of them want bread, when they might have preferment as well as others, do live out of the reach of this accusation: I write not this at all as meddling with their cause, but as answering your exception. I have myself got no more for preaching the gospel these nine years, than if I had been a layman; I mean I have preached for nothing, if the success on men's souls were not something, and God's acceptance, so far as I did preach; and more than that, I would offer any man my most solemn oath to satisfy him, that I believe and profess the christian doctrine for its proper evidence, and for the hopes of the blessedness promised thereby, which, if they prevailed not with me above all the riches, preferments, and pleasures of this world, I would never have been a preacher or a christian, nor would continue in my calling and profession one day, much less on the self-denying terms as I now do.

But, O my Lord, thou hast been to me a faithful Saviour, a happy Teacher, a supporting Comforter, in my greatest dangers, distress, and fears; thy service hath been sweet and good; thy word hath been a powerful light, a quickening, a changing, an elevating, a guiding, a comforting word. So far am I from repenting that I am thy disciple, or thy servant, that, now I am not far from my departure from this world, I do vehemently protest, that I beg no greater mercy of thee in this world, than that I may believe in thee more firmly, and hope in thy promises more confidently, and by thine intercession receive more of thy Holy Spirit, by which I may have nearer access to God, and that by thy blood and merits I may be justified and cleansed from the guilt of all my sins, and that by thee I may be taught to know the Father, and to love him as his love and goodness hath manifested itself in thee, and in the gracious works of man's redemption; that thou wilt be the undertaker for my soul and body through my life, and that at death I may commend my spirit into thy hands, in a strong, well-grounded faith and hope, and come to thee in the fervent desire of divine and heavenly love. And I ask for no greater felicity

hereafter, than to be with thee where thou art, to behold thy glory, and to see the glory of the blessed Deity, and live in the perfect knowledge, and love, and praise of God.

Sixthly, And I may add, that it is not only clergymen that are christians; besides them, the learnedest men in the world have defended or stuck to the christian faith: I need not name to you either men of your own rank, such as the two Mirandulas, the great Du Plessis, Marnixius de Aldegonde, Anhaltinus, a prince, though a divine, Bacon, and many a worthy nobleman of these kingdoms, and of many others; nor such laymen as the Scaligers, Salsmasius, Grotius, Casaubon, Thuanus, and multitudes more. Were all these, *larvati vel palliati*, biassed by price or fleshly interest? He that is not a christian for spiritual and eternal interest, taking up his cross and following a crucified Christ, on terms of self-denial, even to the forsaking of all for him, not excepting life itself, and doth not by his cross, even crucifying the flesh and the world, which is the provision for its lusts, is, indeed, no real christian at all.

I had thought to have said somewhat to your pag. 220, 221. *In omni religione, immo et conscientia, sive ex natura sive ex gratia, media sufficientia dari unde Deo accepti esse possint, ultro credimus*—. But I have been long enough, and the answer may be gathered from what is said before.

The Lord save this land and the darker world from infidelity and its fruits; and give us more of that Spirit which is Christ's agent and witness in us, effectually to plead and maintain his cause. Amen.

Jan. 16, 1672.

Cas. Baronius Annal. ad An. 411.

But because we are discoursing of such matters, reader, I entreat thee to suffer me, like the good householder in the gospel, who bringeth out of his treasury things new and old, to add some things new, or later, to these of elder date; for what I shall briefly say will much delight thee: for I will not report unproved things, but what I know to be confirmed by the assertion of very many learned men, yea, and by all religious men oft told the people in their sermons; and, for my part, I will bring forth the author, of whom I received it, and that is Michael Mercatus Miniatus, prothonotary of the S. R. church, a man of most entire fidelity, and of eminent knowledge and honesty of life. He told me of his grandfather, of the same name with himself, Michael Mercatus, senior, between whom and Marsilius Ficinus, a man of a most noble wit, there was an intimate friendship, contracted and increased by philosophical studies, in which they both were followers of Plato. It happened on a time that, as they used, they were gathering from Plato, but not without doubting, how much, or what of man, remained after death; which Platonic documents, where they failed, were to be underpropped by the sacraments of the christian faith; for of that argument there is extant a learned epistle of Marsilius to this Michael Mercatus, of the immortality of the soul and God: and in their discourse when they had long disputed, they thus concluded it; and giving each other their right hands, they covenanted, that which ever of them first died, if he could do it, he should certify the other of the state of the other life. And having thus covenanted and sworn to each other, they departed. And after a considerable space of time, it fell out that Michael, senior, being early in the morning at his philosophical studies,

unexpectedly he heard the noise of a horse swiftly running, and stopping at his door, and, withal, the voice of Marsilius, crying out, "O Michael! O Michael! those things are true." Michael, marvelling at the voice of his friend, rose up, and opening the window, he saw him whom he heard, with his back toward him, in white, riding away on a white horse, and called after him, "Marsilius, Marsilius!" and looked after him; but he vanished from his sight. He being struck with admiration at the strangeness of the case, took care to inquire what was become of Marsilius, (he lived in Florence, where he died,) and found that he died that same hour in which he

heard and saw him. And what did he hereupon? Though he had been a man of approved honesty, and had lived a life harmless and profitable to all, as it became a true philosopher, yet from that time, bidding farewell to philosophical discipline, and becoming a forward lover, or follower, of the true christian philosophy only, as more eminent than the rest, he lived the rest of his time as dead to the world, only for, or to, the life to come, being an example of a most absolute christian, who before had been famous among the philosophers of his time in praise, as second unto none. So far Baronius: the same is reported by abundance of other writers.

THE

UNREASONABLENESS OF INFIDELITY,

MANIFESTED IN

FOUR DISCOURSES.

- I. THE SPIRIT'S EXTRINSIC WITNESS TO THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY, ON GAL. III. 1—3. WITH A DETERMINATION OF THIS QUESTION, WHETHER THE MIRACULOUS WORKS OF CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES DO OBLIGE THOSE TO BELIEVE WHO NEVER SAW THEM? AFF.
- II. THE SPIRIT'S INTERNAL WITNESS TO THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY, ON 1 JOHN V. 10.
- III. FOR PREVENTION OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST. A DEMONSTRATION, THAT THE SPIRIT AND WORKS OF CHRIST WERE THE FINGER OF GOD: OR, THE HOLY WAR BETWEEN CHRIST AND SATAN, ON MATT. XII. 22—33. A POSTSCRIPT AGAINST MR. LYFORD'S EXCEPTIONS.
- IV. THE ARROGANCY OF REASON AGAINST DIVINE REVELATIONS REPRESSIONED: OR, PROUD IGNORANCE THE CAUSE OF INFIDELITY, AND OF MEN'S QUARRELLING WITH THE WORD OF GOD, ON JOHN III. 9.

TO THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD BROGHIL,

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF SCOTLAND.

My Lord,

WHEN you were pleased to tell me your thoughts of the acceptableness of the attempt in the second part of my book called "The Saints' Rest," and of how great use it would be to have that work yet more fully done; I told you, I had some popular sermons more by me on that subject, which, though they look not like such a full performance, might yet, as a supplement to the foresaid discourse, afford some help to the settling of tempted souls in the faith. Upon some unexpected occasions which fell out when I was with you, with which your lordship was well acquainted, I put the first of these papers then into the press, which moved so slowly, that it hath not reached the last till now. Such as they are, I here present them to you, with the thankful acknowledgment of those great, undeserved respects and favours which I then received from you. And as I first present them to your hand, so do I wish the first and fullest effects of them upon your heart: for though I doubt not but you are established in the foundation of the faith, and resolved in these great matters long ago, and therefore are none of those for whom I principally publish this book; yet may the strongest believer on earth receive an increase of their faith, even in the principles and essentials of the christian verity. Oh! what raised, vigorous, and constant affections should we have to God and the life to come, and what resolute and invincible industry for the attainment of them, with a contempt of all these terrestrial toys, if we were not so defective either in a sound belief, or a serious consideration of these transcendent, incomparable, but invisible things! We should then apply ourselves to the living God, and study his pleasure, and wholly fit ourselves thereto, and hang upon him with greater observancy and expectation, than any sensual, ambitious parasites do study to humour the princes of the earth, or conform themselves to their uncertain minds. The life of the highest unsanctified monarch would then appear to us as children's games, or dreams; and as a sordid, base, unprofitable drudgery, in comparison of the life of the poorest saint; who is daily taken up with attendance upon God, and is, by faith, a courtier and family servant of the infinite Sovereign of heaven and earth; whose heart is employed in loving him, his tongue in praising him, and his life in serving him; while he remaineth on earth hath his conversation in heaven; and walketh and converseth with God in the spirit, while he walketh and converseth with men in the flesh; having surer interest in the love of God, than the highest favourites in their prince's love; that hath access to him on every just occasion, and hath his ear in every just request; that liveth here upon his grace, and groundedly expecteth to be shortly in his glory; where they that followed Christ in the regeneration, denied themselves, forsook all for him, and suffered with him, shall reign with him, and behold the glory that is given him; and they that lived here in contemned obscurity, whose happiness was not

known to the unbelieving world, shall then shine as the stars, and be as the angels of God. Oh were this blessedness but well believed and considered, how could it be so neglected; so coldly desired, mentioned, and sought after, as commonly it is; and so many thousands lose it, by such sottish laziness and ungrateful contempt! Certainly no cold or dull affections, no half or halting resolutions, no mean, reserved, slight endeavours, besem that man that calls himself a christian: for to be a christian is to be soundly persuaded of all the fore-mentioned felicity of the church, and the necessary means by which it must be obtained, through the purchase of our Redeemer. And it is no middle things (nothing but highest affections, resolutions, and attempts, with invincible patience, and unwearied diligence) that besem that man who professeth to seek so high a blessedness as to live eternally with angels in the glorious presence of God. Either it is true that there is such a state to be obtained by believers, or it is not true. If it be true, and truly believed, away, then, with all the pleasures of sin! away with the flattering glory of the world! away with these deceitful nominal riches! Let these be their portion who believe no better: we must use inferior things, indeed, for God, if he put them in our keeping; but we have higher matters to mind, and to enjoy. No matter how dear it cost us, nor what we suffer, nor how much we cross this murmuring flesh; we are sure we shall be no losers, nor repent the bargain when we come to heaven. What palpable self-contradiction is it, for a man to live a carnal or careless life, or to be but coldly, superficially, and reservedly religious, who professeth to believe the resurrection of the body, the life everlasting, with the rest of the articles of the christian faith! But if they take these things for fables, why do they not speak out, and say so, but dissemblingly seem to be christians, when they are none? As for such, I shall speak to them in that which followeth, and through the whole book.

My Lord, I had not poured out all these words to you, but on supposition that your name will entice hither the eyes of some that need them more than you. And yet I will not so injuriously flatter you as to say I imagine you need them not at all. It is impossible that an imperfect soul in flesh, in the midst of the honours and employments of the world, should have no need to be remembered of the things invisible, or to be quickened in the prosecution of that which he doth remember. Wise men have been overreached by the subtle tempter, to fall in love with vanity and vexation: the sensual object doth powerfully, though unreasonably, beguile, because of the natural eagerness of the flesh; which is so greedy of the bait that it will scarce forbear, even when we see the hook. He that standeth over the graves of his ancestors, and looketh upon his father's skull, and asketh, Where is now their worldly honours, and what good have their pleasures and prosperity done them? is yet prone to embrace the same deceits, and neglect the certain, durable felicity. It is hard so long to restrain the senses, while faith and reason have leave to speak. Those that were no babes have lost their eyes in the dust of riches and the smoke of honours. A strong head may turn round on the pinnacle of a steeple. I had rather stand on the ground, and look up at them with pity and admiration, than stand with them and look down with fear; it hath made some men wheel sick but to gaze upon their vain glory. You know, I doubt not, better than I, that these mountain tops are tempestuous habitations, where men are still in the storms of envy and jealousies; where it is hard pleasing men; and where there are the greatest hindrances to the pleasing of God; and where few find that pleasure which they expected to themselves. Like the philosopher's storm at sea, *Ubi ventus neque manere sinit, nec navigare*. A tottering state, and quickly overturned. We need not go to such as Belisarius for our proof; the end of all the living proveth it. If envy and ingratitude let them alone, death will not. The most shining glory will be quickly burnt to a snuff, though no churlish blast should sooner extinguish it. It hath cost many a man full dear to mount into the saddle, that hath quickly been unhorsed; but he that rideth longest must come down at last. When they have cast away their salvation to attain their wills, some of them have proved like Servilius's *consules diales*; or like Vatinius, on whom Cicero broke the jest, that *ejus anno magnum ostentum fuit, quod eo consule nec bruma, nec ver, nec aestas, nec autumnus fuisset*; if not like Bishop Fisher, whose head was cut off when the cardinal's hat should have been set on. Kings and parliaments, honour and nobility, are things, we see, that cannot perpetuate themselves. Not that all dignities are therefore to be refused; but less desired, more feared, and more cautiously used. That they may be received as Emilius did his consulship, *Qui negavit se illis habere gratiam; non enim ob id tum designatum imperatorem, quod ipse desiderat imperium, sed quod ipsi imperatorem*; Not because they want honour and rule, but because the people want good rulers. And they must be held as Seneca did his friends, who could say, *Mihi amicorum defunctorum cogitatio, dulcis ac blanda est; habui enim illos tanquam amissurus, amisi tanquam habeam*. Self must be denied, and flesh must be resisted, yea, subdued and mortified, by all that will be saved. But to do this in the fulness of wealth, or height of honour, where self-denial will be so dear, and where the flesh hath so much to hold or lose, and therefore hath so much to plead, this is the great difficulty which maketh the salvation of such so rare. It is a hard, but most necessary lesson for great men, to live to God, and not to themselves; to devote themselves wholly to the service of Christ, and to make it their daily study and business to do good, and to make themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Those few that learn this holy wisdom, are doubly obliged to the love of God, and should be doubly thankful. *Animosius enim a mercatore quam a vectore solvitur votum, &c. Sen.* But because this grace is so exceeding rare, and the highest mountains are usually most unfruitful, and it is so hard to get that way to heaven, we have little reason to be in love with our temptations, nor to be too keenly set on that which so much endangereth our everlasting welfare, and which hurteth most where it is most beloved. If we lose it for the advantage of our souls, let it go; we have the consent of reason that *optanda et jactura, quæ lucro majore compensatur*. If any step before us, we have small cause to envy them; *nunquam erit felix, quem torquebit felicitas*. Sen. The fulfilling of aspiring desires, would be but the cutting off the ambitious man's delight: for there is more pleasure in the expectation of such things than in the possession; it being the nature of terrestrials to promise more than they can perform, and to seem better at a distance than when you draw too near. In the hope and prosecution of them there is delight, such as accompanieth delusions and golden dreams; but when a man hath all he would have, his stomach is over-set, and the pleasure is gone; which made the moralist thus comfort men of the lower rank: *Age potius gratias pro his quæ accepisti; reliqua expecta, et nondum plenum te esse gaude. Inter voluptates est superesse quod speres*. What pleasure is then in the sure grounded hopes of the saints! But I must stop.

My Lord, as I was unwilling to direct to you a mere complimentary empty epistle, so am I encouraged to

use this freedom with you, because I am very confident you can discern a faithful monitor, both from an accuser on the one side, and from a flatterer on the other. That the God of peace may establish you, sanctify you throughout, and keep you blameless and undefiled, is the hearty prayer of,

Your much obliged servant,

In the faith of Christ,

RICHARD BAXTER.

Kidderminster, Aug. 20, 1655.

AN ADVERTISEMENT EXPLICATORY.

ESPECIALLY ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF GOD'S EXECUTION OF HIS THREATENINGS, OR OF CHRIST'S SATISFACTION: TO PREVENT MISUNDERSTANDING.

LEST any understand what I have said a few pages hence, as if I wholly denied common innate principles, observe, that it is only actual connate knowledge that I deny, and in respect to which I say that the soul is *rasa tabula*; but I confess a natural passive power for the knowing of them, and a greater disposition or aptitude in the intellect to understand them, than conclusions drawn from them; and so that an infant also may have a sanctified intellect, by such aptitude and disposition. But I think not that ever these would be acted, in an ordinary natural way, without the help of some sense.

Also, that I may not be misunderstood in that great controverted point, about the necessity of the execution of vindictive justice in man's suffering, or Christ's satisfaction, I shall briefly declare my thoughts about it, in these few propositions.

Prop. 1. It is not a mere *necessitas consequentiæ*, or logical necessity of the verity of an enunciation, that we inquire after; for it is on all hands confessed, that Christ's death was thus necessary. 1. *Necessitate immutabilitatis, ex suppositione decreti divini.* 2. *Necessitate infallibilitatis, ex suppositione præscientiæ divinæ.* 3. *Necessitate infallibilitatis et veracitatis divinæ, ex suppositione prædictionis.* Because God decreed it, fore-knew it, and foretold it.

2. We do not mean a simple necessity in existing, as God is *ens necessarium*. For all creatures are confessed to be contingent beings.

3. Nor yet do we mean an hypothetical necessity, *existentiæ qua res quando est, necessario est*. For this is but logical, and is undoubted among us.

4. No man among us doth affirm that God doth necessarily punish sinners by such a natural necessity as inanimates, or brutes, act by, that do it *quantum in se, &c. Ut ignis urit*.

5. Nor yet do any affirm that it is by enforcement necessary to God; either *violentiæ*, for that is only in natural agents; or *coactionis*, which is on free agents, for none can force God against his will.

6. Whereas some talk *de necessitate determinationis* among men, as when the will is determined by God, and the practical intellect, (habits and objects concurring,) and thereupon raise disputes, whether answerably in God, his eternal wisdom and communicative nature may not be said to determine his will, to create the world in time, and do whatever is done, and so whether there were not *necessitas determinationis*? And also, whether there were not *necessitas ad finem*; that is, whether it were not best that God's glory should be attained, and thus attained, and no other way would have been so well, and whether all this be declared by the event? I suppose these be arrogant, presumptuous disputes, which I dare not offer to determine. Only I say, that I suppose, as to man, they lay a false ground; seeing the intellect doth not properly determine the will, but only necessarily concur as a propounder of the object, (which is but a moral cause of the determination,) that so the will may determine itself. And of God's own determination of our wills, yea, in gracious acts, a reverend divine, in a late writing, (Mr. Capel, Part 4 of Tempt. p. 38,) saith, "We do not determine God's will, nor doth God immediately determine our wills, but by infusing a life and soul, as it were, of grace. By a habit of grace, deserved for us by Christ, God makes our wills determine themselves to follow him; and this the Scripture calls, not a forcing, but a drawing of us, not as we draw a man to the gibbet, but as we draw a man to a wedding who hath the wedding garment, or as we draw a sheep after us with a bush of ivy, as we draw children after us with nuts and apples, by way of persuasion, indeed, which is so forcible, that Scripture calls it a kind of constraining."

7. But let us suppose, for I shall not contradict it, that the common determination is right, that God created the world, not necessarily, but freely; not only as freedom is opposite to coaction, and to any extrinsic, imposed necessity, which are unquestionable, but also to an intrinsic necessity, so that his wisdom, and communicative nature, or glory, did not necessitate the creation of the world, but that he so willed to create it, that, *consideratis considerandis*, he might have nilled it, and in this sense did freely create it. I say, on this common ground supposed we shall proceed, though I fear such high inquiries myself.

8. God having freely created the world, and made man as he is, a reasonable creature, it followed, by a necessary resultancy from the nature of man, and compared with God, that man was God's subject, and to be ruled by him, and God was his sovereign Ruler. This necessity is the same as there is of every relation, *a positione subjecti, fundamenti, termini*. It is a contradiction for a rational creature to be made by God with a capacity of, and inclination to, an immortal felicity in the fruition of God; and yet that this creature should not be God's own, and his subject, and God be to him, by right of that creation, both Proprietary and sovereign Rector.

9. When God is once become the Rector of mankind, it is necessary that he actually rule him (supposing that he continue his being, nature, and so that relation). To be a ruler, is to be one to whom it belongeth to rule actually. It is necessary, therefore, from God's natural perfection, that he do the work of that relation which he hath himself assumed, and thereby undertaken to do; both justice and veracity, wisdom and goodness, require it. If God should say, I will be man's ruler, but will not rule him, it would imply some contradiction or unfaithfulness. And therefore to do so would be the same as to say so.

10. If God must necessarily rule, he must necessarily give laws, and execute them; for legislation and execution, whereto judgment is usually necessary, are the parts of government: at least let us first conclude the necessity of legislation; for it is a contradiction to rule the rational creature without a law.

11. As we know no necessity of creation, so know we no necessity of God's making positive laws; but that God did it so freely that he might have done otherwise, or not done it, while man was in innocency; though some think that even then, supernatural revelation and positive precepts were of necessity *ad finem*.

12. The whole law of nature, which was such to innocent man, did necessarily result from the nature of man, as related to God and his fellow-subjects, and as placed in the midst of such a world of objects; and so is legible in *rerum natura*. It is a contradiction for man to be man, so related to God and the creatures, and not to be obliged to esteem and love God above all, and to obey all his commands, to love one another, and other duties of the law of nature.

13. There are some duties that are founded in the relation of our very rational nature to the holy, perfect nature of God; as, to esteem him and believe him to be most powerful, wise, good, &c.; to reverence, love, and obey him, &c.: and some duties that are founded in the relation of our natures one to another, and some from the inseparable, innocent principle of self-love. All these have their necessary original with our natures, by resultancy therefrom; and God cannot (that is, he will not, because he is perfect) dispense with them: nor yet reverse them but by destroying our natures, which stand so related, and are the foundation thereof. But yet those are not absolutely necessary for the future; because it is not absolutely necessary that God should continue those natures in being. He may annihilate them, supposing he had not declared that he will not, and then these natural duties cease upon the cessation of the subject; but while man is man, it is contradictory and impossible that such natural good should not be good, and such natural evil as is contrary to it be evil.

14. There are some duties of the law of nature founded in natural, but mutable, accidents, relations, moods. These are indispensable duties, while these relations or other accidents remain, which are the foundation of them; but God can destroy the obligations, by changing and destroying those relations and accidents: so he did warrant the Israelites to take the Egyptians' goods, by changing the propriety; and so he can dissolve most of the obligations of the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments, as to this or that particular person, by a change of the person or thing, but not dispense with it *rebus sic stantibus*.

15. By what hath been said, the great questions may be determined, whether any thing be eternally good or evil? or any thing indispensably good or evil? or whether God wills things because they are good, and nills them because they are evil; or they are good and evil because God willeth and nilleth them? For it being from the relation of the human nature to the Creator and fellow-creatures, that natural duty doth result, it is impossible that it should *quoad existentiam* be a duty before the creation. All duty is some one's duty: but when there was no subject, it could be no one's duty; therefore no duty: but *quoad essentiam in esse cognito*, we may say, that this or that was good or evil from eternity: which is no more but this, that if there had been such creatures in being from eternity, this or that would have been their duty; and so that it was a true proposition from eternity (had propositions been then framed) that such duty will be due from such creatures. But in time the bare creation of man in such a world, doth constitute these principal natural duties, without any further constituting will of God; and duties they will be while man is man; so that God could not continue man in his nature and place in the world, and yet cause these duties to cease, it being a contradiction. And so as to all the approbatory, exhortatory, remunerative will of God, it may truly be said that he wills these natural duties, because they are good, and not that they are good because he wills them. As also that there is no further free act of his will, necessary to make them good or duty, besides his making man and the nature of creatures: but as to God's creating will, which laid the foundation of this duty, it may truly be said, that all such duties are duties because he willed them; for he might have chosen to have made man, or have made him not man, but somewhat else. On the contrary, we may see how to judge of evil, and how to understand those passages of the ancients, that God nilleth evil because it is evil; as Athenagoras de Resurrect. Mort. For what God willeth not he therefore willeth not either because it is unjust or because it is unmeet.

16. Duty being once constituted, the dueness of punishment to the sinner resulteth from the sin and law, and the nature and relation of God and man, by unavoidable necessity. It cannot be *ne per divinam potentiam*, that there should be a sin which makes not punishment naturally due to the sinner; or a sin which deserveth not punishment. Every law doth oblige *aut ad obedientiam, aut ad pœnam*; and this is so essential to a law, that if duty only were expressed without any penalty, yet, by the law of nature, penalty would be due to the offender. The common light of nature manifested in correcting children and servants, and punishing subjects, and in all government through the world, doth put this out of doubt, besides the law of God.

17. It is not, therefore, to the breach of natural precepts only, but to the breach of positive precepts also, that punishment is naturally due. For though God do freely make positive laws, yet punishment necessarily is due to the breach of them: nothing in morality is more clear to the light of nature, than that all sin against God deserveth some punishment.

18. Law doth not, as such, or by its essential act, preceptive or comminatory, determine that the duty shall eventually be performed, or the punishment on the disobedient eventually executed. Nor doth it so oblige the lawgiver to punish as that he may in no case dispense with it; but obligeth the offender to suffer, if he executeth it, by constituting the dueness of the penalty.

19. Yet two ways do such laws speak *de eventu*, as well as *de debito pœnæ*. First, in that they are given as *norma judicii*, as well as *officii*: this is one of the known ends and uses of the law. So that when God made his first laws for mankind, in the promulgation of them he did as much as say to the world of mankind, According to these laws shalt thou live; and according to these laws will I judge you; which comprehend-

eth it in two assertions *de eventu*. 1. That God will so ordinarily execute his own laws, that the people to whom they are given have great cause to expect it. 2. That he will not at all miss of the ends of them in respect of such execution: and therefore, though he have not parted with his *supra* legal power, yet will he never relax his laws, but upon valuable considerations in political respects; that is, on such terms as the ends of those laws (or of the legislator in making them) may be as well, or better, attained, as by the proper execution of them. So that some prediction *de eventu* is implied in the very nature and end of the law, in that it was made to be *norma iudicii*. Secondly, and to the law of grace there is also affixed a peremptory commination, which doth not only constitute, as all laws, the *debitum pœnæ*, but also doth predict the certain execution, and foretell that there shall never be any remedy; and so the legislator is, in point of veracity, as it were, obliged to execute it; that is, he hath revealed that he will so do.

20. As God, having thus necessarily made the law of nature, on supposition of nature itself, doth, by that law, also necessarily determine of the dueeness of punishment to every sinner, and that this shall be the course of judgment, so this justice will give to all their due, and will make a difference by rewards and punishments between them that differ as righteous and unrighteous: and his wisdom cannot suffer the frustration of his legislation, or the missing of the ends of government, nor those great evils that would follow the non-execution of justice according to its evident natural tendency.

21. If God, having necessarily given man a law agreeable to his nature, should permit him, without punishment, to violate that law, it would naturally produce, or necessarily tend to, these sad effects. 1. It would be an apparent occasion to draw men to further sin, when they see that the law is not executed. 2. It would draw men to condemn the law as a mere shadow, and a thing not to be feared or regarded. 3. It would draw them to accuse the lawgiver of levity, mutability, or oversight and imprudence, in making his laws, or insufficiency to attain his ends. 4. It would draw men to think that God in his law did dissemble, and, in some sort, lie; for the purpose of the threatening is to awe sinners, by telling them what they must expect if they transgress, and how they shall be judged; therefore, if ordinarily there should no such evil befall them, they are put into false expectations, and scared with a shadow of deceiving words. And so it would be a great breach on God's part in the frame of morality or policy, and plain imprudence, if not injustice in government, to cause such inconveniences, and lay such impediments in the subjects' way, to turn them from obedience, and cross his own ends and the nature of government.

22. Legislation, judgment, and execution, are proper parts of government. He therefore that must necessarily govern, must necessarily make laws, and cause them to be executed.

23. It is commonly through their own imperfection that lawgivers are fain to dispense with their own laws, or may fitly do it; but God hath no imperfections.

24. If some cases may fall out (as in case of small or secret sin, &c.) that God might dispense with his laws without any of the fore-mentioned inconveniences, yet ordinarily he cannot do it without changing the course of nature first: nor in case of the first great breach of his laws: so that we need not (to our purpose) dispute whether God can pardon no sin without satisfaction; but whether he could in wisdom and justice pardon Adam's sin, or the ordinary course of sin in the world, without satisfaction.

25. It was not only the positive law, but also the law of nature, which Adam did transgress by inconsiderateness, unbelief, adhering to the creature, and apostasy from God: and so do all the sinners in the world. Nor is it possible to sin against a particular, positive law, but we shall also sin against a natural law, particular, or general, or both.

26. From all this it seems clear to me, that after man's sin, there was a necessity of his punishment, or of satisfaction instead of it. And this necessity is a moral necessity *ad finem regiminis*: resulting from, 1. The nature of man, as the subject governed. 2. The ends of government, viz. God's glory, and man's obedience, and the common good. 3. The nature of the law, which is the instrument of government, making punishment due to sinners, and being the rule of judgment. 4. From the nature of sin. And, 5. From the nature of that rectorship, or governing office or work, which God assumed. And, 6. From the most wise, holy, just nature of God, thus governing. So that it is not from any of these alone, but from them all conjointly, as related among themselves: and the necessity appeareth in the contradictions which would follow on the contrary doctrine. For if sin, and such sin, shall go unpunished, and such laws be unexecuted, without a valuable consideration or satisfaction, then God, as Rector, must miss the great ends of government itself, (which enter its very definition,) and that through his own defect; and so shall be an imprudent, or unjust, or impotent governor.

27. The reason why Christ's satisfaction is a valuable consideration for the relaxing of the threatening, as to the sinner himself, is, because that it is at least as excellent a means for the attainment of the said ends of government as the punishment of the sinner would have been; seeing in this there is a full demonstration of governing justice, wisdom, and power, and of God's holy, sin-hating nature, and as full a vindication of the law from contempt, and as full a warning to sinners that they presume not, as if themselves had suffered; and that because Christ did not satisfy for their final impenitency, infidelity, or rebellion, or final, reigning, unmortified sin, and so took them not from under government, nor made them lawless for the future by his satisfaction or merits. And moreover, here is a further demonstration of wisdom and unconceivable mercy, and a preservation of sinners from perishing, to the everlasting praise of God their Redeemer.

28. This necessity of punishment was not absolute before the creation, but only hypothetical *de futuro*, on supposition of creation: for God might have chosen (for aught we know, without any ill consequents) to have made no such creatures as men or angels; and if there had been no such world, there would have been no need of punishment; or he could have prevented it, by such confirming grace as should have prevented the sin.

29. But this is not like their opinion that make no necessity hereof, but only on supposition of God's decree that Christ should satisfy. For if we overlook his decree, yet supposing but these two things: 1. The creation of man, and such a man; 2. And his wilful sinning; there is then a necessity *ex parte rei*, by unavoidable resultancy from the foresaid particulars, as related together. Any man may see, that if God should have made mankind perfect, and given him a perfect law, and have told him, that if he broke it he should not be punished, that this would have been such imprudence and injustice, as the holy, wise, and

righteous God, as Rector of mankind, to such determined ends, could not be guilty of; and God need not rule us by delusory, vain fears.

30. It is said by some very learned and reverend men, that God freely made the world, though he necessarily made it good; he freely made positive laws, though he necessarily made them wisely and just; he freely annexeth threatenings to his laws, though necessarily they are just threatenings; he freely sentenceth or judgeth, though he necessarily judge justly; he freely executeth his sentence by punishing, though he necessarily punish justly. And the reasons given, are, 1. Because God executeth his sentence as *Dominus*. 2. Because his threatenings bind him not to punish, but man to suffer.

To all this I answer briefly and distinctly: 1. The great dispute wherein the nature of liberty lieth, we here premit, supposing that they who thus oppose it to necessity do not mean any of that liberty which Dr. Twisse, Herebord, and others, have maintained to be consistent with necessity; that is, with such a necessity as we have now in hand. 2. I contradict not the two first assertions, that God freely made the world, and positive laws. 3. I find not the contrary-minded affirming that he freely made natural laws. 4. I deny all the following assertions; viz. that he doth freely, 1. Annex penalties to positives; 2. Or to natural precepts; 3. Or that he freely judgeth; 4. Or freely executeth, unless in the sense as freedom is consistent with the foresaid necessity. 5. When it is here confessed that God doth necessarily make his laws, penalties, sentence, and execution just, either the meaning is, that however he do them it is therefore just because he doth them, or else that he necessarily doth that which is *ex natura rei*, first considerable, as good and just before he doth it. If the first be the sense, then here is no necessity affirmed of God's doing one thing rather than another; as that he should rather make a law to punish the disobedient than the obedient; or that he should damn the wicked rather than the just; but it is only *necessitas respectus et denominationis*; a necessity that whatever law he make, were it to punish men for well-doing, should have the respect and denomination of a righteous law, because he makes it. But this is false. Not, as some say, because right and wrong, good and bad, in this sense, are eternal; but because God first makes the differing natures of good and bad, right and wrong, in the nature of things in creation and disposition, before he makes any further particular laws; much more before execution.

2. But if the latter be the assertor's sense, that God necessarily doth that which is first considerable as good and just, *ex natura rei*, then I grant it, and from that concession shall prove what is denied: for what is it that is meant by justness in threatening, judging, and punishing? If it be only that he go not above men's desert, and lay not too much on them, this is but a negation of injustice; it is not *justum*, but *non injustum*: but if they mean any thing positive, 1. Then will it essentially contain the punishment itself; 2. And by what reason they will prove that God must threaten, judge, and punish justly, by the same will I prove that he must threaten, judge, and punish.

Particularly, the most wise and righteous Governor of the world must needs make wise and righteous laws, and pass a wise and righteous sentence, and wisely and justly execute it. Thus must we conclude *de modo*; but *de re ipsa* the conclusion is as necessary as *de modo*. God is, upon creation, by necessary resultancy, the only Sovereign Ruler of the world; or if they have a mind to make this a free act of his own after creation, let them take their own way. He that is the Governor of the world, must needs govern it; he that governeth man, must needs give him laws: for that is the most essential act of government, taking laws in the full sense, as signifying any sign of the rector's will, making due or right to or from the subject. He that makes laws for government must needs oblige the subject to obedience, or to punishment in case of disobedience; for these are in the general nature of a law: or, if the last be denied, he that obligeth to duty must needs make punishment to be due to the disobedient; nay, by a natural resultancy it is so due. He hath put out the eye of the natural light, so far, that denieth that sin deserveth punishment *ex natura rei*, if no law but that of nature did threaten it. He that will restrain man from sin, and so govern effectually according to the nature of man, must restrain him by fears, which is his natural passion to such ends; and that by the apprehension of danger, and that by the threatening of danger. He that must govern by threatening laws, must judge and sentence by those laws; for judgment is a part of government, and the law is *norma judicii*; so that to have governors and laws, and yet for judgment to be unnecessary to mortal man, is a contradiction. He that must judge according to his laws, must execute his judgment, except upon a valuable consideration the ends of government may be obtained by relaxing them. If it be said that God could have attained those ends without punishment or satisfaction, I answer: Not without miracles, or destruction, or alteration of the very frame of nature itself, which was not to be expected, for it would have been a contradiction.

As to the two reasons of their opinions, I answer, to the first: God, who is Rector, is also *Dominus Absolutus*; but he executeth no sentence as *Dominus*, but as Rector; for it belongeth not to him in that relation; punishment being a part of governing justice; and God's relations contradict not each other in their works.

To the second I answer: Though God's threatenings, as such, or directly, bind him not to punish us; yet, 1. His assumed relation of rectorship, 2. And his making that law to be *norma judicii*, do declare that to be his proper work to execute them, and that he is, as it were, obliged in point of wisdom and governing justice to do it, except as afore excepted.

Thus I have (in more words than I hoped to have despatched it when I begun) explained my meaning in several passages, and given in my thoughts (somewhat rudely) on that great controversy, which I did, 1. Because of the great weight of it, especially to the present business of confirming our christianity; 2. Because having there spoken somewhat sharply and less explicitly on this point, I was afraid lest by one I should offend those whom I intended not in that speech, and by the other become more liable to misunderstanding.

August 20th, 1655.

THE PREFACE.

I CANNOT but expect that so slender a discourse, on so weighty a subject, should seem to some judicious men unnecessary; and that I owe them satisfaction concerning the reasons of this attempt. I confess I have many a time privately wished, and sometimes publicly expressed my desires, that some of the ablest teachers in the church would purposely undertake this weighty task of drawing out the chiefest arguments, for the defence of the christian cause and truth of Scripture, which lie scattered so wide in the writings of the ancients, and might afford much light to shame the cause of unbelievers. I know Marsilius Ficinus, Lodovicus Vives, the Lord du Plessis, especially Grotius, and others, have done much already this way; but yet, I think, a fuller improvement may be made of their arguments, at least to the advantage of those that we have now to do with. The account that I can give of the publication of this discourse is only this. I find myself most effectually excited to action, *ceteris paribus*, by the nearest objects; but especially when they are the greatest as well as the nearest. It hath long grieved me to see how the stream of errors, that beareth down this present age, doth plainly lead to the gulf of infidelity. While I only heard and read of infidels in the remote parts of the world, I was either of their judgment that thought it best not once to name, much less confute, so vile a sin, or at least I was not awakened to the fight, because the enemy was no nearer; but when I perceived such a formidable approach, I thought it time to look about us. It is many years since I observed the tendency of the prevailing giddiness, unruliness, and levity of these times. When, through the great ignorance, looseness, or ungodly violence of too many ecclesiastics, the officers of Christ among us had once lost their authority, and were grown into contempt, the people grew suspicious of almost all that they had taught them, and the proud, self-conceited, wanton professors did see no further need of guides, but contemned all that was truly government, and rejoiced in it as a part of their christian liberty that they were from under the yoke of Christ. They either chose to themselves a heap of teachers, or thought themselves sufficient to be their own guides, yea, and the teachers of others; they take themselves no longer for children, and, therefore, will go to school no more: they will be disciples of Christ, if either the name may serve, or he will come down from heaven and teach them immediately himself; but if he must teach them by these his ministers or ushers, he may go look him new disciples for them. Hereupon this pride and passion lead them to open schism; and they gather into separated societies where they may freely vent themselves with little contradiction, and where the spirit of light and unity doth seldom trouble them in their self-pleasing way. They now scorn that which once they called The Church. It is none of the smallest points of their zeal, nor the least piece of their pretended service of God, to make his messengers and some of his ordinances odious unto others, and to deride them in their conference, preaching, and prayers; they now rejoice that they

have got out of the supposed darkness of this or that error, which they suppose all the priests, as they call them scornfully by an honourable name, to be involved in. The devil and seducers having got them at this advantage, they are presently told that it is yet many more things that the priests have deceived them in as well as these; and so they fall upon one ordinance of God after another, till they have made them think hardly of them all. The first of them that must be here opposed is infant baptism, that their posterity may be kept more disengaged from Christ, and so great a part of his church may be unchurched, and the breach may begin where the closure and engagement did begin; but especially that the seducer may the better succeed, by beginning at a point which may hold so much disputation, and whose evidence the more dull, unexercised wits cannot easily discern, because the Scripture hath not spoken of it so expressly as they expect, or would prescribe. Here, also, they grow to many singularities in the Lord's supper and other ordinances. Singing of God's praises in David's psalms they fall to deride; first, as it is done in mixed assemblies, and, next, as by any at all. Praying in families they account unnecessary, for, as in infant baptism, the proof, though plain enough to the humble and wise, yet is not palpable enough for them. Catechising they deride as superstitious forms; and teaching children is to make them hypocrites, because they cannot yet understand. Here their foolish reason controlleth the confessed precepts of the word, Deut. vi. and xi.; Eph. vi. 4. In doctrinals they presently fall into a subdivision; the one-half of them are Pelagian anabaptists, the other are antinomian anabaptists; but these foxes that are thus sent out to fire the harvest, are tailed together for and by their joint opposition to the truth and the unity of the church, and by their consent to a universal liberty or toleration, that their manifest differences disjoin not their posteriors, nor hinder them much from setting all their faces against the church of Christ. The Pelagian party proceedeth next to be Socinians; and they find by the light of their benighted reason, that it was the deceit of the anti-christian priests that persuaded men that Christ or the Holy Ghost is God: and that they may escape anti-christianity, they will deny Christ's Godhead, and his satisfaction for sin; and when they have come so near the borders of infidelity as to make Christ and the Spirit to be but creatures, a little thing leads them the other step, even to take him, with the Mahometans, to be but a prophet; and lastly, with the Jews and infidels, to blaspheme him as a deceiver. The other stream or subdivision that went the antinomian way, do often turn libertines in opinion and conversation, and thence turn familists, seekers, and, lately, ranters or quakers. And here some of them, to save their reputation, do play with the name of Christ and Scripture, and the life to come; but when they dare speak out you may know their minds, that they take the Scripture to be fabulous delusions, and Christ to be an impostor, and the resurrection of the dead to be an idle dream. But where they dare not speak out,

for fear of making themselves odious and marring all their work, their course is sometimes to keep their opinions to themselves; so that you may live many years with them and never shall know what religion they are of. This is the course especially of the more subtle and politic part of them; and I wonder not at it, for there is nothing in their opinions that should induce them to be very zealous in promoting them. But those of them that are of hotter or less reserved minds do use to vent themselves more freely; and that is commonly against all our ministry, churches, and ordinances; against supernatural grace, and all truths of supernatural revelation, that they can contradict without too great suspicions, especially against the immortality of the soul, though that be a truth that nature may reveal. Also, they will be much quarrelling with the Scripture, and labouring to prove it guilty of self-contradictions and untruths; and vilifying it as a dead letter. By this, those that hear them not plainly revile Christ, may smell them out; and thus the divided and subdivided streams do all fall together into the gulf of infidelity, and there they are one in the depth of sin and misery that would not be one with the church of Christ, in faith, sanctity, and everlasting felicity; though, I confess, some few I have known that have come to infidelity by a shorter way.

Having the unhappy opportunity many years ago, of discoursing with some of these, and perceiving them to increase, I preached the sermons on Gal. iii. which are here first printed. Long after this, having again and again too frequent occasion to confer with some of them, the nearness and hideousness of this deplorable evil did very much force my thoughts that way, especially when I found that I fell into whole companies of them, besetting me at once, and with great scorn and cunning subtlety endeavoured to bring my special friends to a contempt of the Scripture and the life to come; and also when I considered how many of them were once my intimate friends, whom I cannot yet choose but love with compassion, when I remember our former converse and familiarity; and some of them were ancient professors, who have done and suffered much in a better cause; and whose uprightness we were all as confident of as most men's living on earth. All this did make the case more grievous to me; yet I must needs say that the most that I have known to fall thus far were such as were formerly so proud, or sensual, or giddy professors, that they seemed then but to stay for a shaking temptation to lay them in the dirt; and those of better qualifications, of whose sincerity we were so confident, were very few. It yet troubled me more that those of them, whose welfare I most heartily desired, would never be drawn to open their minds to me, so that I was out of all capacity of doing them any good, though sometimes to others they would speak more freely. And when I have stirred sometimes further abroad, I have perceived that some persons of considerable quality and learning, having much conversed with men of that way, and read such books as Hobbs' "Leviathan," have been sadly infected with this mortal pestilence. And the horrid language that some of them utter cannot but grieve any one that heareth of it, who hath the least sense of God's honour or the worth of souls. Sometimes they make a jest at Christ; sometimes at Scripture; sometimes at the soul of man; sometimes at spirits; challenging the devil to come and appear to them, and professing how far they would travel to see him, as not believing that indeed he is: sometimes scorning at the talk of hell, and presuming to seduce poor, carnal people that are too ready to believe such things, telling

them that it were injustice in God to punish a short sin with an everlasting punishment; and that God is good, and therefore there cannot be any devils or hell, because evil cannot come from good: sometimes they say that it is not they, but sin that dwelleth in them; and therefore sin shall be damned and not they: and most of them give up themselves to sensuality, which is no wonder; for he that thinks there is no greater happiness hereafter to be expected, is like enough to take his fill of sensual pleasure while he may have it; and, as I have said once before, he that thinks he shall die like a dog, is like enough to live like a dog.

Being awakened by these sad experiences and considerations to a deeper compassion of these miserable men, but especially to a deeper sense of the danger of weak unsettled professors, whom they labour to seduce, another providence also instigating thereto, I put those sermons on Gal. iii. to the press; and remembering that the end of a larger discourse on 1 John v. 10-12, was somewhat to the same purpose, I added it thereto; and next added the two following discourses, which were not preached, as supposing them conducive to the same end. And though I am truly sensible that it is so hasty, superficial, and imperfect a work, as is very disagreeable to the greatness of the matter; yet, 1. Because of the foresaid irritations; 2. And because that in so sad a combustion, every one should cast in the water that he hath next at hand to quench the flames; 3. And because I saw many others so backward to it, not only withdrawing their help, but some of them opposing all such endeavours; 4. And because I had begun on the same subject before, in the second part of the "Saints' Rest," and intend this but for a supplement to that, I thought it therefore my duty to do this little, rather than nothing.

Having given this account of my endeavours, I shall add a few words to the persons, for whose sake I publish this discourse: and that is principally to the raw, unsettled christians that are tempted by Satan or his instruments to infidelity; and also, to those apostates that are not unrecoverable, and have not sinned unto death, for of the other I have no hope. To these, my request is, that they would impartially read and consider what I have here said, and that in the reading they would so far abate their confidence of their opposite conceits, and so far suspect their own understandings, that the truth may not come to them upon too much disadvantage, nor find the door to be shut against it by pride and prejudice, but at least may have equal dealing at their hands. When men, that have no great reason to be self-confident, by any excellency of learning and height of understanding more than others, will still suspect the matter, rather than their own capacity, whenever they find not that clearness or convincing evidence which they expect, what likelihood is there that these men should receive information? Alas! it is but few of the multitudes of christians that have a clear knowledge of the true grounds of the christian belief. And then, when they hear the contradiction of seducers and are put to give a reason of their hopes, they are presently at a loss; and when they find themselves nonplussed, they have not the reason or humility to lay the blame on themselves, where it is due, and to lament their own negligence and unprofitableness, that by so much means have attained to no better understanding; but they presently suspect the truth of God, as if it were not possible that there should be light and they not see it; or as if there could be no answer given to the cavils of the adversary, because they themselves are unable to answer them; and as if others could not untie the difficul-

ties, or reconcile the seeming contradictions of the word, because they cannot do it. And when once these men are possessed with a suspicion of the Scriptures, almost every leaf will seem to them to afford some matter to increase their suspicions, and every difficulty will seem an untruth: and a thousand passages will be such difficulties to them, which are plain to men who are exercised in the word. What student is there in law, or physic, or any science, that is not stalled with multitudes of difficulties in the beginning, which seem to him, in that his ignorance, to be his author's self-contradiction, when competent study doth show him that it was his own mistake. There is more necessary in the hearer to the receiving of truth, than in the speaker to the delivering of it: as Photius saith, *Ἡ Δικαία πειθὼ οὐ τῆς τοῦ λόγοντος ἐστὶ ἐνάντιος, μάλλον ἢ τῆς τοῦ ἀκούοντος διαθείσεως*. Just persuasion proceedeth not so much from the power of the speaker, as from the disposition of the hearer. (Epistle 198, p. 295.) Many old professors among us, are so much wanting in all that knowledge of the Scripture language and phrase and Jewish customs, and many other things that are necessary to the full understanding of Scripture, that it cannot be expected that they should so far be acquainted with the meaning of every passage as to be able to confute the cavils of the adversaries. Yea, teachers themselves are imperfect herein, and that after all their care and study. What a weakness is it, then, for men that are utterly ignorant of the sacred languages and most other prerequisite helps, to think themselves capable of a full understanding of every difficulty in the word of God, merely because they have been long professors, and have often heard and read it.

But perhaps they will object: If we are so unable to understand them, why then do you propound our reasons to us to be understood? I answer: We must distinguish between the understanding of the plain, fundamental truths, and the understanding of all the difficulties; and between a natural and moral disability to understand; and between the nearest power and a remote. And so, 1. Those may be able to understand the substance of christianity and the reasons for its verity, that be not yet able to understand every difficult passage in the word, nor to reconcile all the pretended contradictions. 2. If you cannot understand this substance and truth of christian religion, it is not through a mere physical but a moral disability, which much consisteth in the viciousness of your will. If you have proud, self-conceited, malicious, passionate, impatient hearts that will not set the understanding a-work in a diligent, impartial consideration of the truth; what wonder, if you do not know it. 3. You are in a remote capacity to come to the knowledge of all those difficulties that now so puzzle you, though you are not in the nearest capacity. As a scholar that is but reading English is capable of understanding Greek and Hebrew, when he hath used sufficient means and waited therein a sufficient time, but he is not capable of understanding them at present; so you are capable of fuller satisfaction in Scripture difficulties, if you would have waited on God in the state of willing, humble, and diligent learners, and stayed the time. But if you will needs be persuaded that you are capable of understanding all the first day, while your understandings are unfurnished with those preparatory truths, that must necessarily dispose you to the reception of the rest, what wonder if you perish in your pride and folly! How should you come to the top of the stairs or ladder but by the lower steps?

Object. Sure you distrust your reasons, which makes you discourage us from trying them and judging of them.

Answe. 1. Not at all: I only distrust the present capacity of your raw, unfurnished, or unsanctified understanding. Receive my reasons but as they are, and I doubt not of their success. 2. Nor do I at all discourage you from the exactest trial, only I would have you try according to your own capacity. Let the thoroughly learned, well-studied, sanctified man both thoroughly try and freely judge; but surely the ignorant should try as men that know their ignorance, and the unlearned and unstudied should search as learners. There is a great deal of difference between searching as a learner, and disputing as a caviller, or boldly determining as a competent judge.

Object. We were your disciples long enough, and yet are unable to see any sound reason for your belief.

Answe. It is not being at school, but diligent learning, that bringeth knowledge. If you have been never so long professors and hearers, and were negligent and unprofitable, doth it follow that all is false that you have not learned, or do not understand? To the shame of your own faces may you speak it, if you have been so long professors, and never learned the true grounds and reasons of your profession, nor so much of the truth of christian religion, as might have kept you from apostasy. You will one day find that this was long of yourselves.

Object. Do not you almost all confess yourselves that there is no proof or sound reason can be given for the christian religion and the truth of Scriptures? The papists say (as Knot against Chillingworth) that it cannot be proved, unless it be first granted, that there is an infallible living judge, whose infallibility may be proved before and without Scripture. The protestants prove that there is no such judge, and they say, that popery tendeth to infidelity; nay, do not your own divines expressly say, that it is not to be proved that Scripture is God's word, but to be believed; and that it is Socinianism, or smells of it, to go about by reason to prove it; that it is *principium indemonstrabile*, (Pareus in Rom. Proleg. c. 2. p. 27.); and that it is preposterous and impious to ask, whence know you Scripture to be God's word? and a question not to be heard but exploded. Have you not been publicly told yourself, that it is the *primo creditum*, to be believed, and not known; and that it is a principle not to be proved by any dispute, nor to be questioned, and that there is no disputing with him that denieth it. So that you confess yourselves unable to dispute it with us or to prove it.

Answe. Though I am sorry that any have been occasions of hardening you by affording you the matter of this objection, yet seeing you have got it by the end, as I have oft heard to my grief from some of your most learned friends, I shall show you the vanity of it. 1. The weaknesses of men are not the weakness of our religion, nor any proof of it. What if we be imperfect in the knowledge of our own religion, yet may we infallibly know that it is true indeed. No men in the world are generally so ignorant and imperfect in their own profession of any science or art, as divines (yea, the best divines) are in theirs. And what of that? Is divinity, therefore, the less certain or excellent? No; the very reason is because there is no science so sublime, mysterious, and transcendent as this is; and, therefore, the science is the most excellent, and the professors and teachers of it are most highly honoured by that excellency of the doctrine, though they be so defective in it. He that studieth things visible before his eyes, may see and therefore know, and yet in these things we are every where at a loss; but who can expect that he that studies the nature and acts of the infinite God, and the incomprehensible,

invisible things of the life to come, should be perfect in his knowledge of them. An imperfect knowledge of these highest things is more excellent than the fullest knowledge of things below: no wonder, therefore, if divines be weak and oft mistaken; and yet this is no disparagement to the truth.

2. It is not all our divines, nor most, nor I hope many, neither, that say as you here object. Why, therefore, should all (yea, and the christian cause) be quarrelled with for the mistakes of some few?

3. And it is well known that it is in their disputations against some adversary that they are angry with, that most of these few do turn that way; and it is too common to run into an extreme in the heat of contention. Are any of the ancients of that mind, who write so voluniously for the christian cause, as many of them have done? Read Austin de Civitate Dei, Eusebius's *Præparatio*, and *Demonstratio Evangelica*, yea, almost any one of the fathers, and then judge. They that had to do with heathens, were not tempted to this opinion, as they are that have to do with papists and Socinians. And read almost any common-place book, or body of divinity written by the reformed divines, and see whether they do not largely prove, by sound reasons, the Scripture is the word of God. Even Paræus himself, whom you object, (in Ursine's Catechism, p. 6,) hath thirteen arguments to prove the truth of our religion, before he comes to the witness of the Holy Ghost, as the 14th Polanus is large and excellent in it, and few pass it by. Yea, our very catechisms contain it, as Mr. Ball's, that hath done it very well. So that you may see it is but very few, and those for the most part perverted in the heat of contentious studies, that think there is no sound reason to be given for the christian religion, or the truth of Scripture, or that we ought not to prove it, or that it is an indemonstrable principle, or that the divinity of it is the *primo creditum*.

4. And as for those that say, it is not to be questioned but believed, and do dissuade men from having disputes against it, or hearkening to temptations to doubting, I think they speak well, if you will understand them well. For, 1. Thou must observe whom they speak this to: not to heathens that never had the light made known to them; but to christians that have already believed. 2. And you must observe what it is that they say; not that Scripture is unreasonable, or that we cannot give sound reasons to a heathen to prove our religion, and the Scripture to be divine, nor that we ought not so to do, for their conversion; nor yet that young christians should not be taught such arguments for the strengthening of their faith, and defending it against such as you; or that they should not study them to that end; but that they should not question, that is, with doubt, or suspicion of the truth, which they have believed, whether it be truth or not. For when God hath given sufficient evidence of his truth, we may study for a clearer sight of that evidence as learners, but we ought not to doubt of the evidence, or to study as neutral or jealous unbelievers; but to abhor every temptation that would draw us to unbelief. We must not be like Balaam, that when God had told him his mind, would take no answer, but go on the same errand to him, after he had sufficient reason to be resolved. And I think it had been better with you, if you had met such temptations yourselves with abhorrence; and if you must try them further, if you had done it as learners, by your teachers' help, and not have thought your unfurnished understandings to have been competent judges in such a case without the assistance which God had provided for you.

5. Moreover, the learned, judicious divines that

speak of our disability to prove to another that the Scripture is the word of God, do use to give you these two expository restrictions, which also are to be taken or implied by many that express them not:

1. They speak not of a defect in our evidence or in the soundness of our reasons given, as if we could not give you such reasons as you are bound to be convinced by, but they speak of the defect of your reason for the reception of our reasons; and say, that through your darkness and pravity, no reason, how sound soever, will satisfy you without supernatural grace. 2. They deny not that you may come to a common belief by the persuasion of these reasons and the common help of the Spirit; but only that you can have the special saving faith of the saints, without the Spirit's special grace. An historical belief, which is true in its kind, they confess you may come to by rational persuasions, without special grace: but not that deep and firm belief, which shall carry over the will effectually to God in Christ, and captivate the whole man into the obedience of his will.

6. And as for the papists, as it is their interest and pre-engagement and contentious study, that causeth this and other their errors; so in this they are not of one mind among themselves, and therefore, their error is no disparagement to the cause of Christ.

7. No more is the error of these on the other side, who, through darkness, passion, or inconsiderateness, are carried to take the part of infidels against christianity; so far as to say, that we have no reason for our religion, or that it is not to be proved by any dispute; or that it is to be believed, and not to be known or proved, that Scripture is God's word, or that our religion is true. I say of them in this, as of you, we may have proof, and full proof, though neither they nor you can see it. None of them all is able to confute the proofs that are brought by Austin, Eusebius, or the rest of the fathers for the christian faith; nor to answer the apologies of Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, Arnobius, Minutius Felix, Athanasius, Cyril Alexand. with many more on this subject. None of these quarrelsome men can confute the arguments that our ordinary common-place books and bodies of divinity, or catechisms written by reformed divines, do bring to prove the Scripture to be the word of God. Nor the treatises of Ficinus, Lod. Vives, Mornay, Grotius, Jackson, &c. that are written to that end. If either you or any peevish, factious men that will so far befriending you, will undertake such a task, I doubt not but they shall find enough to vindicate the christian cause and doctrine, and to manifest their error. For my own part, I am willing to give contenders the last word in the most evident points, which are not of necessity to salvation. I have seen so much the fruit of disputations, and what an intolerable provocation it is to some men to be contradicted, and how strongly it tempteth them to passion, untruth, and palpable injustice, and the disadvantage of the clearest reasons, when prejudice is to encounter them, that I shall be as little in contradiction of such impatient souls as I can; and if they will maintain that *homo* is not *animal rationale*, if they enforce it not against spirituals, I shall give them the day. But yet while God gives me life, and ability, and opportunity, I undertake to make good against them or you, that there is sound proof to be given of the two principles of our faith, viz. that God is true, and that Scripture is his word; and that these are first, in true order of nature, to be known, before they are to be believed *fide divina*, though a human faith is

usually preparatory ; and that we are not unfurnished of solid arguments to deal with a heathen or infidel, or to establish a tempted christian in the faith ; and that he that will tell an infidel, or tempted christian, or a papist, or any adversary of our churches, that we have no sound reason to be christians rather than infidels, and that we have no solid proof that Scripture is God's word, shall deal liker a betrayer than a preacher of the word of the gospel, and is unfit to preach to the unbelieving world. And if any of you that are infidels are encouraged by their conceits, I tell you, we shall easily manifest the vanity of such conceits, whether they are from you or them.

Object. But it is not only these few, but the most of you are disagreed among yourselves, on what grounds or reasons you take the Scriptures to be the word of God. Though most of you say, in general, that you have sufficient reasons for it ; yet, when you come to manifest them, how many minds are you of ! That which to one seems an irrefragable reason, another doth condemn ; so that all of them are slighted by one party or other. The papists' reason is from the authority of their infallible church. The protestants, some of them, say that Scripture is as the sun that is seen by its own light ; and so our belief of it is resolved into itself. Others fetch their reasons from the attestation of miracles ; others resolve all into the private testimony or revelation of the Spirit. You know more than one have told you lately that we cannot believe this by a divine faith, but by the testimony of God : nor must we fetch this testimony out of the Scriptures ; for this were to believe the Scriptures before we believe them : therefore the ground is the witness of God to our spirits. The witness of God to their spirits, they say, is the first ground on which their faith is built, and this is by a secret causing us to believe, and so some truth is believed without reason.

Ans. 1. I have before given you my answer, as to the papists, and those few of our own that run into such extremes. All arguments be not weak, which some men dare deny. Is not the highway right except every man hit it ? A drunken man may go beside it, and a wise man that is not used to it may miss it, or by credulity may be turned by others out of his way ; and yet the way may be right and plain too for all that. Will you think nothing certain in philosophy, because philosophers are of so many minds ; or will you renounce all physicians because they ordinarily disagree ; or, as one saith, if a Londoner have a journey into the country, which his life lieth on, will he not go his journey because the clocks disagree ; or will he not set on till all the clocks in London strike at once, or will never give any credit to a clock till then ?

2. Our divines disagree not so much as you pretend. Their ordinary judgment is this, which we shall easily make good against your opposition, that Scripture hath not sensible evidence, or the things believed are not evident ; but yet there is sufficient evidence of the verity of them, in that it is evidently provable, that God is the Author of that word, and that God cannot lie : that our evidence objective of the divinity of Scriptures is partly in the internal light of their own perfections, partly in providential attestations, especially miracles, and partly in the effects : that the Holy Ghost, by special inspiration, was the Author of these Scriptures, and by extraordinary endowments was the Author of those miracles which were wrought for its confirmation, and is also the Author of the faith of the believer ; and having wrought that faith and the rest of God's image, the effect is a further argument to confirm the faith that was wrought before ; but yet

they say not that the Holy Ghost doth cause men to believe without any evidence ; which were to see without light, or to know or believe that which is no object of assent. There is evidence of truth in Scripture, and there are sound reasons for the christian faith, before the Holy Ghost persuades men to believe them. The Holy Ghost is not sent to cure the Scripture of obscurity or any defect, but to cure men's eyes of blindness that cannot see that which is visible to seeing men. The Spirit is not given to make our religion reasonable, but to make sinners reasonable, in habit and act, for the believing it. The Spirit, therefore, is not first any objective cause of our belief, unless you speak of the Spirit in the apostles or others, and not in men's selves, but it is the efficient cause ; nor doth he cause us to believe by enthusiasm, or without reason, but he works on man as man, and causeth him to believe nothing but what is credible ; and his causing us to believe is by showing us the credibility of the thing, or the evidence of the truth to be believed, and elevating the soul to the belief thereof.

And for those that contradict this, it may suffice me now to tell you that their singular opinion is no disparagement to the Scripture, or the christian cause. If they will either make the Spirit to cause an act without its object, that is, faith without apparent reasonable credibility in the thing believed, or if they will make the first work of faith to be enthusiastical, and introduce a constancy of new revelations ; if they will assign such a work to the Holy Ghost of their own heads, beyond the work which Scripture assigneth, which was so to inspire the penmen of Scripture, that it may be a sufficient revelation, and then to illuminate men's understandings by a cure of their depravity, that so they may believe, and effectually to excite the heart thereto, if they will accuse the Scripture of being an insufficient revelation, or if they will accuse the christian verity of unreasonableness, or being a doctrine that hath no proof ; if they will profess that we have no rational means to confute or convince an infidel, nor to confirm a tempted professor of christianity ; if they will tell all infidels that we can give them no such sound reasons for our faith, as should bind them to believe, by making it their duty, and condemn them if they believe not ; but will justify all such infidels from being guilty on that account ; if they will say that natural verities are not presupposed to those of supernatural revelations, and may not afford some proof of our principles of faith ; if they will unavoidably cast themselves into the circle which the papists, falsely, charge upon protestants in general, but is the case but of these few, to wit, to prove by the Spirit that Scripture is God's word, and to prove by Scripture that this is God's Spirit, circularly ; or if they will teach men to be enthusiasts, and to plead new revelations and witnesses of the Spirit, of which they can give no proof that they are of God ; if they will tell men of a Spirit, which is not to be tried by the word whether it be of God or not, seeing its testimony must be believed before we believe the word ; if they will contradict themselves, and make two first credibles, that is, Scripture to be God's word, and that it is God's Spirit that witnesseth it ; if they will deny that honour to the Scripture to be *proper se credible*, and yet give the same honour to the testimony which they say they have from the Spirit ; if they will cross the experience of all those christians that know of no inspiration or testimony of the Spirit which caused them to see a truth without any persuading objective evidence, but caused them to believe, because they believe ; seeing no more reason, at the same time, why they should believe,

than why they should not believe; finally, if indeed they see no reason why they are or should be christians themselves, nor can give to him that asketh them a reason of their hope: I say, if all this be so with them, it is not so with me; it is not so with other reformed divines; it was not so with the ancient fathers of the church that confuted the infidels; nor was it so with the apostles who made full proof of their doctrine to the world, and set to that seal that is not yet void or taken away. You may see these men sufficiently confuted by our divines, especially by Rob. Baronius *contra* Turnebull, and Thes. Salmuriens. de S. Script. et Testim. Spir. For their quarrels with us, we leave them till we shall meet them in the presence of that God whose light will effectually dispel all our darkness, and reconcile our differences, and mollify our angry, self-conceited minds, and where it shall be known which of us was in the wrong.

But as to all the friends of infidelity, as we have showed you already such reasons of our belief as will convince you, or condemn you, so are we ready yet to produce more. We undertake not to cure your prejudice, or blindness, or sensual opposition to the word of God, or proud arrogancy that causeth you to censure the word which you should learn, and therefore we undertake not to cause you to believe. And for those of you that have done despite to the Spirit of grace, we have little hope that ever you should be true believers; but yet we undertake to produce such reasons for our religion as should wholly prevail with a reasonable man; and I dare say there are such, even in this imperfect discourse, which here I offer you; but much more by the more judicious, and upon more deliberation, may be said.

Object. You magnify your own reasons, but you know other men of your own religion do vilify them, and maintain them to be insufficient. You know who saith of you and your reasons, There are some who lay much, if not too much, upon universal tradition; a thing hardly known, for certain, by any, but almost impossible to be known to the many: and yet you expect that we should be moved by that which we cannot know.

Ans. I magnify the word of God, and its certainty, and the soundness of those reasons which God affordeth us to prove that certainty, but not my own reasonings in the managing of them. That writer doth not there expressly invalidate any argument that I use. He saith, Perhaps I give too much to that tradition; but tells not you or me wherein. I have told you how much I give to it, as plainly as I can speak, in the preface before the three last editions of the second part of the "Saint's Rest." We use not the word universal, for that which hath the consent of all men in the world, no more than I mean all the world by the universal church. But that which is opposed to the private tradition of the Romanists, and hath a certain moral universality, and is built, as to the certainty, upon common, rational, and natural grounds, and not on the Romish pretended authority or infallibility. If none can know a history or tradition of this nature, then can no Englishman know whether the laws of this land, which he saw not made, be indeed such laws, or mere forgeries: and so his estate and life must depend upon that which, for aught he knoweth, hath nothing to do with him. In vain, then, do we cite in our disputations with the papists, the writings of Austin, Aquinas, Bellarmine, or the Council of Trent, Constance, Basil, &c. For how know we that any of these be their writings, or that ever there were such a thing as the Council of Trent, or ever such men as Austin, Aquinas, or Bellarmine, in the world?

If the papists quarrel with Luther, Melancthon, and the Augustin Confession, we will not tell them it is uncertain whether ever there were such a man as Luther or Melancthon, or such a thing as that confession. No; we are certain, I say certain, of these things. Unlearned men may, ordinarily, be certain of them. We have yet fuller and clearer tradition to ascertain us that this Scripture was delivered down from the apostles, as I have showed elsewhere.

I would not be he that should so much wrong the christian cause, and strengthen the hands of infidels, as to deny or question the certainty of this infallible tradition, by which the Scripture hath been brought down to our hands, for more than I will now speak of. When I have heard somebody tell me better than I have yet been told, how we shall know which books of Scripture are canonical without this tradition, I should the less set by it. Have we a certainty of the canonical books, or have we none? If we have none, then who can say of any one particular book, This is God's word, or this is true? And if we know not any one book to be canonical, then it is almost all one to us, as if we knew not that there is any canonical at all. Nor can we comfort ourselves, or confute an adversary effectually from the Scripture. If we do know certainly some books to be canonical, it is either by the certainty of tradition, joined with the characters of excellency in that book, or by those characters alone, or some other way. If, by the bare inspection of the books, and the witness of the Spirit, then I will appeal to all that have the Spirit, whether they could have known by the Spirit, without such tradition, that the prophecy of Jonas, Nahum, Haggai, &c., were any more canonical than Baruch? or Ecclesiastes than the Wisdom of Solomon? We are certain enough which is Homer's Iliad, Ovid's Metamorphoses, Virgil's Æneid, Seneca's Epistles, Cicero's and Demosthenes' Orations, to this day; much more Cleonard's, Camden's, or Lilly's Grammar, which our schools preserve. And why may we not be as certain of those sacred writings, of which the church hath been always so careful, and had preachers to publish them, and weekly assemblies to hear them, through the christian world? If we may be sure that we have Mahomet's Alcoran by tradition, why may we not be sure by it that we have the true writings of the apostles, and the gospel of Christ? But I have said enough of these matters in the following discourse.

I shall only conclude with these two requests to the two sorts of people to whom I now speak.

1. To those that are but haunted with temptations to infidelity, but not yet quite overcome. In the name of God, make not light of such hideous injections: meet them not but with dread and detestation: wrong not the grace of God and all the discoveries that he hath made to you of his truth, so much as to entertain Satan into a free dispute against it, upon equal terms; and be sure that you be not arrogantly confident of the competency of your own understandings to deal with those difficulties which are the ground of the temptations; but make out for help to some able, experienced divine. You may perceive by the malice against God, by the importunity and tendency of the temptation, that it is certainly of the devil, and to be regarded accordingly. Your studying to increase your apprehensions of the evidence of christian truth, and to be established in the faith, and able to defend it, is not your sin; but all the suspicions and doubts of the truth of Scripture, which in those studies you are guilty of, are your sin. To be tempted is common to the good and bad; to be imperfect in believing was the case of the disciples, who said, Lord, increase our faith;

but to be overcome by the tempter would be your everlasting undoing. Play not, then, with such motions and cogitations, as may be your utter ruin, but you are sure beforehand, can never, by the conquest over them, do you any good. If you suffer the devil to be still stirring in you fantasies, and raising doubts of the truth of your end, what a lamentable clog will it be to you in your way! what a cooler in all duties, and a destroyer of your comforts in life and at death!

2. And for those that are already apostatized from the faith, though I have but little hope to be heard, I shall earnestly crave thus much at their hands, which they themselves may perceive to be but a reasonable request; that they will be at so much pains, before they adventure any further, as to open their minds to some able minister, and to hear but what can be said against them; and that without prejudice, passion, or scorn, with meekness and willingness to know the truth. Though I abhor your sin, yet the Lord knoweth that it is unfeigned love and compassion to your souls that causeth me to make this motion to you. Your condition is no grief to you, because you believe not your approaching misery. The beast that knoweth not the butcher's mind, is as careless within an hour of his death, as if no harm at all were near him. But would you have a man that knows your danger and the terrors of the Lord, to have no more pity on you than you have of yourselves. The Lord knows, I have oft, with a sad lamenting heart, looked on and thought of some in this condition, who have formerly been my familiar friends, and gone with us in company to the house of God, and seemed to be of us; though since they are gone from us; to think what everlasting calamity is near them, while they least fear it, or are most confident in their unbelief. Alas! it is no deliverance from danger to imagine that there is no danger. Your unbelief shall not frustrate the threatenings of God, but bring them on you. God's word will prove true, whether you believe it or not. It is merely your own ignorance and present incapacity of understanding the Scripture, that makes you first suspect them as improbable, and afterwards reject them as false, and afterwards fall to scorn them as ridiculous. How certainly do I know, that God will shortly show you your mistakes, and make you know that the crookedness was in your conceptions, but his word was straight; that you should rather have suspected your shallow wits, than his sacred word; and that it was your own imaginations that were false and ridiculous, but the word was true. When God hath set open to you the plain meaning of that word, which you censured by misunderstanding it, you will be ashamed of that folly, which now you take to be your wisdom. At present I shall but propound these questions to your serious consideration:

1. Was it not by a way of sin that you came to your unbelief; and is that like to be true and right which men are led to by their wickedness? I have known few come to your case but by one of these two ways: either by wounding their consciences by some secret wickedness, so that they could not quiet them but by believing that there is no punishment; or else by proud self-conceit and separation.

2. May you not perceive that it is the devil that hath tied you into this snare, by the cause that it befriended, and the tendency of it to the strengthening of his kingdom and increase of wickedness, by the manner of the temptation, and the direct opposition to God and all goodness?

3. Do you not sin against the light of nature when you contradict the common principles of mankind?

Almost all the heathens and infidels on earth do believe that there is a life to come, where it shall go ill with the wicked and well with the righteous; even the savage Indians, that have had no notice of supernatural revelations, do commonly believe this; and whence should the world, that never heard of the gospel, have the knowledge of this, but from nature itself? In denying, therefore, the life to come, and the different estates therein, you go against the light of nature and common principles of the world.

4. But if you believe an everlasting state of happiness or misery, must there not be some way to that happiness? And what religion in the world doth show you that way with any probability, but the christian religion? We are sure that there is a true religion; and we are sure that heathenism, Judaism, and Mahometanism, are false or insufficient religions, and therefore it must be the christian religion.

5. Is it likely that God should make so intelligent a creature, that is capable of doing him perpetual honour, for the mere momentary business of this life; or, rather, to join him to those spiritual natures that shall attend him to everlasting?

6. Doth not God actually govern the world by the hopes and the fears of another life. This is past question, by the world's common experience: lower things have a lower place; but it is the hope of happiness, or fear of misery everlastingly, that is the principal instrument of the government of mankind. Without this all would soon come to ruin and confusion. Name one commonwealth on earth, that hath been governed and kept up without this. And certainly God needs not a lie to rule men by: he can rule his creature without false promises or threatenings, without the means of false hopes or fears: of which more anon. And why should he give him a nature unsatisfied with things below, and looking after everlasting things, and fearing everlasting misery, if there were no such things? The brutes have no such thoughts of a world to come, nor trouble themselves with hopes or fears about it, nor are governed by such means. And why, but because they were never intended for such an end? Certainly that creature must be ordained to an everlasting end, who is ruled by his Creator by the hopes and fears of an everlasting end.

7. Is it not certain that God is the Governor of the world? Had there been no Creator, there had been no creature. For earth and stones, or beasts, or men, are not things likely to make themselves; nor can that which is nothing make itself to be something: for by what power should nothing cause any thing? And if God made the world, he must needs (as having the only right and sufficiency) be the chief Ruler of the world: and if he must be their Ruler, he must actually rule: and if he must rule, he must rule with justice; and justice makes an equal difference between the obedient and disobedient; which we see in this life is far from being accomplished; when even death itself is suffered by the obedient, because they will not disobey. And whether justice do not tell us, that there must be an everlasting happiness or misery, to them whose natures are formed to an expectation of it, by the Creator himself, and whose lives are managed by such expectations, I leave to consideration.

8. Are they not apparently the worst men on earth, and the likeliest unto brutes, that are nearest to your mind? And are not christians, for all their faults, the wisest and the best men on earth? There is very little of the world that believe not in Christ, but what is notoriously vicious, if not barbarous: and if there be any part of America, that acknowledgeth not the life to come, it is those that are man-eating cannibals,

or so savage as that they seem almost to have unmanned themselves.

9. Doth not your own conscience sometime stir and gripe you, and tell you that yet there is somewhat within you that beareth witness to your capacity of an everlasting state?

10. Lastly, should not the least probability of a matter of such moment as everlasting joy or misery is, persuade a man of reason to let go all the pleasures of sin, rather than lose but such a possibility of everlasting happiness, or venture on such a probability of everlasting misery? Are you sure that there is no such thing? Are you sure that you shall die as a beast? I do not think you dare say so. What then will become of you, if your conjectures prove false? as most certainly they will. What if there be a heaven to lose, and a hell to suffer; and you will not believe it till you feel it; where are you then? You might have been sure that you could lose but little, if you had followed Christ, but a little sensual, transitory pleasure, which no man ever repented of losing, when he was dead. But you are not sure but you may lose everlasting felicity, and suffer everlasting misery, by your rejecting Christ: which of these two then is the wiser bargain, or better becoms a reasonable man?

To conclude, if you have not yet^a blasphemed the Holy Ghost, or so far forsaken God as to be quite forsaken of him, nor trodden underfoot the blood of

the covenant as an unholy thing, so far as that Christ will leave you to yourselves, I may hope to prevail with you to set seriously to the work, and make a more diligent and impartial inquiry into the grounds of the christian faith; and, among other means, that you will read considerably this book, with that whereof it is a supplement, viz. the second part of the "Saints' Rest," and Grotius, "Of the Truth of the Christian Religion," now translated into English; and if any thing in the reading seem unsatisfactory, that you will debate the case with some that are judicious, and do not conclude inconsiderately and peremptorily against that which you never thoroughly understood; as, also, that you will beg, by earnest prayer, the assistance of God, to acquaint you with the truth, for I suppose you yet to believe that there is a God. If you are given up to so much contempt of God and your own souls, that you will not be at thus much labour for your information, or while you read you will strive against the light, and rather proudly disdain than faithfully consider and humbly learn the things which you understand not; I have discharged my conscience; take that you get by it.

A lament of the apostasies, non-proficiency, and contentiousness of these times,

RICHARD BAXTER.

August 14, 1655.

THE
SPIRIT'S WITNESS
TO
THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

GAL. III. 1, 2.

"O FOOLISH GALATIANS, WHO HATH BEWITCHED YOU, THAT YE SHOULD NOT OBEY THE TRUTH, BEFORE WHOSE EYES JESUS CHRIST HATH BEEN EVIDENTLY SET FORTH, CRUCIFIED AMONG YOU? THIS ONLY WOULD I LEARN OF YOU, RECEIVED YE THE SPIRIT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW, OR BY THE HEARING OF FAITH?"

Nothing is more necessary to the understanding of the apostle's meaning, than first to know the question that he disputes of; and to that end we must know whom he disputes against, which was those or such like false teachers which are spoken of in the fifteenth of the Acts, as many passages in this epistle would easily manifest, if we thought it needed proof. The doctrine which they taught, was, that it was needful to be circumcised, and to keep the law of Moses, and that to salvation. That they taught not only circumcision, but the whole law, is evident, verse 5; that they made it necessary to salvation, is plain, verse 1; yet these men did not deny Christ, nor teach men to do so directly. The converted Jews were so great honourers, of their law, as knowing it was of divine ordination, and their fathers had been so severely chastised for the

breach of it, and so many prophets had been sent to confirm it, that they thought that doctrine could not be true which taught them to reject the law, or maintained the abrogation of it; on the other side, they were so convinced by the miracles of Christ and his apostles, that the testimony of Christ was true, and that he came from God, that they could not disbelieve him, nor reject his doctrine. It must be confessed that their trial was great in this strait, seeing all loyal subjects of God should not rashly believe an abrogation of his law. In this great perplexity, not finding out the right way, they resolve to join both together: the law they thought they must keep, for they were sure God had ordained and commanded it; christians they must needs be, for they could not resist the light of the doctrine and glorious miracles that were wrought;

^a As to the nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost, besides the consent of the fathers, in the main expressed in the third part, see an Epistle of Photius, fully to the same sense and purpose. Inter Epist. ejus, p. 167, 168. Epist. 127. And

against Julian's and other apostates' accusations of Christ's laws, see an excellent discourse, ib. p. 275. Epist. 187. Χριστοφώρῳ Ἀσπαθαρίῳ.

therefore, they would keep the law, and yet continue christians. Their great mistake was in not understanding the nature, and meaning, and use of the law. They thought, that as it commanded them such a task of duty, so the doing of that duty must needs be pleasing to God; and consequently that man must needs be held most righteous that most exactly kept that law; for God could not choose but love and justify them that kept his own law. Where, note, that it was not, 1. Out of self-admiration principally, or a conceit of any excellency of works as works, that was the root of their error, but it was an admiration and honouring of the law of God, thinking that it were a derogation from its perfection, to say either that it was useless as to justify men, or that it was not a way, yea, a perfect way to life and happiness. 2. You must note carefully, that it is not the law as delivered to Adam, which the apostle or these Galatians here spake of, which supposed the subject to be perfectly innocent; and, therefore, that it was not perfect obedience without any sin that these Jews did look to be justified by, for they could not be so blind as to think they had no sin, for then they would never have offered sacrifice for expiation of it, nor have confessed sin, nor prayed for pardon, which it is certain the Jews did use to do; but they thought, that though they were sinners, yet by the obeying this law of Moses God's wrath would be appeased; that is, partly by their sacrifices, which they thought did expiate sin of themselves, as being a sufficient means, through the virtue of God's ordination and mercy for that end, and partly by returning to obedience again: so that they took not this to be a law of perfect works made to perfect man, as the only condition of his salvation, as Adam's law was, but a law of perfect obedience for the future, yet not as the only condition of life, but prescribing a course, in the use whereof God would pardon their sins, if they obeyed sincerely; or, as Paul Burgens, on Jam. saith of his countrymen, the Pharisees, that their opinion was, that he was righteous, whose obedience was more than his disobedience, and the contrary unrighteous. The root of their error, therefore, was, that they looked only at the task of duty prescribed by the law, as if it meant that the bare doing of it should justify them, and procure pardon, especially their sacrifices and other ceremonies; and did not look at the promise, which was a thing distinct from the law; nor yet at the meaning of these sacrifices and ceremonies, which secretly directed them to look for pardon and justification by Christ; they took up with the letter and immediate sense of the law, and did not understand the end of it; they knew not that Christ was the end of the law to every one that believed. The justification that they looked for, did not consist in perfect obedience, as Adam's did, and should have done, (those mistake that think so,) but partly in their obedience to Moses's law, and partly in God's merciful pardoning them for and upon the mere use of sacrifices, and the like ceremonies. They did not look to be justified or saved without mercy and pardon, but to have mercy and pardon by their task of legal duties, as such, and as the only and sufficient means; so that their error lay in the excluding the use of Christ and faith. They saw not that these sacrifices were but types of Christ, and had all their virtue from the sacrifice of Christ, which was then undertaken, and in moral being, though not in natural being, or performed: not that these Jews that were before Christ should not use sacrifices and ceremonies; nor yet that they should not expect ever the more acceptance from God upon the use of them, for certainly God appointeth no duty or means in

vain. But, 1. They should have understood, that Christ's sacrifice was the thing typified: 2. And that from hence they were to expect the pardon of all their sins, as the meritorious cause; and from these sacrifices and ceremonies, but only as the most inferior, remote conditions on their part, i. e. as the matter of the law, wherein they were required to be sincerely obedient: 3. And that faith in Christ, 1. As promised; 2. As typified in these ceremonies, was the principal condition on their part required for obtaining pardon and justification by Christ to come; and therefore they should have believed the more easily in Christ when he was come, in that they might see their law in him fulfilled; and they should have understood that it was but a temporary law, and was to cease when the Messiah was come. It scarce needed any abrogation, because there was a clear cessation when the end was accomplished, and the term expired, of which the Messiah did give them full assurance. Much less should they have been so tenacious of it, when the apostles had so fully cleared to them the cessation.

I have thought it necessary to open this the more carefully to you, because it is most necessary to the understanding of Paul's epistles, and especially about the doctrine of justification, to know well what he means by the law, for else you cannot know what he means by works; and certainly you will find that he means most commonly the law of Moses, and not the law as given to Adam, prescribing perfect obedience to a perfect creature, as the only condition of life, and knowing no pardon; and that he speaks not of any such justification as excludeth pardon, but contrary. It is a wonderful hard, yet very necessary question, what form this law of Moses had, and to what use it was, and how different from that of nature, and that of Christ and pure grace. Camero hath taken most pains in it; but I will not now say any more of that than I have done.

So then the question here debated was: Whether the keeping of Moses's law were necessary to justification and salvation, and therefore to be joined with christianity?

Against this, Paul had before disputed by several arguments; and here, in the beginning of this chapter, having a sensible argument to urge upon them, which none that had the free use of reason could resist, he ushers it in with a sharp and confident exprobration, calling them foolish or mad; and asking them, who had bewitched them, &c. As if he had said, When men are blind and err against their own sense and experience, it is a mark they are mad and bewitched by some power of an evil spirit: but so it is with you, &c.

Thereupon, in the words of my text he challengeth them to answer but this one argument: That doctrine and way is the right doctrine and way of salvation, by which ye received the Spirit; for the Spirit is an unquestionable seal of the doctrine. But it was not by the works of the law that ye received the Spirit, but by the hearing of faith; therefore, &c.

The words contain, 1. Paul's confidence in this particular argument, having the nature of a challenge to them, to answer it if they can: "This one thing would I learn of you," &c.

2. The argument itself propounded interrogatively and dilemmatically, as Christ did by the Jews about John the Baptist, that so while they were studying an answer they might perceive their error; as if he should have said, either you received the Spirit by the works of the law, or by faith; not by the law, therefore by faith.

Here are several terms to be opened: 1. What is meant by the works of the law? 2. What by the

hearing of faith? 3. By the Spirit? Of which briefly in order.

1. I have said as much already to the former as I shall now say; that is to say, that it is the works of Moses's law. But if any shall ask, 1. Was it the ceremonial, or the moral? I answer, both. All the law of Moses, but more principally the ceremonial.

Quest. But faith in Christ is part of the moral law, therefore it cannot be of that.

Ans. The moral law, commanding the duty of the law of nature, is but part of a law, commonly called the matter, by divines, and not the whole law; and it is, 1. Part of the matter of the law given to Adam; 2. Part of the matter of the law of Moses; 3. Part of the matter of Christ's new law. Now Paul speaks of it here not as the law of Christ, nor directly as the law made to Adam, but as the law given by Moses; and so even the moral law perhaps may fitly enough be said to be abrogated or ceased, though the same moral law, as part of Christ's law, still be in force, and I think as part of the first law of nature.

Quest. Doth not Paul argue against justification by the works of the law of nature, as well as of Moses? *Ans.* Not directly, but by consequence he concludeth against it: I mean, his argument will hold *a fortiori* against justification by the law to Adam; for if that law cannot justify, which was given to sinners, as sinners, and hath in it a way prescribed for pardon, much less will that now justify, which was given to man as innocent and perfect, and knows no pardon of sin.

2. By the hearing of faith is meant the hearing and so receiving of the doctrine of faith, or doctrine of Christ; not that hearing is here put for preaching, as Erasmus thought, which Beza well confuteth; but hearing implieth believing or obeying the doctrine heard; for all that hear, or to whom the word is preached, believe not, and so have not the Holy Ghost, but those that so hear as to believe and obey; and therefore Grotius gathers hence, that the Holy Ghost is not given but to minds yet purified, which is his frequent observation, which yet needs much explication and caution, and might more clearly in the right sense be gathered from other texts.

3. But the great question here is, what is meant by Holy Ghost? Calvin modestly leaves it undetermined: Pareus thinks it is rather meant of the Spirit of sanctification than the gifts of miracle: Deodate and many others conclude truly, it is not to be wholly restrained to either, nor either wholly excluded. I think it is meant of that eminent measure of the Spirit, proper to gospel times, which Christ gave his disciples; but especially for working of miracles, and speaking with tongues, which was proper to that age for the confirmation of his doctrine.

It is a great difficulty, I confess, to understand what is meant by the Holy Ghost in many texts of Scripture, which promise it to believers, or which mention the giving it after believing; because faith itself is certainly a gift of the Holy Ghost. For the resolving this briefly, understand, that operations on the soul are ascribed sometimes to the Father, sometimes to the Son, according to the several seasons of working and states of men when it is given, and covenants under which it is given. It was the Spirit of God as Creator, or of the Father, according to Scripture speech, which Adam had in innocency; but it is not called the Spirit of Christ the Redeemer. After the fall and promise Christ was made Head of all, upon his undertaking, and so did send forth his Spirit; but according to the infancy of the church, and the obscure way of then revealing the gospel, in was in so low a degree, that it is not so frequently nor plainly called the Spirit of

Christ. As the grace of Christ and the glory of heaven are revealed very darkly there; so is the Spirit's working, which leads thereto. Yet was there then so much of the Redeemer's Spirit, that is, of recovering grace given, as might and did suffice to save men; but there was a greater fullness of the Spirit promised in the time of the gospel, and given when Christ was ascended to glory. This is called the Spirit sent by Christ from the Father; or by the Father at the intercession of Christ, and the Spirit of the Son. So that as now the Son doth more visibly receive his power, and more clearly manifest his office and commission, and show men their duty; so he now more openly owneth all the works of grace, tending to the recovery of sinners. And so he giveth such further and a fuller measure of the Spirit, for sanctification and for gifts, and for the service of the church, that it is by an excellency called the Spirit of Christ: so that though there were a Spirit before, yet this fuller measure is properly called the Spirit of Christ; because it is that measure which is given by Christ come in the flesh, and was not given before under the law. So that here is the first reason why it is called the Spirit of Christ, as it is meant of the Spirit of sanctification. And it seemeth that faith goes before this gift of the Spirit: that is, that by the help of the word preached, and God's ordinary means, men may be brought to believe by that degree of the Spirit that before was given to the church.

And therefore it is called the drawing of the Father; "No man can come to me, except the Father draw him," John vi. 44; but when they do believe, the fuller measure is given them. Or else, as Mr. Hooker saith, We must distinguish between the Spirit's entrance into the soul, and its establishment or abode there. The giving of faith, saith he, is but the Spirit's making its way into the heart (as some birds make their way into a hard tree, where they will make their nest, and breed their young); but when faith is given or wrought there, then the Holy Ghost may be said to be and dwell within us. Or else, as Rivet against Grotius saith, we must distinguish the habit and act. The act of faith, he thinketh, is the first thing that the Spirit worketh (itself being instead of a habit); and when it hath brought the soul to believe actually, afterwards come in these habits of grace, which are called the Holy Ghost given; or as the sun at its rising sendeth forth its beams before it. This is the ordinary doctrine, which, I confess, I have been more against formerly than now I am.

2. Besides this sanctifying Spirit of Christ, proper to gospel times, there is also a miraculous pouring out of the Spirit, proper to the first age of the church, enabling men to work miracles, and speak with tongues. This was given purposely to confirm Christ's testimony to the world, and therefore was to endure but till a sufficient seal were put to his testimony or doctrine. The Holy Ghost usually, in the New Testament, is meant of both these jointly, and so I understand it here. And as it would be an unfit question to ask, whether by the Holy Ghost were meant the gifts of healing or tongues, or of other miracles, as if it must needs be meant of only one; so it is unfit to ask, whether it be meant of sanctification or miracles? Yet as the same Spirit which wrought in the several members, wrought sanctification in none but the elect, who should be saved, but wrought the gift of miracles in multitudes that had no saving grace, and therefore this was then the more common; so therefore I doubt not but the gift of miracles is more principally intended in these words, than that of sanctification.

My reasons are, 1. He that will carefully observe the language of the Holy Ghost, shall find, that this word, Spirit, or Holy Ghost, is most usually, in the New Testament, taken for the extraordinary gifts of that age.

2. The apostle appeals to the witness of the Spirit here, as that which most undeniably did prove the truth of Christ's doctrine: now, though sanctification may do much here, yet so much might be said from heathens' virtues, and especially of the sanctification of some before Christ, among the Jews, that this was not so likely to have made that great conviction of the world.

3. The apostle appeals to this, as an open known testimony which might be seen of all. But the work of the Spirit of sanctification alone is so secret in the heart, and wrought by such degrees, that it is not so open a testimony.

4. The apostle appealeth to it as a public thing, which the whole church might be convinced by: but so they could not so easily be by sanctification, as by miracles, for every man had not sanctification; and those that had it not, could not see it as certain in others, nor see the glory of it. But for miracles, as most had the gift, so those that had not, might see it openly in those that had.

5. The text itself, in the 5th verse, expressly saith, it is the gift of miracles; "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Where Grotius noteth; that the old manuscript which he had out of the king of England's library, (being brought by Cyril of Constantinople out of Egypt,) hath the same words as be in this second verse, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law," &c. So that, what can be more express.

6. But my greatest argument is from many other scriptures, that run all in the same sense, which I shall have more opportunity anon to mention.

Pareus's arguments for the contrary, are these: 1. Miraculous gifts were not given to all, but few. A. 1. To far more than the gift of sanctification it is likely. 2. The rest might see them, though they could not work them, and that was testimony sufficient.

2. He saith they happened to some that followed not Christ, "We saw one casting out devils, and we forbade him, because he followed not with us," Mark ix. 39. Therefore those gifts must not be the proper effect of the gospel. A. A very bad argument. 1. The text saith, it was in the name of Christ that they cast out devils, and therefore it was the effect of Christ's name. 2. Multitudes believed in Christ that did not follow him with the twelve apostles. 3. It is evident that none had that gift then but from Christ, and he gave it none but for confirmation of the gospel. 4. It would confirm his testimony the more, if his name in the very mouth of an unbeliever would work such miracles.

Argument 3. He argueth, because elsewhere the apostle draweth them to the Spirit of promise, by which they are sealed, as Eph. i. 13; 2 Cor. i. 22. *Ans.* Neither do these texts exclude, but principally include the gift of miracles. The Spirit of promise was that promised Spirit, and not only that Spirit that assureth men of their part in the promise, as many do amiss expound it.

His fourth argument is, because in the fifth verse following he mentioneth miracles, therefore not in this second. *Ans.* The clean contrary seemeth to me hence to be proved; because the apostle plainly speaks of the same thing in the fifth verse and second, and not of divers things.

Now to the point.

Doct. The Spirit of Christ, especially for working miracles, was given in those times so commonly, evidently, and convincingly to the churches of believers, that the apostle durst appeal to that one testimony alone for the confirmation of the christian doctrine; and that with such confidence, as concluding them bewitched into madness, that would not be convinced by it.

For explication, we must do these things in their order.

1. I shall prove to you that this Spirit was given commonly; 2. Convincingly, or miraculously; 3. Evidently, or undeniably; 4. That the apostle appeal to it, as is said. 2. The reason why Christ would thus send the Spirit. 3. The use of all.

1. The commonness of this gift is proved both by the promise and the history of the performance. Mark xvi. 17, "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Matt. x. 1, He gave this power first to his disciples, and Luke x. 1, 17, 19, he gave the same power to the seventy disciples; and in Acts ii. 1, 2, &c. you may see the promise fulfilled, not in some, but all that were present, one hundred and twenty at least.

John the Baptist could prophesy of this as the great mark of Christ's baptism; "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire," Matt. iii. 11. And Acts iv. 31, 33, "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all."

The generality of Samaria, who are said all to believe, received the Holy Ghost by the apostles' praying, and laying on of hands, Acts viii. 17; insomuch that Simon would have bought that gift of them with money, to be able to give the Holy Ghost. Acts x. 44, when Peter preached to the congregation which Cornelius had gathered together, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard him; so that the believing Jews were astonished when they heard the gentiles speak with tongues, and magnify God, verse 46. So the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost, Acts xi. 15; Acts xiii. 52. Paul laid his hands on the twelve men there, and they all received the Holy Ghost, and all spake with tongues, and prophesied, Acts xix. 6. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, saith, "That by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or gentiles, bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit," 1 Cor. xii. 13; and what Spirit that was, the former verses show, where he saith, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. To one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the same Spirit, dividing to each man severally as he will." So that in one kind or other, and most extraordinarily, all christians then had the Spirit. 1 Cor. xiv. The gift of tongues was so common in that church, and consequently likely in all, for that was none of the best, that Paul is fain to restrain their too much exercise of them, and to desire them to study, and be zealous rather for the gift of prophesying, and, if they did speak with tongues, pray

that they might interpret, and show the end of tongues. Verse 22, they are for a sign to unbelievers, and not for believers. And verse 26, he chideth them thus, "How is it then, brethren, that when you come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation? Let all things be done to edification. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two or three at the most, and that by course, and let one interpret; but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge; for you may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn." Jam. v. 14, 15, he directeth them that are in sickness to seek to the elders, to heal them by praying and anointing in the name of the Lord. And Christ saith, "That many shall say to him in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works?" Matt. vii. 22; who yet were workers of iniquity, and shall be rejected for ever. I will add no more proof of the commonness.

2. That those gifts of the Spirit were so miraculous as to be sufficient for convincing those that were not bewitched into madness by the devil, may appear, both from the commonness already mentioned, and the greatness of them being so far above nature. 1. For not one, nor two, but so many thousands of people, in so many several churches, to speak tongues that they never heard, to prophesy, to heal the sick; some of them to give men up to Satan, to be destroyed by him by a word, and some of them to make the lame to go with a word speaking, and some of them to raise the dead; so that even the clothes that went from Paul's body healed the sick. When they were in prison an earthquake comes and causes the doors to fly open for Paul and Silas, and the jailor comes trembling in, and lets them out; and the angel takes off Peter's bolts, and opens the doors, and frustrates the meeting of the rulers that would have judged him. Besides all those wrought by Christ himself, in raising the dead, giving sight to them born blind, &c. the works are so many and so great through the whole story of the gospel, that I think it vain to cite particular texts to men that read the Scripture. Now if any man shall question whether this might not be done without divine testimony to the doctrine which it accompanieth; that is, in plain English, if any man be tempted to the incurable sin against the Holy Ghost, to think that all this is done by the devil, and not by God, I would have him consider these things:

1. There is a God.
2. This God is the Ruler of the world.
3. He is good, merciful, and just.
4. His will revealed is a law to the creature.

As man is not made to be lawless or ungoverned, so God is his chief Governor, and without that knowledge of his will, we cannot obey him, nor can we know his will without revelation.

5. No man that is well in his wits can expect that God should speak to us immediately, and that no other revelation is to be trusted. Alas! man cannot endure his voice, nor see him and live.

6. If, therefore, any shall prove to us that they come from God, and are his messengers to reveal his will, we must believe them according to the proof that they bring.

7. If any shall seal the doctrine that he bringeth in the name of God, with the testimony of such numerous, evident, undeniable miracles, it is the highest proof of the truth of his doctrine that flesh and blood can expect. And if God do not give us suf-

ficient help to discover a falsehood in this testimony, we must take it for his voice and truth. For if God shall let men or devils use the highest mark of a divine testimony to confirm a lie, while they pretend it to be divine, and do not control this, he leaveth men utterly remediless. For we cannot go up into heaven to see what hand these things are wrought by. We are certain they cannot be done without divine permission and commission. And we are sure that God is the true, just, merciful Governor of the world; and as sure that it belongeth to a rector to promulgate, as well as enact his own laws; and that they cannot oblige us till promulgated, i. e. sufficiently revealed. And if he shall suffer any to say, God sent me to you on this message, and to back this affirmation with such a stream of miracles, through a whole age, by many thousand hands, and shall not any ways contradict them, nor give us any sufficient help to discover the delusion, then it must needs be taken for God's own act, seeing by office he is our Rector; or else, that God hath given up the world to the disposal and government of the devil. Now, let any man of right reason judge whether it be possible that the just and merciful God, being naturally our Governor, as we are his creatures, should give permission or commission to the devil to deceive the world in his name, by changing and working against the very course of nature, and by means that no man can possibly try, and so leave his creature remedilessly to be misled and perish. And whether this be not plainly to say, God is not just, nor merciful, or is not the Governor of the world; and whether that be not to deny that there is a God; for if he be not just, and good, and Governor, he is not God. So that he that denieth christianity, and Scripture verity, must deny the Godhead, if he know the arguments for it.

Now, for the discovery of a deceit in such a case as the testimony of miracles, I know but two ways by which any man can discover the deceit, if there be any. 1. By some truth of God, which is revealed to us by a more certain means than those miracles are which this new revelation doth contradict; 2. Or by some greater works by which God shall presently contradict the testimony of those wonders or miracles, as Moses did by the Egyptians. Now, we have neither of these contradictions from God, against the doctrine of Christ or his apostles. So far are they from contradicting former, or certainly revealed truths, that they consent with truth before revealed; and Christ, as the Light of the world, hath given us the kernel and clear explication of all. And so far was God from sending any to work greater miracles for the contradicting of Christ, that the poorest of his followers, for many a year after, did do wonders without any such contradiction. No enemy of the church did ever pretend to any such testimony against him. I would fain know, in one word, whether God can reveal his will to us or not? If not, then he cannot be our Rector. If he can, then by what more evident and convincing way, supposing we cannot see himself? 3. The next thing we are to prove, is, that those gifts and works of the Holy Ghost were evident and undeniable. And here are two questions in this one: 1. Whether they were evident and undeniable to the first witnesses; 2. Whether they are so to us. That is, whether the history of them be certain: and for the first, it is left beyond all doubt. For, 1. The works were numerous, done both by Christ himself and his apostles: and the wonderful gifts of the Spirit were common in every church, and in one kind or other on the generality of christians, as I have before proved. 2. They were continued for many years together, even from Christ till the end of the apostles'

time, and not all ended of long time after. For Irenæus saith the dead were raised, and lived again among them, in his days. And Tertullian (and after him Cyprian) made public challenges to the pagans and persecuting rulers, to bring their possessed with devils into the christian assemblies, and if they did not cast them out, and make them confess themselves to be devils, and Christ to be the Son of God, then they were content to suffer. 3. They were done in various places at great distance; at Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Galatia, and through a great part of the world. 4. They were done before multitudes of people, and that ordinarily; not in a corner, but in the face of the whole world. 5. And that in the presence, if not upon the persons, of the enemies themselves. All this appeareth in the whole story of the gospel.

More than once did Christ feed many thousands with a few loaves, by miracles: oft did he heal and cast out devils in the presence of the multitude; so that the Pharisees took their advantage by it, because he would heal on the sabbath day. They examined the blind, the lame, and others, whom he healed, and had their own confession of the cure. He turned water into wine, publicly at a marriage feast. He would not raise Lazarus till he was ready to stink, that the glory of God might be manifest in his resurrection: his disciples were the constant witnesses of other miracles, and might most easily discern whether he were a deceiver or not; and would they follow one through such difficulties and misery, and to death itself, in hope of a resurrection to glory, by him whom they knew to be a deceiver? At his death, the earth did quake, the temple rent, the land was shut up in darkness for three hours together, without any eclipse. Were there not witnesses enough, then, of this? His resurrection the soldiers could partly witness by the terror, and the disciples by their frequent sight of him. And Thomas must be convinced himself by putting his finger into his side, till he was forced to cry out, "My Lord and my God!" who (but even now) said, "Except I see and feel, I will not believe." Yea, above five hundred brethren saw him at once. But yet there is more than all this; the Holy Ghost fell so publicly on the disciples, that the Jews and men of all countries that were then in Jerusalem, came flocking together, to hear them speak every one in his own tongue, which they had never learned nor understood before. Gifts of healing and casting out devils were common among the disciples in all churches long after this. Christ chose especially these two, both to signify his healing, recovering work and office, and his love to man's welfare, and his enmity to Satan, and that he came to destroy his work and kingdom, and save men from him. It continued long after this the ordinary practice of the disciples to speak in strange languages in the open assembly; so that unbelievers that came in among them, were ordinary witnesses of it; so that all the world that lived near them might see the Spirit of Jesus in his church, not to speak of all the other miracles which the apostles did. This Spirit, residing in men's souls, appearing visible in the actions, audible in the prophecies, languages, and other gifts of the disciples, prevailing against the devil, and healing the diseased, and thus openly manifesting itself in all parts of the world, and before all the people where christianity was entertained, is such a witness to Christ, and his testimony and doctrine, and to those writings which the chief actors of those miracles published, that he that denieth it, renounceth sense and reason, and openly fighteth against the God of heaven. If here were not wit-

ness enough, then we were incapable of a sufficient testimony. And yet I shall say more to this anon, from the sanctifying work of the same Spirit.

2. All that remains for the further clearing of this, is to inquire whether there be also a certainty of the history which delivereth the report of those things down to us. I have formerly proved to you herein, 1. That the authors of those histories or reports deceived not the world, but published only undoubted truths; 2. And that we have most certainly received their writings, or records, without any considerable corruption or alteration. I will now suppose you remember what I have said of both these already, and will only add these few words more.

1. I have told you already that the law of nature effectually teacheth all men, 1. To love themselves, and their own lives and liberty; 2. And to love truth, and hate known falsehood, where they have not some carnal advantage to make it seem lovely, that it is not possible that so many thousands of men could be found that would, to their own utter undoing in the world, take on them to work so many miracles, and see them wrought, and would follow a profession in mere delusion of others, or as willingly deluded themselves. That which now I will say, is only these two things:

1. The history of these things was not only delivered by these writings, which we call the Scriptures, but so generally received both before they were written and since, by the very evidence of the actions themselves, that churches of Christ were gathered and planted thereby, through a great part of the world; so that the conversion of so many countries by the very present power of the Holy Ghost appearing in them, and among them, which, undoubtedly, had an evidence and glory as great as the work which was wrought thereby, were a living public history of the glorious works of the Spirit which did convince them. The world, which was brought to believe by these miracles of the Holy Ghost, was the legible history of the truth of those miracles.

2. But the main thing that I would have you note, is that which my text affordeth, that those things were generally published, both by word and writing, through all countries, and especially in that same country where they were chiefly done; and that in the very same age, and among the same people, that are mentioned as witnesses of the things. This is a proof beyond all exception: it was not like a story raised in the next age, when all the witnesses were dead. Now, I desire every tempted or doubting soul seriously to think of this one plain truth. When all the writers, and many preachers of the gospel, shall publish up and down Judea, that Christ at such a time and in such a place fed so many thousand miraculously, turned water into wine, healed such multitudes, raised the dead, could not any man have discerned the falsehood of this, if it had been false? Nay, when they mention the Pharisees' own examination and conviction of the matter of fact, would not these enemies of the gospel have easily confuted them? Nay, what need the Pharisees, then, and the Jews, to this day, father all these works on the devil, if they were not really done? For men to write and tell the world, that on such a day, at such an hour, there was an earthquake, and a general darkness, and the temple rent, if this were no such matter, would it not make them the shame and scorn of the world for liars?

Could not all the country tell whether it were true or not? Would not this have made those that followed them all forsake them, and proclaim their shame? If thousands of men should seek credit to

their testimony by telling us in England that there were earthquakes and general darkness at such an hour, would they get any followers by this report, if it were false? Paul saith, that of the five hundred brethren that saw Christ at once after his resurrection, the greater part were alive at the time when he wrote it. If this were false, how easily were it disproved, when it is written and published that men of all nations about did hear the disciples speaking in their own tongues the wonderful works of God at Jerusalem, when the Holy Ghost fell upon them: if this had been false, would it not have made all men forsake such notorious liars, and those that before did believe them to turn off? or, at least, would not the enemy have refuted the report? But, to come nearer the scope of my text, when it shall be written and published that the Holy Ghost was so common in every church, and on all christians every where, that all had either gifts of healing, or tongues, or miracles, or prophesying, or interpretation of tongues, or the like; if this were false,

1. Every unbeliever that was near them could know it to be false; and then, 1. Some would have confuted it. 2. None would have believed it, and been converted by it.

2. Every christian would have known this to be a false report, for men to write and publish that they had those gifts which they knew they had not, and do those works which they do not, it would certainly have made all christians deride and forsake them, and some of them publish the deceit. But yet, to come closer to my text, when the apostle shall reprove the church, as Paul did the Corinthians, for too much using and affecting the gift of tongues, and endeavour to restrain them in it, and bid them use it but by two or three, and not so much neither without an interpreter, if there had been no such gift as this of tongues among them, (or the rest which he mentioneth of healing and miracles,) would not these Corinthians have derided Paul? Would they not have been unchristianed and unchurchd by such reproofs as these? But yet, to come nearest of all, when false teachers come among them, and persuade them of the necessity of obeying the law of Moses in conjunction with Christ; and some bring the person of the apostle Paul into disgrace with them for opposing this: when the apostle shall make this open challenge to them to answer this argument, Did you receive the Spirit, and do you work miracles by the works of the law, or by faith in Christ? When he shall appeal to the miracles which he wrought among them, to prove the truth of his apostleship, "Verily the marks of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds," 2 Cor. xii. 12. When he shall threaten to deliver offenders to Satan, and make them supplicants to be spared, 1 Cor. v.; and 2 Cor. ii. Nay, when he shall appeal to the Spirit in themselves, received by his ministry, and tell them, "He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his; and Christ dwelleth in them, unless they are reprobates." And if he do dwell in them, and they have the Holy Ghost, it was by his ministry and the faith of Christ, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Is it possible that any man of reason should be deceived by them that spoke such things, if they were not true?

When men's minds are exasperated against us, they will be glad of any matter against us: so were many of the Corinthians and Galatians against Paul; they were become his enemies for telling them the truth, in opposition to the Jewish christians. Now was this a likely way for him to vindicate himself or the christian doctrine, to make solemn appeals to themselves, even the whole churches, whether the

Holy Ghost which they generally had, and the miracles which were commonly done among them, were not by the doctrine and faith of Christ? Yet so he doth in my text; 1. To call them angrily, bewitched fools and madmen, for going against the same doctrine, by which themselves had received the Spirit, and by which miracles were still done among them: would they not all have hated the very name of christianity, if this had been false? I pray do but put the like case to ourselves, if we were in a case of doubt between several teachers, and one of them should write thus to public churches, even the churches of England, Scotland, Holland, Germany; I appeal to yourselves, whether you did not by that doctrine which I delivered to you, receive the Holy Ghost, by which you all received either gifts of tongues, healing, prophesying, or the like, by which miracles are still wrought among you? I challenge you to answer this argument: if you were not bewitched fools and madmen, you would never offer to turn from that doctrine by which yourselves do these things, to that by which you never received the Spirit. If all this were false, would not all these churches forsake that teacher, and renounce the doctrine which depended upon so notorious an untruth? And could not every enemy, yea, every silly person, know whether this were true or no? Would they not all say, Why, what doth the man mean to talk of common miracles, and that done among us, and by ourselves, and of the Spirit in us, when we know we have no such thing? And yet Paul's epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians run in this strain: I think God suffered those false teachers to oppose the truth the rather that we might see afterward how it was defended. I conclude, therefore, that if ever any history in the world had certain evidence of the truth of the fact in it, and that there was no deceit, or overreaching of the ignorant by shows, then certainly this history of the gospel hath much more; for greater is scarce possible.

2. And that we have the records or transcripts of those histories or writings, without any considerable corruption, is a truth that any learned man may be as easily satisfied in, without any special illumination of the Spirit; a truth that hath fuller evidence than for any other book in the world can be produced. For, 1. The copies were numerous which were dispersed.

2. And that in many languages.

3. And that in places at the remotest distance.

4. And all christians in all those places held their religion upon this revelation.

5. And every heretic, and men of all opinions, alleged the same Scriptures.

6. No one church could corrupt it in any material part, but all the christians in the world would have discovered it, and cried him down.

7. It was the constant business of ministers, whereof then every church had many, ordinarily to preach this same doctrine and Scripture. They had no greater work to mind, nor any other, but publicly and privately to acquaint people with this doctrine, and keep them in obedience to it: and if no lawyer or person can corrupt our Magna Charta but all the land would know it, and be on the head of him; how much less could any corrupt one charter by which all the men in England should hold all their estates, and have every man a copy, or most men, and have in every town an officer on purpose to teach people the meaning of it! No one schoolmaster in England can corrupt Lilly's Grammar, because it is in every school, and is the work of every schoolmaster to teach it, and they would all presently discern it.

8. We have yet copies of the Scripture extant of very great antiquity. There is, or lately was, one in England, sent to the king from Cyril, patriarch of Constantinople; a very fair copy brought out of Egypt, which was wrote about two hundred and twenty years after the apostles' time.

9. All the writings of the fathers, in every age since, are full of citations of Scripture passages, and all according to our present Scripture in the substance. Clemens Romanus, that lived with Paul, and Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, and Tertullian, and Origen, Cyprian, and all the rest downward, quote abundance of sayings out of those same Scriptures: and all the copies dispersed abroad agree in all substantial.

10. And consider also that all the churches had the same truths doctrinal and historical among them in those times, by unwritten tradition also, as is said before; for they were preached before they were written. So that it may far more reasonably be questioned, whether those acts of parliament, or our present Magna Charta be not counterfeit, or Lilly's or Camden's Grammar, which yet no man of any brains can suspect, than whether these Scriptures which we receive and use, were the true writings of those holy apostles. The hand of universal tradition hath delivered them to us with more certainty than if we had received them from the hands of any apostle ourselves. For our sense may sooner deceive us than the universal sense of the first age, and the universal sense and credit of all succeeding ages.

11. Lastly. None of the enemies of christianity, that in all ages have wrote against this, do deny these writings to be those which the apostles wrote and delivered; as may be seen in those of Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, yet extant in the fathers. Else Julian need not rail against Paul and John as he doth, for affirming Christ to be God, and other such things, if he durst have denied those to be their writings, as in Cyril, Alexandria, Nazianzen, and others that write in confutation of Julian, you may see. Blessed be that holy providence of the Governor of the world, that hath so spread, promulgated, and maintained his law to this day, that no writings in the world of any antiquity have near the like certainty.

Reasons.

1. But why is it that Christ would thus convincingly send abroad such abundance of the Spirit in those days? *Answer*, 1. He had the old law of Moses to repeal; and that was well known to the Jews to be God's own law. And therefore if he had not brought that seal of God to his commission, and such as men might well know to be his seal, no wonder if every true subject of God had disobeyed him. Men must not believe God's law ceased or abrogated without good proof.

2. Christ had a new law to promulgate, even the law of faith and gospel ordinances, and he must both manifest his authority before they could be received and submitted to, and also give his Spirit to enable men to keep them: for as he required new duties of fallen, disabled man, so he must give a strength proportionable.

3. Yea, then himself was to be entertained as the Redeemer of the world; which was a new work and office, and man's salvation was to lie upon the receiving of him: and this they neither could do, nor ought, without sufficient evidence or proof, that he was the Redeemer indeed. And therefore he saith, If I had not done the works which no man else could do, you had not had sin. If any prophet came as from God with new revelation, he was to prove himself to be a prophet; much more when Christ

shall affirm himself to be the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

2. *Quest*. But why did not Christ continue this communication of the Holy Ghost to his churches still, seeing our unbelief is strong, and we have still need of such help as well as they?

Ans. 1. We have the full use and benefit of the Holy Ghost which was given then, that seal that was then set to the christian doctrine and Scriptures stands there still. When Christ hath fully proved to the world the truth of his mediatorship, office, and doctrine, must he still continue the same actions? Is it not enough that he sealed it up once, but must he set a new seal for every man that requireth it in every age? Then miracles would be no miracles. Must your landlord seal your lease anew, every time you will causelessly question his former seal? Then, if Christ had done miracles among a thousand, every man that was not present, should come and say, Do the like before me also, or I will not believe. Will you put God to this, that either he must work constant miracles in every age, and before every man, or else he must not be believed? What if all Christ's works had been done at London, and we had not seen them here in the country; or, what if all this town had seen them except one man; should no man believe them but he that did see them? Should no man believe that there hath been any wars and fighting in England, but those that saw the battles? or, what if these things had been done in our forefathers' days, should not we have believed them except they had been done in ours? We have as full testimony of Christ's and his apostles' works, as we can have of any of these.

2. Also I answer, Christ doth still continue his Spirit to his churches, and every true member thereof, but not to the same use; and therefore not to enable them to the same work as then. "Tongues are not for them that believe, but for them that believe not," saith Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. 22; that is, to show them the power of Christ, and so convince them. But now the Scripture is sealed by these, there is not the same use or need of them. But because there is still need of the subduing of corruptions, and sanctifying our natures, and enabling us to keep the law of Christ, and conforming us to his holy image; therefore the Spirit of sonship, or sanctification, is still continued. And, let me tell you, even this Spirit hath enough in it to convince, both the world and the saints, of the truth of the doctrine and Scripture of Christ. For the godly themselves, I have told you already, that this Spirit of Christ is a witness within them, and how it witnesseth. And for the world, had they but eyes to see the excellency of holiness, they might see that the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, and that it is certainly an excellent, true, and perfect law and doctrine, which doth produce so excellent an effect. But the wickedness of men's hearts hindereth them from discerning the validity of the testimony; because they cannot see the excellency of grace, which is so contrary to their lusts and carnal pleasures. The things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned: but they have their senses free, and therefore can better see the glory of the miraculous works of the Holy Ghost: and therefore those are fitter to convince them. But for true christians themselves, they have that within them both objectively and efficiently, those glorious experiments and potent workings, which will not suffer them to change their religion.

The uses that we shall make of this doctrine now, are these, all for information of your understandings.

1. Of what certain truth the christian religion and Scripture is.

2. What is the greatest argument to prove the truth of these.

3. What the testimony of the Spirit is; and who have it.

4. What it is to believe in the Holy Ghost, and to be baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost.

5. What it is to sin against the Holy Ghost.

Use 1. The challenge and appeal that Paul here makes to the Galatians, I dare make to all the world; and undertake to prove that man bewitched into a madness, that will not be convinced by this only argument.

Whence came the Holy Ghost, which the Lord Jesus did send down upon his church, which sat on the disciples in the likeness of fiery cloven tongues, that filled all the churches in all parts of the world at once, how distant soever, with the miraculous gifts of strange languages, prophesying, interpretation, healing, casting out devils, or the like? that fell on men ordinarily, and in such numbers, as soon as ever the apostles laid their hands on them after they were baptized? that putteth such a new nature into the soul of every saint; and writeth the law of Jesus in his very heart; and raiseth him with strong and constant hopes of such a future resurrection and glory that he will go through all difficulties and sufferings to attain it? that overcomes all fleshly lusts, and keepeth under such inclinations as all the rest of the world are mastered by? that maketh such low and silly creatures to live in the sweet, delightful forethoughts and contemplation of the life to come; and causeth men so earnestly, frequently, seriously, reverently, and delightfully to converse with the holy, invisible God? I say, whence is this Spirit, but from the holy and almighty God? If you doubt whether such a Spirit were poured out so abundantly and miraculously, I have proved it already. Paul appeals to the very men that saw and enjoyed it, and they durst not, they could not deny it. The enemy, the very Pharisees, could not deny it. If you would open your eyes, you might yet see very much of it in the holiness of the saints. But prejudice and hatred to holiness blindeth you. Can any but the living God, who first breatheth into man the breath of life, breathe forth such a Spirit of miracles and holiness into the world, and make men new creatures, by causing them to be born of the Spirit? Can any but God so raise the dead, and command over all the powers on earth, and cast out Satan by a spirit of miracles, in instruments of greatest natural weakness, till he hath made the Roman empire, and the rest of the kingdoms of the world, to acknowledge Christ their Lord? Doth it belong to any but God to rule the world, and send forth a new Spirit and power upon men's souls? These works have such certain evidence of reality, that the Jews confess them, and the Turks acknowledge them, and upbraid the Jews for not believing God by his prophet Jesus: and Mahomet threatens judgments against the Jews for it in his Alcoran, saying, That Christ was the Word and Power of God sent to convince the world by miracles; so they have as full an evidence of a divine power in them. Almightiness, and goodness, and wisdom in infiniteness, do make up the nature of the Eternal God. And all these do evidently appear in this sending of the Holy Ghost.

1. It is a work beyond a mere created power, as all the effects of it show.

2. If any Jew should think that a devil might do such works of omnipotency without God, yet at least let him be convinced by the work of sanctification, which demonstrates God's perfect goodness, as the other doth his greatness. Dare they think that the devil is become a spirit of holiness, or loveth holi-

ness? Will he sanctify men's natures, and make them heavenly, and destroy their sin, and keep them in a course of obedience unto God? Why then doth he so contradict this doctrine and these holy ways, and so potentially hinder our endeavours in every congregation and soul? Why is it that he armeth all the ungodly rout of the world against those holy doctrines and ways? That man is certainly bewitched by the devil into madness, that can indeed believe that the devil is the sanctifier of men's souls, and the author of a doctrine to destroy men's sins, and bring them into such exact obedience unto God.

3. If all this will not serve, let the wisdom of God be observed, both in the stream of the doctrine, and in the effect of the Holy Ghost in illuminating the church: so that you may look over all the rest of the world at this day, and easily see that they are all but barbarians, even in human, common knowledge, in comparison of the christians; especially in the things of God, they are utterly blind.

Indeed Christ did at Rome and Athens cause a star of human learning to arise, but it was only for a time; and at that season a little before his own coming in the flesh, of purpose to direct men to the Sun of righteousness, and to be an usher to prepare the way for the gospel; and when the gospel was come, he hath now delivered up even all the learning in the world that is worth the speaking of, unto his church, and continued even these common gifts of the Spirit therein.

4. If all these convince not, let me add this one thing more. This good, almighty, holy God is the Governor of the world: if he made it he surely ruleth it; if he be not Sovereign he is not God; and, being God and Governor, he must needs be a faithful and merciful Governor, as I said in the beginning: and can he then stand by and suffer, and give commission to the devil to publish such a holy doctrine, and send forth such a spirit of miracles and of holiness, and that over all the church, and into the hearts of all the honestest people in the world in all ages following; and all this to deceive the world, and to confirm a falsehood, and God never contradict him, nor give men any means to discover the delusion? Shall he suffer the deceit to come from heaven, or another world, and shall there not a remedy come from heaven? Shall he lend the devil his omnipotency, and holiness, and wisdom, to deceive his own creatures, when himself hath undertaken to be their Governor? Shall he suffer miracles to be wrought to delude, and himself work none to rectify us? Hath he taken on him the office of making and promulgating his own law, for the governing of his people, that would fain know his will and do it; and, then, shall he suffer the devil to publish laws in his name, manifesting his very nature, and requiring obedience to him, and seal these with such a spirit, as is afore-mentioned; and all this to mislead us, while God stands by and never once controls him, but leaves us remediless? Is this the part of the Governor of the world? Is this like the way of a merciful, holy, wise, almighty God? Lay all this together, and lay it well to heart, and I dare say again that that man is bewitched into madness by the devil, that dare believe that God hath given up his holiness, wisdom, almightiness, and government of the world to the devil. And by all this you may see how vile a thing the sin against the Holy Ghost is; and why so heavy a doom is passed on them that are guilty of it: of which more anon. Shall God suffer such a creature on his earth, endued with reason, that shall imagine such things as these against him? Why it is, in effect, to say the devil is God; and can the heart of

man entertain a more horrid blasphemy? And may not he justly be their God, and they given up to his disposal? For what is it to be God, but to be infinitely wise, powerful, and good, and to be the faithful, sovereign Ruler of all things? And when men shall dare to think that God hath given up the rule of the world to the devil, and enabled him to send forth a spirit of power, wisdom, and holiness, to seal a holy doctrine, and all to delude men, and this without any control; surely, these men are no less guilty than I here charge them. Is not God righteous, that must judge the world? Whither shall a poor soul go for justice, if God have no more? whither shall he go for mercy, if the God of heaven have no more mercy? or who shall be able to defend us, if God be not able to rescue his own prerogative from the hands of Satan? Let me repeat the question that I put before; do you think that the God of heaven is able to reveal his laws to the world, and give them a sufficient testimony of their verity, and set to any seal whereby he may be known to be their author? if not, how will he govern the world? Can he rule without making known his will, or promulgating his enacted law? And can he make known his will without any certain, satisfying revelation, that it is he that speaks? And if you think God can reveal his mind, will you but tell me how you would have him do it? How should he do it more fully and convincingly? What seal would you have him use whereby he may be better known, than this of the Spirit of power and holiness? He that would have God speak face to face to such worms as we, knoweth not what he saith. Wouldst thou be consumed and burnt up as the stubble? Canst thou endure the sight or voice of God? Dost thou know him if thou see him, or hear him, or wouldst not thou say still, How know I but it was an evil spirit, and not God? Knowest thou not that God is invisible, and mortal eyes cannot see him? It is past my reach to know what more satisfying evidence and seal thou canst desire from God than he hath given: and if thou wouldst have none, thou canst not be governed.

If any say, I would have God reveal all by the light of nature, as he hath done the law of nature.

Ans. Such men know not what they say; they know not what the law and light of nature is. Reason, or the understanding, is but the mere visive faculty, as it were; it is but a seeing power, and doth not actually see any thing, till it be revealed from without. The understanding is a bare sheet of paper, and knows nothing but what maketh its way into it by the sense, and what it thence gathers. Man hath no actual knowledge by mere nature; never infant ordinarily had any. And if it were possible for the reasonable soul to remain in a body, where all the five senses are dead, (as hearing and seeing is in some,) the soul would know nothing; our understandings, therefore, or reason, are not the law of nature, nor the light of nature, except improperly; when they have received the species, and there is a transcript of the law of nature written on them, then they may be so called, in the same sense as sanctification may be called the law of grace, because Christ writeth his law there in our hearts. But truly and properly the law of nature is *natura rerum*, the common nature of all God's visible workmanship, both ourselves, and all the rest of the creatures within our knowledge. These are God's book, or law, because they reveal so much of God to us, as from whence we may gather much of his will by his nature, and so know much of our own duty. Now let me ask any admirer of reason or nature in the world, Do you think that this great,

dark book of nature doth speak God's will so fully and plainly to our purblind souls, as the clear, express revelations of the word and Spirit do, who also enliveneth the eye to discern it? Are not the few great wits of the world puzzled in the book of nature, especially those that had no further light? and what, then, shall all the ignorant world do by it? Is it not a very little of God that the wisest could find out this way, when the silliest woman can know far more by the supernatural revelation? Nay, had you rather have the mere dark premises to gather conclusions from, than to have God from heaven deliver you the conclusion to your hand? Are not God's arguments and collections more certain than those of your weak understanding? Nay, and for the evidence, do you think that natural works are more convincing than supernatural? Can you see more of God in the ordinary course of nature, than by miracles that cross nature, or work above it? Why then do you desire miracles; and say, Except we see signs and wonders we will not believe? Lord, how perverse is blind man grown by his strangeness to God! The ordinary works of God almost none regard, because they are ordinary. But they say, if God would work miracles, they would believe; if he that made the sun move, would make it stand still; if he that made the sea flow, would make it dry land; if he would raise the dead, and show himself evidently above nature: and when God hath done so, then they are ready to say, For ought I know it may be the work of the devil; I would have him reveal things to my reason by the way of law or nature. Well, if you will not know his law, you shall know his sentence.

What I have said concerning the truth of the christian religion, and Scripture in general, will hold clearly to each particular part.

1. If Scripture be so certainly true, then those passages in it that seem to men contradictory, must needs be true; for they do but seem so, and are not so indeed. Ignorance makes men think all dark and self-contradicting which they read. It would make one pity some wretched souls, to hear how confidently they will charge some texts with contradictions, through their mere ignorance of the plain sense, which when knowing men have manifested to them, they are ashamed of their rashness. It is ordinary, in all studies, for men to quarrel with that which they understand not, and say, as Nicodemus, How can these things be? Which yet, when they have well studied the matter, they discern to be easy, familiar, and well reconcilable; as in resolving a riddle, or finding out some new invention. If you set a man to it without help, he studieth and vexeth himself, and at last giveth it up as impossible; but when you have showed him the mystery of it, he marvelleth at himself presently that he could not see it easily. And yet, when men are possessed with presumption, and void of a due reverence and fear of God, though they neither understand these difficulties in the languages and phrase, which is necessary for the clearing of seeming contradictions; and though they understand not the customs of the country, nor the situation of places where Scripture facts were done, with many the like things necessary to the clear discerning of the truth; yet they are ready presently to fly in the face of God, and to charge the Scripture with contradiction: as if God understood not himself, because they understand him not: as if the Holy Ghost were as much in the dark as they are. Alas! that silly man should be no more conscious of his own weakness of understanding, and no more apprehensive of the dreadful majesty of God, and the unsearchableness of his ways, and how little

it is to be expected that his mysteries should be so easily discerned by the world! That men that know, or may know, the great diseases of their own eyes, should yet rather quarrel with the sun, when any thing seems dark or doubtful to them! If we were reading but some indentures, or other instrument, which we knew were drawn by an able lawyer; if we met with some passages that seemed difficult or contradictory, we should presently question our own understanding, because we have not so much skill in law matters as to be able to pass a censure on it, rather than we would believe it to be a contradiction indeed: or, at least, we should think the transcriber had slipped; yet there is no seeming contradiction in Scripture, but these unbelievers may see a fair reconciliation and solution, if they will be at the labour to read expositors.

2. If our religion and Scripture be so certainly true, then the most improbable passages are true, as well as the rest: I mean those which to the ignorant seem unlikely: the opening of the sea to the Israelites; the standing still of the sun for Joshua; Jonah's living in the belly of a whale; the raising of the dead, and the resurrection of Christ himself; the earthquake, and darkness at Christ's death, &c. Here, also, the wickedness of man's nature appeareth. If God send a prophet, or his Son, into the world to acquaint them with his will, they call for signs and wonders, and except they see these they will not believe: and they pretend, that if they could but see such miracles wrought, they would all believe: and when they are wrought, some that see them believe them; the rest will question the power that doth them; and the next age will make these very miracles the occasion of their unbelief; and say, These are unlikely things, I will never believe that such things were done: and yet these unbelieving wretches see as great works as any of these every day before their eyes. Is not the so swift moving of such a body as the sun as great a work as its standing still? Sure, motion requireth as much power as not to move doth. Is not the course and tide of the sea, and its limitation and restraint, as great a work as its standing still, and being dried up for a passage to the Israelites? But ordinary things men take no notice of; as if God did them not at all, because he doth them every day: and so, if God do daily miracles, they are slighted, and cease to be miracles; men say, Nature doth it: as if nature were any thing but God's creature, or the order he hath placed among his creatures; and if God do such wonders but seldom, men will not believe them. The like may be said of seeming improbable doctrines, as the resurrection, the last judgment, heaven, hell, and whatever else in Scripture flesh and blood can hardly digest. Scripture being proved true, all these must needs be true.

3. Also, if Scripture be certainly true, then the most terrible passages in it are certainly true. Nothing is hardlier believed by men than that which will be most tormenting to their minds, when it is believed; that none shall be saved but the regenerate and holy; and those that live not after the flesh, but the Spirit, and love God in Christ above all the world, even their own lives; and that, besides these few, all the rest shall be tormented in hell for ever: this is the doctrine that flesh and blood will hardly down with. They say or think they will never believe that God will be so unmerciful; as if God must needs be less merciful than man, because he is more just and holy, and will not be so indulgent to their flesh and sin as they are themselves, and would have him to be. And I have known even godly men, through the remnant of their corruption and darkness in the things of God, and the violence

of temptation, much troubled with their unbelief in this particular. But God cannot lie: the Scripture being true, and the christian religion certainly true, every part of it must needs be true. But because sensual nature looks for sensible demonstration, or proof, let me ask the unbelievers this one question: Do you believe that which you see and feel, and all the world feels as well as you? You know that all mankind liveth here a life of trouble and misery; we come into the world in a very poor condition, and we pass through it in daily labour and sorrow, and we pass out of it through the dreadful pangs of death. What uncessant labour have the most of them at plough and cart, and thrashing, and other hard work, in your several trades! and when one day's work is over, you must go to it again the next; and after all this, how much want and misery do you undergo! how many a hard meal, and pinching cold and nakedness, some of you! how much care and grief of mind to pay debts, to provide for children, yea, to provide meat, and drink, and clothes; besides wrongs from men of high degree and low, the rich oppressing you, and your own poor neighbours often abusing you! Do you not see and feel how sicknesses do torment us? When one pain is over another is at hand. Have you not seen some, under such terrible fits of the gout, or stone, or other diseases, that they thought no torment could be greater; some with their legs rotting, and must be cut off; some with loathsome cancers and leprosies on them many years together; some fastened to their beds five or six, yea, twelve years together; some that have lost their eyesight, have lost almost all the comfort of life; some that never could see; some that never could hear or speak? I have known some in such pain that they have cried out they did not believe there was greater in hell; some are mad, and some idiots: are not all these in a very miserable case? Now, I would ask you further, if God may, without any unmercifulness, do all this to men, and that as a chastisement in the way to bring them to repentance; if he may, without unmercifulness, make a David cry out in misery, and wash his couch with his tears; and make a Job to lie scraping his sores on a dunghill; why should you think he cannot, without unmercifulness, torment incurable sinners in hell? Further, I would ask you this question; suppose you had lived in Adam's paradise, or some condition of pleasure and rest, where you never had tasted of sickness, or labour, or want, or feared death, if God's word had there told you but that man shall endure so much misery as I have here mentioned and men daily suffer, and should die at last for his sin; would you have said, I will never believe God would be so unmerciful? You that say so now, would have said so then in this case likely; for feeling the pleasure yourselves, you would on the same ground have said, God is unmerciful if he should make man so miserable; and yet you see and feel that God doth it, and we know that he is not unmerciful.

Moreover, you see how he useth your poor beasts here; how they are made your servants, and you labour them from day to day, till they are ready to lie down under it; and you beat them at your pleasure, and at last you kill them. Nay, men will not stick to kill the most beautiful birds, or other creatures, and perhaps twenty lives must sometimes go for to make one meal for men at their feasts: and yet consider, 1. These creatures never sinned, and so never deserved this, as wicked men deserve their torments; 2. Yet you accuse not God of unmercifulness for giving them up to this misery; 3. Nor do you accuse yourselves of unmercifulness for using them thus; 4. Much less will any man be so mad as to

say, sure this is not true, that the poor creatures suffer so much, because God is more merciful.

Yet further, I would ask you, do you not know that you and all men must die? and would you not be contented to suffer a terrible degree of misery everlastingly, rather than die? Whatsoever men may say, it is certain they would. Though not to live to us is better than to live in hell, yet men would live in very great misery, rather than not live at all, if they had their choice. We see men that have lived, some in extreme poverty, some in great pain, for many years, that yet had rather continue in it than die. If, then, it be so great a misery to be turned again into nothing, that you would rather suffer everlasting pain in some measure, methinks you may discern a probability that God's word should be true, which threatens yet a greater pain: for it is not likely that the judge will inflict more than the prisoner will choose or submit to?

Once more, let me ask you, did you never see a toad or snake; and do you not know there are such creatures in the world? Would you not think it a very grievous misery to be turned into a toad or serpent? And would you not rather endure much misery, as a man, than be such a creature? And were he not a madman that would say, I will not believe that there is such a creature as a toad, because God would not be so unmerciful as to make such? Why now consider; if God did make such creatures so far below you, when he might have made them men, and yet these creatures never sinned against him, judge yourselves, whether it be not very probable to reason, and very just, that God should bring men that wilfully sin in the abusing of his grace, into a far worse condition than a toad. If God might justly have made thee a toad, when he made thee a man, and continued thee so for ever, and that without any sin of thine, then how much more evident is the justness of his dealings, in damning those to everlasting torments, that have obstinately, throughout all their lives, refused his mercy. And yet even these toads and snakes are loth to die, and thereby show that yet there is a greater evil which they are capable of, and that without sin. Have you all these so sensible demonstrations, yea, do you see the sinful world lie under war, and blood, and famine, and pestilence, and yet will you not believe that God's threats of everlasting torments are true?

Yet once more let me ask you, did you never know a man in desperation under intolerable pangs of conscience? Alas! it is frequent; so that some of them have said, as Spira, that they had the torments of hell already on them, and wished they were in hell, that they might feel the worst, so that their lives are a burden to them; that though their friends watch them never so carefully, they cannot keep them from making away themselves. Is not here a plain foretaste of hell on earth? when no pain is upon the body, no losses nor crosses on them in the world, and yet their minds lie under this torment.

Nay, is there not naturally in all men living, a fear of suffering in another world? Even as there is naturally an apprehension of a God who is holy and just, so also a fear of the execution of his judgments hereafter. And as atheists, when they have done their worst, they cannot be perfect atheists, nor blot out all apprehensions of a God from their minds; so when they have done their worst, they cannot perfectly get rid of those natural fears of everlasting sufferings; but even when they are drowning them in the pleasures of sin, and stopping the mouth of conscience with the noise of worldly delight and business, and are drinking away, or playing away, or

laughing away their fears, yet still they stick in their very hearts, and are so rooted that they can never pull them up, though they may stifle them. And very few are given over to such desperate unbelief, but many a gripping fear doth stir within them, and they dare not be much alone, nor dare seriously be-think themselves one hour, whether there be such things in the life to come, or no. They dare scarce hear the minister preach of them, lest, with Felix, they should tremble. They are ready to say, what if these things should be so, what a case am I in then! And when these men have fallen among infidels, who have furnished them with all their confident cavils, and subtile arguments against the truth, and make them believe that there is neither heaven nor hell hereafter, and so make them more atheistical than the mere sin of their nature alone could make them; yet still these fears do dwell in their very hearts, and all the paganish arguments in the world will not wholly root them out. Especially, when they come to die, how few of these is there but are far more afraid of misery in another world than they are of death itself alone! And are not God's threats of hell, then, to be believed? Nay, yet let me propound one question more to you: is there nothing in it, that there is in man's nature such a strange fear of devils, and spiritual enemies, and misery? So that children that have no understanding are afraid at the naming of them; that we are afraid to go in the dark, or into a church among the graves, in the night, upon a conceit that an evil spirit may be there; nay, the fear of these things is far greater than the fear of death itself, and yet not one man of a thousand ever saw the devil appear in any shape, and, it may be, never spoke with any man that did; and yet he cannot overcome these fears. Yea, if you do but dream in the night that you see the devil in any shape, or that he followeth you, or layeth hands on you, it is a greater terror than to dream that you are beset with thieves, or that you must die. Nay, we have known dying men that have not seemed afraid of death in any extremity, and yet they have thought, shortly after, that they have seen the devil stand by them, and then they have cried out in the greatest amazement and horror; as being far more scared than they were by death itself. It seemeth to me that this natural fear of devils comes from that real captivity that men are in to the devil, from which the saints themselves are not perfectly delivered till the last enemy death be conquered; though they are so far delivered that they are not his captives, but only have yet some of the effects of his tyranny. "For Christ hath destroyed, by death, him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil, that he might deliver them who, through fear of death, all their lifetime were subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 14, 15. But this deliverance is not perfect in the time of this life. And, indeed, fear of spiritual enemies, and of punishments in the world to come, so deeply rooted in the soul of man, seemeth to me to be even nature's acknowledgment of the truth and justice of everlasting punishments.

Besides all this, yet it is evident that God is just, and the Governor of the world, and therefore must be just in judging, and executing his laws; and it is as evident that in this life there is not that difference made between the righteous and the wicked which their different lives, and God's justice, do require. It happens to the righteous according to the work of the wicked, and to the wicked according to the work of the righteous, Eccles. viii. 14. If there were no punishment for the wicked, nor happiness to the godly, after this life, certainly either God

were not the Governor of the world, or else he governs it not in justice; and he that dares imagine either of these, must say next, that there is no God.

I have said thus much more than the main argument in hand, to prove the truth of the torments of hell, because sensual men do look for arguments from sense; arguments, which they may see and feel, as well as understand; and because fleshly men think that God should not be so merciful, if he should so torment them. Self-love makes men partial judges in their own cause. There is not the worst murderer or felon, but thinks the judge unmerciful that sentences him to death. Yea, the foolish child thinks his own father unmerciful, for whipping him. Silly sinful man is unfit to judge of the proceedings of their God.

Object. But the wicked Socinians, and some others, that argue against the necessity of Christ's satisfaction, have taught these men to object thus: that there is no necessity of suffering for sin, and God will not torment his creature without necessity: God can forgive it, say they, in mercy, without any wrong to his justice. For the end of punishment is but to deter men from sin, and preserve obedience, and there will be no use for that in the world to come; and therefore the punishment shall not be continued in the world to come.

Ans. To all this I answer, 1. There is a moral necessity of suffering for sin; for God is necessarily the Governor of the world, and necessarily just: and having made a law which is in its ordination made to be both the rule of men's actions, and of God's judgment, (*norma actionum moralium, et norma judicii*;) according to the common nature of law, it is therefore necessary, that God rule according to his law: not that he hath given up his power to dispense with a law; but by making these laws for his instrument, in governing the world, whose use is to be *norma judicii*, as well as *regula actionum*, he hath restrained his power as to the exercise, signifying that this shall be the way of his governing and judging; and therefore he will not dispense with them but upon a valuable consideration. 2. And besides, there is yet a further moral necessity *ad finem*, that he may attain the right ends of government, which by ordinary moral means cannot otherwise be attained; but the law and lawgiver would be condemned, and men sin more presumptuously, when they were from under that restraint. 3. Where they say, that these ends require not everlasting punishment, but only punishment here,

I answer, There is no proper government but by law, the engine and instrument of government. These laws must have threats, and constitute the due-ness of punishment, in case of disobedience: it is necessary, then, that these laws must be made: and man being a creature that must live for ever, either in joy or misery, it is necessary that the pain threatened be such as may have weight enough *in suo genere*, in a moral causality, to restrain from sinning. Now, if God should inflict that punishment only which he doth in this life; then, 1. Man should not have been governed as man, that is, as a reasonable creature, by hopes and fears of things to come, but as a beast: nor could virtue or vice be differed or manifested; nor the excellency of the one, or the vileness of the other, appear: for men should live by sense, and not by faith. The thief and the true man will be alike in practice, when the judge stands by, and they know they shall presently be hanged if they steal; so the murderer and the lover of his brother, the adulterer and the chaste, will be both alike free from the act of sin in the midst of a congregation. This is not properly obedience, or, at least, not obedience fit for a reasonable creature

(who is made to be ruled by reason, and not by mere sense) to give to the high God. 2. Besides, it would not be sufficient to restrain men from sin, if God should only threaten temporal judgments, and not eternal. How would all the world be cast into confusion by this, while every murderer would venture to execute his malice, and every drunkard and adulterer would follow their lusts, and every voluptuous man would take his pleasure, if it were but to endure a short pain at death, and then be happy or free from misery for ever after. We see how thieves will venture a hanging, and every offender venture on the punishment of the law. And some drunkards and adulterers have professed that they had rather live but one year in their pleasure than live to be old without it. So that reason may see, if God did not threaten an everlasting punishment, it would not be rationally sufficient for the government of the world; except he should execute judgment presently still as they sin, and make the present bitterness greater than the sinful pleasure; and so govern rational men like unreasonable brutes. So that it is apparent there is a moral necessity that God do threaten hell fire. And then, I think, it will easily appear that there is a necessity that he execute these threats: for though the law, as a law, do not oblige God to punish, but man to suffer, and do but constitute the due-ness of the punishment, yet this law is also, as I said, *norma judicii*; and so in the enacting this law, God doth, as it were, say, according to this rule I will govern and judge the world. The law saith, punishment shall be his due; justice saith, let men have their due. Besides, if God had only constituted the due-ness of punishment, and not made known to men, that he would eventually execute his threats accordingly, then the hope of impunity would have encouraged men to sin. This is so evident, that we see men will still venture on sin, after God hath foretold them the very event; and say, they hope God will be better than his word. What, then, would men have done if God had not declared the event, but only the due-ness of punishment? And, therefore, God hath been pleased, in the new law, to add to the mere threat a peremptory decree, or a prediction, assuring them that this threat shall be executed without remedy, though in the first law he did not so; and reason sheweth the moral necessity of so doing. So it is now plain, it was necessary that God make such a law, that should threaten everlasting punishment, and that by such a peremptory threatening, that should leave the sinner no hope of escape. And then it is past doubt that it is as necessary that God execute all such peremptory threatening, for God cannot lie. Though he may alter the due-ness constituted by his law, and so dispense with the law, yet he cannot make falsehood become truth, and so dispense with his prediction. Besides the great doubt, whether *stante rerum natura*, he can dispense with the punishment of all law. So that the punishments in the world to come were a necessary means to govern aright this present world.

And, besides, let me tell these bold men, that as the devils are made a warning to men that they sin not as they, lest they suffer as they; so little do we know whether God will have any other world of creatures, to be continued after our great judgment, who shall be kept in obedience by the consideration of the punishment of these men that now despise the mercy that is offered them.

But they object that God could easily make the creature so perfect as to obey him without the threats of such punishment.

Ans. True; but it is apparent he hath not made him such, and who dare say he hath done amiss?

May not horses, and oxen, and sheep, yea, toads and serpents, have more pretence to expostulate that they were not made men, than we have that God made us no better? I will not meddle with the schoolmen's dispute, who maintain that it is impossible for God to make a creature impeccable, or indefectible. It seemeth that the upshot of the quarrel is, that man is but man; that he is made a free agent; and that God hath contrived to rule the world sapientially by the two great engines of free-will and external objects. A will naturally inclined to good, and averse from evil, (self-good and self-evil,) and good and evil, life and death, set before him accordingly to determine him. So that the adversary doth seem herein to confess that another kind of world might be made by God, which could be governed well without promises and threats, but not this world of man, in the nature he is in. Even the most perfect measure of saving grace that is in this life supposeth the necessity of promises and threats, reward and punishment, for restraining from sin, and provoking to duty; and in the life to come, the present fruition of so glorious an object will hold faster than any promise or threat now can do: so I think it is evident that everlasting punishment to sinners is necessary. But if I could prove none of this, yet that they shall certainly be inflicted, may certainly be concluded from the truth of Scripture. And for the necessity of them, or the justness, we will let God alone to convince the world, who will one day fully manifest both, and be justified when quarrelling unbelievers shall be condemned.

But if men are resolved to perish, what remedy? Yet, besides all this, let me tell you that it is not only this fore-discovered necessity for the avoiding following inconveniences, but there is also another necessity of punishing sin. Not a necessity physical, as if God punished sin as the fire burneth, without reason; nor a necessity of coercion, as if any compelled him; nor as if he would do otherwise, but could not choose: but it is a necessity of natural perfection, because of God's justice: for the very order and nature of things requireth that God should join natural evil to moral evil, and not make the wicked happy, nor the good unhappy, but the wicked miserable, and the good happy, according to their nature: for his law, in this respect, was grounded upon the nature of things; and therefore, as nature requireth that God should make punishment due by law, so the same nature of things requireth that it be inflicted by vindictive justice; from which nothing but sufficient satisfaction to that justice can free them, and God neither can nor will go contrary to the nature of things. Every man will confess that if he had made a law that it should go well with the wicked, or that men should sin without punishment, it had been an unjust law. And is it not as evidently unjust to do so in execution? But of this, for full satisfaction, I pray read Amyraldus Thes. Salmurienses de Necessitate Satisfactionis.

4. Further, if Scripture be so certainly true, then all the promises and merciful passages are as certainly true. The careless world, that are not interested in them, do seem more easily to believe this, than those gracious souls to whom they do belong. But their faith is too easy to be sound; and befriended too much by Satan to be from God. But of this heretofore.

5. Let me now advise you further, seeing it is so fully proved that our religion and Scripture are the certain truth, that you would remember and make use of this doctrine at time of need; especially in these several cases following, wherein men have more than ordinary need of it.

1. When you are tempted by the devil, or by heathens, to unbelief and blasphemy, remember then, and make use of the proofs you have heard. These sorts of men are most liable to temptations, to unbelief and flat heathenism, or Judaism. 1. Young, weak christians, and especially giddy professors, who place most of their religion in opinions; who fall in among seducers, before they are grounded in the truth. 2. Fleshly, sensual men, whose lusts and wicked desires are strong, and so rage within them, that they cannot endure the strictness of the christian religion. But while they do stay among professors, they are as birds in a cage, still seeking to get out, glad to hear of a more flesh-pleasing doctrine. 3. Especially if these men have wounded their conscience, and been false to the religion they did profess; and secretly lived in the lusts of uncleanness or drunkenness, or the like sensual course. They are glad to believe any doctrine that tells them of impunity in the life to come, that thereby they may quiet their consciences: God knows, a short and silly comfort. 4. The proud and presumptuous professors, that study not the word of God with fear and reverence, and look into holy things with rashness and self-confidence, not knowing the weakness of their own understanding. In a word, all that receive not the love of the truth, that they may be saved, whom therefore God giveth up to believe a lie, that all they may be damned that believed not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Truth looks to be entertained as truth, and to be preferred before all carnal interest; which if it be not, these souls are justly left in darkness, by the departure of the Spirit of light and truth. 5. And some true christians are liable to temptations to this horrid sin, especially when they are stronger, and so more able to bear it; (for it is observed, that God in mercy seldom suffereth the weakest to be much exercised with such hideous temptations;) especially those christians that let loose their reason to over-bold inquiries, and expect too much that God should in all things satisfy their reason. 6. Also, those christians that having, in their younger time, received the fundamental truths only on trust, do come new to the trying of them, upon occasion of any enemy questioning them, or of their own doubting thoughts; these at the first are usually put hard to it, till they have time, and good helps, to try and to be well settled.

7. And most people that are in deep melancholy, and next step to distraction, are presently assaulted with blasphemous thoughts. I have wondered ofttimes to observe what an evident power God giveth Satan in this case. I have had multitudes of people come to me for counsel in deep melancholy, some for their bodies and some for their minds, and I scarce remember two of them, but they were strongly tempted to deny Christ and Scripture, and many to question whether there were a God. Many that, being very godly, were well grounded before, and many that were worldlings, and never minded it much before: yet now they are assaulted with these blasphemous temptations.

All these sorts, that are capable of receiving advice, I would entreat to consider of the evidence given in, by which it is manifest that our religion is most certain, and Scripture most true: the devil himself believes and trembles, who would persuade you to unbelief. Methinks the very nature and manner of urging the temptation, the importunity, and unseasonableness, and other circumstances, may easily manifest to you that it is the devil that puts it on. And if it be from him, you may easily know it is truth and goodness which is so opposed by the

father of lies and wickedness. The Scripture doth every where speak evil of him, and therefore, no wonder if he be an enemy to it. There are divers of my acquaintance now in England, that formerly seemed to have some religion, who now are so far turned from Christ, and have made shipwreck of faith, that they deny the truth of Scripture, and believe nothing upon the authority of its revelation; and so do not believe in Christ as incarnate and crucified for sin, and as the Redeemer of the world by his blood. My heart is often moved with grief for these men's case, to think of the certainty of their approaching misery; and the rather, when I have fears that some of them are past recovery. "For if they sin wilfully," by renouncing Christ through unbelief, "after the acknowledging of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fire that shall devour the adversary." "Oh, how sore will be their punishment, that tread under feet the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, and do despite to the Spirit of grace!" When it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord: and the Lord shall judge his people: it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. x. 26, &c. Yet, because I am in hope that some of them have not heard yet of this argument from the gift of the Holy Ghost, or not in its full force set forth; and, therefore, that they have not yet sinned against the Holy Ghost; I will venture to add one word of request to them. In the name of the Lord that made them, I entreat them, if these lines come into their hands, that they bestow a few hours in the sober, impartial consideration of that evidence which I have here and formerly given to prove the certain truth of Scripture, and our religion. That they would try them with meekness and humility, as men that are not willing to be deceived, and, in the mean time, stop their ears against the impetuous clamours of their lusts, which they may know to be against reason, as well as against Scripture: and if they can yet pray, that they would beg of God to show them the truth; and if they cannot at first discern a full evidence of certainty, that they would a little suspect their own understanding, and read it over again, and come and open their objections to those that have studied these things more than themselves; and if they can discern but a probability of truth in the Scripture, yet to consider whether it be not worse than stark madness to venture on a probability of everlasting damnation, and to cast away a probability of everlasting glory; and all this for a thing of nothing. If it were another more probable way of salvation, that stood in competition with the way of christianity, then the madness were not so great; but when it is only for a little fleshly pleasure, for a few days, alas! what a mad exchange or venture is this! If you should lose these pleasures, your loss is not worth the naming: when death comes, the pleasant life and the sorrowful life are both alike. Nay, I believe, in my heart, that you that sell heaven for pleasure, have not near so much as you might have, in the way of Christ, in believing expectations of heaven: and it is strange, if the very terrors of your conscience do not mar your mirth. Oh! then, when christianity is revealed to you, with such clear demonstration as may put a reasonable man out of doubt, what do you mean, to perish by wilful infidelity? You may see, in what is said already, that God calls you not to believe any thing, without reason to believe it, and full discovery of the truth. God doth not bid you to renounce your understanding. Christianity is not in shutting your eyes, and following any teachers blindfold; it is opening your eyes, and using

your understanding, and reasoning solidly and rightly, that God calls you to, and that is all that is necessary to your believing the truth. Therefore, renewing grace consisteth so much in illumination and opening of men's eyes, and turning them from darkness to light. There is no religion in the world hath true reason for it, but the christian religion, or those parts of it which men of other religions do acknowledge: only you must needs know, both that lust and fleshly interests and inclinations will be strong hindrances to your believing of a doctrine which is so much against them; and, also, the clear apprehension of these things cannot be expected, either at your first study, or upon any slight view. If a man should teach the metaphysics or mathematics, yea, or any common doctrine or trade, you never think to understand him, and discern the evidence of truth in all his assertions, at first. No; nor till you have long and seriously studied it, and used yourselves to it. And shall these heavenly mysteries be so easily apprehended, or be so obvious to your understanding, that you may discern them at the first view; especially considering the native blindness of the understanding in spiritual things?

It may be you will say, this is not our first consideration of these things; we have been christians many a year. Answ. But were you not all the while christians in name only? Did you not take up your religion merely upon trust; and believe Scripture to be the word of God merely upon tradition, and the authority of your teachers? If you went no further, I may say you are yet new to study for the grounds of your religion, though you professed it before. The objections of the devil and heathenish seducers, which have drawn you from Christ and Scripture, have but discovered the sandiness of your former foundation, and weakness of those grounds on which you had so carelessly built your faith; but they have not discovered the weakness of religion, and the christian doctrine itself, nor the weakness of those reasons by which other men can maintain it, though you could not, or cannot. And is it not a desperate betraying of your souls, that you fly discourse with those that have studied more than you, and will not open your doubts to those that have better reasons than you have to resolve them? Should not any probability of eternal misery be avoided with greater diligence than thus much? You think, by opening your doubts, men will account you blasphemers, and so you shall lose your credit; and you are confident that you are in the right, and you know already all that they can say, and therefore you will not open them to any that are able to judge of them; but you do not know what can be said against them. Ministers do not use to deal with such blasphemous errors ordinarily in public, nor is it wisdom to do it; and therefore you hear not what they can say. However, it is worthy your trying to hear the utmost, before you venture on eternal misery.

2. As you should thus meditate on the certain truth of Scripture, when you are tempted to doubting, so also when your hearts are dull, and need quickening and exciting to duty; as also when conscience groweth sleepy, and you dare, easier than formerly, venture on sin. As it is the belief of the truth of Scripture and christian doctrine, that is the first means of quickening the dead soul, and purifying the defiled heart; of mortification and vivification: so the same means that bred a spiritual life must breed spiritual strength, and maintain that life. By illumination God shows men the truth of his word, and the goodness of the things offered and promised therein; even the desirableness of Christ, and the glory of his kingdom. By this sight the heart is touched, the will

inclined to God, and longing desires after Christ provoked. Hereby love is kindled to Christ and glory, and the heart taken off from all inferior vanity, so that the apprehension of the truth and goodness of the christian doctrine, and that which it holdeth forth, is the very instrument by which God doth his other works in the soul. Here other graces enter; and here the conversion of a sinner doth begin. This being so, it is evident that when any grace languisheth, or any corruption reviveth or gets strength, you must observe the same way in strengthening that grace, and destroying and getting down that corruption. Do you feel your love to Christ grow cold? Go take a serious view of the truth of Scripture in general, and of those scriptures in particular, that express his loveliness, and tell you what he hath done and suffered for you. Then it will make the fire break forth, and you will say, Hath the Lord Jesus taken my soul from the very gates of hell, and ransomed me when all the world could not have done it? and hath he chosen me to be one of his peculiar people, and renewed my dead corrupted soul, and, with the stamp of his image, marked me for his own? Hath he pardoned, adopted me, and promised and prepared for me everlasting glory? And shall I not love him? or shall I love any thing else before him? God forbid. If you feel the love of the godly or any of your brethren decay in you, go to Scripture, and consider the truth of those passages where Christ hath made this the mark of all his people; and saith, that he is a liar that professeth to love God, whom he never saw, and loveth not his brother, whom he seeth daily, 1 John iv. 20. And where Christ hath given you his own ensample, both in stooping to wash his disciples' feet, and in laying down his life in love to us, and charged us even so far to imitate him, as if need be to lay down our lives for our brethren. And when you consider thoroughly that this is true, as being the word of God, it will do much to the cure; especially if you believe also what God saith of your loveliness in his own eyes, and how tender he is of them for all their infirmities, and how you must be one body with them for ever in glory. If you feel your hearts grow dull to duty, that you grow customary in prayer, and hearing, and reproof, and meditation, do but take a serious consideration of the truth of Scripture, and it will do much to quicken you to think: is it not a certain truth of God, that these are appointed means for bestowing grace? Is it not a real state of torments that I pray against; and a glory that hath God's own word for the ascertaining it which I pray for? Oh, this will put life in prayer! When you hear sermons, or read Scripture, and mix them not with this faith, they do not profit you, Heb. iv. 2. As much as you actually and firmly believe the truth of Scripture, when it speaketh of spiritual and eternal matters to you, so much, and no more, will it work upon your hearts. And, therefore, what great need have all ministers to help their people to believe the word of God, seeing, according to this belief, all the after-work succeedeth! Oh with what reverence would men read every chapter, and with what affectionate workings of soul would every sermon be heard, if the truth of Scripture were firmly believed! Could men believe the reports of judgment, heaven, and hell, and make so light of it as usually men do? The same means, also, must quicken you in meditation, to consider deeply of the truth of what you think of. It is a dangerous case when christians give way to a daily, customary deadness in duty, and go on in it without trouble, or any great resistance: it is the common way of backsliding, and declining in grace; the common way by which men grow strange to God.

If thou have had never so sweet incomes this way, and communion with God in these duties, yet if thou once grow heartless in them, and seek God as if thou didst not care for finding him, he will hide his face, and will not be found of such a careless soul. The lively reviews of the truth of Scripture is the way to awaken thy heart again, and make thy addresses to God more serious. Think, oh! how certainly shall the same wretch that is now kneeling before God, and begging mercy in so dull a manner, be shortly at the dreadful bar, (where there will be no mercy to those that prevail not for mercy now,) and there be sentenced to everlasting life or death. So when you are talking to one another of the life to come, or the way to it, see that you speak as men that believe the truth of Scripture, and then your words will be as the oracles of God, and all your speeches be seasoned with salt. 2. The same means you must use, also, when corruption gets strength, or you grow venturous on sin. Oh! who durst let loose the reins to flesh-pleasing sensuality, that did but believingly consider, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die!" Rom. viii. 13; and the fleshly mind is enmity to God? Who durst give way to the fire of lust and passion, that did believingly consider of the fire of hell? Who durst give his heart to this present world, and turn all his thoughts, and words, and care about it, that did believingly consider of its vanity; or how much better things he might have in God; and that he that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him, 1 John ii. 15; and that to be a friend of the world is enmity to God? Jam. iv. 4. Who durst neglect holiness that did believe he should not see God without it? Heb. xii. 14. Who durst harbour unholiness, pride, and malice in his heart, that did believe the image of the devil doth consist in them, and how sure a destruction attendeth them? Durst careless sinners spend their time in drunkenness, sporting, or the like vanity or wickedness, if they believed how much greater work they have to do, and what a reckoning they must make for all their time? My advice, therefore, is, to every christian that would strengthen his graces, get down corruption, or forbear sin, or practise duty, go take a view of the truth of Scripture.

3. Another season when this lesson should be most made use of, is when we need the reviving of our hope and comfort. A man that is well awakened to apprehend what the heavenly glory is, must needs be deeply afflicted upon every doubtful thought of the truth of it. When affliction breaketh us, and lieth heavy upon us day and night, how should a poor creature bear it with any comfort, if he stedfastly believe not that relief and blessed change he shall have hereafter? When a man is wearied with a vexatious, malicious world, and hath lived long as Lot did in Sodom, 2 Pet. ii. 8, how would he be overwhelmed with impatience, if he did not think believingly of the deliverance at hand! When a man liveth in continual poverty or sickness, and hath scarce one day of ease to his flesh, were it not for the belief of his approaching happiness, how could he choose but wish he had never been born? When we think of lying in the grave in rottenness and dust, how could nature bear it with any comfort, if our belief of God's word, which promiseth a resurrection, be not stedfast and firm? This is the sovereign remedy against all disconsolation and maladies. Thou canst be in no trouble which hath not a particular, sufficient medicine in the word, if it be but applied by firm belief. There is enough in the word of God to comfort the poor, the sick, the oppressed and otherwise afflicted, that fear God; but if it be not believed, how can it comfort? There is enough

to comfort the doubting soul, the troubled conscience, the soul that longeth after God; but if it be not believed, what good can it do? There is enough in this Scripture to make every true christian's life a continual feast, and fill their heart with continual gladness, and make them the merriest men in the world; but then you must seriously and frequently bethink you of the truth of it. Here is the armour which will defend you against all assaults and terrors, and quench all the fiery darts of the devil; but then it must be put on by faith. Christians do not walk uncomfortably for want of sufficient ground of consolation, (I mean those christians that walk uprightly with God,) but for want of more faith to believe it. The Scripture doth both ascertain to them their happiness for the future, and reveal it to their present knowledge; but if they think not on this believingly, no wonder if they live in sadness for all this. If any man make you a deed of gift of all his lands, if you believe it not to be current, you will be nothing comforted by it. Oh how it would raise these drooping spirits that are so depressed by present afflictions and distresses, if they did but once a day look on the promise of everlasting glory, and say, How infallible and certain a word is this! and would look to their approaching enjoyment of Christ, and say, I shall shortly see the face of my dear Saviour, and then I shall be full; I shall want, and suffer, and complain no more. Though now we see him not, yet thus believingly we might rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 8. Certainly, if there were but one promise in God's book, it would make a christian live comfortably, if it were well believed: had we but that one in John iii. 16, "God so loved the world that he," &c. how merrily might a true believer live! If Satan should say, Thou shalt be damned, thou shalt never see life; or if all the enemies we have in the world endeavoured our destruction, we could tell them all, God's word shall stand; I have his promise that I shall not perish, but have everlasting life. If christians that live in never so great affliction, through sickness, poverty, oppression, or the like, did well believe that one promise, "All things shall work together for good," &c. Rom. viii. 28, how easily might they bear their sufferings! For what man will be so much grieved at that which he knoweth is for his good; yea, and so great a good as the working an exceeding, eternal weight of glory?

Second Use.

As you have seen in the First Use the certain truth of Scripture and the christian religion; so then see, next, what is the main argument by which the christian religion hath still been proved, and must be proved to the world's end; even the Spirit of Jesus, working miracles and wonders in the first age of christianity, openly in all the world, and working faith, and holiness, and consolation, in the saints, in all ages. I put both together, for they are but several gifts of one and the same Spirit, though either of them alone is sufficient to convince. Christ was to convince men of things so unlikely to common reason, and so far above nature, and also of so great concernment and necessity, that he must needs bring most evident, undeniable proof; and so he did. They that would not believe all his own miracles, nor believe his resurrection, should yet have a continuation of miracles to convince them; when he is out of sight in heaven, they shall see him disposing of the world at his pleasure, and making the powers of earth and hell stoop to the poorest of his disciples. He sendeth forth a peculiar Spirit into his chosen, by which he will still live within and among them.

As the bodies of men do live, and speak, and reason by the soul, so doth the church live and move by the Spirit of Jesus. If one had power to send the spirit of a man into the brute beasts in the whole country, and should make them speak, and discourse reasonably to any that come to them; and all the country should see this done publicly on thousands, for many years together, would you not believe the testimony of him that did it, and say, he that hath power to do this is certainly of God? So doth the Lord Jesus evince the verity of his testimony, by sending forth his divine Spirit in men; making them so publicly, in the face of congregations, do miracles, speak with tongues, cast out devils, for many years together; and ever after to sanctify by it the souls of his people, mortifying and mastering the strongest corruptions, and raising them to those holy inclinations and affections, which mere nature is utterly strange unto. Unbelievers might have seen the former outward workings of the Spirit, and may yet see the certain proof that they were wrought: and believers feel the inward for a witness in themselves. It much hurteth believers to forget what they once were, which, compared with what they are, will make the change more sensible and eminent; because they feel not as great a change still again and again, as they found at the first, they forget the first, and overlook much of that mercy and evidence. If the sun did appear to the world yesterday, and to-day be under a cloud, and yet from thence afford the world its light, and some heat, is he not mad that will now question whether there be any sun or not? We will believe them that yesterday saw it, though we had not ourselves seen it; and we will confess that nothing else but the sun could thus enlighten the world. May not the glorious light of knowledge, the heat of holy affection, discover the Lord Jesus, though we live not in that age when he did shine visibly in daily, numerous miracles, having withal most certain testimony of these miracles? As reasonably may we deny the sun, when we live in its light, or deny a man to be reasonable, when we hear his discourse, as deny the testimony of the Lord Jesus, when we see the effects of his Almighty Spirit. This Spirit he promised to send when he was ascended, to supply his own room, and that as a greater advantage to our faith and joy than his personal presence would have been, John xvi. 7. This Spirit he promised to send to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believed not in him: that is, when they see the unquestionable evidence of his Spirit, they shall confess the sinfulness of their unbelief, and say, "Verily, this was the Son of God." Of righteousness, because he went to the Father, i. e. they shall then be convinced that he was righteous, and so was his testimony, when they shall perceive that he remaineth not dead, but is ascended, and liveth with the Father in power and glory, all things being committed to his hands, when they see both men and devils obey him. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged, i. e. they shall then acknowledge that he is made the only Lord, and all judgment is committed to him, when they see him judging the devils themselves, and casting them out, and silencing all their oracles through the world, and destroying the kingdom of wickedness and darkness, and in bringing in light, and holiness, and consolation. Indeed, as God manifested himself the Creator by breathing into man the breath of life, whereby he became a living soul; so Christ hath manifested himself the Redeemer, by breathing into man a divine nature, even the life of grace, whereby they become supernaturally living. And as it is madness for any man to doubt of God's

creation, who hath a living soul, and discerneth it in others by the effects; so is it madness for any man to doubt of Christ's redemption and salvation, that hath his Spirit dwelling in him, or discerneth it by its proper effects in others. And verily, if the blind world could see the things of the Spirit, they might discern the Spirit of Jesus in the holiness and heavenliness of these very people, whom they now hate and despise, as they can discern a reasonable soul in men by their discourse. For though true special grace could not be so certainly discerned from common grace, yet both common and special, as they are diffused through the church, do show the great power and virtue of Christ. I conclude, therefore, that the Spirit of Jesus is his great convincing witness to the world.

Third Use.

The next information is this; we see hence what is the testimony of the Spirit, and who they be that have this testimony. There is a twofold testimony of the Spirit, as to the thing testified.

1. Its testimony of Christ and the christian religion.

2. Its testimony to the truth of our own graces, and of our adoption. What the former is you may easily discern by what is already spoken, that is, both the work of miracles and sanctification. As for the latter, the Spirit's workings are some common, and some special; the common, as miracles, tongues, prophecies, &c. formerly, and many common gifts now, may prove a man a common christian. For Christ giveth to common, sanctified christians those gifts of his Spirit which he giveth not to any of the heathen world. But yet these will not prove him a true christian in the favour of God. But that the special gifts of sanctification will prove. It is not, therefore, at least principally, any internal voice, or the Spirit saying within a man, Thou art the child of God, which is the witness of the Spirit; but as the Lord Jesus hath made a promise of giving his Spirit to all that are his, so when he performeth that promise they may hereby know that they are his. It is the having this Spirit, and the working of this Spirit in us, that first witnesseth to our souls the power, goodness, and truth of Christ, and next witnesseth our own adoption, because he giveth it to none but to sons. "For because we are sons, (so made upon our believing,) God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father," John i. 11, 12. When we find the Spirit working child-like love, and child-like hope, and child-like dependence upon God, and desires after him, and recourse in prayer to him, we have then the certain witness of our adoption, Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 15, 16. For by this work of the Spirit, causing us to cry Abba, Father, and causing us to speak to God from child-like affection, and so helping our infirmities in our prayer, doth the Spirit witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, Rom. viii. 15, 16, 26. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, may conclude they are the sons of God, Rom. viii. 14; that is, if they live not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, ver. 13. It is the Spirit dwelling in us, then, which is the testimony, ver. 9. And if any man hath not this Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, ver. 9. It is therefore objectively that this Spirit testifieth. It is the seal, and pledge, and witness of our adoption; as the having of a reasonable soul, and the workings of it, witness our humanity. Those, therefore, that look after a witness otherwise efficient, that is, the Spirit within, to tell them they are the children of God, may on both sides delude and undo themselves. They that have no grace, may think they have, while their own deluded hearts per-

suede them they are good christians. How readily would most of our worldlings think their presumption were the witness of the Spirit! And those that have true grace, may think they have none, because they discern not such a witness: whereas if they faithfully inquired after the indwelling and working of Christ's Spirit in their souls, mortifying the flesh and causing them to live to Christ, according to his law, they would have the sure witness, and that which they might sooner find. Yet I know, that when even from hence they conclude their sonship, the Spirit helpeth them in that conclusion. It is the Spirit itself, in its powerful, victorious workings, that is the white stone, and infallible seal of the love of God.

Fourth Use.

Next, we are hence informed what it is to believe in the Holy Ghost, and what it is to be baptized into the Holy Ghost. We find mention of the Spirit of God upon the prophets and holy men in the Old Testament, before Christ's coming in the flesh; and the salvation of man then did lie in their believing this Spirit's speaking in the prophets, and revealing God's will to them. Those natural discoveries, which are made by the mere book of the creatures, was not then sufficient to instruct men in the truths and duties necessary to salvation. God saw it meet, even from the creation of the world, even to innocent Adam, to add some supernatural revelation: and we find now by full experience, the defectiveness of mere natural discoveries, called the law or light of nature. Therefore had God still some special messengers, whom he designed to this work in former ages, that by them his Spirit might speak to the world; and they that believed not, but resisted these prophets, were said to resist the Holy Ghost, Acts vii. 51. For that I judge the true meaning of the text, not excluding other resistance. Yet as Christ was not then so fully revealed, or so fully described to those believers to whom he was then propounded; so the Holy Ghost was not so explicitly propounded to be believed in, nor the doctrine of the Trinity then so fully opened. Yet then, as they were to believe in the Messiah, or Saviour to come, so were they to believe that the Spirit of God in the prophets, foretelling his coming, was a true witness; and therefore their prophecy is called a sure word, whereto we do well to look and trust, as to a light shining in a dark place, 2 Pet. i. 19. But now, since the coming of Christ in the flesh, both the Son and the Holy Ghost are more fully revealed, the Holy Ghost by himself, and the Son by the Holy Ghost, and the Father by the Son and Holy Ghost, in a special manner. And though the Spirit in the prophets were truly the Spirit of Jesus foretelling his coming and salvation, yet the more eminent measure and working of the Spirit, given since Christ's coming, especially in the first ages of the church, for the confirmation of christianity, is peculiarly called the Spirit of the Son, Gal. iv. 6; Phil. i. 19. Therefore, when we are said to believe in the Holy Ghost, it is not only that there is a Holy Ghost, or to believe the doctrine of the Trinity; but it is to believe, first, that Jesus Christ did send forth his Spirit into his prophets before his coming, and more fully into believers since his coming, to be his infallible witness to the world, to convince the unbelieving, and confirm believers; and that this Spirit was poured out on the church, especially on the apostles, causing them to prophesy, and speak strange languages, and cast out devils, and heal diseases; and that the same Spirit is given to all true believers, in all ages, to guide, and sanctify, and comfort them,

working their hearts to God by Christ, and sealing the love of God to their soul, striving against and conquering the flesh. 2. And further, to believe that the witness of this Spirit is certain and infallible, and that it is and must needs be the Holy Spirit of God which doth such miracles as were then wrought, and attesteth and revealeth so holy a doctrine, and worketh in men's souls so holy and blessed effects; and therefore that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who sealeth his doctrine by sending into believers this Spirit. When we read of the glorious workings of the Holy Ghost of old, and see the holy workings of it still, to believe that this is the Spirit of Christ, which he promised to send for the confirming of his doctrine, and guiding his church, and applying his merits and benefits; this is to believe in the Holy Ghost, as to the assenting part. And then as to the consenting part, (for the will hath its part also in this work of believing in the Holy Ghost, as well as in believing in Christ,) it is a hearty consent that this Spirit shall be our Confirmer, Guide, Sanctifier, and Comforter in particular; with a sincere resolution to yield to his revelations, to obey his guidance and motions, and give up ourselves to his sanctifying work: this is believing in the Holy Ghost.

And then by this you may easily see what it is to be baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost; for it is but the obsignation of this our faith on our part, and receiving of Christ's obsignation of the promise of the Holy Ghost on his part. We do not only, by baptism, profess to believe that there is a Holy Ghost, but we profess to believe the truth of his witnessing to Christ and his doctrine, and to trust our souls on his teaching and revelation, and take him for our Guide and Sanctifier; and to believe on him, as that Holy Spirit which Jesus Christ, in his bodily absence, hath sent to supply his room, and to be, as it were, the soul of his church, and actuate every true believer. I know none that more fully opens the sense of the Scripture and primitive church, concerning believing in the Holy Ghost, than Tertullian, de Præscript. where he citeth the creed, or foundation of religion, which the church believed and professed in those times, and by which the orthodox were known from all heretics, *Christum misisse vicariam vim Spiritus sancti qui credentes agat*; having spoken of Christ's own working miracles before. Every word of it deserveth consideration.

1. He speaks of the Holy Ghost as sent into the world, and not only as proceeding from the Father and the Son before the world was made.

2. He speaks of him as sent by Christ, and so flowing from him, the Head, to his members, and testifying to him.

3. To show the manner of his indwelling and working, he calls it *vim Spiritus sancti*, the power or active force of the Holy Ghost, because, essentially, he is every where, but he is not pleased every where to exercise or manifest his force; and he chooseth this phrase rather than a habit or an act; and I conceive it more fit than either to signify that which we receive from Christ, called by the name of the Holy Ghost; for the habit and act are but the effects of this force of the Holy Ghost. By this force he moveth the soul to action so effectually that it produceth a habit; and he saith, not the substance, or person, or essence of the Holy Ghost is sent or given, but the force or energy.

4. He calls it *vicariam vim*, to show that this Spirit is sent from Christ, the Head, upon his personal departure from the earth, and ascending to heaven, to supply the room of his bodily presence, both in tes-

tification, and in sanctification and consolation of his people, as he told his disciples: "I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart I will send him to you," John xvi. 7. It is not expedient for the body that the head be contiguous to every member, but rather that it join locally only to the highest part of the body, and send forth the animal spirits into the whole body; and the life and motion of the feet and hands, that stand remotest from the head, is yet an infallible mark, both that there is a head, and that it conveyeth spirits to those members, and those members have a conjunction and communion with the head: so is it most expedient that Christ, our Head, should be bodily present in heaven, but send his Spirit to his lowest and remotest members; and he that feeleth or seeth the certain effects of this Spirit, is mad if he doubt of the life and efficacy of the Head; so that this Spirit is instead of Christ's personal presence, even as the magistrate is in the stead of the sovereign, through the body of the commonwealth. Nor doth this intimate any personal inequality between the Son and the Holy Ghost, but only a subseriency in operation.

5. The office that Tertullian and the primitive church here giveth the Spirit, is *ut credentes agat*, to actuate believers, as the soul actuates the body: not that man's soul is merely passive herein, as the body is to the soul; for the soul is of a more active nature, being itself a spirit; but as to the spirituality, and holy and heavenly manner of action, it comes from this Spirit. It actuated the first church after Christ with a force extraordinary, by miracles, prophecies, healing, languages, &c. and it still actuateth the whole body of Christ, according to their necessity, for the perfecting of them in the application of Christ's blood and merits.

6. It is especially the eminent degree of the Spirit which is here meant, that is given to believers after their faith; and therefore he saith, *qui credentes agat*. Though, as I have said, the Spirit of prophecy that foretold of Christ was Christ's Spirit too, and so is the Spirit that bringeth men to Christ, by causing them to believe. Yet this is but the Spirit moving without, and knocking at the door first, and making his way into the soul, and then he dwelleth in the soul afterwards. Sure I am the Scripture speaks of giving the Holy Ghost upon and after believing frequently, and that must be some gift eminently, and by an excellency called the Holy Ghost. Yet even that Spirit which is given to believers, may be said to be given to unbelievers also, though not in the sense as he is given to believers; yet in a lower sort he may be said to be given or propounded to them, not only as it moveth at the hearts of unbelievers, (though not effectual to sanctification,) but also as its workings in believers, discovered in the fruits, are an objective means to convince unbelievers. So saith Paul, "If an unbeliever come in, he will fall down and say, God is in you of a truth," 1 Cor. xiv. 25. And Christ himself promising the Spirit to his disciples, saith, that the same Spirit shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, John xvi. 8, but he is sent to dwell in believers only: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," John xiv. 16. Yet he addeth, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you;" to show them that when the Spirit hath done all his work, Christ will return personally, and

do the rest of his work also, which shall be the bringing them yet a greater comfort than that of the Spirit.

The first work was to be done by Christ on the cross in satisfying, and by Christ on the earth in preaching and working miracles, and giving an example of holiness to his followers. There was so great comfort in this, that his disciples grieved to think of leaving him. The second work is to be done in heaven by Christ mediating, and on earth by the Spirit whom he will send to his church. By this shall the benefits of his former works, even of his death and satisfaction, be applied: and therefore this is yet a more comforting work to believers, because it brings that mercy near us that before was far off, and that to our hearts, and into our possession, in part, which before was in the hands of Christ, and in a conditional promise: and therefore the Holy Ghost, that performeth this work, is called a Comforter. The third and last work is by Christ returning to his church again: when the Holy Ghost hath done his works on our hearts, and perfected them, then will Christ sentence them to life everlasting, and present them perfect and spotless to his Father, and bid them enter into the joy of their Lord. This is the most comfortable work of all, which he here frequently also promiseth. In the mean time the Holy Ghost is his substitute, as it were. "These things have I spoken while I am present with you; but the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you. But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning," John xv. 25, 26. So that the work of the Spirit is first to be Christ's witness; and then, secondly, to be his Agent in the souls of believers; and therefore Christ is said to dwell in them by his Spirit, Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 18; and they are said to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in them, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; 2 Tim. i. 14. And he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is said to be none of his, Rom. viii. 9. So that I conclude the Spirit, by extraordinary works formerly, and by holy actuating the church to the end, is Christ's great witness to the world: and thus we believe in the Holy Ghost, and thus we are baptized into him: for, as to believe in Christ, and to be baptized into him, respecteth him, not only as God, nor only as God and man, according to his nature, but also as Redeemer, according to his office; and that with a special applicatory respect unto ourselves; so also the same may and must be said of our believing in the Holy Ghost, and being baptized into his name.

So much for that use.

5. Hence we may perceive also what it is to sin against the Holy Ghost; I mean that sin which is especially so called, and is the unpardonable sin. I dare not be too bold in such a controverted point. But it seemeth to me to be the total rejection of this great testimony of Jesus Christ given to the world, when men see or hear this testimony fully, and are convinced of the matter of fact, that such a Spirit the Lord Jesus did send into his church at first, working these miracles, and prophecies, and tongues, which we read of, and see also the effects of this Spirit in the holiness of Christ's doctrine, and his people's lives, and yet will not believe that this Spirit is divine; but when they have no other shift or means, they blasphemously say, it is the Spirit of the devil,

or by the power of the devil, that these things were wrought. This is Athanasius's opinion, and this seemeth punctually agreeable to that text of Scripture where Christ mentioneth this sin. I shall say the less of this now, because I have before told you my judgment of it. Only observe, that it is not temptations or motions to this sin that is unpardonable; nor every sinful attendance to such temptations, or hearkening or inclining to them. But it is when the temptation so far takes, that the sin is prevalent against the contrary witness and motions; and when men do conclude fully and resolutely, that the Spirit of Christ is the spirit of the devil. This sin is therefore unpardonable because incurable: for the Spirit will not stay with such a soul, but leave them remediless; as Christ hath sent no greater remedy of unbelief, than the witness of his Spirit. Therefore, they that totally reject this have no remedy left for their cure: for the Spirit may follow them, and solicit them, till such a total blasphemous rejection. Even as when Christ himself is totally rejected by apostasy, sinners are left hopeless because helpless, and helpless because there remaineth no sacrifice for their sin, when the only sacrifice which was once offered for them is rejected, Heb. x. 16. Whether it be only this objective testimony of the Spirit, whose refusal is the sin against the Holy Ghost, or whether also the total rejecting of the effective testimony of the Spirit of Christ, when its motions come to so high a degree, be the sin against the Holy Ghost, I will not now determine: but the former methinks is clear. Only one great doubt here lieth in the way.

Object. If that be so, then the conversion of the Jews may seem hopeless or desperate, because to this day they confess the miracles of Jesus Christ, and the other workings of his Spirit, but maintain that he did these by the help of the devil.

Sol. To which I answer,

1. It is God's great mercy to his church which made Christ's workings, nay, his apostles', so publicly and eminently miraculous, that all these enemies of his truth do confess them, and maintain the infallible medium of the christian faith, while they deny the conclusion; which one would think should much confirm all christians in the faith.

2. I answer, that as it is with the papists, so it is with the Jews, they be not all of one mind: the leaders have grosser principles than most of the common people do entertain.

3. And consider, may not that be one reason why the Jews are yet uncalled? Why all nations flock in to Christ wherever the gospel yet came into the world, though God hath suffered the sword of the Turk to deter many countries from christianity again, and only Jews continue uncured, except now and then two or three that come in; may not that sin against the Holy Ghost cause the commonness of obstinate, incurable infidelity? It is worth the observing.

4. May not God cause this generation of the Jews, whom he means to convert, to be free from this sin, which else would hinder their conversion, and which hath hindered the conversion of so many of their predecessors.

5. And the rather, because, indeed, we cannot say it is most of the Jews that are now guilty of it; for though the generality confess the miracles of Christ and his disciples, blessed be God for it, yet we read and hear but of few of them that lay this on a diabolical power, and so blasphemously the Holy Ghost: but most of them have a foolish fable, that Christ had found out the right pronunciation of the ineffable name, and by the power of that, did all his miracles; and they think, if any other could find out that

name, he might do the like; I mean, that *nomen Te-grammaton*, which we call Jehovah: so that I see not any cause that men have of discouragement, in any attempt for the conversion of any Jew, as if they all or most did now lie under that unpardonable sin, the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

There is none, besides Jews, on earth, that I am more afraid of, in respect of this sin, than some that lately were professors of religion amongst us, and now are turned to deny Scripture and christianity, and make a derision of the word of God; especially those of them that are convinced of the matter of fact, and judge all to be done by the power of Satan: but I hope there are but few of those. The Lord teach every believer to take heed of any thing that is like this sin, or that hath any tendency to it; and to tremble at every temptation that way, and speedily fly from it: for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who hath said, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay;" for our God is a consuming fire: and doubtless, christians and all others have need to be very careful what entertainment they give also to the Spirit's motions within them; lest by unkind neglects, and frequent repulses, they grieve and expel him, that should convince and enlighten them, sanctify and comfort them; and then they will be left to be filthy still, and comfortless for ever.

I might have added somewhat here more fully, to show you what it is to resist the Spirit, and what to quench and grieve the Spirit, and what for the Spirit to depart from men: but you may gather thus much from what hath been said.

Doctrine II.

Having done with the main doctrine, which I intended from this text, I shall add a few words of that which lieth next before us.

That doctrine, religion, and way, in which the Spirit of Christ is given, is the only true doctrine, religion, and way to salvation; and, therefore, every one that would certainly know the true doctrine, religion, and way to salvation, should inquire by which religion or way it is, that he or others have received the Spirit of Christ.

Here I must first give you some explicative cautions for the right understanding of this part; secondly, give you the reason of it for confirmation; thirdly, apply it.

1. He that is capable of making use of this rule, must be a man that either hath the Spirit himself, or else seeth the clear effects of it in others, or is convinced of the truth of Scripture report of these effects. Those churches that the apostles wrote to, had the Spirit themselves, some of them for miracles, and some for sanctification; and those that had it not for miracles, could frequently see these miracles wrought by others that had it. Those, therefore, now, that either have the Spirit of sanctification or common illumination, or live among those that have it, and are able to discern the Spirit by its effects, are capable of making use of this rule of judging of doctrine and religion by the Spirit: but those that neither have the Spirit, nor live among those that have it; or if they do, yet are not able to discern it by its holy effects in men's speeches and conversations, nor yet do believe Scripture reports of the former workings of the Spirit; these can never come by the means to know the true doctrine and religion; for being ignorant of the means, they must be ignorant of the conclusion and end.

2. He that is capable of making right use of this rule, must be sure that he take not that for the Spirit which is not; and so mistake a delusion, or melan-

choly fancy, and confident self-conceitedness, or dis-tempered passion, for the Spirit of God: otherwise, a man will not only lose the use of this rule of trying and knowing the true religion by the Spirit, but he will be carried likely to a false, by this false means. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light to deceive; and his ministers transform themselves into ministers of light, 2 Cor. xi. 14. And therefore every spirit that bringeth light, or seemeth to do so, is not this Spirit of God; nor is every minister that preacheth light a minister of this Spirit of Christ. Those that inwardly are ravening wolves, yea, grievous wolves, devouring the flock, shall yet come in sheep's clothing, with seeming innocency and fair pretences, Matt. vii. 15; Acts xx. 29. And they that creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with iniquity, ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth, shall have a form of godliness, 2 Tim. iii. 5-17. If one of Montanus's disciples, or one of our ranters, should take their strange satanical delusions or possessions for the Spirit of Christ, as they do, no wonder if they be enemies to the true religion: for that Spirit comes not by Christ's doctrine, nor leads to his way and end: and it is a duty of great moment to try the spirits.

3. You must carefully understand, that this rule is no further to be extended to any doctrine, or trial of it, than it can well be proved that this doctrine was the means of conveying the Spirit: and, therefore, that it reacheth not to every circumstance or accident of that doctrine, and every manner of delivery, or every qualification of the instruments that deliver it. We are certain that the first church received the Spirit by the preaching of the faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law; and therefore, we are certain the christian religion is the true religion, and not the Jewish ceremonies; and consequently, that every part of Christ's doctrine is true: for if Christ be proved once true in his main testimony, that he is the Son of God and Saviour of the world, then is it impossible but that all is true which is his doctrine. So clear is this, that Mahomet himself, in his Alcoran, confesseth it, (for God would have his truth have the confession of enemies also,) and therefore he feigneth, that though Jesus taught nothing but truth, yet his disciples depraved his doctrine. And how? Forsooth, by blotting out Mahomet's name, whom Christ promised to send as the comforter. As if the former christians had any reason to blot out his name, or the latter in his own days could have done it undiscerned, when no Bible then in the church had his name in it. But to pass by these foolish adversaries; I say, it is a good argument the christian doctrine is true, because by it the Spirit was and is given.

But now you cannot argue for the goodness of the preacher, or for such or such an accidental manner of preaching, or for such a man's opinion in other smaller things, that these are certainly of Christ, because you received the Spirit by that man's doctrine, or such a manner of preaching. For example; if Judas say, by my preaching men received the Spirit, therefore I am a true believer; this is no good argument: or if Peter should have argued, by my preaching men received the Spirit; therefore my dissembling, or my denying Christ, was good; this is ill arguing. So, perhaps, men may receive the Spirit from a minister's preaching that hath an ill method, or an ill delivery or gesture; it will not follow that the Spirit is a witness to these faults of his: nor may you thus argue, I received the Spirit by such a method of preaching, therefore that is the only method. For it was not the method, or delivery, or gesture of the man, but the christian doctrine by

which you received the Spirit : men of divers ways and opinions about inferior things, may yet all preach the same christian doctrine, by which the Spirit may be conveyed. A presbyterian, or independent, or episcopal man, as they are now termed, may none of them argue thus : By my doctrine men receive the Spirit, therefore these opinions are true. No man ever received the Spirit by the preaching for episcopacy, or presbytery, or independency, as such, or in these parts wherein they differ from others, and whence they have their names : the like may be said of some other such controversies. Yet this must be acknowledged, that if God do ordinarily bless one way of preaching, or one sort of men, to be his instruments for conveying the Spirit more than all others, it is a very probable mark, that he favoureth that very way of preaching, and sort of men. Plain preachers, and zealous, are often blessed to be instruments in this work, than cold or dull, or daubers, or quaint-wordy preachers. Hence, we may well argue thus : Most men receive the Spirit by plain, zealous preachers, and few by dull or daubing ones, and therefore God approveth the former more than the latter. Yet here you must take heed of a mistake, by stretching this rule further than ever God intended it, or the nature of it will bear. As if one should argue thus : Presbyterians succeeded more than episcopal or independent ; or independent succeeds more than presbyterian or episcopal ; therefore, God more approveth of them ; it is not a certain argument ; for, perhaps, the reason of God's approbation may be from something else, wherein they differ, that is of greater moment than these parts. Perhaps, most of this or that opinion may be more godly, zealous, conscionable preachers, and therefore may be more succeeded ; whereas, if the other were such, they might succeed too, for all their opinion. Yet this may be granted, that if God ordinarily give up the men of one judgment to wicked lives, and their doctrine doth more harm than good ; or though their lives be good, yet God useth not to bless their doctrine to the saving of souls, and ordinarily useth to bless the doctrine of others, and that both to the sanctifying of themselves and their hearers ; this is a strong probable argument that God favoureth not that opinion which bringeth forth no better fruits. You see, then, in what sense this Spirit must be received.

Reason. That doctrine, religion, and way in which the Spirit is given, must needs be the true doctrine, religion, and way to salvation, because God will not bless any other with such noble success. It is the end and use of God's own doctrine and way to convey the Spirit to his people ; and he that hath appointed means of his own to that end, will not bless others, but his own thereto. It is the highest honour of his own ordinances, which he will not give to any other : the Spirit will not ride in any chariot, but what is of God's own making ; the conveying of the Spirit is the chiefest seal that any doctrine can have ; and, therefore, God will not set this seal to any falsehood. So that I need no more proof of this.

Quest. But do not our divines ordinarily teach that we must try the Spirit by the doctrine, and not the doctrine by the Spirit.

Ans. This is a great question, and because it is much tossed, and of great use for these times, I will speak to it the more exactly, though briefly.

1. You must distinguish between the doctrine of Scripture, and the doctrine delivered now by particular men.

2. You must distinguish between the Spirit that hath already sealed the christian doctrine, and the particular spirits that now men have, or pretend to have.

1. The first doctrine delivered to the church and to Adam by God himself, needed no other witness, he having the certainty of sense and knowledge that it was of God.

2. This doctrine he delivered down to his posterity, which they received, till Moses' time, by tradition, and needed no new testimony for the sealing of it, but only a hand or mouth still to report and deliver it.

3. When God added a new system of doctrines by Moses, there was a necessity of some new means for to discover the truth of it : and here the people had, 1. For the moral law, its clear agreement with the law of nature written in them. 2. For the whole they had, partly the voice of God, and the sight of the flaming mountain ; and partly many and frequent miracles upon every rising of unbelief to convince them.

4. What was added afterwards by particular prophets in each age, was not any doctrines or new parts of God's law, but predictions about matters of fact, or reproof, or counsel in particular cases : and here the witness was partly the holiness of the men, and partly the fulfilling of their prophecies ; and partly the agreement of their counsels and reproofs to the general law.

5. But then for the doctrine of Christ and his apostles : though he had many witnesses, yet his main witness was his own miracles and his Spirit ; even that Spirit by which he, as it were, animated the body of his church, and so Christ's doctrine was proved by the Spirit.

6. But now Christ by his Spirit hath sealed and well proved his doctrine : that doctrine standeth as our rule hereafter, to try both all doctrines and spirits by. For a doctrine sealed by the Spirit of truth, must needs be truth, and, therefore, nothing can be truth that disagreeeth from it. And the rather must men bring all hither for trial, because this doctrine is not only true, but full and sufficient ; no more being to be added ; it being given to make the man of God perfect and wise to salvation ; and is able to build us up, and give us the inheritance : and Christ having promised to be with them that preach this very doctrine, to the end of the world ; and having purposely given to his church the preachers of this doctrine for the edifying of the saints, and perfecting his body, till they all come to the stature of his fulness, to a perfect man ; and he will sanctify and cleanse his church by the washing of water by his word, that he may present it spotless and without blame. And Paul chargeth him to keep what he had delivered to him till the coming of Jesus Christ. All this you know is Scripture, and, therefore, this word is not only true, but a perfect rule, and consequently being thus sealed up by the Spirit of miracles and sanctification already, it is now the rule of doctrine and spirits.

Quest. But how was that Spirit known by which Christ first proved his word ? Was there any way of knowing the Spirit to be of God, but by the word ?

Ans. Thus : that Spirit which certainly comes from the highest wisdom, power, goodness, faithfulness, and holiness, doth certainly come from God. This reason can see as plain as the eye can see the sun : but such was and is the Spirit of Jesus, by which he attested his doctrine ; therefore,

1. It came from the highest wisdom, as appeareth both in the doctrine itself revealing the hidden things of God, and the way of salvation, and opening the secrets of men's hearts ; 2. And by the effects, in that it illuminateth the simple, and maketh christians the wisest men in the world.

Object. They say so themselves, but how will that appear ?

Ans. I will not stand now on the answer of this, being on the by: but this one thing I will say; it appeareth in that all men sooner or later are of their mind. 1. The wiser any heathen philosopher is, the nearer he is to the doctrine and way of christians: Plato, Plotinus, Seneca, Cicero, were the wisest, and they were likest to christians. 2. Most dying men say as they say in most things, though they were against them never so much before; they speak against sin, and commend a holy life, and acknowledge their folly in judging otherwise. 3. Those that are converted, and have had experience of both ways, are the fittest judges.

2. The Spirit of Christ comes from the highest power; for none but the Almighty could do such things, and could animate so many thousand mean people for many years after with the same Spirit, and by this means subdue the world far and near in so short a time, to a doctrine so contrary to flesh and blood.

3. The Spirit of Jesus Christ came from the highest goodness; for it discovereth the greatest perfection of the author, and the greatest love to mankind, especially to the good, that is possible to conceive of, both in the way to salvation by the redemption through Christ, and in the end, in the glory prepared for believers.

4. The Spirit of Christ comes from the highest truth and faithfulness: for, as the prophets foretold it, and Christ, before he went from earth, promised it, so did he perform it; and the doctrine it sealeth to is but the doctrine of the fulfilling of former prophecies and doctrines, and exactly agreeth with all the former word of God.

5. The Spirit of Christ came from the most perfect holiness, as appeareth undeniably in the holy contents of it, and holy design which it prosecuteth. Scripture is most perfectly contrary to all vice, without respect to any fleshly pleasure or interest; and most perfectly contrary to all the laws of nature, and prescribing the most holy, perfect means to everlasting blessedness. So that thus the Spirit of Christ might easily be known, by which he proved his doctrine. If, therefore, any spirit should now contradict the same doctrine, it is impossible that the spirit should be of God; for the same Spirit of truth will not say and unsay, and be on both sides: that which contradicteth the Spirit and doctrine of highest wisdom, power, goodness, truth, and holiness, can never be the Spirit of God; and, indeed, there is not now any spirit in the world that can make the least probable pretences against the doctrine of the Scripture. The Spirit of consolation and adoption is the same, and so given; and so is the Spirit of illumination the same, and given only by the Scripture; and for any spirit that shall contradict Scripture, it can never be holy, nor true, nor faithful, as contradicting truth: nor is there any that can pretend to omnipotency, for there is none that speaks against Scripture that ever wrought one true miracle; much less multitudes of uncontrolled miracles, such as confirmed the Scripture: so that you see how doctrines must be tried; at first by the Spirit, and then both spirits and their words by that doctrine.

Quest. But may we not then try men's doctrine now by the Spirit?

Yes; both by the Spirit and Scripture together, but not otherwise. If you see any doctrine by which God giveth the Spirit of holiness, that is certainly a holy doctrine, and of God; but if you take not Scripture along, you may easily be mistaken in this: only thus much I say, that yet to this day, if any man be a heathen, or tempted to heathenism, or Judaism, and doubt of the doctrine of Scripture and christianity,

this man may try the Scripture by the Spirit still: that is, by the Spirit which Christ gave in the first time, with the Spirit of illumination and holiness, which he giveth to this day; and by this Spirit he may certainly know the Scripture to be the word of God: but when a man, upon the testimony of this Spirit, acknowledgeth the Scripture, he must try all particular motions, and personal, real, or pretended revelations, by this Scripture; for he receiveth the Scripture as a rule, and therefore must use it as a rule: and even Christ himself and his apostles, though they had such variety of miracles to testify for them, yet still appealed to the prophets that were before them; acknowledging that it would not be of God if it contradicted his prophets or former word; and that was it that was the great occasion of the Jews' unbelief: because Christ took down the law of ceremonies, they thought he contradicted the word of God, not understanding that these were as positives, and therefore alterable by God: so types, and therefore to cease, when the thing typified was come. Besides all this, there is great difference between the Spirit witnessing to Scripture by way of inward persuasion that it is true, and the witness of the Spirit's glorious and blessed effects, wrought by that doctrine, and objectively witnessing. The Scripture might be said to need this latter to make it a sufficient revelation; but it is we only that need the former to cure our blindness.

Use I.

Let all that are tempted to any doubting about the truth of the christian religion and doctrine of Christ, consider well of this argument; what religion is there in the world that hath possessed the professors of it with a new Spirit, and such a Spirit, besides the christian religion? Only this religion hath been sealed by such a Spirit as beareth the lively image of God; a Spirit of wisdom and omniscience, discovered by prophecies, languages, &c.; a Spirit of omnipotency, discovered by miracles; a Spirit of holiness, discovered in the holiness of the doctrine and the holiness of the receivers; a Spirit of goodness, discovered in the excellency of all; and that love and mercy that is manifested to mankind. Mahomet disclaimeth all miracles, and confesseth, in his Alcoran, that Jesus was the Word of God, and spake the truth, and condemneth the Jews most bitterly for not believing in him. The Jews hold part of the truth, and they had miracles for the establishment of their positive ceremonies; but they are blinded, that they cannot see either the tendency of these ceremonies to Christ, the truth, or the miracles, by which God did again seal to the taking of them down. Their prophecies, which they maintain, are one part of Christ's testimony, and those miracles, which themselves confess he did *de facto*, are another part of it; so that they are but, as Austin speaks, the library keepers of the church. The heathens that worship multitudes of gods, even they know not what, have neither supernatural revelation nor sound reason, but go contrary to both. The deficiency of the mere light of nature needs no other proof than the experience of all those parts and ages of the world, that have had nothing but the light of nature, who have generally lived in gross ignorance and wickedness; and withal, the sad experience of our own weakness and pravity, and how little we can reach with all helps and means; much less by the mere light of nature, besides that certainty we have of supernatural revelation *de facto*. He that would be of no religion must needs believe that there is no God; for if there be a God, he must needs be the Maker of the creature, and must needs be wor-

shipped by the creature, and obeyed as our Lord: and he that is thoroughly an atheist is not thoroughly a man: and, therefore, seeing there is no other religion that a man can, with any strong show of reason, entertain, and seeing he that will appear a reasonable creature must be of some religion, it followeth, that to renounce the christian religion is to renounce reason, and to doubt of it is to be injurious to reason itself. This is the only religion that doth convey the Spirit into those that do profess it. I know there is a certain work that every religion hath upon the minds of them that do believe it; and, because every religion hath somewhat that is good in it, as the acknowledgment of a God, and that he is good, true, just, &c.; therefore, every religion may do some good in the souls of men; that is, the common truths of God which men of these religions do hold, though mixed with wicked and abominable opinions, may do some good on the minds of men; but because they hold so small a part of the truth, and because they mix that truth with so much error, and detain it in unrighteousness, therefore the generality of them are given up to vile affections and wicked conversations, and the best of them never manifested any spirit of true sanctification or of miracles. Nay, besides that, the mixture of contrary opinions destroyeth the force of that truth which they acknowledge: it cannot have its natural effect upon their souls for want of the concurrence of an internal efficient; for the christian religion hath both these advantages of all other religions: 1. Objective; 2. Effective.

1. It propoundeth such truths of so high and glorious a nature, and offereth benefits of so excellent, desirable, and attractive a nature; and, withal, contains so full and sufficient a number of these truths and benefits, having the whole chain, and not as Jews, heathens, or Mahometans, some few broken links only; that herein it hath the advantage for elevating the soul to God, and purging it from sin, above all other religions: such as the seal is, such will be the impression. Objects make an impression on the understanding, as a seal in the wax. If, therefore, each religion should make its impress on the soul according to its own nature, you should see on all other religion a little of God, and much of Satan; a little light, and much darkness and confusion; but in the christian religion only, you should see the very image of our Maker, his wisdom, truth, goodness; power, and holiness. No wonder if a doctrine of heaven produce a heavenly mind and life, and if a doctrine of love do make men loving, and if a doctrine of mercy do make men merciful, and if a doctrine of humility do make men humble, and a perfect doctrine do fill up all those sad wants and chasms that imperfect ones leave in men's minds; when the heathenish doctrines, on the contrary, produce little but pride, vain glory, covetousness, voluptuousness, and makes them all slaves to the flesh. If ever paganism were in splendour, it was among the learned Romans, and that even then when christianity came and shamed it, and, as a glorious sun, dispelled its darkness: and yet what a monstrous age of wickedness was that learned, civil age! and what a horrid place of all villany was that learned, civil place of Rome, who called almost all other barbarians to them! What should we talk of the worst of them, when even their great, learned men, that condemned the vices of the world, and their excellent, virtuous princes, whom they called gods when they were dead for their virtues, even these were sinks of sensuality; as if they had been made to pour in meat and drink, and take their fleshly lusts? When they have commended all their

excellent virtues, yet all is concluded with some confession of the whole gallons of wine that they were wont to drink at once, or that they would eat till they cast it up at table, or scarce any but had his whores commonly; that was one of Rome's venial sins; then valiant acts in fighting for their country, or acts of justice to men, were the substance of all the best part of their religion; for all that help they had from the church of God near them.

2. Besides this objective advantage, christianity hath an effective advantage. Man's soul is so far depraved and enslaved to sensuality, and mastered by inferior things, and its inclinations corrupted and turned to them, that now a mere objective help is not enough. The object is a sufficient seal, but the understanding turns away from it, and will not receive it: it is not as wax, but as water, or as iron; either it will not receive, or will not retain, the impression. The best principles of religion find men's understandings and wills like a bottle already full of water, into which you cannot pour any wine, because it is full; besides all the prejudice and other hinderances raised by the flesh. Now, therefore, if there be not a Spirit within to take the seal in hand, and make the impression deeply and effectually, all doctrine will be for the most part lost. This, therefore, is the great advantage of the christian religion, that besides what the doctrine tendeth to of itself, there is the Spirit of God within that doth second these doctrines, and take the received species of them, and impress them on the soul, and doth this effectually and potently, according to the mighty, irresistible power of the agent. I confess (and I would more would confess it considerably) that its way of working is secret to us, as is the way of the Spirit's forming us in the womb. Some question whether it be physical or moral, this way or that way: I think it may be called both; and many learned disputers do, in a blind zeal for the glory of God's strength, deny him the glory of his admirable wisdom, as if he governed not the rational creature, and healed and sanctified the souls of believers, *per viam sapientiæ*, but only *per viam omnipotentæ*; yea, as if his wisdom itself had not in it such an omnipotency as God will have to be observed and glorified; but the manner is past our clear and exact apprehension, and he that knows himself, and his distance from God and spiritual things, will not wonder at that. But yet, though we know not how the Spirit worketh, yet, through the great mercy of God, we feel that it doth work, and what it doth work; and hence we see those holy affections in christians, those holy breathings after God, and that sense of the evil of sin, and that conscience of duty, and those groans excited by the spirit of prayer, and those mindings of the things of another world, and those joys and spiritual comforts in life and death, and that ability to deny the flesh its desires, and to overcome all temptations from things below, and to suffer in hope of an unseen glory, and that hearty love to one another, and that ability to forgive enemies, with many the like excellences, which are not in any other sort of men in the world. I speak of those that have truly and thoroughly received the impress and spirit of this religion, though even the false christians go beyond all other men by far; for even they are often cleansed from the pollutions of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Christ. God will not give forth the Spirit with a false religion; no, not to make forcible these few truths of his own which the heathen, or Jewish, or Mahometan world doth detain in unrighteousness. So that you see the truth of the christian religion by the Spirit of holiness, besides that of miracles formerly.

Use II.

You see here, also, what clear, evident light it is that those men among us do sin against, who say we have lost our Scriptures, and our church, and our ministry in antichristian darkness, which hath choked the truth, and destroyed and drowned the certainty of all; and that, therefore, we must have new prophets, or apostles, and a new spirit of miracles, for the restoration of all. Do these men think that God must seal one and the same Scripture and religion with miracles, as often as they will be unbelieving? Is it not enough that he sealed it with the miracles of an age, before a thousand of witnesses in open congregations, in many countries; and that even those that quarrelled with the apostles, were forced to confess it, as being eye and ear-witnesses, being challenged to deny it if they could? Moses once sealed his doctrine by miracles; should the Jews say, they would not believe it, except it were so sealed over again, in every age? Should not these wretches, that in their ignorance cry for signs and wonders afresh, forgetting, or undervaluing, the old, (like the Israelites in the wilderness,) do better to blame their own unbelieving hearts, than God's providence? and rather beg and wait for a spirit of faith, than a spirit of miracles? Blessed be the great Governor of the world, and Lord of the church, that hath delivered us his Scriptures, and the testimony of his first miracles, in so clear, so certain, so infallible a way, as no book or matter of fact in the world hath the like. For all that is said against Rome, true or false, this is certainly true, that God hath kept them in the acknowledgment of his Scripture, though they sinfully magnify unwritten traditions of doctrines; yet they confess all the Scripture to be the word of God, and to be true, which we maintain, and have carefully preserved it to this day. And what silly souls are those to think, either that Rome could have corrupted the Scripture considerably, if they had been willing, (there being so many thousand copies among them, and some of more conscience than such corrupters would be,) or that the church of Rome was the only keeper of Scripture? Do they not know there are far more christians in the world than all those of the church of Rome are? And that all they have kept the Scripture among them as safely and certainly as we could desire, as to all considerable things? Have not all the Greek churches in Muscovy, and through all the Turks' dominions in Asia and Africa, the Scripture pure? And have not the Ethiopian churches, which are exceeding large, all the same Scripture as the church of Rome have, and we have? Is there any book that ever the world saw, that hath had such means to preserve it from alteration or corruption? when so great a part of the world, and almost all the learned part of the world, have had it among them, as that which they held their hope of salvation by, and that which they take for their guide in worshipping God, having all ministers, whose constant office hath been to read it and expound it in the open congregations; and have, every week, one day in seven set apart, wherein all the people should come together to hear the Scripture read and expounded to them, as the law, by which they all must live, and by which God will judge them at the last. Let men be men, and not renounce their reason, nor turn stark mad, and let them tell us how it is possible that such a book should be considerably depraved, and the depravation take so generally through all the world, as that all the books should be the very same to this day; except here and there a letter or inconsiderable word that differs

through the fault of some transcribers; as our printers may now misprint a word.

2. Besides, do not these men see God accompanying this doctrine to this day, with the Spirit of sanctification and consolation? Certainly these men do but tempt God, and delude themselves and others, by talking of the loss of Scriptures, and church, and ministry, and manifest their own gross ignorance and unbelief. Though, for my part, I confess that I am strongly persuaded that some wicked, subtle Jesuits have fomented this opinion among us: for they may well know, that if they can once get the people to believe, that either there is no church, or ministry, or Scripture, or else it must be the church of Rome, all reasonable men will easily believe rather that the church and ministry of Rome is true, than that there is none. For he that believeth not that there is a church, doth scarce believe, I think, that there is a Christ, the Head of the church. There are many such books lately gone forth, that confirm me in this opinion; such as William Parker's "Answer to the Assemblies' Confession of Faith," which maintains the main substance of the doctrine of Rome; only, instead of pleading the infallibility of the church or pope, they plead the necessity of new prophets. But it is easy, when that doctrine is once received, to show men the vanity of their grounds, and bring them to receive the same doctrines, upon other grounds: their prophets will be gazed after but a few days. A little time ever discovereth the folly of such pretenders; and then how easy is it for a papist to challenge such to dispute about the grounds of their religion, and to show them that their prophets are deceivers; and therefore they must rather hearken to their church? In the mean time, it is a sad providence to us, that so many should be permitted to call other men, and their ways of worship, antichristian, and so long to cry out of antichrist, till they are almost papists already, and liker than others to turn such, when they are tempted.

Use III.

Hence, also, we may be informed that all these several parties in the world, by what name or title soever distinguished, that hold the substance of the christian religion, are not so many different religions, but are all but one true religion, and, consequently, are all one church. But that there be no quarrel about mere words, take notice that I use the word, religion, not for every particular opinion or practice about the immediate worship of God, but for the body or frame of such doctrines and practices, called, commonly, our faith and profession: as christianity is called one religion, or the christian faith, and Mahometanism another, and Judaism another. Otherwise, taking the word religion for some particular parts of that frame, and that not essential, but merely integral, so it may be said, that there are as many religions among us, as there are particular differences about the worship of God. Yea, if you extend it to opinions or practices, which, by the owners, are supposed and called essentials or fundamentals; and on a conceit of such necessity, are added to the main frame or body, yet not destroying or nulling that frame or body to which they are so added: in this sense, also, I confess, there are many religions in the christian world, and many churches. But I shall now choose to take the word religion and church in the primitive sense, and so I say, that there is but one true religion and church in the world, and that is, the christian religion and church: from which I exclude all and only those sects, parties, heretics, or infidels, that hold not the whole

essence of this religion and church; both those that deny the whole or any one essential part, so denying it, as that they do not hold it.

Here observe these three parts of my assertion:

1. They are not many religions, but one.

2. Not many churches, but one.

3. And every one is of the true religion and true church, and that is apparent from my text and experience set together; because among all these several parties there is that doctrine and religion by which God doth convey the Spirit of sanctification now, and which he did seal with the Spirit of miracles at its first promulgation.

1. It is the fundamental and substantial parts, and not every inferior opinion, that denominate a religion. There are not so many religions in the world, as there are differences about the expounding of this or that particular text of Scripture, or as there are different opinions about inferior things; those among us, therefore, are silly people, that think we have as many religions as we have different parties. The ignorant people think that the episcopal party are of one religion, and the presbyterian of another, and the independent and separatist of another; and they think, that when the Common Prayer was in use, there was one religion on foot, and now it is down, there is another: as if the nature and denominating form of religion lay in every accident or circumstance: so the papists would make the world believe, that we are of as many religions different among ourselves, as we have variety of opinions; when yet they maintain as great or greater differences among themselves, without any conceit of variety of religions. Witness the many and great differences, so long and hotly agitated, between the Dominicans and Jesuits, about grace, free-will, predestination, &c.; their quarrels about the virgin Mary's native innocence; the difference between the Spanish and the Italian parties in the Council of Trent, about episcopacy. Yea, the great unreconcilable difference that continues to this day among them, about the very master-part of their new-devised creed, Where is the seat of infallibility and supreme church power? one party saith, it is in the pope alone; another, as the French clergy, saith, it is in a general council; and some say, it must be in a concurrence of both: and it is very observable what a case they have brought themselves into, and what a loss they are at in matters of religion, and what uncertainty they would bring all the christian world to, in religion, if they would but follow them; for they receive the Scripture for the word of God, upon the authority of the church, and the church must be the infallible church; and they are not yet agreed among themselves, what or who that infallible church is. How well, then, do they believe the Scripture and their religion! but this, on the by. There are not, then, so many religions as there are different opinions; except these differences be in fundamental parts.

2. Nor are there so many different churches as there are different opinions: Christ hath but one invisible church on earth; nor but one universal, visible church, containing all that make profession of the true religion, or doctrine of Christ, in the fundamentals; to call any other a church is to contradict or equivocate; Jews, Mahometans, pagans, are no church. Particular, visible churches there are many, which are diversified by the variety of their meetings: for so every assembly of men, professing the true religion, is a true church; and if lawfully combined therein, they are a true political church; but all these are but parts of that one universal, visible church. Indeed, we use to give several parts of this church also the name of such or such a church,

from some accidental respects: as to call it a national church, because it hath the advantage of a special association, by living in one country, under one magistrate, or because they are actually associated: so we call the church of England, Scotland, France, &c. as we call the same sea, the English, or French, or German sea: so also, from variety of opinions, we call one the church of the protestants, and another of the anabaptists, another of the Arminians; so the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches: but these are all so diversified merely from accidents or circumstances, and not as if there were any essential difference between them; for then they could not be so many churches; for Christ hath but one church, divided into many congregations and associations, and diversified according to their various degrees of knowledge and purity; read Mr. Marshall's late sermon of "The Unity of the Church," and Mr. Samuel Hudson, of "The Church Universal:" not that we dream of any visible, supreme power over this one visible church. The papists understand not well the nature of the church's political constitution, or else they would never talk of that: but yet a visible organical church it is, even one political republic: but the sovereign power or head is none but Christ, who is visible to the glorified part of his church in heaven, but not seen of the imperfect part on earth: and particular churches are not as so many commonwealths, but as so many corporations making up one commonwealth, and all under Christ, but none under one another; being all free, and having all their own officers and privileges; yet all bound to maintain the strictest, and most general, and extended association, that nature and opportunity will permit, for the unity, strength, and edification of the whole. This is that one visible, yea, organized church of Christ; a true, political church, even as visible, though not in that sense as the deluded papists do imagine: but in this elsewhere.

3. And as all these are one church, and of one religion, so they are all of the true religion; or else they could not be of one, and any one of them be true. Some will think this too charitable a conclusion; that so many erroneous parties should all be of one and of the true religion; but it is as true and necessary, as charitable. He that should deny it, should, as much as in him lieth, rob God of the chiefest fruit of his creation, providence, and redemption; and Christ Jesus of the chiefest fruit of his blood, resurrection, and of all those miracles which he hath wrought in the propagation of his gospel; and the Holy Ghost of the fruit of his work of sanctification. It is too bold an attempt for any earth-worm to venture on, to give Christ's spouse a bill of divorce. If the Husband of the church do it not, what are we that we should do it? Christ hath paid so dear and done so much to redeem them, and sanctify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, that he will not take it well of those that shall deny them to be his own. I know how zealous ignorance hath proved in these last times, the devil's master-piece for the disuniting of the church; and those that are once possessed with the spirit of delusion, have nothing more common in their mouths, than that such a party are heretics, and no church of Christ; and such a party are antichristian, and no church of Christ; and only they, or such as they, are his church. I would they knew how little thanks Christ will give them for this dealing. If they heard him speak his mind to them, it would be this; You know not what spirit you are of. Zealous men do often run before their understandings, and little know their own hearts. They think it is the Spirit of God, and the love to his truth,

that actuate them; but they know not what spirit they are of; nor how much passion, raised by different judgments, and fed by the hot words of men of their own party, is used to go coloured with the name of holy zeal, and even deceiveth often the truest christians; for we are not better than James and John. Christ hateth putting away, and he loveth not that we should attempt the putting away of his spouse. What God hath joined, let no man put asunder; especially if the conjunction be so near as head and body; and the covenant so strong as the blood and Spirit of Christ, and the bond of the everlasting covenant. Where Christ writeth his name, and saith, They are mine, let men take heed of blotting it out, and saying, They are the devil's. I know we may find faults enough in any church that I know on earth, to give some poor colour to these attempts; such a church is erroneous, and such a one is superstitious, and such a one is lukewarm: I would they were all better, and so they will be one day. But it ill becomes poor sinners to be more quick-sighted in spying out the faults of Christ's churches, or more severe in charging it on them, than Christ is. It belongeth to him to do it, if it must be done; and let not us do it before him; it is Christ that justifieth, who shall condemn them? Every fault or error is not an unchurching fault. Oh how the God of unity and peace abhorreth the zealous censures and separation of these mistaken men! Christians should imitate their Lord, and get that tender, gentle, lamb-like Spirit that he useth to his poor people. He will not break the bruised reed; he carrieth the lambs in his arms, and gently driveth those with young. God is love, and his people should be loving. Were it but one particular sinner, we should sadly think of those plain and terrible words of Christ, "Judge not, that you be not judged;" and, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" to his own master he standeth or falleth." The points between us and them in difference are controvertible, but these texts are as plain as the highway: God will give us little thanks to say of one poor, weak christian, Thou art no christian, and to deal by our brethren as Job's friends; and to appropriate to ourselves alone the common salvation, and say, Christ is mine, and not thine. None shall take his sheep whom the Father hath given him out of his hands; and none should attempt it. But to judge whole churches, and say they are no churches, is a matter yet of far greater moment; to say she is a harlot that Christ calleth his spouse.

USE IV.

Oh that the revolvers of this age would but make use of this rule of the apostle! Here is such abusing of ministry, and doctrine, and church, and separating from us, as if we were the most abominable people in the world. But shall I entreat those that are the true servants of Christ, and know what it is to be partakers of his Spirit, that they would ask themselves the apostle's question, Received ye the Spirit by the doctrine commonly preached in England, and by the ministers of England, or not? If you did, how can you deny them to be the true church and ministers of Christ? If you did not receive the Spirit by us, or by the doctrine which we preach, I dare say you never received it. O, ungrateful children, that when we have prayed and preached and spent ourselves for their souls, and then think to have the comfort of them as our children in Christ, and they should be our crown and joy; then do they turn against us, reproach us, and account us their enemies, because we tell them the

truth. Doubtless, there is a strong engagement lieth on men to those that God makes the means of their first conversion; else Paul would not so glory in it, and tell the Corinthians, that though they had never so many instructors, yet he was their father. Must we travail in birth of you till Christ be formed in you, and then do you not only as brute beasts, that when they are grown up forget their own dams, but even revile us, and prove our greatest grief, and the sharpest thorns we have in our side. I know the ministers of Christ are faulty, and deserve all this as permitted by God; but yet God will let these men know one day, that this is not equal dealing from them. More particularly, you that are turned to antinomianism, and think that our ministers preach not free grace, no, not the gospel, but the law; tell me, received you that Spirit by that which you call the preaching of free grace? I know free grace must be preached, but I mean that which you miscall so. Nay, let me not ask you for yourselves only, but for others; have you known any considerable number of men, nay, any one man, that ever received the Spirit by that doctrine which telleth them that Christ hath not only suffered and fulfilled the law in their very persons, so that they are judged as having done it in him; but also he hath repented for them, believed for them, and also obeyed the gospel for them; that, therefore, they are justified before they are born, or before they believe or repent; that, therefore, they are under no law but that of man; not so much as under the law of Christ, except only as the work of sanctification in them may figuratively be called a law; that, therefore, they need not pray for pardon of sin, nor be humbled for sin, as if it were not pardoned till they repent of it, seeing all their sins, be they never so many and heinous, were pardoned at once before they were committed, and that faith procureth only the sense of pardon in our own consciences. Did you ever know this doctrine convey the Spirit? Nay, do not all that receive it, or most, turn loose and licentious, and cast off duty more than before? I might say the like of some other sects among us that love not to be named. Though I said before, that every particular opinion is not to be tried by this rule, but the substance of religion; yet those assemblies that God so forsakes, as not to convey his Spirit among them, have reason to suspect their way.

Use the last.

If all this be so, then, alas, what a case are those poor souls in among us that have none of the Spirit at all; yea, those that make a mock of the Spirit! Alas, that after so long preaching of the gospel, there should yet be so many such found among us! If you be asked how you received the Spirit, would not some of you mock at it; and others say plainly you know not what it is to have the Spirit? The Lord open your eyes to see your misery: and let me tell you thus much of it at present, though I resolve to be short.

1. If any man of you have not the Spirit of Christ, that man is none of his, Rom. viii. 9; and what a case are you then in! If you be not Christ's, then Christ is not yours; and then what will you do against the accusation of the law, and of Satan, and of your own consciences? What will you do against the guilt of sin? What will you look to for comfort at your dying hour? What will you set between God's anger and your naked, guilty souls? How will you stand before God in judgment, or make answer to all that will be brought in against you? Oh! the thousand bills that will be there brought in,

the least whereof may condemn you for ever. Then you will say, Oh! if I had but part in Christ, then I would answer all; but nothing else will do it. Is there any other name by which you can be saved?

2. Let me tell you, if you have not that Spirit you are strangers to God. You cannot go to him sincerely, and call him Father. You cannot pray; for this is the Spirit of prayer; no wonder, then, if you be neglecters or despisers of prayer, and disaffected to God.

3. If you have not God's Spirit, you are yet in your pollution; you are unclean; for it is the Spirit that must sanctify you. You know not what holiness is, though without it you shall not see God, Heb. xii. 14. No wonder if you undervalue or deny holiness.

4. You will not be able to resist temptation; for it is the Spirit that must strive against the flesh, and conquer it. No wonder if you yield to every temptation, and live as Satan's slaves.

5. You have no true consolation; for the Spirit is the Comforter: nor ever will have any sound comfort without him. The Lord teach you to beg for this Spirit, to seek and wait for it in the use of God's means, till the Lord Jesus shall be pleased to pour it upon you: for without the Spirit of Christ you are but the slaves of the devil, and animated by him in every evil work. And as, instead of a right guide and sanctifier, you have a seducer and corrupter of your hearts and ways, so at last, without sound conversion, you will find that, instead of a comforter, you have a cruel tormentor.

COROLL.

A Demonstration of the Life to come, and Immortality of the Soul.

There is an absolute necessity of the apprehensions of reward or punishment in the life to come. For it is impossible that without it the world should

be governed: no man's life, or goods, or good name would have any considerable security, if no punishment or reward were expected but in this life; it being so easy a matter for a servant to rob his master secretly, or an envious man to kill or poison another secretly, and so all the world would be set on wickedness.

Now I assume, if the apprehension of future rewards or punishments be so necessary, then certainly it is a truth that there are such future rewards and punishments. Else we should imagine that God cannot govern the world without deceit or a lie, as his engine; which, as it is highest blasphemy, so as clearly against the light of nature, as the denial of the Godhead. For to be so impotent, and so evil, is to be no God. Even among the Romans, when nature was as much rectified and elevated, as ever it was without the doctrine of faith, and invisible blessedness, yet not only every tyrant did destroy men at pleasure, but the angry master must cast his servants into his fish-ponds, or otherwise put them to death, whenever they displeased him, if it were but by the breaking of a glass; and the servants perhaps as commonly poison, or secretly kill the master: inasmuch that even in cruel Nero's days, Seneca saith, (Epist. 4. ad Lucil.) *Quisquam vitam suam contempsit, tuæ Dominus est. Recognosce exemplum eorum qui domesticis insidiis perierunt, aut aperta vi, aut dolo; et intelliges non pauciores servorum ira cecidisse, quam regum.* And yet then there were common apprehensions of a life to come, and a belief of different estates there of the good and bad; so that we cannot say, that the order which was maintained among them, was without the special help of this belief: and this being still acknowledged in all, or almost all nations on earth to this day, is the chief means of that little order and restraint of sin, that is found among even idolaters and pagans. This I am ready more fully to vindicate.

A

DETERMINATION OF THIS QUESTION,

WHETHER THE MIRACULOUS WORKS OF CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES, DO OBLIGE THOSE TO BELIEVE, WHO NEVER SAW THEM?

JOHN XX. 29. "BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET HAVE BELIEVED."

READER,

HAVING put the foregoing papers to the press, I thought it not unmeet to adjoin these here following, as being on the same subject, and to the same purpose. It was but the hasty determination of a question, in one of our usual monthly disputations, which are maintained by the ministers of this association, for our mutual edification. It was a more private conference with some miserable men, who maintained the negative, which occasioned the choice of this question, as being the matter then freshest in my mind, and heaviest upon my heart, because of the misery of such apostates, and the danger that I perceived some to be in, through their subtlety and industry. By experience of them, I am caused to expect, that the apostatized should prove hardened; and that many who profess themselves their greatest adversaries, should still contribute to their hardening, by refusing to defend their own religion, and backbiting and reproaching those that do it. If the Lord will bless these weak endeavours for the confirmation of thy faith, the repelling of temptations, and the preventing of thy ruin by thy great sin of unbelief, the quarrels of adversaries, and offended friends, will be the easier borne, by

Thy well-willer,

RICHARD BAXTER.

QUESTION.

Whether the miraculous works of Christ and his disciples do oblige those to believe, who never saw them?

THE necessity is manifold and evident of discussing and right determining this weighty question. 1. For the soundness and stability of our own belief of the christian verity; and consequently for our salvation. 2. For the avoiding the great sin against the Holy Ghost. 3. For the confutation of all infidels, and in particular those apostates in England, who go under the name of sceptics, or seekers. Sad experience acquainteth us, that some such men there are, who being fallen from christianity, and in their hearts disowning Christ and the gospel, and being loth openly to defy, deride, or blaspheme him, because it would mar their reputation with men, do therefore, first and openly deny only, that there is any present church, or gospel ministry: forsooth, all is lost in the antichristian faction. They know how easy it will be to prove that there is no head, if they can once prove that there is no body; and how soon they might make Christ appear to the world more contemptible than Mahomet, if they could persuade men that he had never any church, but only in one age of the world, and that confined to so narrow a compass: for they say, he had no church before his incarnation, because the mystery was hid till then; and he had none when miracles ceased, nor where they were not; because Christ said, "If I had not done the works that no man else could do, ye had no sin: and these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues," &c. Mark xvi. Hereupon they maintain, that miracles being ceased, there are now neither churches, christians, ministers, or Scripture, known to them; and that the world, for want of such miracles, is not now bound to believe the gospel: that is, in plain terms, infidelity is no sin; faith in Christ is no duty; it is no fault to be an infidel: no duty to be a christian: which must be grounded on this, that either the gospel is false, or we have no evidence of its truth; for if there be evidence of its truth, no doubt it is our duty to believe it: could they persuade men that Christ, the Redeemer, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, was so unhappy or unsuccessful in his undertaking, as that his dear-bought church did die in the shell, or when it was newly hatched, and was strangled in the very birth or infancy, and that he had no body or kingdom but the beholders of those miracles; no wonder if they next persuaded them that he was a mere pretender and deceiver. Yet you would think by their arguing, that they gave Christ freely this portion of honour, to have had a true church, and truly proved the verity of his gospel, so far as his miracles did extend; but, indeed, they believe not this much; as who can, that denieth the rest? for if you plead the argument of miracles with them, for the verity of Christ's doctrine, they will tell you that antichrist and Satan may do the like; and, therefore, that this is no sufficient argument: and so, I fear, they blaspheme the Holy Ghost. Some half disciples that follow them in the dark, go not yet so far, nor discern yet the bottom of their designs. And I much fear, lest the Jesuits have had a strong hand in this damnable seduction, thinking to convince the world that at last we must be papists, or no christians; of the Roman church, or of none. 2. To loosen men from their former grounds, church, Scripture, ministry, that at least they may have free audience, and room and advantage to put in for their interest.

To fortify us in our christianity, against the vain cavils of pagans, Jews, and these apostate infidels, is the scope of this dispute.

For explication of the terms, I shall say no more than is necessary.

1. By miraculous works we mean, principally, those works, 1. Which were so above and against the established course of nature, that none but God himself could do them, being above the power of angels or men. 2. Those which angels could do, but not without the special help of God, or at least without his special commission, but still above the course of nature; that is, above the power of natural causes, working in the order that God at first established them in, and, by his common providence, doth sustain and actuate them. The most observable of these was Christ's own resurrection, and conversing afterwards with his disciples on earth; and then all the miraculous actions of his foregoing life: his ascending up into heaven before their eyes; his pouring out the Spirit on his disciples; the miraculous works of that Spirit: so frequent; on and by so many; in so many; in so many places; uncontrolled by any adverse power; of unquestionable evidence, for verity and greatness: and I yet see not but that the work of sanctification is truly miraculous; for though it be by natural means, and take advantage of some natural principles and inclinations in the soul, yet is the principal cause the Spirit of God, which worketh supernaturally, by doing that by those natural means, and on those faculties, which the means in an ordinary course of nature could not effect. So that it is nevertheless miraculous, though it is by instruments, or on a prepared subject: as an infant's arm cannot do that with a sword, which Samson or Achilles could have done; so a creature cannot do that by persuasion or other natural means, as God doth in this work. So far as the instrument or means doth work on natural men, that ordinary effect, which is but answerable to its own strength and the disposition of the recipient, so far the work is not miraculous; but as it is elevated by an almighty arm, to do greater things than by any other it can be used to, or than the common course of natural providence doth use it to, so far methinks it is truly miraculous. This is not only agreeable to their doctrine, who take regeneration to be strictly a new creation, and theirs who think that no angel is or can be an efficient cause of it, and theirs who think that by a physical specification it differs from the highest degree of common grace; but it is also agreeable to them that suppose the title of creation to be improper, and them that think an angel may be the instrument of the Holy Ghost in effecting it, and them that think that saving grace doth differ from common grace, but by a moral specification, and a natural gradation and modality.

So that, in a word, it is the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost, for supernatural works, that we must extend the word miracles to: but those we deal with, will not take sanctification to be such a confirming, miraculous work; and, therefore, as to them, we must restrain it to the rest.

2. By Christ's disciples, we mean, both the apostles, and all those believers besides them, who had these miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

3. By obliging we mean, constituting it our duty to believe: that is, doing their part toward such an obligation.

4. By the words, to believe, we mean to believe the gospel.

5. By those that never saw them, we mean it of any though in those first ages that never saw them: but specially those in these latter days.

But because the point of obligation is it that needeth most explication; and I told you that miracles do their part towards it, and so not the whole, it will be most necessary that I show you what is their part; and to that end, that I show you what part it is that other causes and requisites have herein; and to that end also, that I show you in what order it is that we do in reasoning arise to the christian belief.

Understand, therefore, that the first question in order to be propounded, is neither, which is the true church, nor, whether the Scripture be the word of God. The doctrine is not for the words and writing; but the book, writing, and words, is for the doctrine; and that for God's glory and our happiness. It is natural to man, or within the reach of nature itself, to know that there is a God that made him, and ruleth him; and to whom he should chiefly live; who is his principal efficient, and should be his ultimate, intended end: if any deny this, they will not, I hope, deny that it is natural to man to will happiness in general to himself, that is, he loveth himself. In our natural course of reasoning, therefore, we thus proceed.

1. We inquire, what course a man should take to please God that made him, and to save his soul? or, at least the latter, if he be mindless of the former. In answer to this, it is presently told him by preachers, or the common doctrine of the country, or some other means, that this must be only by Jesus Christ, and in the christian religion; and, therefore, he must become a christian, and live as such, if ever he would attain these ends.

2. The next inquiry, then, will be, who is this Christ? and what is this christian religion, both for faith and life? The answer to this will be, by telling him what Christ is, and hath done, and will do, and what he hath prescribed us to do: in a word, by reciting the creed or christian doctrine in the essentials, and the absolutely necessary parts of the christian practice.

3. The means of acquainting us with this much, that this is *de facto* the present christian religion, is by tradition of some sort, either by preaching, private instruction, showing us the Bible, or other books that do contain the said doctrine.

4. The next inquiry will be, how it appears that this religion is of God, and so is true?

The answer will be, that Christ came down from heaven to deliver and establish it, and confirmed it by miracles, and sent his apostles to preach it to the world, and gave them and multitudes of others the Holy Ghost, by extraordinary, supernatural works to confirm it: and being thus sealed, to deliver it down to the world, and to settle churches in which, and officers by whom, it shall be successively explained, and propagated to the end of the world; and he continueth the sanctifying works of that Spirit, as of standing necessity, and so writeth the same doctrine or laws in the hearts of his true disciples.

5. In inquiring after the verity of all this, we arise by these degrees from our present state, and the things which we see, to the former, and things that we never saw. And first, we are most likely to look upon the professors of that religion; and though we cannot see the sanctity of their hearts, nor clearly the glory of their lives; yet may it be discerned, that they are indeed of another spirit, and of higher hopes, and nobler resolutions, and contempt of things below, and in general of a more innocent, honest, and sublime conversation, than the rest of the world are. Many primitive converts were first moved by this observation. Yet this is not enough.

6. The next question, therefore, in our assent will

be, whether this religion were indeed delivered down from Christ and his apostles to the first churches, and from them to us, by a succession of believers to this day?

And first, we inquire, Was this religion delivered down from the first churches till now?

The answer to this, or the means by which we are resolved, is, 1. Assertory; 2. By proof. The first being used by well-known teachers, who are discerned to be of honest lives, and have no deceiving intent, and to be learned and skilful in their own profession, doth often serve with the ignorant vulgar to produce such an assent, as helpeth to a saving belief of the main doctrine, and draws them to be sincerely of the christian religion. But as all should aspire after clear evidence, and see the proof, so those that are able to judge of it, may soon discern a sufficiency in it.

7. The proof, that this is the religion which was delivered from the first churches, is in these particulars: 1. *In signs*, that is, in the continents and infallible signifiers of this religion. 2. *In evidential traditions*, in the evidence of a certain tradition of it, in and by these signs and continents. The mind of one man is made known to another by signs, seeing we cannot see the naked face of another's soul; much less can we immediately see the essence and mind of God, and, therefore, must have signs for the discerning of his will. These signs are: 1. The very words of Christ, and his apostles in their writings, commonly called the canonical Scriptures; which not only reveal the essentials of our religion, but also the necessary accomplishments and accidents.

2. The second thing that *per modum signi* containeth the christian religion, is the forms, ordinances, and constant practices of the church. By forms, I mean, 1. The form of words called The Creed, containing the sum of the christian belief. 2. The form of words called The Lord's Prayer, containing the sum of our necessary requests, and directory for prayer. 3. The form of words called The Decalogue, containing the sum of moral, natural duty. These three forms have been constantly preserved in the church, and contain the sum of the christian religion. And the Scripture itself is a form of words, more copious, comprehensive, and fitted to particular uses and cases. Let them, therefore, that are against all forms, see here, on the by, how foolishly they would reject the christian religion; and lose the sword, by losing the scabbard; the meat, by losing the dish; the soul, by destroying the body that it dwelleth and appeareth in.

3. The third thing that, by way of sign, doth evidently declare the christian religion, is the established church ordinances, and constant practice of them. Among these, I especially enumerate, 1. The catechising of those without, by which they were taught the sum of religion: as also the preaching of the gospel for their conversion, where the same doctrine was delivered to them, and which was the constant practice of Christ's ministers. 2. The ordinance of baptism, for entrance into the church, which summarily comprehended the main body of the christian religion; for there the person baptized, by himself if at age, did confess his sin and misery, and profess repentance and belief in God the Father, that made him and all things; in Jesus Christ, that redeemed him, and died, rose again, and ascended into heaven, and will judge the world, and reward his people with everlasting life, and punish the rebellious with everlasting punishment; and in the Holy Ghost, who was the Witness of Christ, and the Sanctifier of his church. He professed also his resolution for future obedience, and hereupon was baptized into

the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: so that baptism itself, with its profession, contained the very covenant of grace on God's part and man's, as entered and there solemnly confirmed or sealed, and so contained the sum of the christian religion. 3. To this we must add the communion of the church, in the participation of the Lord's supper, which was another seal for the confirmation of the same mutual covenant, and so the sum of the same religion. 4. The like we may say of the constant prayers of the church to God, in the name of Christ, and the constant hymns and praises of God and the Redeemer, for the grace of redemption and the hopes of glory, which show what was the christian religion. 5. Add to these the constant preaching and reading of the gospel in the church, for the instruction and edification of the faithful, besides that to the unbelieving for their conversion: by which the substance of the christian religion, for faith and practice, was frequently inculcated on all. 6. Add, also, hereunto, the church's constant practice of discipline, first, in avoiding the scandalous, and rejecting the obstinate by suspension and excommunication: secondly, the open confessions, and discoveries of repentance, and requests for readmission, which were used by the rejected: thirdly, the open absolution of them upon such manifestation of repentance. All which show what the christian religion was as to the purity of their practice. 7. To these may be added their opposition to, and conflicts with, all the depravers of their doctrine or practices. And thus church ordinances and practices were the continents and signs of the christian religion: and if we can prove the continuation of these, we undeniably prove the continuation of the religion.

2. The next part of this proof doth consist in the evidence of tradition, that, *de facto*, all these things were so. Where, first, observe that God hath, by abundance, provided for the security of his people's belief. If we had not all these forementioned proofs, yet one of them might satisfy beyond all contradiction.

As, first, If we could only prove the tradition of the canonical Scriptures, from the apostles' days till ours, we should thereby prove the tradition of the christian religion in them expressed, viz. that this is the faith once delivered to the saints.

Secondly, If we could only prove the tradition and use of the said church forms, the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue, though we had not seen the Scripture, or could not prove its tradition, or incorruption, yet did we fully prove the tradition of the christian religion. So that the being of the christian religion is not shaken, if the Scripture were unknown, or if we could not vindicate them, but only the well-being and accomplishment of our religion.

Thirdly, If the foresaid ordinances alone were proved, it would prove the succession of religion, which indeed doth so much consist in their performance; but through God's abundant provision, we have all these characters of our continued religion, and the evidence of all and each part, as clear as that ever King James or King Henry did reign in England: so that it affordeth us an infallible certainty. To run over the particulars briefly:

1. We do show an unbeliever, before his eyes, the Scriptures extant in the original languages, and several translations; and we prove, by most unquestionable records, that these are the same that have been delivered down to us from the first churches.

For, first, we show them manuscripts, yet extant, of exceeding antiquity: we have one in England that came from Alexandria, above 1300 years old.

2. We show them very ancient translations.

3. We show them, openly, the unquestionable writings of all divines, historians, lawyers, councils, &c.; assuring us that these holy writings came down to us, as the apostles', from the first churches; all pleading these Scriptures, appealing to them, and filling their books with the express citations of their words.

4. We show them the arguments of exasperated heretics, who all plead the same Scriptures, and acknowledge them even while they wrest and abuse them; yea, very few of them did ever attempt the depraving of them, and those few to their great disgrace.

5. We show them the infallible records of several countries and nations in the world, east and west, and south and north, that this Scripture hath been among them and translated into their languages, Ethiopic, Persian, Arabic, Syriac, Sclavonian, &c.; which old translations do still remain, and, in all things of moment, agree.

6. We show them infallible records of multitudes of christians, that for the doctrine of this Scripture have sacrificed their lives.

7. We show them the laws of the Roman empire since Constantine's days, confirming the Scripture and religion, and the edicts of former emperors; some persecuting it, and some abating those persecutions.

8. We show them the Jews now living, the great enemies of the christian name, who never deny but that this is the same Scripture and religion that was, by the apostles, delivered down to us.

9. We show them all the nations of Mahometans now living, who, for the chief part, do confess the same.

10. We show them all the records of the former carriages of the enemies of christianity: 1. Both in the controversial writings of our own with them, as Origen, Athanasius, Eusebius, Cyril, Augustin, &c. with all our apologies to the heathens, as Justin's, Athenagoras', Lactantius', Clemens Alexandrinus', Arnobius', &c. 2. And also the writings of the enemies themselves, so many as are extant: in all which it appears that they took it for granted, and denied not, that this is the same Scripture and religion which was delivered to us from the beginning.

11. We show them the ministers of the gospel now in being, and prove, by all the unquestionable records of friends and foes, that there hath been a succession of such ministers from the apostles till now. Of the necessity of succession in a particular church, I speak not, nor of the necessity of an uninterrupted succession of a regular ordination by man to that office; but that a succession there hath been in the universal church, and each particular where the gospel hath continued, of men of this office, whose employment was constantly to preach this Scripture, and build men up in this religion, and guide them in the practice of it: all this is confessed by the persecutors that murdered them, as well as by the whole history of the church, and that part of the world.

12. We show them the present churches in being, I mean the people that profess and practise this religion, and receive this Scripture; and we show them the unquestionable records of the church and the enemies; attesting, that such a people or churches there have been since the apostles' days. What man will make question of this? And, if there have been christians, then there hath been the christian doctrine and religion: they are the subjects of this religion. That proves there have been societies of stoics, Platonists, or peripatetics, so long, doth prove that their doctrine hath been so long. If

there have been christian churches so long, then there hath been the christian religion so long.

13. We show them undoubted records of the constant, solemn assemblies of christians, to profess and practise this religion.

14. And also of the Lord's day appointed to be the solemn, separated time, besides others, for such constant assemblies: all which tend to the preservation and certain proof of the continuation and tradition of that Scripture and religion. One part of their work was to read the Scripture in their assemblies.

And as we thus prove the undoubted tradition of Scripture, so do we, 2. Also, of all the fore-mentioned forms of religion. Not only as these are delivered in and with the Scripture, but compendiums delivered to the people by themselves; so that in the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Commandments, with baptism, &c. was the substance of the christian religion so delivered, that men were saved by it before the Scripture was seen, I mean the New Testament, and thousands might, for aught we know, be saved by it after, that knew not the Scripture; yet was not the Scripture, therefore, unnecessary, or less excellent: for though the sum of religion, enough to the being of christianity, and so much as may save, might by tradition be preserved from age to age, in a form of words, yea, though there had been no writing in the world.

Yet, 1. Writing the same thing is a surer and easier way, and leaves it most undoubted to posterity, that there hath been no change. 2. And it was not so easy nor so probable a way, without writing, to have preserved uncorrupted such copious doctrines, histories, and larger instructions, as were necessary to the well-being of the church: and, therefore, God was pleased, both for our more undoubted security, and for our fuller information, to deliver it us down in writing, even in the very words, as it was delivered to his churches, by the direction of the Holy Ghost.

3. The same may be said concerning our certainty of the third particular, viz. the tradition of church ordinances, which contain the sum of the christian religion. All the foresaid fourteen arguments, besides many more that might be given, do prove all three.

Object. Doth not this, with the papists, ascribe too much to tradition? *Ans.* No: there are several sorts of tradition. 1. As to the agent. 2. As to the manner of the action. 3. As to the end: in all which, our tradition differs from theirs.

1. We allow the apostles' delivering of the word to the churches by voice.

2. And by writing.

3. And the church's delivering that writing, and forms of doctrine, and directories for practice, by word or writing to their posterity.

And, 4. Parents delivering all this (book writing and verbal forms and custom of ordinances) to their children.

5. And all ministers delivering them by word, or writing, to those whom they teach.

6. And writers of all ages delivered the truth, historically, doctrinally.

7. The unanimous consent of other churches, manifested in their immediate professions and practices.

8. The declaration of such consent by councils, on fit occasions congregated.

9. The concessions of heretics.

10. The testimony of infidels. All these traditions we make use of.

But the tradition of a visible head or vicar of the catholic church, or of an infallible person, or of a

particular church, pretending to be the universal, this we do disclaim.

2. And as to the manner, we allow an apostolical authoritative tradition by the apostles; and a ministerial authoritative tradition by every minister, and a tradition by testimony from all the churches and enemies also: but a tradition by way of decision by one pretending now an authority of being judge to all the world, when the other churches see not his grounds, this we leave to the Romanists.

3. Also, a tradition for the conveying of Scripture from age to age, and a tradition of the sum or compendium of Scripture doctrine in a form by itself; this we allow. But a tradition of necessary, unwritten verities to supply the supposed defects of Scripture, and to add the doctrine that there is wanting, as if it were but part of God's word, this we leave to the papists. Yet, if we had assurance that any other doctrine were delivered down from the apostles, which is not in Scripture, though it were but by word of mouth, we would receive it as of God: but we know of no such evidence of any such traditions, and therefore cannot entertain them.

And thus I have resolved that question, whether this which we now profess be the religion which was delivered by the first churches, and so by the apostles?

Sect. 8. If any will suppose that the other part of the question doth need a further distinct resolution, viz. whether the apostles delivered it to the first churches, as they did to us? I answer, first, It is proved by most that hath been said already. Secondly, It was the apostles that turned them to christianity; and that is, to this religion which we inquire after. They had not been made churches or christians by the apostles, if they had not received the christian religion from them. Thirdly, They prove it by the apostles' own writings to them. Fourthly, All about them would have evinced them of forgery else, if they had pretended to have their religion from the apostles, when they had not. Fifthly, The apostles had no worldly glory or dignity, which might incite so many thousands to forge their names. Sixthly, It was impossible for so many persons of so many distant nations through the earth, to agree in such an action. Seventhly, The apostles themselves would have discerned and disclosed it in their own days. Eighthly, All the enemies of the church, Jews, and heathens, and heretics, confess, without the least doubt, that it was from the apostles that the churches received the christian religion. Ninthly, Had it been from any other, they would not have hid it, but have gloried in their leader, and he in his design. Tenthly, No other came with that authority of miracles, which might compel belief, so that to say, the first churches had not the christian religion from the apostles, is to be blind against the fullest convincing evidence.

Sect. 9. We have thus followed our religion up the stream, till we have brought it unquestionably to the apostles themselves: our next question, then, in order to be resolved, will be, how it is proved that the apostles spoke truth, in their preachings and writings of the christian religion? To which we answer, the great argument (not excluding divers others) is, from the infallible testimony of the Holy Ghost, by multitudes of apparent, uncontrolled miracles, sealing to their doctrine, and illuminating men, and writing this gospel in their hearts.

And thus we are by degrees come up to the matter of our question, of the obligation of miracles: concerning which I shall first lay down these preparatory conclusions, and then affirm the question, and prove the affirmative.

Prop. 1. Miracles do oblige by way of sign or seal, as declaring God's interest in and owning of the testimony to which they are annexed.

This is concerning the way of their obligation: they oblige most directly to credit the testimony.

Prop. 2. The seal of miracles was not affixed to every word that an apostle should speak, nor did it make them in all things impeccable or infallible. But it is affixed to those works, which they were commissioned to perform, and obligeth us to believe, that in doing the works, which, as apostles, they were sent upon, they did not err: that is, in being witnesses of Christ's oral doctrine, life, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension. And in delivering his doctrine to the world, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them.

Prop. 3. All that they did in preaching this doctrine, and writing it to the churches, being the work on which they were thus sent, it followeth that their miracles sealed all this; and so that every word of their writings of this subject are of certain and sealed truth.

Prop. 4. Those that affirm that it was but the doctrine of christianity that was sealed by the Holy Ghost, and in which they were infallible, but that their writings were in circumstantial, and by passages, and method, and words, and other modal respects, imperfect and fallible as other good men's, (in a less degree,) though they heinously and dangerously err, yet do not destroy or hazard the christian religion by it. For if we could not prove, that every historical, chronological, or personal by-passage, or difficult lesser point there delivered, were sealed by the Holy Ghost, yet if we can prove that the christian religion contained in that writing was so sealed, it sufficeth to confirm that religion, beyond doubt.

Prop. 5. The supernatural works of Christ, and the Holy Ghost in his disciples, did indispensably oblige all that beheld them, to believe that the testimony was divine, which they were affixed to. This is the very root of all the controversy between the christian and the infidel; and hither all is at last devolved.

If they that saw these miracles were not bound to believe the testimony which they sealed to be of God, then it must be either because their senses were deceived, and they uncertain whether they might credit their eyes and ears; or else because the testimony itself was invalid, and insufficient to compel belief. There is no third reason imaginable. For if they were certain that their sight and hearing deceived them not, but that they did indeed see and hear what they supposed they did; and, 2. If the testimony of the Holy Ghost, which they saw and heard, were unquestionably divine; then there is no doubt but the doctrine, or the testimony of the preachers, was divine, which was sealed with this testimony of the Holy Ghost.

1. And for the first, if any man say, that all their eyes and ears were deceived, and that the thousands who supposed that they spoke with tongues, or heard others do it, or saw the great works that were done, were all mistaken; they will sure take their own senses to be fallible as well as other men's, and not advance themselves in point of sensibility above the rest of mankind. And if none else will doubt of the truth of christianity, but those that doubt of the certainty of sense, we may well leave it at this issue, and give over arguing for it. And for such men, I would have them honoured with no other disputation, than to be tied to the fool's post, and whipped till they are sure that they feel the smart, and are able to conclude of the certainty of sense.

2. And for the latter point, that the Holy Ghost, that is, a Spirit of such wisdom, power, and holiness, as appeared in the doctrine, miracles, and lives of the disciples, is indeed the Spirit of God, and a sufficient seal to the christian faith, it is so clear to the very light of common reason, and I have said so much for it already, that I will say but thus much now.

The full resolved denial of this truth, is the sin against the Holy Ghost: to say, that it was Satan that was the Spirit from whom proceeded the wise doctrine, mighty works, and holy hearts and lives of Christ's disciples, may well be the unpardonable sin, supposing it be concluded with the whole heart, when it is so horrid a blasphemy, as to make the devil himself to be God, by ascribing God's attributes and prerogatives to him, and doth reject the last and most potent evidence that can be expected for conviction. For if Satan can be such a spirit of wisdom, power, and sanctity, and if he can do such miracles without control from heaven, to persuade poor mortals to an entertainment of error, and to delude the world, who have no sufficient means to discover the delusion; then it plainly follows, that the devil is the wise, powerful, and Holy Spirit, and that he is the governor of the world; that is, that he is God, or that God hath so little mercy or justice as to give up the world to the power of the devil to be remedilessly deluded by him, so that they that fain would know the true way of worshipping God, yet cannot know it. And that God hath lent his seal to the devil to sign his delusions. And he that will rather believe this than the christian faith, deserves remedilessly to perish for his blasphemous, malicious infidelity.

Moreover, I demand of them that deny the sufficiency of this evidence of the Holy Ghost, what evidence they do desire, or will take for sufficient to compel them to believe, which is fit for God to use with such creatures as we? We are not capable of seeing God himself, or hearing him speak immediately to us; nor hath God the voice or tongue of a man, though he can create both. If one should rise from the dead, it would be far more questionable and less convincing. Angels we know not, the good from the bad, nor when they speak rightly; but so much evidence as this can afford, was afforded; for the voice from heaven was heard of Christ, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him." The angels were seen with Christ in the mount, and sitting by his grave; and divers times they appeared to the apostles. I conclude, therefore, that if the Holy Ghost so given were not a sufficient proof that the testimony and doctrine of the apostles was of God, it is past my understanding to discover what evidence would be sufficient.

I do all this while suppose that the first churches did see and hear these works of the Holy Ghost, because that is anon to be proved; and I now have showed that sense being certain, and the works a certain seal of God, it must needs follow that all they that did indeed see and hear them, were obliged to believe beyond all doubt, that the doctrine which they did confirm was owned by God, and so was of certain truth.

Having proved that miracles obliged them that saw them to believe, I come now to affirm and prove the question.

Prop. 6. The Holy Spirit of Christ, appearing in his own and his disciples' doctrine, works, and lives, doth indispensably oblige, even those who never heard them preach, or saw those works, to believe the certain truth of the christian faith, and, consequently, of the Holy Scriptures.

This proposition supposeth that such a spirit of miracles would oblige us to believe, if we ourselves did see them: for, 1. This is proved. 2. The infidel seekers whom we deal with, pretend to confess it, at least, in their ordinary discourse; so that the doubt is, whether our not seeing do hinder our obligation? I prove the proposition by these arguments following:

Argument I.

All they to whom the gospel and the foresaid miracles are revealed in sufficient evidence of their certain truth, are bound, by the seal of those miracles, to believe the doctrine of the gospel to be of God. But to us, and millions more, that never saw them, the gospel and the said miracles are revealed in sufficient evidence of their certain truth. Therefore, we are bound by the seal of those miracles, though we never saw them, to believe the doctrine of the gospel to be of God.

By sufficient, I mean, in its own place and kind sufficient; but not absolutely and in all kinds; for evidence supposeth many other things, especially in the receiver, to actual intellection or belief. A sound understanding in due reasoning, and by the supposed helps which are common in the church, may discern this evidence; therefore it is sufficient.

The major is past doubt. The reason why they that saw miracles were obliged by them to believe, is because they had sufficient evidence of their certain truth that such things were done. But we that do not see them may have such evidence; therefore, they may oblige us as well as them. What can we expect more from God to oblige us, than a sufficient revelation of that which carrieth the signification of his will? All that needs proof, therefore, is the minor; whether have we such a certain revelation, or may any that saw not have it?

I prove, first, that there is a certainty of matters of fact, without seeing them.

Secondly, That we have such of these in question.

1. For the first, universal consent doth save me the labour of further proof. All men confess that there is certainty in some reports and histories. Many a thousand in England that never saw any fighting, are yet certain that we have had a war in England; and many that never saw him are certain that we had a king, and that he was beheaded. We are certain there are such countries as France, Spain, Italy, though we never saw them. So that all men grant that some human testimony hath such a certainty. And that we have, *de facto*, a certain revelation that this Holy Ghost was poured out on the first churches, and wrought miracles among them before their eyes, I prove thus: If we have an infallible testimony of this, from those same men who possessed this Holy Ghost and saw these miracles, then we have a certain revelation of it. But that we have such an infallible testimony I prove: and, first, I will show you the testimony itself; secondly, the infallibility of it.

The first christian churches, generally, have attested to us, *de facto*, that such a Spirit was poured forth, and such miracles wrought, by these five means, which, taken conjunctly, make up the fullest testimony that we can reasonably desire.

First, By the preaching and doing of these miracles, they were converted, and became christians and churches: it was the preaching of Christ's miracles, resurrection, and ascension, and of the Holy Ghost to be given, and the sight of what was done by the apostles in confirmation of it, that wrought the change, and brought them in. This is still visible

in the gospel which was preached. So that the very being of all those churches, is their full attestation to the truth of the miracles, and giving of the Holy Ghost. That which never was, at least in their apprehensions, could not have produced such great alterations and strange effects in the world. And to imagine that all their senses did deceive them, is ourselves to become mad, in feigning them to be so from whom we see the effects of a sound mind. And that it was indeed miracles that did convert them, appears, 1. In that it is recorded fully in the writings which themselves have delivered us (of which more anon); 2. In that the doctrine delivered to them being supernatural, above the reach of common reason, and contrary to the interest of the flesh, was unlikely to have been entertained without such means; 3. And it is confessed by the enemies. So that I may well take the conversion of the multitudes of unbelievers, and the very being of the churches, for one evidence that they saw the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the miracles then wrought.

Secondly, The same hath the church attested by owning the Holy Scriptures, and delivering them as the unquestionable writings of the apostles. The substance of the gospel is much of the miracles and resurrection of Christ. The Acts of the Apostles containeth many of their miracles: both that and the Epistles do testify that the gift of the Holy Ghost was then common to the disciples; and that whole households, and great part of cities, (as Samaria, &c.) received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the apostles' hands, (so that Simon would have bought that power with money,) and that commonly in the churches for many years after; by this Spirit they spake with tongues, and prophesied, and healed the sick, &c. I mention not all this as now supposing these Scriptures to be divine, but as proving them divine by the Holy Ghost, and using them now as the testimony of the first churches. For we had (as is proved) all these Scriptures from them, commended to us as the writings of the apostles, and words of truth: which testimony or approbation they would never have given if they had known all these reports to be false. So that the church's act of delivering us the Scripture as true, doth attest the truth of those matters of fact, whereof themselves were the eye and ear-witnesses.

Thirdly, The same truth of these miracles was attested by those first churches, by their great sufferings and confessions before magistrates, and ordinary martyrdom, which they underwent, because they would not deny the truth of these very things, and because they proclaimed them.

Fourthly, The same truth of these miracles the first churches have attested, by vocal and practical tradition. Neighbours did assert it, and teach it their neighbours: parents delivered it to their children. They made it the greatest act of charity to convince a neighbour of it, that he might believe; and the greatest act of love and parental duty, to acquaint their children with these things. As to this day, we do not only show the Bible to children and neighbours, but we distinctly acquaint them with the main contents, and sum of the christian religion, and so did the first churches: by which they attested that the things were true.

Also, their constant practising the religion thus confirmed, doth attest it both in the public ordinary worship of God, and in their lives towards men.

Fifthly, It was most fully attested by the standing office and constant work of the preachers of the gospel. Two sorts of preachers were then among them. Some that were to go abroad and persuade

Jews and heathens of the truth of this gospel, and make them disciples, and baptize them. Some that were resident with particular churches already called, to teach them more fully the doctrine, which these miracles did confirm, and to guide them in the practice of it. It was the office and daily business of these teachers, to acquaint them with that gospel which declareth these great works. They had special meetings every Lord's day to that very end, even in remembrance of Christ's resurrection (which very day, much more all the works of the day, is a record of their believing it to be true). These ministers were men known and approved of by the churches, so that as the skill in physic, law, philosophy, &c. hath been delivered down by a succession of teachers of these sciences, one teaching another, and fitting him to teach it to others again, so hath the sum of sacred history and doctrine been delivered. The apostles, by their own consent, appointed over the churches in their days teachers and overseers, whose office it should be to teach these things.

I leave it, therefore, as utterly past doubt, by these five ways of attestation, that we have the universal testimony of those first churches, that the report of these miracles and gift of the Holy Ghost, is a certain truth. And themselves being the possessors, agents, or eye-witnesses, could not be deceived, unless they were all mad.

2. I am next to show you the infallibility of their testimony, that certainly they have not all conspired to deceive the world, but did themselves believe what they did thus profess to believe: it is commonly objected, that the acts of a free agent being contingent, and all men being defectible and fallible, therefore we can have no proper absolute certainty upon the testimony of any men. But as man's freedom is *servato ordine finis*, and as nature doth infallibly incline him to his natural end, so a man may pass an infallible judgment of man's acts, where the prevalent interest of nature and the end are certainly visible; and that not only in cases past, but in prognostics of things to come. And, therefore, (as is said,) I certainly know by human testimony, that men were burned for supposed heresy in Queen Mary's days, that King Edward before her, and Queen Elizabeth after her, did befriend the reformed doctrine and worship. And though I cannot say it of any one man, yet I am certain of a whole city, country, or nation, that they will not all hang themselves or famish themselves wilfully, unless they be intoxicated, or bewitched, or all run mad.

And that the church's testimony in question is infallible, you may see in these particulars following.

1. They were thousands of persons that attested it, and not a few only.

2. They were of several countries through the world, for the apostles divided the world among them, for the propagation of this gospel.

3. They were people of several languages, dispositions, and interests.

All this sheweth, first, that so many persons and countries could not possibly have a prevalent motive to carry them all purposely to deceive the world with a volume of lies; no more than all the people of England can have a prevalent motive to persuade them all, to pretend that we have had a war here, and tell the world of our several fights, when there was no such matter. Allow the remnants of common honesty and veracity to have their reasonable force, and consider the strength of what is pretended to bear it down in so many, and you will see that there is no possibility of such a deceit.

Secondly; and it sheweth, that such men could not possibly forge such a volume of miracles, if they

would: for first, they could not all come together, nor have any opportunity to agree in the contrivance, being in several parts of the world; nor was it ever imagined by their fiercest or foolishlest adversaries, that they did such a thing: could all the poor persecuted christians in Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, Rome, and the rest of the world, combine to delude all their posterity, and the rest of the world, by telling them that such a history of miracles was true, when it was not?

4. But, yet further, this will appear if we consider, how many malicious Jews and heathens were among them, that might have easily evinced such a deceit, and made them for it the shame of the world: yea, when miracles were wrought before these enemies, and the gift of tongues used in their hearing; for they were purposely for the convincing of unbelievers.

5. Yet do the enemies confess the fact, else what need the Pharisees have blasphemed the Holy Ghost; and said, They were done by the power of Beelzebub: yea, Julian, and the worst enemies of the christians, did confess them. The Turks, to this day, do confess them: so doth Mahomet, their prophet, in his Alcoran: and so do the very Jews themselves, that now live.

6. Consider, also, that the apostles had many enemies in the church, such as fell into heresy, and being convinced by miracles of the truth of christianity, and yet taking it for a heinous sin to take down the law of Moses, they joined both together, and so opposed the apostles; and, therefore, would soon have discovered so gross a delusion as this is supposed to be.

7. Yea, and the apostles appealed to miracles, and the gift of the Spirit, as the proof of their apostleship against all these false teachers.

8. Yea, when many of their followers were drawn away by them, and began to think meanly of them in comparison of the seducers, they appeal to these works for the satisfying of the people, both of their office and doctrine; insomuch as Paul, with much sharpness, asks the Galatians who had bewitched them, and calls them foolish, and challenges them to answer, 1. Whether themselves received this Spirit by the law or faith; 2. And whether they that yet work miracles among them did it by the law or faith, Gal. iii. 1—3.

9. Consider, also, whether such writings, preachings, and provocations would not have caused the apostles to be derided of all, and have turned back those that were inclined to christianity, if they had not been true. To persuade them first to believe a volume of Christ's miracles, done in the open world, and to believe his resurrection and ascension; and to make the giving of the Holy Ghost to be that seal, which should credit this report with their hearers; and to preach and write to themselves, that this Holy Ghost was commonly given by the laying on of their hands, yea, given to these their hearers, yea, so common, that he that had not the Spirit of Christ was none of his; and to tell them of miracles still among them, and persuade them to desire rather the more edifying gifts, when they speak to the church, than the gift of tongues, which was to convince unbelievers, &c. If all these things had been feigned, would they not rather have tended to make all men condemn them, who might so easily know it, and could not but know it, than to establish them in the faith, or turn the world?

10. It is most certain that all the first churches, who have delivered us the report of these gifts and miracles, did not intend to delude us, because they lost their own worldly profits, pleasures, and honours by this profession, and lived a life of great suffering

to the flesh, and multitudes laid down their lives in the cause; and is it possible, I say possible, that many countries, or so many thousand persons of so many parts of the world, should combine to ruin themselves, and cast themselves on unavoidable calamity, contempt, and, many of them, death itself, and all to deceive the world, in a matter by which themselves can be no way advantaged? I think I need to say no more to prove this impossible. You see then that the first christians were christians indeed, (for that is all I have to prove,) and did believe what they pretended to believe, and were not all dissemblers nor cheaters of the world in the testimony which they delivered them.

If any object that the certainty of some of the things before mentioned dependeth so much on history and records of antiquity, which unlearned men are unacquainted with, and therefore they cannot be obliged to believe, I answer in these particulars:

1. The thing is nevertheless evident, because you know it not.

2. It concerneth all men to do what they can to attain that acquaintance with history and antiquity, by which they may be enabled to see the truth in its fullest evidence.

3. No man can know that the Magna Charta, the Petition of Right, or any statute of this land, are indeed genuine and authentic as being the acts of such kings and parliaments, but upon the credit of tradition. Shall the unlearned, therefore, conclude that they are not bound by any such statute law, or custom, or that the tenure of their liberties and lands, by such a charter, is uncertain or bad; because that no man can know but by records of antiquity, whether these statutes and charters be authentic or no? Doubtless, men that are not acquainted with antiquity, have a sufficient means to know that these are not forged statutes or charters; for they have the concurrent testimony of all that are skilled in the laws, and have had better opportunity to search records and understand antiquity, than they have had; yea, and they may be certain that all these do not deceive them, when they know that there can be no motive to draw them to such a thing, but much against it, and if some were deceivers others would discover it, with divers the like considerations. So that the most unlearned man is so far bound to believe the statute against felony to be authentic, and in force, that he shall justly be hanged if he break it; and it shall be no sufficient excuse for him to say, I could not tell without skill in antiquities, whether this statute were counterfeit or not.

4. The case is much alike here in the point in hand. When all divines or other learned men, that are acquainted with history, do unanimously affirm that these records are certain, and when the way to the same knowledge is open to all that have time and help to study it, we may, by a human faith, be here infallibly certain, as an unlearned man may be that there is such a place as Jerusalem or Rome; or as a scholar that understands the Latin or Greek, but not a word of Hebrew, may yet be certain, by a concurrence of evidences, that there is such a thing as the Hebrew tongue, and such books as Genesis, Exodus, &c. written in it, and that the translators do not herein deceive him. And this is one use of ministers in the church; and the people may and must believe their teachers with a human, yet certain faith, that these records have been thus delivered to us down by tradition, and other parts of common historical verties before mentioned.

Argument II.

The contrary doctrine of the apostates is self-contradicting and absurd; for, whereas they pretend

that they, and they only, are bound to believe, that see the miracles, by this means they leave God incapable of convincing the world by miracles: for miracles would lose their convincing force, and be as no miracles, if they were common to all, and in all ages. For it is not so much the power that is manifest in that work simply considered, that proves it any testimony to the doctrine, or that would convince; but it is the extraordinary application of omnipotency that sealeth the truth. It is a work of as great power to cause the sun to move as to stand still, or the sea to keep its course as to change it, or the living to continue in life as for the dead to rise, and to give eye-sight at birth or in the womb, and to give it twenty years after: but it would not have confirmed Christ's doctrine so much, if Lazarus had not died, as if he be raised again; or that a man be born with eye-sight, as that he be restored to it that was born blind; and so of the rest. Now, these men would have every man, in every country and age in the world, to see miracles, or else not be bound to believe; and I think, on the same ground, they must see particular miracles, for the sealing of each particular truth that they receive; and, then, miracles would be common, and so lose their force and be as none: then, every infidel would say, This is a common thing. If it were as common for the sun to stand still as to move, or for the dead to be raised, as the sick to be healed, or a child to be born; do you think it would be a fit evidence to convince these unbelievers of the christian truth?

Argument III.

That doctrine which would deprive all the world of the benefit of God's miraculous works, except those that see them, though others are capable of it, is a false doctrine: but such is the doctrine which we here oppose; *ergo*,

That others are capable of such benefit, is proved before; as also by the experience of all ages. May not this age remember God's works in reforming the churches; in delivering this nation from the Spanish invasion, in eighty-eight; from the powder-plot, &c.; for the confirming of our faith and confidence in God, and exciting our hearts to a thankfulness for his mercy. May we not, yea, must we not, be awed and warned by God's recorded former judgments; even those that were done in the days of our forefathers, and in all generations that come to our knowledge: but if we are not bound to believe them, because we ourselves did not see them, then we cannot improve them, or get the benefit: and if we are not bound to believe our ancestors, and the histories or records of the church, or those that are skilful therein, concerning works that are miraculous, and therefore more observable, then we are not bound to believe them concerning other deliverances or judgments. There is no way for us to be acquainted with such matters of fact, but either by our own sight, or by immediate revelation from heaven, or by tradition and testimony of them that saw them. He that expecteth either to live in the sight of miracles, or under the immediate revelation from heaven of historical things, is a very vain, unreasonable man. The testimony of those that saw, must be the medium between their senses and ours, and must be to us instead of sight. I say, tradition is to us instead of sight, and that is the proper use of it: and he that would rob the world of the benefit of all God's works, which they have not seen them-

selves, is no good friend to them, nor very wise man. Must none believe that the world was drowned with water, but those that saw it? Must none believe that Christ was incarnate, but they that saw him? If they must, then they must on the same grounds believe his miracles, though they did not see them: if not, they must not believe that there was ever a king in England, or that there is any such place as Rome or Jerusalem, or any country but England on earth, because they never saw them.

Argument IV.

That doctrine which would rob God of the honour of all his most wondrous works, which we never saw, is a false and wicked doctrine. But such is the doctrine which we here oppose; therefore,

Should God have no glory for bringing Israel out of Egypt, by any but that age that saw his wonders? Why, then, doth he call for it in all following ages? These men think that the Israelites of following ages were not bound to believe the very preface to the Ten Commandments; that God brought them out of the land of Egypt, and the house of bondage. Should this age give God no glory for any deliverance in former ages, or any work of providence that was done since the beginning of the world till now? What a foolish and impious conceit is this! They may as well say, that he that liveth all his days in this town, or is cloistered in a cell, should not believe that the world is any bigger than he sees, nor should give God any glory for the rest of his workmanship. Human testimony is the light by which we must behold his former works to his praise.

Argument V.

If we are not bound to believe God's wondrous works, which we see not, then our ancestors, or teachers, are not bound to tell them us. But the consequent is false; therefore, so is the antecedent.

Why should men be bound to tell us that which we are not bound to believe upon their report? God bindeth no man to use any means in vain. But that we are bound to tell others of God's wondrous works, is clear in nature, as well as Scripture.

1. What greater use have we our tongues and languages for?

2. Our allegiance to God requireth it.

3. Our love to men, to posterity, to the world, requires it.

4. Our love to truth will bind us to propagate it. I do not think, for all their foolish cavilling, but that if one of these apostate infidels should see the dead raised, or should have an angel from heaven deliver them a book, and say, This is the truth; they would think it their duty to tell it abroad, and other men's duty to believe their report. Is it not our duty to tell to posterity the deliverances which God had wrought for us? And for those that have seen any mercy or judgment in peace or war, to tell those that saw it not? But why should they tell those that are not bound to believe them?

Argument VI.

That doctrine which would put out the eyes of the world, and bring them all to folly and barbarous ignorance, and would destroy all teaching, and all human converse, societies, and government, is false and detestable: but such is the doctrine which we here oppose; therefore,

If we are not bound to believe men, when they

report the most wondrous works of God, then we are not bound to believe them in lesser things, which we first see not, or know not ourselves. And if so, then the fore-mentioned consequents will follow.

1. Take away from men the credit of history, and let them know nothing but what hath been in their own days, and what a mole do you leave man! But further take away from him the credit of human testimony, and let him know nothing of any other country, or of his own, but what he sees, and you so far put out his eyes, that you leave him scarce a man, and may next shut him up again in the womb.

2. How shall any man teach another any art, language, or science, if the scholar ought not to believe his teacher? If he that would teach you Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, tell you the power of each letter, and the signification of each word, and you say, I am not bound to believe you, because I know it not to be true myself, how then will he learn? So in other cases. And if there be no teaching or learning, what knowledge will there be? If children must practise this doctrine also, and not learn any thing of their own fathers or mothers, because they know it not first themselves, and therefore need not believe them; then we should have a world of infants, and they would not be taught so much as to speak. But the best is, this idiot doctrine is so unnatural, that it must be violated before it can be practised: you must believe others, before you can learn that others are not to be believed; and, therefore, children are not in much danger of it. He that tells me that I am not bound to believe others, I hope will give me leave to suppose, then, that I am not bound to believe him that tells me so; for by believing him I shall cross his doctrine: nor will he suppose that I should credit him more than others, or than all the world.

3. There can be no societies kept up, without believing one another.

4. No, nor any human converse. If men should live every one as purely independent from the rest of the world, no men could enter into any contracts or covenants.

5. Nor could there be any government of any commonwealth. The subject should not be bound to believe that he hath a king, unless he see him, nor that the laws are true and genuine, and not forged; nor could men buy or sell, or have any security of their proprieties for want of witnesses, nor be accused of any crime, or wrong doing, because no witnesses should be to be believed. If a man's estate and life shall be in the power of two or three witnesses by the laws of God and nations, except where there is just exceptions against them, and proof of the contrary to what they attest; sure, this is on supposition of some powerful inclination to verity in nature, and of so much natural honesty and conscience in mankind, as that so great concerns may be laid upon them. How much more, then, should so many thousand witnesses be believed in a case, for God and our souls, where we know that they cannot possibly deceive us!

Argument VII.

That doctrine which would tie God to be at the beck of every unreasonable infidel, to satisfy him by miracles, when he hath afforded him ordinary, sufficient means, is a false and ungodly doctrine. But such is the doctrine which we here oppose; therefore,

That ordinary, human testimony is a sufficient means to inform us of the certainty of former miracles, I have already showed: and also that those

miracles are sufficient attestations on God's part of his owning the doctrine so attested. If, therefore, every infidel after all this say, I will not believe unless I see, they deserve rather punishment than satisfaction. Then, if God had showed a miracle to a thousand, yea, to all the city or country, except one man, he must do all over again for the convincing of that one man, because he will believe no man else. This were to subvert the whole frame of providential government, and to turn extraordinaries into ordinaries, and to teach all men to live by sense. But thus God will not do to satisfy every or any unbeliever.

Argument VIII.

If God do not use such common, repeated miracles to convince the world with, of the verity of the christian religion, then they are not necessary absolutely to that end. But God doth not use such, &c.; therefore,

That miracles are now ceased, at least so as not to be common to every man, is beyond doubt. And that God withdraweth not any means without which the world cannot rationally be convinced, is as certain: they that affirm the contrary must affirm that he now obligeth us not to believe, that is, that it is no duty to be a christian; which I have disproved before; and use this argument against those seekers only, who yet pretend not to renounce their christianity.

Argument IX.

God doth still effectually convince millions of men of the certainty of the christian religion, and that without renewed miracles. Therefore there is a sufficient way of such conviction without them.

Ab esse ad posse, ab actu secundo ad potentiam, ab efficientia ad sufficientiam, the argument is doubtful. If God ordinarily do it, then it may be done, and then the way is sufficient, and the other not of absolute necessity. If any infidel say that all these that seem convinced of the truth of the gospel are deluded, and take their own imaginations for certain apprehensions, I answer, 1. They themselves know the contrary to their own satisfaction.

2. Some of them are able to show sufficient reasons of their faith and hope to others, and have often done it.

Argument X.

Lastly: I shall, for the sake of those that yet own christianity, produce some Scripture testimonies, from whence it shall appear that it was not the intent of God to work miracles before all that ought to believe, nor to continue them to all following ages, but to send down a sufficient testimony that formerly they were wrought, and thereby to oblige posterity to believe: and also that we are obliged to believe the testimony of our ancestors and teachers, as they are bound to instruct us.

1. "That I might show these, my signs, before him, and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done amongst them, that ye may know how that I am the Lord," Exod. x. 1, 2. Here you have, 1. The convincing evidence, God's miracles. 2. The person that saw them was Pharaoh. 3. Yet must the Israelites declare them to posterity, and therefore posterity must believe them. 4. And that to prove to them that God is the Lord.

2. "Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. That which the palmer-worm hath left, hath the locust eaten," &c. Joel i. 2—4. You see here tradition must be instead of the sight of the fact.

3. "And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses," Exod. xii. 14, 17, 26, 27, 42. Here is tradition by ordinance and words, which posterity must believe.

4. "For I spake not with your children, which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm, and his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt, unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land, and what he did unto the army of Egypt," &c. "But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he did. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates, that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children," Deut. xi. 2—7, 19, 21.

5. See, also, Deut. xxix. 22—27, &c.

6. "That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean you by these stones? then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, when it passed over Jordan; the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever," Josh. iv. 6, 7, 22—24.

7. See, also, Josh. xxii. 24—32.

8. "Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that you may tell it to the generation following," Psalm xlviii. 13.

9. "Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: and might not be as their fathers," &c. Psalm lxxviii. 1—8.

10. "This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord," Psalm cii. 18.

11. "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts," Psalm cxlv. 4. See ver. 5—7, 11, 21.

12. "The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham," &c. "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations," Exod. iii. 15.

13. "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days," &c. "that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought

them out of the land of Egypt," &c. Levit. xxiii. 42, 43.

14. Psalm lxxxix. 1.

15. "And ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," Acts i. 8.

16. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses," Acts ii. 32. So Acts iii. 14, 15, "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses."

17. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged upon a tree; him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour," &c. "And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost," &c. Acts v. 30—32.

18. "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel," &c. "which was published throughout all Judea," &c.; "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him: and we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they slew and hanged on a tree; him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead: and he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead," Acts x. 38—41.

19. "But God raised him from the dead, and he was seen many days of them, which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings," &c. Acts xiii. 30, 31.

20. See, also, Acts i. 22; iv. 33; xxii. 15; xxvi. 16; 1 Pet. v. 1; Heb. ii. 3; Luke iv. 22; John i. 15, 32, 34; v. 33; xii. 17; ix. 35; xv. 27; Acts xxiii. 11; 1 John i. 2; with divers others, which all show that it was the office of the apostles, and the duty of all others that saw Christ's miracles, to bear witness of them, and that others should receive that witness. And though God did enable those first witnesses to seal also their witness with the gift of the Holy Ghost, given by God at the laying on of their hands or at their preaching, or by miracles, yet those that saw not those miracles were bound to believe their witness; and the gospel was by them committed to others, that were by preaching, though mostly without miracles, to convince the rest of the world, and propagate it to posterity.

21. "And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou unto faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," 2 Tim. ii. 2. This is the way of propagating the gospel. So, 1 Tim. vi. 20.

I conclude with that of Christ to Thomas: "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed," John xx. 29. I might have added even those texts that require parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to teach them the doctrine of redemption and salvation: and he that saith either that every parent can work miracles, or that no child is to believe his parents that cannot work them, is unworthy to be the parent or instructor of children, much more to be a teacher of men.

We must next answer some of the apostates' objections.

Object. 1. Imagination is strong, and the multitude easily deceived, as we see by experience.

Ans. Yet sense is a certain judge, and it is not easy to deceive the senses of so many thousands, through the space of so many years together, so as to persuade both cities, congregations, and countries, that they see and hear what they do not, and to venture their credit, estates, lives, and everlasting hopes upon it: show us such an experiment.

Object. 2. Men of other religions are as confident that they received them from God as the christians, and yet are mistaken.

Ans. I know but of three religions in the world besides the christian, that any considerable number do embrace.

1. The greatest part of the world are idolaters, that worship many feigned deities, and know not God. These are, for the generality, brutishly ignorant and sottish, and pretend to no more than custom and nature, for the reason of their religion; and are able to say nothing considerable for what they do, as they that converse with them in the Indies or other parts do fully testify.

2. The Mahometans, whose leader pretended to be a prophet, and hath made them some ridiculous laws against the law of nature itself, confirmed by no miracles nor divine testimony, but having got a rout of barbarians to follow him, he and his successors did prosper in war, and so his party have advanced his religion, merely by the sword; he confessed that Christ was the word of God, and a great prophet, and confessed his miracles, and thundered out threatenings against the Jews for not believing on him; only he revileth his followers for making him to be God; as is to be seen in his Alcoran. So that this is a confirmation of the christian faith.

3. The Jews, who had indeed the witness of God, concerning the truth of their law: but do sin in not receiving the testimony of his truth of the gospel.

Object. 3. But how many sects are there among christians themselves! And every one is confident of the truth of his religion, and say, They had it down from the apostles; and who knows which of them is in the right? Or, how can we believe any of them, when they are no better agreed among themselves?

Ans. Christians are all of one faith or religion, and all agreed in that one faith. They all believe the articles of the Creed, commonly called The Apostles; and all take the Lord's Prayer for a rule for their prayers, and the Ten Commandments as a sum of moral duty; they all believe the same gospel, and confess the necessity of faith, repentance, and new obedience; they all hold the canonical Scriptures to be the word of God, and of certain truth. Their differences are partly about some corrupt additions, whereof the papists are especially guilty, and partly about some expositions of more difficult passages. And doth it follow, that there is no full certainty of the christian religion and canonical Scripture, wherein they are all agreed, because they are disagreed in some other things? It was never the mind of Christ to make all his disciples perfect on earth, and, therefore, while they are imperfect learners, they must needs differ. Rather, it is a sign that our religion and canonical Scriptures are certain, when so many parties among their hottest contentions are yet all agreed in them. I shall further answer this under the next objection.

Object. 4. But they agree not in their very translations of the Scripture; nay, their very copies in the original languages agree not, so that they are not sure that they have a true, uncorrupted Scripture. What certainty, then, can there be of their religion?

Ans. 1. Right translating proceeds from the skill

of the translator; if that be imperfect, what is that to our religion, or Scripture?

2. Translators differ not in matters of moment.

3. Take that for certain that they are agreed in.

4. The copies in the original do differ in so small, inconsiderable passages, and so admirably accord, that it affordeth us a full argument to evince them to be incurrant in all things wherein they do agree.

5. Though the apostles were directed by the Holy Ghost in speaking and writing the doctrine of Christ, so that we know they performed their part without errors, yet the delivering down of this speech and writings to us is a human work, to be performed by the assistance of ordinary providence: and, therefore, we are not, with the seekers, to expect an infallibility in such tradition to be confirmed by new miracles; nor, with the papists, to expect an infallibility in such testimony or tradition upon any extraordinary gift of infallibility conferred by the Holy Ghost upon the pope, or any particular persons; but an infallible certainty we have upon common rational grounds, advantaged and strengthened much from the special piety, honesty, and veracity of the christian church; which certainty of the incorruption of Scriptures and christian religion in all the material points, may yet consist with some literal or verbal errors in the copies, and with some corruptions or doubtful controversies, that may creep into the churches. For it is not an apostolical work to deliver down to posterity the writings or words which the apostles first wrote and spoke; but it is a human and christian work: and, therefore, though God promised to his apostles his Spirit to lead them into all truth, and hath promised to be with ministers in preaching this gospel to the end of the world; yet hath he not promised us the same exact infallibility or impeccability in preaching, as to every circumstance, as they had at first in speaking or writing: nor hath he promised so to guide every printer, or the hand of each transcriber of the Scriptures, that none of them shall err. But our religion or Scriptures are nevertheless certain in the doctrine, for all this: for the doctrine depends not on these slips, or questioned passages.

6. We have an infallible certainty of the printed statutes of this land, that they are not forged: yet may the printers commit some errors in the printing them. And will you conclude, if you find a word misplaced, or false printed, that, therefore, it is uncertain whether ever the parliament made such a statute? The lawyers, also, and the judges themselves, may differ about the sense of some passages in those statutes, and some may be of one mind, and some of another: is the statute, therefore, counterfeit, or is it not obligatory to the subject? Camden's, or Lilly's Grammar may be misprinted, or the writings of Cicero, Virgil, or Ovid, which were written before the gospel, and yet we are past all doubt that the writings are not forged.

Object. 5. But I am not bound to believe every man that tells me he brings the gospel: men may say that is the gospel which is not the gospel.

Ans. Doth it follow, that because you are not bound to every man, therefore you are bound to believe no man? You must believe no man that tells you a lie, nor any man that saith he brings you the truth, and yet gives you no evidence of what he saith to be true. But must you not therefore believe him that tells you the truth, and proves it to be so? Or, dare you say, after impartial examination, that we give you no evidence of the truth of the gospel? You must not believe every man that saith he hath a letter to you from such a friend, or a pardon of some offence from the prince; but if you see it

under his hand and seal, which no man can counterfeit, must you not then believe it? You must not believe every man that saith such or such a law was made by the parliament, which you must obey; but if all the heralds and messengers of the commonwealth do proclaim it, and the commonwealth acknowledge it, and they produce sufficient proof that the parliament did enact it, and tell you by what records you may prove it yourselves, if you will be at the pains, as they have been, and no man hath any thing of weight to say against it, should you not believe such a report? You are bound to believe every man that gives you evidence of the truth of his report, or shows you sufficient reason why you should believe him: but so do the preachers of the gospel; *ergo*, &c.

Object. 6. Christ saith, "If I had not done the works that no man else could do, ye had no sin?"

Ans. But he doth not say, if you had not seen them, you had no sin. The revelation of them by any sufficient means, will leave an unbeliever without excuse.

Object. 7. But why should we be obliged by miracles unseen, any more than the Jews in Christ's time?

Ans. Because we have sufficient proof of them, though not the sight: and if the Jews had had such proof of them, it would have obliged them, as to this day it doth.

Object. 8. By that rule Christ need not to have done miracles in any place but one, and then have sent word of it to the rest of the world, and consequently all the miracles of his apostles should be needless: but Christ did them not needlessly; *ergo*, they are needful to us.

Ans. If God so far condescended to our infirmity, as by multitudes of miracles to make his seal so evident, that we may be put out of doubt that none can counterfeit it, should his creature be so ungratefully impudent as to require yet more, and tie him to satisfy his unreasonable expectations. What, if six or eight of the plagues of Egypt had been a sufficient means to have left Pharaoh unexcusable; if he would not believe, may not ten plagues leave him yet more unexcusable? And shall no man be thought unexcusable that hath not as many? This is to make foolish sinners the rulers of the world, yea, of God himself, and they must teach him what to do. Yea, ungrateful wretches are so quarrelsome with his very mercies, that they will not be pleased. If God work but few, the seal is supposed questionable and obscure, because, perhaps, there might be some deceit in them: if he work many to put it out of doubt, then either they must be pronounced needless, or else every man must see the like.

Object. 9. But there are contradictions in the Scriptures, and great weaknesses in style and method; how then can we believe that they were sealed by God?

Ans. 1. So ignorant men do think of other writings, or of any science, when they do but half understand them. They that understand them are able to see the falsehood of this objection. Were men but any whit humble, they would rather suspect their understandings of mistakes, than the Scriptures of contradiction. When one sheweth these self-conceited infidels the plain sense of the words, and how easily they are reconciled, which they thought contradictory, they have then nothing to say, but be ashamed of their rash and ignorant conclusions.

2. If we could not free the text from every charge that in smaller things is laid upon it, and if we could not prove the writers infallible, and free from all mistakes in their writings, yet might we be sure that the doctrine of Scripture, in the main, is God's word,

and that the christian religion is of God. *Object.* I will not believe him in any thing, that speaks falsely in one. *Ans.* An ignorant answer. If a man mistake in a doubtful matter, will you not believe him in a matter that hath evidence beyond doubt? All historians are fallible, and liable to error; and if they describe to you such or such a fight, or the acts of such a parliament, they may easily err in some smaller circumstance, as the just number of the slain, the particular terms of every act, &c.; and yet the main part of their history may be of infallible verity that such a fight there was, and who conquered, and that such and such laws were enacted. We are certain of many of the reports of heathen historians, who yet may err in some things; much more of the reports of godly, conscionable men, when it is clear they could not be deceived, or deceive. So that all the credit of the gospel and christian religion doth not lie on the perfect freedom of the Scriptures from all error: but yet we doubt not to prove this their perfection against all the cavils of infidels, though we can prove the truth of our religion without it.

The like may be said of the supposed weaknesses of Scripture, in method and terms, which is but the censure of proud ignorance: it was not agreeable to the design of Scripture, or the occasions of its writing, that it should be written in an exact, logical method; neither histories, laws, nor epistles, are used to be so written, and such are the Scriptures: and it was necessary that the language should be suited as to the matter, so to the capacity of the generality of the readers. It is God's great wisdom and mercy, that he will rather offend the proud, than lose the weak.

Moreover, if we could only prove that the Holy Ghost was given to the penmen of holy Scripture, as an infallible guide to them in the matter, and not to enable them to any excellency above others in the method and words, but therein to leave them to their natural and acquired abilities; this would be no diminution of the credit of their testimony, or of the christian faith. Indeed, as God's word is not given to men to repair their understandings about mere natural common things, (unless, on the by, it may do this in physics,) but in spirituals, so doth it suppose both reason, and the necessity of common arts and sciences, for the rectifying and helping of reason in naturals, which Scripture and grace do then teach them to improve for the highest and noblest ends.

Object. 10. But there are in Scripture such improbable things in the history of some miracles, and in the threatenings of hell, &c. that we cannot believe that they came from God.

Ans. All things seem improbable, that are beyond the understanding of the reader, and contrary to his former conceits. Is there any thing that is too hard for God; or any thing that requireth a greater power than the making of the world; the motion of the sun, the upholding of the frame of nature in its vigour and course, &c.: if we knew the power that did it, as well as we know the difficulty of the work to a human power, we should not think it improbable to God.

And for the necessity of the punishing of impenitent sinners, I have spoken to it sufficiently elsewhere.

Object. 11. But you are not agreed which is the canonical Scripture: the papists take in all the apocryphal books, which you reject.

Ans. That is no diminution of the authority of those that we are agreed on; and the whole christian religion is contained in those. Nor do we differ about any book of the New Testament.

Object. 12. It was long ere the Scriptures were

gathered into one book, and before some of the books of the New Testament were received; some of the primitive churches received them not.

Ans. 1. It is not binding them in one book that adds to their authority, nor binding them in many that diminisheth it; else the bookbinder might make or mar the Scripture at his pleasure. 2. When the epistles were written to several churches at a great distance, there must needs be some space of time before the latter writings could be communicated to all others, by those churches to whom they were written: and till they were communicated with sufficient evidence for their reception, no wonder if they were doubted of. And that cautelousness of the church doth the more confirm us of their care in the rest. 3. It was but James, and 2 Peter, the two last epistles of John, and the Revelation, that were doubted of, and some light question of the epistle to the Hebrews. And the doctrine of christianity is so much contained in all the rest, that if they be received, it cannot be doubted of. Believe those books that all received; for the objection reacheth not them.

Object. Clemens' epistle to the Corinthians was a while read in churches, as Eusebius saith.

Ans. 1. Not as canonical, but as some yet read the Apocrypha. 2. There is nothing in that epistle, but what is consonant to the apostles' doctrine, and therefore confirming to the christian faith.

Object. 13. But it was many years after Christ's resurrection before the Scriptures of the New Testament were written. Where then was your religion, and your Bible?

Ans. The living preachers that had seen Christ's miracles, and wrought more to confirm the doctrine which he taught them, were instead of books; and so were the daily miracles that were wrought, and the laws that were written in the hearts of the disciples: but when the apostles were to be taken from earth, as they left a succession of christians, of preachers, and of church ordinances, which might by tradition preserve to posterity the substance of the christian religion; so did they leave their doctrine more fully in writing, as a more certain and perfect means to preserve, not only the substance, but the whole: which writings are by infallible human testimony or tradition, brought safe to our hands, being free from all wilful or material depravation: for which, to God be glory in his churches.

Object. 14. There are as confident reports of miracles wrought since, yea, and some of them for the confirming of error, as those of the Scriptures, which you so much build upon; and yet you give not so much to these: for example, Augustine De Civitate Dei, lib. xxii. cap. 8, hath very many; whereof some are said to be done before many witnesses; some in the public assemblies, and in his own presence. See also his Retract. lib. i. cap. 13; and Confess. lib. 9. cap. 7; and De Unitate Eccles. cap. 10; and Serm. De Divers. xxxix.; and Ambros. epist. lxxxv.; and Serm. xci.; Sidorium Apollinar. lib. 7. epist. i.; Gregor. Turonens. lib. 1; Mirac. cap. 47, attest the same miracle.

And that error was confirmed by it, is clear, in that most of them were done at the memories or shrines of Stephen, or some other martyrs, and some of them upon prayers to the martyrs, and, as Augustine thought, upon the procurement of those martyrs; and some were done by the sign of the cross, as Innocentia, an eminent woman in Carthage, is said to be cured suddenly of a cancer in her breast. Athanasius, and many others, mention the ejection of devils by the sign of the cross.

Ans. 1. There is so great a difference between these miracles and those of the gospel, for frequency,

greatness, evidence, and unquestionable certainty, and also between the certainty of the attestation and tradition of the one and the other, that the one is only probable, or morally certain, the other hath a certainty that may well be called physical, and is clearly infallible. The curing of a disease, or the raising of a dead man, attested by a few witnesses, or by a congregation, is not like an age of miracles, whereof some were done before thousands, and by which so many countries were convinced and made disciples.

2. Yet I further answer, that even these miracles are attested by so many and honest witnesses, such as Austin, and many of the fathers, that they are credible to reason; and though they have no such certainty as those mentioned in Scripture, yet are they strongly probable, and morally certain. Both, therefore, may well be believed, but with a different belief, according to the different evidences.

3. And that these latter were not wrought in attestation of any error, but of the true christianity, is evident in the professions of those that wrought them, and those that report them. It was not to attest any undue worship of the martyrs or the cross, but to attest the truth of that faith which the martyrs sealed with their blood, and to advance the honour of Christ, whom the infidels derided, because he was crucified. So Augustine, in the next (ninth) chapter, saith, Whereto do these miracles attest, but to this faith, in which Christ is preached to have risen from the dead in the flesh, and with the flesh to have ascended into heaven; for the martyrs themselves were martyrs, that is, witnesses of this belief, and giving testimony to this belief, they endured the great hatred and cruelty of the world, and overcame it, not by resisting, but by dying. For this faith did they die, who could obtain these things of the Lord, for whose name they were slain. For this faith, their wonderful patience did precede, that so great power in these miracles might follow after. For if the resurrection of the body to an everlasting state, either went not before in Christ, or will not come as is foretold by Christ, or as is foretold by the prophets by whom Christ was foretold; why, then, can the martyrs do such things, who were slain for that faith, by which this resurrection is preached? &c.

4. Consider that the case of the church, then, and their manner of using the cross, and the memories or relics of the martyrs, was much different from that of the papists now; and therefore the most religious, godly people did use them then without scruple, though now such people refuse the popish use of them: for then the church lived among persecuting heathens, and their christianity was a hazard to their lives; so that,

1. There was a special necessity of some encouragements from God answerable to their great trials, or else how should men have endured them, and christianity have been maintained and increased as it was? Flesh will be flesh, and life will be sweet, and death will be to nature the most unwelcome and abhorred guest in the world; and God works in a way agreeable to man's nature, by outward means of encouragement, as well as by inward corroboration. Therefore was he pleased to encourage men to the flames, to the sword, to the jaws of wild beasts, and all the torments of bloody tyrants, by doing miracles, rather at the memories or graves of the martyrs than elsewhere; and hereby making their names honourable, and such a death more evidently desirable.

2. There was then greater reason to expect miracles than now; even for the convincing of the hea-

thens, that they might be drawn to believe; for though miracles ceased to be ordinary or so frequent after the apostles' times, yet did God continue them, in some degree, for many hundred years, that by degrees they might help the extirpation of infidelity.

And it was a more reasonable and less culpable thing then, for the christians to use the sign of the cross, before heathens that scorned a crucified Christ; and to honour the martyrs, and choose the place of their graves or memories for their prayers, where they found God to do such extraordinary things for encouragement to martyrdom, and attestation of his truth, than it is now for us to do such things, where the case is altered, and the reason ceased; much less should we use them with religious worship to the creature, as giving it that which is proper to God.

5. If it were granted that the use of the cross, and the praying at the memories or graves of martyrs, was then an error, yet is it clear that it was not them, but the christian faith, that God attested by those miracles; for so the reporters profess, and so the christians judged and did expect; and God may well attest his own doctrine, even where there may be some mistakes in men's seeking or expecting his attestation. He would not neglect the owning of christianity against the learned and cruel heathens, because of some small circumstantial errors in his servants.

6. And where it is said, "These miracles were done by praying to the martyrs;" I answer, 1. If that had been so, yet the case is answered in what is said already: It was not such prayers as the papists use to deceased saints and martyrs now, as supposing them to know our particular wants, and to be able to relieve us; of which I desire you to peruse Bishop Usher's "Answer to the Jesuit's Challenge," on this point of praying to saints. 2. But, indeed, there is no such thing appears in the words of the reporter. Indeed, there is twice mention made in Austin there of praying *ad martyres*, but that I suppose to be no more than *apud martyres*, *id est*, *apud martyrum memorias*; *ad* being usually put for *apud*. It is true, also, that Augustine mentioneth the martyrs' impetration of the things, or else their actual instrumentality in effecting them; he knows not whether.

But, first, This is but his own interpretation of the matter.

Secondly, He speaks not of any particular prayers of the martyrs for persons in such particular distresses, but of impetration in general, whereby he may understand either, 1. That their holy lives and martyrdom were so acceptable with God, which the fathers commonly called meritorious, that he would do such works for the manifestation of his acceptance, and encouragement of others to the like: 2. Or, that their present perfection in glory makes them so pleasing to God, that he will thus manifest it: 3. Or, that their general supplications for their distressed brethren on earth, are heard and do obtain such particular deliverances: all which do imply no particular knowledge of all our particular cases, nor yet any warrant that we should pray to them.

Thirdly, But if it could be proved that the use of the cross, and the praying to martyrs at their graves, in a subordination to Christ, were approved by miracles, we should have more reason to approve of such practices, than to question the miracles or doctrine of the Scriptures.

Object. 15. But when you have made the best of it you can, you have but a moral certainty of the truth of the christian religion, which dependeth

upon the credit of the witnesses, and therefore may deceive you, and strictly, is no certainty at all: for man's actions are contingent, and his nature, as you confess, exceedingly corrupt; and, therefore, your human testimony of these miracles may be false.

Ans. 1. If it were but a moral certainty, yet may it be so great that he were mad that would not so far believe it, as to venture all his hopes and happiness upon it. If, by the laws of nations, men's estates and lives shall stand or fall, upon the testimony of two ordinary witnesses, which afford scarcely a moral certainty, how much more credible may a fuller testimony be! If your own father, brethren, kindred, and honest neighbours, should all say and swear, that they saw such or such a thing with their eyes, or heard men speak such languages with their ears; would you not so far believe them, as to venture your life upon the truth of it; especially, if they would all die in the attesting of it; and yet, more especially, if you must venture much more than your lives, by refusing to believe it.

2. But I say, that in our case we have not only a moral certainty, but a natural; or, that we may not quarrel about words, call it what you please, but it is a certainty as infallible as that of sense itself. This I have proved already, and for further clearing it I will consider the words of one that denieth it, and that shall be Peter Hurtad. de Mendoza, in his *Physic. Disput.* 8. de Anima, sec. 3, sec. 23—25, p. 570. (I have elsewhere examined the words of Rada and Rob. Baronius, denying faith to have evidence, in my "Reply to Mr. Blake.") Hurtado asks this question, "To what species we must reduce the evidence of a testimony?" and he answers, "To a moral certainty; because though we have a physical evidence of the testimony, yet of the thing testified we have not simply evidence, but obscurity. But if we did evidently know the testimony of God, then we should evidently know the thing testified, because it is gathered from two evident principles, viz. That God cannot lie, and that he revealed that thing."

To this I reply, We have infallible evidence that these miracles were done in confirmation of the christian faith; and consequently that it is revealed by God. For the further clearing of which, let us follow this author yet further: he next asketh, "What sort of evidence is that by which I believe that there is such a place as Rome, upon the witness of so many men attesting it?" *Ans.* It is physical; for it is impossible; even in a physical sense, that so many men in so many ages should so lie, so that I have no less evidence that there is a city called Rome than that all fire is heating.

Object. Then human faith may have physical evidence?

Ans. I deny the consequence, because that it is not an act of faith, but of knowledge; for it resteth not upon human testimony, but on a physical repugnancy, by which I see that so many men could not combine to lie; but human faith resteth on the testimony of one or more men, who could physically combine to lie, and therefore it is obscure and uncertain. The reason is at hand; because that former assent ariseth from two principles, which suffer not any dissent. The first is this: It is impossible for so many men in so many ages to meet or combine to lie. The second is, So many men in so many ages do witness this. So far the author. But I infer that the same, or as infallible, physical evidence have we of the truth of the miracles by which the Holy Ghost did witness to the christian faith; for first, it is naturally impossible that so many churches in so many countries of the world, at such a distance, should combine to lie, in telling the world that the

Holy Ghost was given, and tongues spoken, and miracles done among them for so many years, if it had not been so. 2. Consider well, that though man be a free agent, yet he hath a nature as well as a free will; and that *voluntas ipsa est quedam natura*; the understanding naturally inclines to truth; the will hath naturally good, as good, for its object; and evil, as evil, it shunneth. And though yet it be free, and its acts contingent as to the means, because of its own and the understanding's indetermination, yet its freedom is, *servato ordine finis*, and his willing of his own felicity as the end is with a freedom consistent with a necessity, and is natural, though not strictly *per modum nature*, as brutes desire their objects. Men, as well as brutes, hath a nature that cannot but love itself, and desire its own welfare, and abhor death and misery, temporal and eternal. And, therefore, though here and there a man, in some desperate passion, may make away himself; yet we are physically certain, that it must be a thing which they do indeed believe, that must persuade cities and countries of people in their wits, to cast their estates and lives into the hands of bloody tyrants, and utterly ruin their worldly hopes. It is, therefore, a very natural impossibility that so many thousands, of so many parts of the world, should entertain a doctrine, which pretendeth to be underpropped by frequent miracles, and these done in their sight, and by or upon themselves, and which promiseth to give the Holy Ghost to all that receive it, for the effecting of some extraordinary gifts, and to deliver this doctrine and the records of it to the world as true, and to forsake all worldly hopes, and cast themselves on apparent misery in the world, and lay down their lives, in the attesting of these things, without any hopes of worldly advantages by it, if they did not believe or judge these things true; and they could not judge the objects of their own sight and hearing true, if they had known them so to be; and especially, when they do all this in hope of a blessedness in the life to come, where it is impossible that so many men of reason should expect to be blessed for conspiring in a lie, but rather to be everlastingly cursed and miserable, by the justice of that God from whom they expect their reward. I conclude, therefore, that the case being resolved into man's natural principles and inclinations, so clearly as it is, there is a natural evidence of the truth of these miracles. If it be a physical certainty that there is a city of Rome, it is also a physical certainty that there were such and such parliaments in England, and that they enacted such and such laws as now bear their names, and that there was such a man as Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Aristotle, who wrote such orations, poems, systems of sciences, &c.; and a much clearer physical certainty have we (incomparably more clear) that the Holy Ghost was given, and such miracles wrought in attestation of the truth of the christian doctrine.

But Hurtado proceeds thus:

"*Object.* 2. Then the testimony of the martyrs gives us a physical evidence of the mysteries of faith; because it is impossible that so many martyrs should combine to lie.

"*Ans.* I deny the consequence; because they confess they know not evidently the things which they affirm. So that though it be evident that they all believed the mysteries for which they died, yet are not the mysteries themselves evident; because that which I testify cannot be more evident to him that heareth, by my testimony, than it is to me; but these mysteries were obscure to the martyrs, therefore to us. But in the former case of the question, where so many witnesses have evidence of the thing attested, and their testimony is evidently true, there the thing itself is evidently true to us."

To which I reply, that the latter is our very case, and his answer is not to the case that we have in hand; for the question should not be only of the martyrs, but of all the churches of the first age; and it should not be directly of the mysteries of faith, but of the miracles which they did or saw, which were matters of frequent public fact. Therefore, I say, 1. The martyrs had as full evidence, in the latter ages, that they received from their teachers and ancestors the records of christian doctrine and miracles both, as the witnesses which you mention have that they saw Rome; and, 2. The first churches had as good evidence that the Holy Ghost was extraordinarily given, and miracles wrought before their eyes, and strange languages spoken among them and by themselves, which they were never taught by man, as your witnesses are certain that they saw Rome. 3. And that these miracles, being the effects of God's power, are his own seal, which cannot be set to a lie, to lead the world into remediless delusion, this is a most evident consequent from the great principle, That there is a God; and that this God is merciful, just, wise, faithful, and the Ruler of the world. So that upon this philosopher's own grounds, it is clear that the first churches having evidence of the miracles, had thence evidence of the certainty of the doctrine; though the mysteries of that doctrine were not evident in itself; nor did these churches ever doubt of the truth of the miracles, much less profess that they had no evidence of them, as he saith they did of the mysteries, but contrarily, became churches by the cogency of that evidence.

In all this I have spoken nothing of those inherent evidences of its verity, which the christian doctrine containeth in itself; it being most evident that no good spirit would lie in the name of God, nor deceive the world by false pretending his authority: and that no evil spirit, either could do such miracles, without that commission, which the faithful and gracious Ruler of the world would never grant; or would, if he could, by such extraordinary means promote a doctrine that reproacheth and disgraceth him, and destroyeth his kingdom, and tendeth wholly to bring man back to God, and restore man to the purity of his holy image, and to a blessed communion with him that made him.

Nor do I, in all this, make much mention of that evidence, a *posteriore*, even the Holy Ghost within the believer himself, and the blessed effects of this doctrine upon his soul; though every believer hath this witness in himself, whereby he is confirmed in the faith; because this is an evidence which unbelievers have not in themselves, nor can well discern in others, and we speak of those that even an infidel may behold; as also because I have spoken of this heretofore, on 1 John v. 10—12.

Object. 16. But why have we not miracles still, as well as they heretofore?

Ans. Having said enough to this before, I will only add the words of Austin, in answer of this question, wherewith he begins the foresaid cap. viii. lib. 22. de Civit. Dei. "I might say, that before the world believed, miracles were necessary that he might believe. He that yet asketh for miracles, or wonders, that he may believe, is himself a wonder, who believeth not when the world believeth. But they speak this, that it might be thought that no such miracles were ever wrought. Whence, then, is Christ, as taken up into heaven in the flesh, every where proclaimed with so great belief? Whence is it that in so learned times, which reject all impossibilities, the world did believe incredible things too miraculously, without any miracles? Will they say the things were credible, and therefore believed? Why, then, do they not themselves believe them? Our answer, therefore, in short, is this, Either an incredible thing which was not seen, was believed, because of other incredible things, which were done and seen; or else, certainly, a matter so credible that it needed no miracles to evince it, doth convince these men of their great infidelity." So far Austin.

And Ambrose answereth the same question thus, in cap. xii. p. ad Corinth: "At the first, miracles were necessary, that the foundations of faith might be firmly laid: but now they are not necessary, because the people draw each other to the faith, by their simple preaching, and the sight of their good works."

See, also, how Chrysostom answers the same objection, in Homil. xxxiii. in Matt.

CHRIST'S WITNESS WITHIN US,

THE

BELIEVER'S SPECIAL ADVANTAGE

AGAINST

TEMPTATIONS TO INFIDELITY.

JOHN XV. 26, 27. "BUT WHEN THE COMFORTER (OR ADVOCATE) IS COME, WHOM I WILL SEND UNTO YOU FROM THE FATHER, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, WHICH PROCEEDETH FROM THE FATHER, HE SHALL TESTIFY OF ME: AND YE ALSO SHALL BEAR WITNESS, BECAUSE YE HAVE BEEN WITH ME FROM THE BEGINNING."

READER,

WHILE the foregoing sermons on Gal. iii. 2, were in the press, I thought it not unmeet to peruse this sermon and annex it thereto, to make up the discourse more useful to true believers. I confess I did purposely handle this text more largely when I preached on it, with the 11th and 12th verses, for the explication of another point; and this was but slightly touched on the by; yet because it is suitable to the rest, and seasonable for weaklings in these shaking times, I have chosen to annex it, in hope it may somewhat conduce to their establishment, whereto I desire of God that he will use and bless it.

1 JOHN v. 10.

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."

Sect. I.

THE apostle having, in the fourth and fifth verses, extolled the grace of faith in Christ, from its successful victory over the world; doth proceed, in the following verses, to magnify it: 1. From the full and certain testimony, which doth animate and support it. 2. From the nature of its object and office. The first he doth in the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses; the latter in the 11th and 12th, and some following. In the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses, the witnesses are enumerated: in the 9th verse, the validity and unquestionable authority of the testimony is proved. In the 10th verse is declared, 1. The privilege of true believers, and the advantage which they have for further certainty: 2. The heinousness of the sin of infidelity.

Though it be the first part of the 10th verse which I am now to handle, yet because we cannot so well understand what is meant by the witness here, unless we look back to the precedent verses, let us briefly consider them.

In the 6th verse, the apostle, extolling the object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, declareth with what convincing evidence he showed himself unto the world: "He came by water and blood, and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." Whereupon he further enumerateth the glorious trinity of witnesses in heaven, and the trinity of witnesses on earth, verse 7, 8. The extraordinary diversity of reading in these two verses, and the specious arguments brought for each of them, I purposely overpass, as not concerning much my intended business; but what these witnesses are I shall briefly inquire. 1. The Father, the Word, and the Spirit, are the three in heaven, which bear witness: it is on earth that they witness; but it is in heaven that these witnesses are in glory.

1. The Father witnessed of the Son, as by describing him in prophecies and promises before his coming, so by many notable attestations at his birth, and afterwards sending a choir of angels to predicate and honour his nativity; leading men to him by an extraordinary star, and other like means; and in an eminent manner at his more solemn entering upon his office, at his baptism, proclaiming him by a voice from heaven to be his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased; and to this testimony the text may seem to have some special respect: as also, he owned him by a voice from heaven, before his suffering, John xii. 28; and divers other ways.^a

2. The Lord Jesus himself, the Word of the Father, hath fully attested his own office and doctrine, not by naked affirmations only (for if he so bore witness of himself, he tells us, his witness were nothing; but by proving his mission and commission from the Father, by the prophets, by his doctrine, and by the works which he did; which were such as perfectly answered his commission, and such as no man else could do.

3. The Spirit bore witness to Christ and his truth, both in the mouths of those prophets that foretold

his coming, and by a more full attestation, when he was come: when he was baptized it lighted on him in the form of a dove; in himself and his disciples it gloriously appeared, as I have more largely expressed in the foregoing discourse.

But for the three witnesses on earth, though we are agreed in the matter, yet expositors are not of one mind about the sense of the words in this text; what is meant by Spirit, water, and blood. The first doubt is, what is meant by the Spirit? If it be the Holy Ghost, then is not this witness on earth the same with one of those in heaven? To avoid this, some like those copies that leave out the 7th verse; some, as Piscator, by the Holy Ghost here, understand the gospel; some take it only for the spirits which with the water and blood went out of the side of Christ on the cross. I rather judge that in the 7th verse, by the Spirit is meant the Holy Ghost, considered, not as he is in heaven in glory, but witnessing on earth; but in the 8th verse is meant the same Holy Spirit, as he is and witnesseth here on earth. For as he appeared in the shape of a dove on Christ, and of fiery tongues on his disciples, so is he said to be, to dwell, and work in the souls of believers.

The cleansings in the law were by water and blood: by blood for expiation, and by water for actual absterion.^b But as Christ was to be the true efficient of what these were the types, seeing the law itself could neither expiate nor cleanse a defiled soul, so especially was the gift of the Spirit a thing beyond the compass of the law, and the eminent privilege of those gospel times, and the special witness to the verity of his word. It is not unlikely, that in the 6th verse the apostle had respect to Christ's fulfilling the legal types, as Calvin, Piscator, and others judge, and so here also: but how was it that he fulfilled them? I see no reason why we should restrain the sense to any one act or passage of Christ's life, as many do, but more comprehensively expound it thus. It was both expiation of guilt, and absterion of the filth of sin, that lost souls did need for their recovery: it was both which the law prefigured to be done by the Messias: it is both that he did; and sent forth his Spirit in a most eminent, triumphant manner to do the one, and by wonders also to bear witness to his name in the world.^c He was himself baptized, first with John's baptism of water, and then by the Holy Ghost, descending on him as a dove, at the chief entrance upon his work; and lastly, by a baptism of blood in the *Evangelium*, toward the finishing of his preparations on earth. He sweat water and blood in the garden in his agony. He shed water and blood from his side upon the cross.^d He lived accordingly, a life, first, of pure innocency, without sin; secondly, a life of suffering, even to the death of the cross, both to expiate our sins, and to seal his testament, and to teach us self-denial and patience, by his example; thirdly, he walked in the power of the Holy Ghost, doing wonders, and doing good, and was quickened and raised by the Spirit from the dead. And as these testimonies were left by him on certain record, so did he accordingly transcribe it upon the souls of his disciples, and do these works also on them, and drew out his image on their souls, and left his cures and wondrous gifts thus visible on earth, to be witnesses of him in the world.

First, The Spirit he poured out on his church, even to the astonishment of the world, and the con-

^a Matt. xvii. 5; and iii. 16, 17; John v. 32; viii. 18; v. 36; i. 1; iv. 26; v. 17, &c.; vi. 29, &c.; vii. 46; viii. 12, &c.; x. 24, &c.; and i. 33, 34; 1 John i. 1; Acts ii. 3, 4, 32, and ix. 3-6.

^b John x. 25, 36, 38; v. 32, 36; xiv. 2; xv. 24, 26; xvi. 13. and xv. 26; Acts xi. 22; 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

^c John i. 28; Eph. v. 27; Tit. iii. 5; Heb. x. 22; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Isa. i. 16; Jer. iv. 14.

^d John xviii. 37; 1 Tim. vi. 13.

viction of unbelievers, by the various and mighty works which were done; and he gave it to be resident in true believers, as his house and temple.*

Secondly, He cleanseth them by his word and Spirit, from their former uncleanness, even the filth of sin.

Thirdly, He washeth them in his blood by the application of it, in its fruits, from the guilt of sin: he bringeth them to so much self-denial, as in preparation and resolution, to lay down their lives, and shed their blood for him: and when he calleth them to it, he wonderfully sustaineth them, so that his people are living witnesses of his power and truth. The Spirit of power on the first churches, and the Spirit of holiness on all, is his infallible witness; his sanctified ones, that are cleansed from their former wickedness, are his witnesses; his pardoned, justified, adopted ones, are his witnesses. And as they are thus objectively a threefold witness to him, so are they actually, effectively, and expressly. They give him themselves, and fullest testimony, in a threefold baptism, as it were. They are baptized with water, and there openly own him, and take him for their Redeemer: they are oftentimes baptized with blood in actual martyrdom, and so own him to the death: and in the sacrament of his supper they feed upon his blood, and renew their resignation, and their testimony of him. They are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and then exalt him in the throne of their souls, and his kingdom is set up within them.

And thus we see what are the three witnesses on earth, viz. the Spirit, water, and blood.†

SECT. II.

Let us now see what is that "Witness in ourselves," which the text in hand mentioneth: I see no reason to restrain this, neither, to any one way of having the witness in ourselves, but shall take it more comprehensively.

1. He that believeth hath a witness in himself, in that he hath received God's testimony of his Son; and so that which was external, is admitted within, and that which was an object aptitudinal, offered, propounded, and the reception of it commanded, is now become an object actually believed and entertained. And thus all believers have the witness in themselves, as the object is in the present act, and so in the recipient agent.

Object. That is no more than to say, He that believeth doth believe.

Ans. It is to declare what believing is; it is the reception of the divine testimony: and so upon our believing, that which was before only without us, written in our books, or spoken by men, is now within us, transcribed by the Spirit of grace upon our hearts: but, yet, though this be part of the sense, I take it not for the whole, therefore I add,

2. He that believeth hath the witness in himself, in the radicated habit of the aforesaid belief, supposing him to be a sound believer; for it is the Spirit of Christ that worketh this faith; that not only revealeth the object from without, but useth it also on the soul, as a man doth a seal by impressing it on the wax: and the same Spirit confirmeth and maintaineth this habit, having made it his office to be the sanctifier of believers, and the finisher of their faith: so that as he believeth, so he shall believe; the Spirit of life being the preserver and maintainer of his faith.

3. He hath also the witness in himself, more confirmed, in that the same Spirit is at hand to be the exciter of his faith; and not only to give him a habit,

or power; but, also, to cause him to bring it forth into act; so that it is no small advantage against temptations to infidelity, which he that soundly believeth hath already in himself.

4. He that believeth hath, by the same Holy Spirit, not only his understanding thus cleared and persuaded, but, also, his will effectually inclined to Christ, and to God the Father, by him: and his heart affected so much with the goodness that is in him, and the goodness that hath flowed from him; in the wonders of love, which he hath manifested to sinners; and with the goodness which he is in hope of, when the promises are all fulfilled; that there is by these, as it were, a new nature within him: he hath new thoughts, new designs, new desires, hopes, love, delights; he is now driving a new trade in this world, for another world, and set upon a work which before he was a stranger to; so that he is now become in Christ a new creature: "Old things are passed away, and all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. He that would now tempt him to infidelity, and persuade him from Christ, must not only persuade him against his radicated, maintained belief, but also against his love, his desire, his hope, his joys, against his very heart, and new nature.

5. And it increaseth his advantage, that this love, desire, hope, and whole new disposition, is radicated, maintained, and excited by the same Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in the soul, and manageth it for Christ, even as his belief itself is; and the very radication, maintaining, and exciting of true belief, is the radication, confirmation, and exciting of these, as the moving of the first wheel is the moving of the rest.

6. But the most observable part of the sense, is this: that all these received impressions on the soul, are a standing testimony in us, which we may have recourse to for the future, for the repelling of temptations, and the confirmation of our faith. They are a witness within us, as the objects or evidence, for our future belief, and not only, as I said before, as the received object of our present belief. Our present actual and habitual faith, and renovation of our souls, and the sacred inclinations and actions therein contained, are a standing evidence within us; as the written word and the miracles of Christ are without us; from which we may soundly argue for the verity of christianity, and may look on them as an infallible testimony for Christ. For none but the sacred Redeemer of the world, approved by the Father, and working by his Spirit, could do such works, as are done on the souls of all that are truly sanctified.

7. And I suppose it is not the least part of the apostle's meaning, that he that believed then, had that extraordinary Spirit of wonders, in one kind or other, which was purposely then given to be a seal to the christian verity, and the great witness of Christ: for the promise, Mark xvi. 17, was fulfilled then in one sort or other, in one measure or other, to all believers; at least to all morally, that is, to the generality, or ordinarily.

I shall not add here, that immediate witness of the Spirit within us, which some assert as only sufficient; which is neither an objective testifying from without, nor an objective testifying by the foresaid works of grace within, nor an effective testimony by producing our belief of the objective testimony (all which I have asserted): but is moreover, first, either another internal objective testimony, as by an inward word or enunciation of another to our mind; secondly, or else an efficient testifying, by causing us to believe without the objective evidence; or only upon wine and water in the sacrament; as appears in Justin Martyr's Apology, and in many others.

* Acts i. 5, 8, and ii. 1.

† In the first age, and long after, the churches used to mix

this last supposed internal enunciation of his own: for these enthusiasms or inspirations, let them boast of them that have them; but let them not blame me, if I prove them not common, or necessary to all; nay, if I prove that the former, without them, are a sufficient testimony within us, of the truth of Christ's doctrine. Concerning this controversy, I refer the learned reader to what is already fully written of it, by Rob. Baronius in Apodix. Cont. Turnebull. against Spalatensis, and by Amyraldus in Thes. Salmuriens. in the disputation of Scripture, and the Spirit's testimony. And withal, I mention not here the Spirit itself the efficient, as dwelling in us, distinct from his works, because it is not the *τὸ μαρτυροῦν* that is here said to be in ourselves, but the *ἡ μαρτυρία*; not the *testis*, but the *testimonium*; though the English word witness signify either; and though I know that other places of Scripture speak of the Spirit himself within us.

You see then the chief difficulty in the text explained, What it is to have the testimony or record in ourselves.

Quest. But have all believers this testimony in themselves, or some only?

Ans. All: but not all in one degree; nor all in the same sort, as some have had it. The spirit of sanctification is common to all true believers; but so is not the spirit of miracles, or extraordinary gifts, though this also was ordinary in the first age of the christian church.

Quest. Is it only believers that have this witness in themselves?

Ans. Not only true and sound believers, but also hypocrites, unsound and half-believers, had the Spirit of miracles in the first age, which was a testimony within them; but only true and sound believers have the Spirit of sanctification; and I think it was only such sound believers that had the promise of the Spirit for extraordinary gifts and miracles; and that all other had it, above and beyond promise, as to any promise made to themselves; but yet as the fulfilling of a promise to the church, and to some that might receive the benefit of them. But it is of no great moment, especially to our present business, which way this last is determined.

Sect. III.

The reasons why God will have "All true believers to have the testimony of their christian religion in themselves," are these, among others, so far as we may presume to give a reason of God's will from the thing:

Reas. 1. It was God's will in revealing Christ to the world, that his revelation should be a means of the restoration and perfect felicity of his chosen ones; which it could not be at a distance, nor without being entertained into the inwards of their souls. For it was the soul that was wounded, and it is the soul that must have the cure; to which end, the application of the plaster is necessary. That light which shall illuminate a dark understanding, must be received into that understanding itself. That life which quickeneth, must be in the substance which is quickened by it. If an external revelation or testimony of Christ, had been a fit means of itself to recover men's souls, though they never received it, then might the gospel save all alike, even the haters and despisers of it, as well as its truest friends; which is an unreasonable conceit: nay, what is it to be healed and recovered from our blindness, by the gospel, but to be ourselves informed, convinced, and enlightened by it? and what is that, but to have received this testimony in ourselves? To be happy, is to be made perfect in our-

selves, and in that perfection to enjoy God, our end; and our perfection lieth in the image of God upon us, which partly consisteth in knowledge, Col. iii. 10, and in a clear reception and discerning of his truth. It is not a light, or felicity, which is barely reported to us, that solaceth and satisfieth the soul of man, but a light and felicity which he partaketh of himself.

Reas. 2. It is the nature of God's real possessed gifts, to manifest both themselves and their proper causes, to the soul that possesseth them, according to their degrees, and freedom of operation; though sometimes, through darkness, delusion, and the stirrings of the contrary corruptions within us, we may be brought to overlook them, and doubt of their truth. Light hath a self-discovering property, to them that can see; and life is a testimony of its own existence, to the person that hath it; and so are the particular actions of life: and as grace is the testimony or discoverer of itself, so also of its cause. It beareth God's name in the face or nature of it: it is his own image, and therefore may discover much of him to the soul that beareth this image. The effects of the Spirit and doctrine of Christ, do show what that Spirit and doctrine are. If it make men holy, it is itself more holy.

Reas. 3. It is the order of God's works, that every foregoing part doth tend to the promoting of that which is to follow; as the revelation of Christ is the means of our believing, so our believing is a means of our fuller sanctification, and so far, of our receiving the Spirit; as in the first age it was a means of their receiving the Spirit of miracles and wonders: and that Spirit and holiness is again a means of our increased belief; even by testifying objectively to us the verity of the promise, which we find thus fulfilled in ourselves; and therefore God will have us to have the witness in ourselves.

Reas. 4. It is God's purpose, in possessing his people with his Spirit, to make them the living monuments of his truth and goodness, that they may bear upon them his image and superscription; and as he is honoured by the truth and purity which is found in his laws, so will he be by the like excellences that are found in his saints. They shall also be everlastingly employed in his praises, which must proceed from a heart that is filled with the lively sense of his goodness, and from a clear understanding of that for which they praise him, and therefore they must have the witness in themselves.

Sect. IV.

Use. If all true believers, having the Spirit of Christ, have the witness of the truth of the gospel in themselves, we may hence be informed, how great an advantage such true believers have, above all other men in the world, for the resisting and overcoming of temptations to infidelity, and for a clearer discerning and faster holding of the truth of the christian doctrine. Among others, you may observe the difference in these particulars following:

1. Unbelievers have a testimony indeed without them, but it is but without them, and therefore not so near at hand for their use; but believers have it engraven on their very hearts, and as near to them as the very motions and inclinations of their own souls.

2. Unbelievers, therefore, have but an external light and object, without an inward light, or eye to discern them; for this, which is the witness within, is also the power of discerning the testimony, which is without. But the sound believer hath this visive power, and the light within to fit him to receive that from without. Like will to like. You may easier

draw water to water, and by a place where water is before, than to or by the dry ground. You may easier kindle fire where fire is before, than where is none. The first degrees dispose to the reception of more. There is something in the eye that hath a nearer likeness and connaturality to the light without us, proceeding from the sun, than the hands or feet, or other parts have, or else the eye would see no more than they. And there is something in a holy, believing soul, which is thus kin to the truth of the gospel, which is without us, and therefore doth fit the soul to entertain it.

3. The true believer, therefore, hath a double testimony, one without, and one within; but the unbeliever hath but the single external testimony alone.

4. The witness within us is more sensible and affecting. That which lieth as near us as our own hearts, is liker to work more effectually and deeply, than that which is at a greater distance.

5. The witness within us is still at hand, when the temptation comes: such christians do carry their armour about them. They live still in arms. Whenever the tempter assaulteth them to stagger at God's promises, through unbelief, they have arguments in their own hearts to answer the temptation: so that they are not likely to be found unprovided, as other men are. Men's Bibles may be out of the way; their teachers may be out of the way; their memories may fail them, if they trust only to these. The reasons which one day a little moved them, may be forgotten the next day; or they may forget where the chief strength of them lieth; or they may receive them with greater prejudice or disadvantage, as being staggered or perplexed with what is said or suggested to the contrary. But the settled, habituate testimony within us, is not so much liable to changes; though, I know, that through temptations and distempers of soul, this also may sometimes be much obscured. But yet it hath a great advantage of the other.

6. The witness within us is a permanent witness. It will go with us, which way soever we go; it will accompany us through all straits and difficulties to the end: but the external testimony may be taken from us. Men may take from us our Bibles, our teachers, and our friends; or they may imprison us, where we cannot enjoy them: but they cannot take from us the Spirit of Christ.

Consider, therefore, I beseech you, christians, first, how great a mercy it is that you have received; secondly, and how you ought to improve this mercy.

Sec. V.

1. And first, it may easily appear to you to be a very great mercy, if you do but consider these things following:

First, consider what it is that this testimony doth witness within you. It is the doctrine of your redemption and deliverance, by the Son of God, and of your future glorification in the fulfilling of his promises. If the happy news of man's recovery by a Mediator should not have been true, then were we all still in our sin, and our faith and hope were but vain and delusory. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not: for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins: then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable: but now is Christ risen from the dead,

and become the first-fruits of them that slept." 1 Cor. xv. 14, 16, 17. What hope or consolation have we, but what depends upon the truth of the gospel? If these glad tidings should fail us, all fails us. What else doth give us assurance of a future felicity? And without that, how wretched and despicable a creature is man; and how low and base are all the transactions and passages of his life, if they be not ennobled by their respects unto that end! Even the blindest infidel that denieth the truth of the gospel, methinks, should easily confess the goodness of its promised happiness; and therefore see cause to wish that it were true, unless as he hath brought himself under its terrors.

You see, then, it is the best news that ever came to the ears of man, that is attested to you by the witness within you: it is that which may cause you to live in hope, and peace, and joy; and to die in hope, and peace, and joy, while you believably look to a blessed immortality, and upon your resurrection, as secured in the resurrection of Christ, and his promise of yours. Other men may confess that the truth of this is desirable; but you have the truth of it witnessed in your own hearts: to carry about with you such a witness, is to carry about the matter of continual joy. The same Spirit which is your sanctifier is your comforter, at least, by maintaining in you the grounds and fit matter of consolation. How happy is such a soul that hath not only the voice behind him, saying, This is the way, walk in it; but also the witness within him, that this voice is divine, and telling him of the end, which by that way he may attain! No wonder if the life of such a man be as a continual feast, and if he have a peculiar joy, as he hath a peculiar testimony, even such as the stranger meddleth not with.

Sec. VI.

Object. But if all believers have such a consolatory witness in themselves, first, why are so many of them still troubled with doubtings, even about the truth of God's testimony? Secondly, Why are so many of them so dejected and disconsolate, and live as pensive and sad a life as others?

Ans. 1. One reason is, because they do, by quenching and grieving the Spirit, too commonly hinder the fulness of the work, wherein this inward testimony doth consist; and so the gospel is written on their hearts in so small a character, that it is not easy to read and understand it; besides the many blots which it receives by some provoking transgressions. They that cheerfully obey the Spirit in his teaching and guidance and receive the fuller character of the gospel upon their hearts, and so are more fully conformed to their Head, "being transformed by the renewing of their minds, that they may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom. xii. 2; these have a stronger and more confirmed belief, and usually the sweet effects of that belief, in a greater measure than others do obtain.

2. Yet, because this testimony, which all believers still have, is but objective; that is, such a work on their own souls, which is a sufficient evidence of the truth of the gospel, it may be often overlooked, and the belief and comforts not obtained, which yet, in its kind, it is sufficient to afford: for it is not in every kind, but in its own kind, that the evidence is sufficient; and therefore doth suppose the concurrence of other necessities. There must be a studious observation of this record; and to that end, a keeping it from blots: and the same Spirit, which dwelleth in us for sanctification, must excite the soul to this observation and improvement, and help us to read these evidences in ourselves. So that in a neglected, dis-

tempered heart, when there is naturally still a remnant of sin, and confusion, and accidentally more confusion; and where men are so strange to themselves, as most of us are, and so little addicted to self-converse, and so little acquainted with it, and cast also so many impediments in their own way, and draw a veil over their evidences; what wonder if we do too defectively reap the fruit of them, and if such have yet much staggerings at the promise of God, and much disquietness and sadness in themselves?

3. And for consolation, it is not the highest nor most necessary part of the Spirit's works; and therefore he oft layeth it by, when so doing is necessary to the promoting of our sanctification; and will oft trouble us, or suffer us to be troubled, that he may heal us of that which is the cause of our trouble, and would else trouble us for ever. Though it be his office to be the Comforter, yet he doth not always comfort, because he must by sorrow prepare for seasonable well-grounded comfort. You may have an expert physician with you, who may go on successfully in the cure; and yet not always give you present ease, but sometimes give you that which will irritate the disease, and increase your pain. Though the kingdom of God doth partly consist in joy in the Holy Ghost, yet as sorrow doth frequently prepare the way, so is it by sorrows frequently clouded and interrupted.

The witness within us then is a standing cause of consolation; but yet if through our folly we mar our own comforts, and make not use of the matter of them within us, or occasion the Spirit to leave us unto sadness, for the killing of some sin, and the promoting of our holiness; this is not a reason to question the inward testimony, but to reprehend our own folly and neglect.

Sec. VII.

2. It may further appear how great a mercy it is to have this witness in ourselves, by the earnest desires of believers to have more of it, when they have experience of the advantage of that measure which they have obtained. When a christian, in temptations, hath had recourse to the gospel written in his heart, and hath had some support and confirmation by that witness in himself, though the voice were very low, and the characters but obscure, oh, how glad would he be of a further degree of that evidence! Could he hear that voice speak louder, and see the evidence of that transcript more clearly, it would be sweeter to him than to win the whole world. When the tempter would hide Christ and his grace from our eyes, what a comfort is it, not only to find him, but even to find him in ourselves; for this telleth both together that there is a Christ, and that he is ours.

Sec. VIII.

3. The greatness of the sin of unbelief, and the danger into which it leads the sinner, or in which it leaves him, do tell us what a mercy it is to have the witness in ourselves, for the saving of us from that sin and danger. Alas! what a case were thy soul in, if infidelity should prevail! There may be so great a conflict in thy mind, through the imperfection of thy faith, and the insinuations of the tempter, as to force thee to cry out, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. But if unbelief get the mastery, how miserable is thy case. Thou wilt then be left in thy lost condition! Thou wilt die in thy sin, and perish everlastingly for want of healing, while the Physician did offer thee his help, and was rejected: for how can it be expected that the Physician should

heal those that will not believe him, nor trust themselves in his hands for a cure? that Christ should save those that take him for a deceiver, and do not believe that he is able to save them, and therefore do not trust themselves on his sufficiency for salvation? He that believeth not is condemned already, and that in point of law, not only because he is in general a sinner, but in special, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God, John iii. 18—20. "He that believeth not shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John iii. 36. No wonder, then, if a temptation to infidelity be received by a gracious soul with trembling and abhorrence, considering what would be the issue if it did succeed. How great a mercy, then, must it needs be, to have so near and powerful a remedy against this desperate sin and danger, as is this witness that is continually resident in the saints!

Sec. IX.

4. As the sin of unbelief is great, and the punishment no less than eternal damnation, so are the temptations to it many and strong, and therefore the mercy is so much the greater to have the witness in ourselves. What can a christian look upon in the world, which the malicious tempter will not make the matter of his temptation. The spirituality, the strangeness and seeming improbability of the matter, the plainness of the style, the seeming contradictions in the several parts, with many other the like, doth he use as arguments to assault our belief with; and the stronger are all these temptations against us: first, because they find so much darkness in ourselves. Since we fell from God, and holiness, and happiness, we have lost most of the knowledge of that God, and holiness, and happiness, which we fell from. They are enjoyed much by knowledge; to lose them, therefore, is to lose the knowledge of them. The devil hath, therefore, a great advantage to deceive us, when he speaks to us about matters that we are naturally so unacquainted with: yea, in losing God we have lost ourselves, and therefore are very much strangers to ourselves; and so know not our own souls, and therefore are the easier drawn to doubt of their immortality, and capacity of higher, supernatural enjoyments. Secondly, yea, we have not only a defect and darkness, but an opposition to the doctrine of our supernatural felicity, restored by Christ, till grace do overcome it. Being fallen from God to the creature, we adhere to this creature as we should have done to God; and because it hath our hearts we are unwilling to look after a higher felicity, and therefore unwilling to hear of it and believe it. We savour not, naturally, the things of the Spirit, and therefore have no mind to believe them to be true; and how hard it is for some men to believe that which they are loth should be true, experience may easily acquaint us. Men are fallen into a condition so near that of brutes, that it is the easier to persuade them that they shall die as the brutes, and are capable of no more felicity when this life is ended, than the dog or the swine, whom they lived like on earth. Having forfeited their hopes of eternal life, and so come short of the glory of God, it is the easier to persuade, that there neither is, nor ever was, any such glory, of which they had any hopes or possibility. Thirdly, the stronger also are these temptations to unbelief, because man is now so mastered by his sense, and hath so much weakened his reason by subjugating it to his flesh, that he is hardly drawn to look higher than sense can reach. Because we see not God, or Christ, or heaven, or hell, we are apt naturally to question

whether they have indeed any being, and to say as Thomas, "Except I may see or feel, I will not believe;" yea, men are ready to doubt of the very being of their souls, which is themselves, and which is that which doubteth, because they cannot see the soul. Fourthly, especially these temptations to infidelity are the stronger, in that man's soul in its corrupted state is disposed to believe Satan, and not to believe God; for as this was his first sin, so was the soul thereby habituated according to that act, rather than God hath done any thing to cure and remedy it. Though we must needs know that God is more to be credited than the devil, in general, yet when it comes to particulars he is so far above us, and the breakings forth of his light and truth are so strange to us, and also we are conscious that we are fallen under some enmity to him, and therefore are the apter to suspect what he saith and doth; and his ways are all so cross to our corrupt conceits and interests, and the persuasions of Satan so suitable to both, that it is no wonder if we are more ready to believe the tempter than God. Fifthly, and yet stronger are these temptations to infidelity, because of the subtlety of the tempter, and the many devices that he hath to overwit us, and his importunity and violence in driving them on; which if we should mention particularly, would be the matter of a volume. And is it not a great mercy for a soul that is thus assaulted, to have the witness in himself, and so great a help against the power of these temptations?

Sec. X.

But, it is like, some will here say; I know it is a great mercy to have such witness in ourselves, but I find not any such witness in me: I inquire into my own soul, and I can perceive no such matter: I hear talk of the Spirit dwelling in us, and that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his; but, yet, I cannot find that Spirit in myself.

Ans. As for those that have not this Spirit, no wonder if they find it not: but if, indeed, thou be one that hast it, I would ask thee these few questions, and desire thee to give a deliberate answer, before thou concludest that thou hast not the Spirit.

Quest. 1. Do you not, in your inquiry into your hearts, expect to hear or feel some effective, persuading witness of the Spirit, besides the holy changes of its sanctifying work upon you; yea, perhaps, without any reference to that sanctifying work at all. If you do, for aught I know, you look for that which you have no reason to expect, much less, to depend upon as the only witness. The Spirit's holy changes upon your heart, are a standing, objective testimony, which you ought to improve to your own consolation; and it is your exciter and helper in that improvement: but, if you will expect a voice or witness within you, to tell you the same things by immediate revelation, and not to deduce them from that permanent testimony, I shall not marvel if you miss of your expectations.

Quest. 2. Do you not mistake the matter of this inward testimony, as if it were more to be sought in some other sort of changes by the Spirit, than in that renovation of the soul, and implantation of God's image. If you think that the witness of the Spirit lieth in higher notions, or raptures, or ecstasies of the mind, or in sudden inspirations, or extraordinary gifts, which were common in the first age; no wonder, then, if you find not the witness: that witness you may find without you, in the apostles and first churches, when it was purposely given as a public seal to the public testimony, which they gave of Christ; but I cannot encourage you to expect that

within yourselves. As the doctrine of the apostles was to be delivered down in writing, for the use of the church to the end of the world, so was the seal of their extraordinary gifts to be annexed, for the like public use of the church, to the confirmation of that doctrine: and, so, both their doctrine and their gifts were not for themselves, or for that age alone, but for all us that do succeed: but this being not the case of their successors, what wonder, if their successors have none of those gifts.

Quest. 3. Do you not ascribe all the workings of the Spirit in you, to yourselves, and say, This is but the work of mine own reason, or conscience, or voluntary endeavours, and not of the Spirit of God. If you do thus, no wonder, if you have the Spirit, and overlook it. If you will needs divide what God hath joined together, and say, This is the work of reason, conscience, or my own will, therefore not of the Spirit; you do but use the Spirit's witness against the honour of the Spirit, and against yourselves. You should argue contrarily, thus: My reason, conscience, or will, would never have moved thus, or been thus disposed, if the Spirit of Christ had not thus disposed and moved them, and taken off their contrary inclinations; therefore, even this inclination and operation of my own reason, conscience, and will, is the true effect of the Spirit, and the standing witness of Christ and his gospel in my soul; for the Spirit worketh on us, and so by us. Where is it that the Spirit giveth light, but into our own understandings? and, how perceive we that light, but by the rational apprehensions and discourses of those understandings? Have we any other faculty or means of perceiving them? How doth the Spirit assure us of any thing, but by giving in some evidence of it to our understandings; or causing us more clearly to discern that evidence which we discerned not at all, or but obscurely, before? It is, therefore, to and with our consciences, that the Spirit doth witness, and not without them. The like we may say of his work upon the will; when he excite it, he causeth it to excite itself. All faculties would lie dead, or move disorderly, if the Spirit did not set them in joint, and guide them in their work: their orderly right motions, therefore, being the effects of the Spirit, are this testimony of the Spirit within us, which we speak of.

Quest. 4. Do you not overvalue your natural corrupted faculties, and think they may go further than indeed they can? If when the Spirit doth set your souls in frame, and elevate them to God, and take off their earthly or sensual dispositions, you will then persuade yourselves that nature doth all this of itself, and that it is but the operations of unsanctified reason, what wonder then, if you overlook the Spirit? This is one danger of having too mean thoughts of our depravedness, and too high thoughts of our natural abilities, lest it draw men to rob the Spirit of his honour, and say, that corrupt nature hath done those works which were done by the Holy Ghost. I will not say, that they who ascribe the sanctifying works of the Spirit to depraved nature, are guilty of that blasphemy, as they are which ascribed his miraculous works to Beelzebub; but it looks so much that way, that we should the more carefully avoid it. Let those take heed of this, that are ready to say, That no men have the Spirit, and all that pretend to it are deluded by the strength of their own imaginations; and mere teaching, education, and industry, may produce all those effects, which we ascribe to the Holy Ghost. I say, let these men take heed, lest they run too near to the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, before they are aware.

Quest. 5. Do you not forget the state that once you were in, and the great change which the Spirit did

then make upon you, and because you feel not such further alterations proportionable to that first, you conclude that you have not the Spirit at all? I am sure this is a very common case: as the forgetting of the miserable state we were in, in the late wars, doth make us undervalue our present peace, which then we would have accounted an excellent mercy; so doth the forgetting of our wicked dispositions and conversations in our state of unregeneracy, make us undervalue our present state of grace. We have lived since that first change, without any more changes so great and notable as that was, and therefore we have forgotten what once we were, and live as if God had never changed us as to the comfortable apprehensions of the mercy. But cannot you remember, when it was much otherwise with you; and that once God made a great alteration on you? And doth it not still remain? Remember how little savour you had once of the things of the Spirit; how little mind to Christ, or holiness; how wholly you were given up to the pleasures of the flesh, or the profits of the world, and what mastery your lusts had over you? Was it not a work of power, and love, and wisdom, and holiness, and therefore a work of the Spirit of Christ, by which all this is altered in you, and you are not now the persons that you were? Who else could so have changed your minds and ways?

Quest. 6. Do you not look for a greater measure of this testimony, and the comfortable effects of it, than you have reason to expect on earth? or, at least, till you have done more in attending the conduct of grace, and in resisting and conquering the enemies of your peace? And do you not thereupon conclude that you have not the Spirit, because you have not so great a measure of the Spirit as you expect? There is a great difference between having not the Spirit, and not having so much of the Spirit.

Quest. 7. If none of these be your case, then diligently inquire whether you have not wronged and grieved the Spirit, and by some stubborn untractableness, or wilful disobedience and yielding to your lusts, occasioned the Spirit to leave you in the dark, and so far to withdraw his operations and manifestations of himself, as to let you feel more of your lusts than of his graces, and to doubt whether you have the Spirit within you or not?

These questions I would have those christians considerately to answer, that have the witness in themselves, but know not that they have it.

Sect. XI.

Object. But we see so many pretend to the Spirit that are conceited of their own opinions and ways, and some of them, on that pretence, maintaining the vilest doctrines and practices, and the more heretical or mad they are, the more strongly and confidently do they pretend to have the Spirit, that we cannot believe that any have it at all; for the one are as confident of the Spirit as the other.

Ans. 1. The conclusion of this objection is unjust and unreasonable: unjust, for it condemneth one man for the fault and folly of another, and takes one man to have an ill title because another man's evidences are nought. If two men shall have a cause before you as their judge, about a title to lands or goods, and you find the plaintiff to be a deceiver, and his title bad, will you say to the defendant, Thy title is bad too, because he was as confident that his was good as thou art of thine? And it is unreasonable, too, not only to judge of one man's pretences by another's, but to judge his pretences to be false who evidenceth at least the probability of their truth, because another man's are false, who manifesteth their falsehood. Suppose

you discourse with a wise man and a fool or madman, and the one is as confident that he is a wise man, as the other; will you, therefore, judge that neither of them are wise, when you hear the words of wisdom from the one as you do the words of folly from the other? If you have two neighbours who would both be taken for honest men, and one lives honestly, and the other dishonestly; will you conclude, that neither of them are honest because both are not? So is it here. Some men pretend to a spirit of holiness and heavenlyness, and withal do live holy and heavenly lives; others boast more confidently of the same spirit, while they hate the doctrines and ways of holiness, and maintain the most impure opinions and practices; will you judge, that either both these must have the Spirit which they pretend to, or neither? One sheweth you his faith by his works, and the spirit within him by the fruits of the Spirit, while the other shows you his delusion or dissimulation, by the fruits of the flesh.

2. It is the ordinary way of the deceiving spirit, to do his works by an apish imitation of the Spirit of Christ. His chiefest means to resist Moses, and harden the Egyptians in their unbelief, was by imitating him as far as he could in his wonders, that the Egyptians might say, Our magicians can do thus as well as you; and so might think that the cause was equal, by the effects, till God showed that he permitted them but for a fuller discovery of his power in vanquishing them. About the time that Christ came in the flesh, the devil stirred up many false Christs, to seduce the poor Jews, that while they said, Lo here is Christ, and lo there, he might be the less regarded; and by raising up many to lay claim to the same dignity, Christ's own claim might be the more questionable in the eyes of the world. When the apostles went out with a spirit of power and wonders, to convince the world of the doctrine of Christ, the chief resistance they had was by the imitating spirit, who would do wonders too. Simon Magus was the head of the heretics, who would contend against the apostles by his wonders, till he was vanquished by the Spirit of Christ; his successors, Menander, Ebion, Cerinthus, Valentinus, Basilides, Carpoocrates, and Marcion, with their sects, were animated by magical works. By the same way did the pagan Apollonius resist the truth, more successfully than he could do by his philosophical disputations. The same course doth Satan take in our times: he raiseth up heretical, impious men to boast of the Spirit, and cry up The Spirit, The Spirit, that thereby he may disgrace the Spirit, and make men believe that all pretences to the Spirit are as false as theirs; he stirs up the quakers, ranters, and others that pretend to communion with angels, appearing to them in visible shapes, that by seeming to be acted by an extrinsical power, by their motions, frenzies, ecstasies, and strange speeches, he may draw men to question whether the Spirit of the apostles and christians of old were not some such diabolical possession or deceit. This being the known and ordinary artifice of the deceiver, to seek by an imitation of the Spirit of Christ, to shake men's faith, and make them believe that it is the same Spirit that causeth the one and the other; we have little reason to be shaken by such palpable and old deceits.

Sect. XII.

Quest. But when so many pretend to the Spirit, how shall we know which of them it is that are deceived, and who hath the Spirit indeed, and who not?

Ans. I will first lay you down some negative

rules, to show you which is not the Spirit of Christ; and then I shall direct you to discern it in yourselves.

1. That spirit which opposeth God, or his nature and attributes, is not the Spirit of Christ; for it is the office of Christ to lead men to God, and for the honour of his Father did he come into the world. Justin Martyr saith, in Dialog. cum Tryphon, "That he would not have believed Christ himself, if he had spoken against the Father." I am sure we have reason to believe that it is not Christ, nor his Spirit, that shall speak against him. Whatever spirit denieth the infiniteness, immortality, incomprehensibility, omnipotency, wisdom, or goodness of God, his holiness, faithfulness, truth, justice, or mercy, it is certain that spirit is not of Christ. For Christ is one with the Father as God, and the way to him as Mediator; and therefore cannot be the author of any blasphemy against him in his attributes.

2. Whatever spirit contradiceth the evident light and law of nature, is not the Spirit of Christ; for Christ came to repair and perfect nature; and all truth is God's truth; and the light and law of nature is his light and law.

3. Whatever spirit shall contradict the Holy Scriptures, is certainly none of the Spirit of Christ: for Christ is the author of Scripture, and confuted Satan himself by its authority; and Christ is not divided, nor against himself. The Spirit of God is not against the word of God; for God is not a contradicter of himself, because he cannot lie. We may well, therefore, try the spirits of our times, by the word which before our times was sealed by the Spirit. All the spirits of this age that contradict any doctrine delivered in the Scriptures, are certainly spirits that contradict Christ's Spirit, and therefore are deceivers, whatsoever they may pretend.

4. Every spirit that is against holiness and purity of life, is a spirit of uncleanness, and not of Christ: for Christ's Spirit is eminently a sanctifying Spirit, sent by him from the Father to make us holy as he is holy.

5. Every spirit that is against order, and is a friend to confusion, is against Christ, and is none of the Spirit of Christ. For God is not the God of confusion, but of peace, and commandeth that all things be done in order, 1 Cor. xiv. 33; and hath established an order among angels, men, brutes, and inanimates, yea, some among the devils themselves. God hath set in his church, some prophets, some apostles, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the edifying of the body, Eph. iv. 11, 12. And he hath appointed rulers under him in the commonwealth, and made it one of his Ten Commandments, that we shall honour our parents, and so our rulers; and made authority of parents a natural result. Those, therefore, that would level the powers in church or state, that God hath set up, and despise dominion and authority, which he hath commanded us to obey, are certainly possessed with an antichristian spirit, which is far unlike to the Spirit of Christ.

Sec. XIII.

Quest. But how then shall I know that I have the Spirit of Christ?

Ans. By the nature of its effects. 1. The Spirit of Christ doth renew the soul to God's image. And one of God's attributes is to be the living God. His being is the ground of the rest. The Spirit of Christ is no fancy, dream, or delusion, nor worketh an imaginary change on the soul, but a real change, making the soul alive that was dead in sin, and becomes a principle of life within us. To be really alive to God, and dead to the world, is the certain effect of the Spirit of God. Would you know whether

a godly man be alive or dead; observe him in his desires and endeavours after God, and there you shall see by his action, and earnestness, that he is alive. But if you would try whether a carnal man be alive or dead, you must see by his desires and endeavours for the flesh, that he is alive; for by any that he hath after God, you cannot see it.

2. As wisdom is one of the attributes of God, so is the Spirit of Christ a Spirit of wisdom. He teacheth men to know God from the creature, heaven from earth, holiness from sin; and what to choose, and what to refuse. He acquainteth them with duty and danger, and the reward that is before them: he maketh them wise to do good, to discern the methods and wiles of the devil, and escape them, and to manage their christian conversation in the world. Even those that are simple in worldly matters are thus far made wise by the Spirit of Christ; without great wisdom, there is no escaping the snares of the deceiver, and getting safe to heaven. By this holy wisdom, which is foolishness in the eyes of worldly men, you may discern that you have the Spirit of Christ.

3. As God is holy, so is Christ's Spirit a Spirit of holiness, and given us of purpose for the destroying of your sins, the resisting and conquering the desires of the flesh, the healing of our diseases, the implanting the graces of God in our souls, and working our hearts and lives to an obedience to his will. If you have this Spirit, it striveth against the flesh, Gal. v. 17; and it inclineth your hearts to the things above, and is still mortifying your lusts, and bringing you nearer God. It is the business of this Spirit to bring back the creature to God, whom we did forsake; and, therefore, it must give us more of the knowledge of him, and love to him, and confidence in him, and make us more zealously devoted to his will. The Spirit, therefore, that is impure, and encourage men in sin, and cries up carnal liberty, and draweth not the heart to God, but from him, is certainly none of the Spirit of Christ. By this many carnal pretenders of our times may be convicted.

4. As God is love, so is Christ's Spirit a Spirit of love, by which we are taught to love God, and our brother, yea, and our very enemy: and so to dwell in God, by dwelling in love, and God also dwelleth in us, 1 John iv. 10-16. "They that learn of Christ, are meek and lowly," Matt. xi. 28, 29. "They that keep his commandments do love one another," John xv. 17. "The wisdom from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, Jam. iii. 17, 18. "They are taught of God, by this Spirit within them, to love one another," 1 Thess. iv. 9. The most of the heretical spirits of these times do hereby show that they are not of Christ; their very religion lieth in railing at ministers, and reproaching those that are not of their way, and bearing down all that resist their designs; by how much injustice or unmercifulness, they do not much regard. How full are all places of the effects of this spirit! Men's selfishness, and cruelty, and envious zeal, and spleen against their brethren that are not of their minds, do tell us that too many among us do little know what spirit they are of.

5. As God is almighty, so is Christ's Spirit a Spirit of power: though it will not do all that it can, yet it will do that which none else can do: though it do not here perfect us, nor subdue our sins absolutely, yet doth it make us conquerors, and more, Rom. viii. 37. It rooteth up the strongest and deep rooted lusts; it prevaileth against prejudice, custom, and nature; it conquereth corrupted sensuality, and

keepeth the ordered senses in subjection; it mastereth the nearest interest of the flesh, and self; and the highest interest of the greatest on earth, or of our nearest carnal friends, that do oppose it; it levelleth high imaginations, and taketh down all within us which exalteth itself against God, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. If the Spirit in the word be thus mighty and powerful in making the first change on a carnal heart, how much more easily may we see that it must be so with the Spirit in the soul, which it hath possessed! This Spirit doth not only strive against sin, but conquer it, nor suffer a man to spend his days in fruitless resistances, but doth give sin its death-wound; so that in whomsoever this abideth, sin shall not have dominion over him, Rom. vi. 14. You see, then, how you may know that you have this Spirit.

Sect. XIV.

If all true believers have the witness in themselves, then it follows, that when Satan would tempt them to infidelity, they should not only have recourse to their Bibles, but also to their hearts. Here, therefore, I come to the second part of the application before promised, to show you what use we should make of this testimony, and how to improve it, for the confirmation of our faith. Oh what an excellent help is here, that the poorest christian hath against such temptation, beyond all the furniture of the most learned that want it! This advantage will furnish us both against temptations to infidelity in general, and against temptations to any error that is plainly contrary to the essentials of christianity.

1. If the devil, or any seducer, would draw you to doubt, whether there be indeed a Christ or not, and whether he did rise again, and be now living, what an excellent advantage it is against this temptation, when you can repair to your own hearts, and there find a Christ within you, I mean, his Spirit possessing you, and ruling you for him; and his very nature and image in you, and such workings of his upon you, which none can imitate. Oh, saith the sanctified soul, have I felt Christ relieving me in my lost condition, binding up my broken heart, delivering me from my captivity, reconciling me to God, and bringing me with boldness into his presence, whom I had offended, and saving me from God's wrath, and law, and my own conscience; and now, after all this, shall I doubt whether there be a Christ, or whether he be alive? Have I felt him new-creating me, and making all things new to me, so strangely opening my darkened eyes, and bringing me from darkness into his marvellous light, and from the power of Satan to God; binding the strong man, and casting him out, and bringing down the strongest holds in my soul; and yet shall I question, whether there be a Christ or not? Hath he made me love the things which I hated, and hate that which I loved; hath he given me such a taste of the powers of the world to come, and possessed me with the hopes of glory with himself, and given me a treasure and portion in God, and set my heart where my treasure is, and caused me in some measure to have my conversation in heaven; and yet shall I doubt again, whether he be the Christ? What an impudent spirit is it that would tempt me against so much experience? As Athanasius saith to the heathens in his time, "If Christ be not alive, how doth he yet destroy your idols, and cast out devils, and convert and subdue the world to himself. Are these the works of a dead man?" Though you see him not, yet by these you may see that he yet liveth; so may the true christian say, Is it the work of a dead man to make me alive? to bring such a clod so near to heaven? to set up a new kingdom and laws within me? Sure, he that

did all this in me, is alive. He that every day helps me to pray, and hears my prayers, and plainly shows me in the accomplishment that they are heard, he is not dead but alive; or else I should not have these benefits of his life. Because he lives, therefore do I live also, and therefore am I in hope of living with him for ever; whereas, if he were dead, my hopes would die, and justice would have caused me to die ere now. My very life confirms me, that there is a Christ, to keep off the penalty which justice would else inflict. It is because God is merciful to me in his Beloved, and pleased in him in whom he was well pleased; and because in him his compassions fail not, therefore it is that I am not consumed. Thus may a true believer argue, from the testimony that is within him, against this temptation.

If deceiving infidels get abroad among us, and seek to turn men from the faith of Christ, they may prevail with those that gave Christ no deeper room than in their fantasy, and that never did heartily close with him in love. If you out-reason these men, yea, if you can turn the scale of fleshly interest to be against the profession of Christ, they will be easily drawn to let him go; but for those that have the Spirit of Christ within them, it is not so with them. If they cannot answer the cavils of an infidel, yet they can hold fast the grounds of faith. Christ hath deeper room and interest in them. He is held faster by the heart than by the head alone: Love will hold Christ when reason alone would let him go. If you will draw such a soul as this to infidelity, you must draw him out of the arms and embracement of Christ. His ear is, as it were, nailed to his door: because he loveth him, he will not leave him. If a sinner will the hardlier leave his lusts, or worldly profits, because he loveth them, blame not a christian, if he be loth to leave Christ, who hath so loved his soul, and whom his soul so loveth. "Who shall separate him from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that hath loved us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 35—39. See here how fast that lively faith, which works by love, doth hold the Lord Jesus Christ! though a superficial, bare assent may let him go. I know expositors agree not about the sense of the words, the love of Christ. Calvin, Beza, Martyr, Pareus, Par, &c. do take it as spoken of Christ's love to us, and not of our love to Christ. Piscator takes it for the sense or feeling of Christ's love to us. Ambrose, Augustine, and others of the ancients, understand it, of our love to Christ. Our English annotations say it may be taken for either, but rather for our love to Christ. The Pelagian expositors are glad of the seeming advantage that ours, before mentioned, do give them, in expounding it of God's love to us, and not of ours to him; and thereupon infer that it is God's love in Christ, to those that love him, (as ver. 28,) that is here meant; as if he should say, What can cause Christ to cease loving those that love him? But then say they, Here is nothing to deny that we may be drawn from loving Christ, and so from being the objects of his forementioned love; and therefore they note that sin is not here enumerated among the rest of the causes. Erasmus and Deodate take in both, supposing it to speak both of our love to Christ, and Christ's love

to us, which I conceive to be the soundest exposition; but, most nearly, I conceive it speaks of our love to Christ, but ultimately and principally of the love of God in Christ to us: for, first, none could reasonably imagine that our tribulation, distress, famine, nakedness, &c. should be so many assaults on God to draw him from loving us, but rather assaults on us to draw us from loving God; nor can it be imaginable that angels, principalities, powers, things present, or to come, should be thought by any to have any considerable strength for the overcoming or expunging of God's love to us, while we love him; and therefore it were no great glory for the apostle thus triumphantly to say, he was persuaded of that which no man doubts of, that God cannot be overcome, or moved from his love, by the extrinsic opposing powers of the creatures. Secondly, it is said that in all these things we are more than conquerors. It is not said God is conqueror. It is we, therefore, that were assaulted, and not Christ: it was we, therefore, that were drawn by these enumerated trials, to have relinquished our love to Christ, and not Christ that was tempted by them to relinquish his love to us: and I am loth, with Piscator and some others, to take it for the feeling of Christ's love to us, because, first, many christians are drawn from the feeling of his love. Secondly, and then it would not be true of all christians universally, but of some eminent champions that are strong in the faith. And the word separate shows that it is spoken, both of us and Christ, and that it is not so much of the sense of love, as of the love itself. I take the apostle's meaning, therefore, to be, as if he should say, What can unclasp those mutual embracements between Christ and his people? or what can separate us from Christ, by withdrawing or destroying our love to him, and consequently turning his love from us? We have many assaults, but all in vain. And if our love to Christ be thus secured, then is the saint's perseverance sure; but if his love to those that love him be firm, and not our love to him, then if we cease loving him he would cease to love us, and be unreconciled to us, as he was before our believing. It is the embracements of a mutual love that is here meant, as I suppose. Christ hath hold of the believer in the arms of his love; and by an answerable love, though infinitely weaker, the believer also hath hold on Christ. Who now can separate them that are thus closed in these embracements? The first reason of the stability of the love of the saints, doth lie in the stability of the love of Christ. We love him, because he loved us first; and he loveth us with a further love of complacency, because we love him; and we persevere in loving him, because his love to us doth persevere. It is not easy to draw a truly loving believer from the arms of his Beloved. He remembereth that love of his first espousals, how Christ took him up, and washed him from his blood, and spake peace to his wounded, self-condemning soul. He remembereth the straits he brought him out of, and the misery which he rescued him from. Oh, what should I have done, thinks he, if I had not had a Christ? what should I have done in my fears and griefs; what should I have said to an accusing conscience; how should I have escaped the jaws of the devourer; how should I have lived one day in peace upon earth, when God had once made known to me my condition? He remembereth also the frequent refreshings which he hath had from the Spirit and grace of Christ; the assistances in duty, the conquests which by him have been obtained against the enemy: and all these reviews do renew his love; and with such thoughts and remembrances as these

in his mind, and with such a sacred fire of love in his heart, how excellently is he fortified against temptations to unbelief! This love is strong, and the waters of many temptations cannot quench it: if the tempter would give him the substance of worldly goods and riches, yea, all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, to draw the soul from Christ, they would be despised. A bare belief is only in the head, which is but the entrance into the inwards of the soul; but when Christ hath our love, he is in the castle of the heart; and then the word hath rooting in us; and therefore in time of trial we shall stand. Love is accompanied with hope and desire, so far as we want the thing we love; and it is not easy to take a man off from his strongest desires and highest hopes. Love is always accompanied with delight, so far as we enjoy the thing we love, and know that we do enjoy it; and a fruition in taste and earnest we have of Christ in this life. And it is, then, no wonder if the tempter have a hard task of it, to draw the soul from him, whom he is delighted in. Worldly men will not let go their vanities; no, nor children their toys; no, nor foolish wretches their foulest sins; because they do delight in them. No wonder, then, if the sons of wisdom, the members of Christ, and children of the kingdom, do hold fast their delights. Did not faith work by this love, desire, delight, and hope, it would be dead, being alone, as to this resisting of temptations.

These are the ways in which it putteth forth its strength. These are the arms by which it holdeth fast the Lord. Every grace is employed in its own place, for the entertainment of Christ, and the retaining him with us. They all sit together, do compose that spiritual frame or furniture, which makes us convenient habitations for the Spirit. He, therefore, that hath this nature, these affections, and these experiences accompanying his belief, may well make Paul's challenge, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ?" O, thou malicious devil, that dost haunt me with thy darts! O, you deluded heretics and infidels, that fill my ears with your foolish sophisms, and trouble me with your disputes against the Lord, my Redeemer! go to them that know him only by the hearing of the ear, if you mean to prevail: but I have known him by the sweet experiences of my soul. Go to them that make a religion of their opinions, and whose belief was never any deeper than their fancies, and whose piety never reached any higher than to certain abstinence and negatives, and to tasks of formal duty; these you may possibly draw away from Christ, and make infidels of them, that were never true believers. Go to them that never knew what it was to love Christ, nor to desire after him, nor to delight in his salvation, nor to hope for his promised blessedness hereafter; but have been only the shells or shadows of believers, annumerating themselves with the strictest professors, while they were strangers to their new natures, and inward frame of mind. It is like you may prevail with these, by subtle seducement, or allurements, or threats; but do you think to do so by me? Why, what weapons, what arguments, do you think to prevail by? Shall tribulation be the means? why, I have that promise in the hand of my faith, and that glory in the eye of my hope, that will bring me through tribulation. Shall distress do it? why, I will rather stick so much the closer to him that will relieve me in distresses, and bring me unto his rest? Will you affright me by persecution? I am assured that this is the nearest way to heaven, and I am blessed of Christ when persecuted for righteousness. Shall nakedness be the weapon? I had rather pass naked

out of this world to heaven, than be clothed in purple, and be stripped of it at death, and cast into hell! Adam's innocent nakedness, and Lazarus's rags, were better than that epicure's gay apparel, Luke xvi. Shall famine be the means? Why, man liveth not by bread only! I had rather my body famished than my soul. I have meat to eat that ye know not of; even the bread of life, which whoso eats, shall live for ever. If I eat and drink with you, I must hunger and thirst again; but this living water will spring up within me to everlasting life, and then I shall thirst or hunger no more. Will you affright me from Christ, by the sword of violence? I know that the Lord, whom I believe in and serve, is able to deliver me out of your hands; but if he will not, be it known to you, I will not forsake him: for your sword shall be but the key to open the prison doors, and let out my soul that hath long desired to be with Christ. If you tell me of peril, I know no danger so great, as of losing Christ and salvation, and bearing his wrath that can kill both body and soul in hell. Do I not read in certain history, of that noble army of martyrs, that loved the Lord Jesus to the death, and gloried in tribulation, and would not by the flames, or jaws of lions, be separated from Christ? Did not they pass through that Red sea, as on dry ground, to the promised land?

Was not the Son of God in the flames with them, to strengthen and support them? Though they were killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep to the slaughter, yet did they not forsake the Captain of their salvation; who was made perfect by suffering, and gave them an ensample: yea, in all this they were triumphant conquerors; they triumphed in the flames, to the confusion of Satan, and all their enemies, as Christ triumphed on the cross, destroying by death the prince of death, Heb. ii. 14. Through him that loved them to the death, they were enabled to love him to the death. I am confident that all your assaults will be vain, by which you would separate me from the love of God, in Christ. If you would do it by the threats of death, I will remember it will prove the passage to life, and that Christ doth threaten everlasting death. If you would do it by the baits of life, I will prefer the everlasting life before it. If evil angels assault me, as thinking themselves too strong for me, they will find that I am preserved by a stronger than they. Were it possible for a good angel to dissuade me from my Lord, and to preach to me another gospel, as he would cease to be good, so I would hold him accursed.

Principalities, aerial and terrestrial, cannot overpower the divine and sovereign Lord of the redeemed. Powers, aerial or terrestrial, will never overpower him. Present hopes, or fears, or enjoyments, are transitory and contemptible. Future evils will soon be past, and all future things are as ineffectual as the present. The height of honours would not entice, the depths of distresses would not discourage. No power, from the highest to the lowest of creatures, no state, from the highest to the lowest of conditions, shall separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus my Lord; either from the love wherewith through Christ I love him, or the love wherewith he loveth me through Christ.

Thus may the confirmed, experienced believer be confident, that the bands and cords of love will never by fraud or force be untwisted; and that none shall take them out of the Father's hands, who is greater than all; and, therefore, none shall take them out of the hands of Christ; and that no persecution shall cause that faith to wither, which in a good and honest heart hath taken root.

And thus you see what an advantage it is against temptations to infidelity, to have the impress of the gospel of Christ on our hearts, and the witness in ourselves.

Sect. XV.

2. So if the tempter should persuade such a man to doubt whether the gospel be true, or be God's word, this believer may have recourse into his soul for a testimony of it; thence he can tell the tempter, by experience, that he hath found the promises of this gospel made good to him. Christ hath there promised to send his Spirit into the souls of his people, and so he hath done by me; he hath promised to give light to them that sit in darkness, and to guide their feet into the ways of peace; to bind up the broken-hearted, and set at liberty the captives; and all this he hath fulfilled upon me: all that he hath spoken about the power of his word and grace, and the nature of its effects, I have found upon myself. The help which he promised in temptations, the hearing of prayers, the relief in distress; all these I have found performed; and, therefore, I know that the gospel is true.

3. If the tempter would persuade you that there was no need of a Redeemer, the believer hath a testimony of the contrary in himself. Experimentally he hath been convinced of the need of a Redeemer, and so hath advantage against this temptation.

4. If the tempter would persuade you that Christ came but to seek himself, and only to be believed on and magnified in the world, here also the true believer hath the witness in himself, from whence he can conclude, and prove, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, to be a physician to the sick, to seek and to save that which was lost, and to pull down the kingdom and powers of darkness: for of all these he hath experience in himself, and from hence may sufficiently repel this temptation.

4. If any should question whether there be, indeed, such a thing as a sanctifying Spirit of Christ sent forth into the souls of believers, to recover them to God, (as many carnal persons, and deceivers of late, do,) the true believer may have recourse to his own heart, and prove the thing by the testimony within him. He can think of the sins that this Spirit hath mortified, and of the heavenly image which it hath planted on his soul, and the discoveries and changes which it hath made within him, which flesh and blood could not have made, and thus can experimentally confute such deceivers.

Thus you may perceive, that it is the duty of the saints to fetch arguments from within them, for the repelling of such temptations, and the confutation of all suggestions to unbelief: and here, if ever, to show ourselves instructed to the kingdom of God, by fetching out of our treasure things new and old. If the wiser heathens, yea, almost all the pagan world, could gather that there was some life for us after this, from those small sparks of virtue which they found in man's nature, how much more easily and so lidly may we conclude, both this and much more, from the spiritual principles, inclinations, and actions, which are wrought on the souls of the sanctified, by the grace of Christ, and the power of the gospel! Doubtless, there is something within a true christian that takes part with Christ against all contraditors, as there was somewhat in the new-created man, Adam, that would have taken part with God, if any had denied the Godhead; yea, and as there is something yet in the common sort of mankind, that would make them rise up against him that should be a professed atheist. Do not tempt God, upon confidence of this, by thrusting yourselves into the mouth of

temptation, or lending your ears to heretical deceivers or infidels; but if you are cast upon such temptations, make use of this antidote, and observe whether there be not somewhat within you, that contradicteth the seducer, and riseth up against the blasphemies which are suggested? If a child should be persuaded to think ill of his own father, whatever arguments were brought to persuade him, the very natural love of a child would contradict them, and much advantage him against any slanderous reports that might be raised of him. Another man that neither so well knoweth him, or loveth him, would be far easier drawn to believe them; but there is somewhat within him that will not let a child believe them so easily. If a deceiver should say to him, This man is not thy father, and hath nothing to do with thee; he meaneth but to undo thee, and desireth not thy good; would not something within, even natural love, and experience of his father's kindness, establish a son from crediting such a deceiver? Believers have an inward rooted love to Christ. They love him above father, mother, house, land, or their own lives. They have tasted also and tried how good he is: and is it easy to break these bonds, and make such a one believe that the gospel is false, or that Christ is not indeed the Messiah? When Christ standeth without, and knocks at the door of men's hearts, he then pleadeth but his right for admittance; and though his arguments be very cogent with evidence, and he fully proveth all that he saith, yet it is less wonder that he is kept out by unbelief, because, though he have the right, yet his enemy hath the possession. But in a true believer, Christ hath possession, as well as right; and, therefore, it will be harder for the enemy to dispossess him, by drawing that soul again to infidelity. His Spirit keeps possession; his graces all keep possession; his precepts and promises also without, do hold them to their allegiance. His threatenings awe them, and are as a wall of fire before them, and they have their eyes opened to see the angel with the sword. He telleth them, that if any man draw back, his soul shall have no pleasure in him, Heb. x. 38. That it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame, Heb. vi. 4-6. I see no necessity that this must be understood of the unregenerate and unjustified; yet doth it not affirm, that eventually any sanctified, justified person shall come into this sad condition, but it warneth them that they do not, and telleth them the danger, that hereby it may be prevented: for Christ causeth his people's perseverance, by telling them of the possibility, facility, and danger, in itself, of not persevering. So that all these advantages do fortify a true believer against infidelity: but especially in that the precepts, and promises, and threatenings of Christ's law, are all written over again in his heart: these are they that hold fast. A precept, and promise, and threatening in the Bible, may do much; but when a true christian is tempted to unbelief, he can say, There is a precept to the contrary written in my heart: there is a threatening against infidelity written in my heart: there is a promise to believers written in my heart. How then can I do this great evil; and sin against the law that is within me, and the Lord that doth possess me?

You see, then, what hope the devil hath to speed by such temptations, and where it is that the up-

start generation of cunning infidels in this age, here in England, must seek their prey, and find matter to make unhappy proselytes of; not among the experienced, well-grounded, renewed, and truly regenerate ones, that have a Christ in their hearts, as well as his name in their books, but among those that are merely nominal, titular, traditional, and superficial christians: of such as these is their apostatized party composed.

Object. But some that have seemed as godly and experienced christians as the best, have of late fallen to deny Christ and everlasting life.

Ans. 1. All seemers have not the witness in themselves, nor the law of Christ put into their hearts.

2. I hope some of those that deny the fundamentals opinatively and speculatively, may hold them virtually and practically; and that their infidelity is not yet rooted or habituated, nor hath extirpated the better habits which were in them, though it have so far prevailed with their fantasies, opinions, and tongues.

3. If it were proved that some true believers do apostatize unto perdition, yet would the doctrine which we are upon remain unshaken, that it is a great advantage against temptations to unbelief, to have the witness in ourselves.

Sect. XVI.

Object. May not a Turk or a pagan say the like, that there is something within them that dissuadeth them from a change; and resisteth all motions that would draw them from their religion? That is, there is prejudice, through education, custom, company, and interests, and prepossession; and there is a kind of love to their own idols, and conceits hereupon. And what is yours more than this?

Ans. My answer consisteth of two parts, which I desire you to observe together. 1. It is easy to possess men with prejudice, and with love, and friendship, to a false teacher, false religion, or way, which hath nothing in nature against it, but for it; but it is not easy to possess men with the like persuasions and affections to that which nature is not for but against. If Mahomet will promise men dominion on earth, and sensual felicity after that they are dead, and make a sensual life to be the way to it, what wonder if nature be easily drawn to this religion? Here is much in carnal hearts to befriend it, but little to gainsay it. But if Christ call men from all their pleasing sins, and instead of satisfying their flesh do require them to take it as their enemy, and to crucify it; and instead of making them great in the world, do call them to leave all, and deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow him, if they will be his disciples; and setteth men upon high and spiritual employments, and all in hope of a reward which is unseen: here flesh and blood will resist; carnal nature will rise up against it; this will not easily down, till more than human strength effect it; so that you may see the case is so different between the christian religion and others, that it will no way follow, that we may love Christ without a supernatural work, because a man may love Mahomet without it.

2. And further note, that we do make a great difference among christians themselves, between those that believe and love Christ merely upon such prejudice, custom, or interest; and those that believe in him and love him sincerely, and upon right grounds. And we confess, that those of the former, being but superficial and seeming christians, may be drawn away to infidelity: but what is that to their case, that have a true faith and love? There is a double difference between these and the other; one

in the object of their faith and love, and another in the act. For, first, it is but the cheap and easy part of the christian religion, which those customary professors do indeed entertain in love; and so they love Christ but as the author of these; and so they make another thing of christian religion in their conceits, than indeed it is; and it is not indeed that religion which they embrace or love, but the name of it, and some parcels torn from the rest; but it is not so with the sincere: and then, secondly, it is but by a superficial, dreaming, ineffectual belief, that they receive the very history of the rest; and therefore not accepted by a sovereign love.

Such a faith and love as Mahometans have to Mahomet, such many seeming christians have to Christ; and these are not the confirmed ones, by the testimony in themselves. But such a rooted faith and love, as is proper to the saints, in one that so crosseth their carnal inclinations and interests, as is aforesaid; this cannot be found in any but in christians. Men of other religions have no such object for faith and love, and no faith or love for such an object.

Consider, also, that so much of God as there is remaining, even in those religions which otherwise are false; so much it is, even by the professors of it, resisted and opposed, in the points that are cross to carnal interests and inclinations: and therefore, we find that even among the heathens, as Seneca and others tell us, an abstemious, temperate, contemplative man, that would not do evil as freely as others, was the common scorn; so that the very sparks of virtue that appeared among them, had ill entertainment by the vicious vulgar; though they could, good cheap, afford them applauses when they were dead, as the wicked among us still will do of the saints that lived before them.

Sect. XVII.

Object. But if the gospel were false, yet, if you do but believe it to be true, will it not make all those impressions on the mind, which you so magnify. If one tell me of an everlasting joy or torment, will it not make me deeply affected, and chiefly apply myself to the minding thereof, if I do but believe it, whether it be true or not: so that it is the weight of the matter, and your belief of it, that causeth all these effects, and not the truth of it.

Answ. I confess, I have known some much staggered by this objection, but I doubt not to show you the vanity of it; as followeth:

1. You suppose that which is not to be supposed, viz. that the doctrine is not true which we believe, or that it is not of God, when you say, It would have such effects, though it were not of God, if we did but believe it: and that you ought not in this disputation to suppose that is manifest, in that we first prove it to be of God, by former arguments, before we plead this argument, from the testimony within us.

We use not this our first reason of belief, but as a confirming reason, procuring a stronger belief: for we do but first believe Scripture to be of God, because it hath done such works on us; but we believe it by other cogent reasons, that so it may do such works on us. It is a believed doctrine, that mortifieth our lusts, and raiseth up our hearts to God.

Let us suppose such a disputation between the tempter and Adam, in his innocency. The devil saith: This great world which thou seest and art a member of was not made by God, but by me.

Adam saith: I know it was made by God; for as none but God can make such a frame, so I have seen God in it and by it, and by this sight of him my soul

hath been possessed with such lively apprehensions of his infinite wisdom, and goodness, and greatness, and hath received such admirable impressions hereupon, that I am fully confirmed by these effects within me, that it is the work of God.

The tempter replieth: This is but the effect of thine own belief, for whether God made it or no, thou wilt thus admire God for it, if thou do but believe that he made it. Here the tempter may not suppose that God made not the world; though Adam be but proving it, the contrary may be supposed, because this argument from the impress and effects is but a confirming argument, supposing it proved before by other arguments, That none but God could make this world, and that God did make it.

We can first show the image of the Creator on the world, and thereby prove that it is his workmanship; but, afterwards, when Adam findeth the impress upon his heart, he is the more confirmed in it, against all temptations.

So do we first prove, by the intrinsic nature of the word itself, and by the extrinsic assistant testimony of miracles and wondrous works, that the Scripture is of God, and the doctrine is his truth; and then we are confirmed in it by the effects of it upon our own souls. We first show the image of God and his Son Christ in the gospel, and then we find the same image imprinted by the gospel upon our hearts. Suppose a prince have a broad seal that no one can counterfeit, and which he hath also extrinsically testified to be his own; if I have a grant of some lands, which I hold by writings under that seal, if any affirm that the great seal itself is counterfeit, I will prove the contrary; first, from the seal and extrinsic testimony; and, then, from the impress of it, which I possess: and if any say, If the same seal were counterfeit, yet it would make the same impress; I should answer, That I prove, both from the quality of the seal and impress, that it is not counterfeit.

2. Note, therefore, that we argue not from the impress upon the soul, as an impress, but as such an impress, from the quality or nature of it; and finding it to be the very image of God, we are the more confirmed, that the seal that made it did bear the same image, and was his.

Sect. XVIII.

Object. What need you a testimony within you, if you can see the same image of God in the word without you, and so believe before: is not the same sufficient to confirm your belief which did beget it?

For answer to this objection, I add in the third place:

3. The image of God is more easily discerned in the effects or impress upon our own hearts, than in the word alone; especially more easily in both than in that one. The one begetteth faith, the other a stronger faith: I showed you the advantages before. You plainlier discern the image in the wax than on the seal, especially when the impress and effects are so near us, and consist in the very apprehensions, and feelings, and workings of our own souls, which will force us to an observation.

Besides, the effect is something more express and operative, and in that respect more illustrious, than the word itself, which is the cause. The fire in the flint is not so discernible as in the flax; the seed of the living creature doth not contain the image of it so actually, expressly, and discernibly, as the birth itself doth. God's word is his seed, and the new creature is the effect; not that there is any part of the new creature which is not actually and expressly required in the word; but that it is to us more dis-

cernible, as to the excellency and beauty in the creature, than in the seed; in the effect, than in the cause; in the obedience, than in the precept: only the present imperfection of the effect, while the cause is perfect, doth make some difference on the other side; but yet in the nature of the thing, the effect is to us more discernible: nay, the operative nature of the effect is such, that it is oftentimes more discernible, even to a stander-by; which caused the apostle to require that wives should, therefore, walk uprightly with unbelieving husbands, that if any obey not the word, they might without the word be won by the conversation of their wives.

4. Moreover, you suppose that which is not to be supposed in this objection, viz. That we can believe, and so believe this word to be of God, if it were not so indeed; that is, if he do not, by a special work of his grace, cause us to believe it; for, first, Where man was most guilty he is most depraved: as man sinned by turning from God, so is he become a stranger to God, and blind in the things of God, and of his own recovery and salvation; and as his sin was especially in believing Satan, and denying belief to God, so is he now viciously disposed to the same. Secondly, And, moreover, the way of our recovery is supernatural, and therefore must have a supernatural light within, as well as without, to reveal it to such a low, depraved soul. Thirdly, And, especially, man's corrupted sense and will hath got the mastery of his understanding and reason, so that he cannot easily believe what he is exceedingly unwilling should be true; but all unregenerate men are exceedingly unwilling that this word should be true, both because it tells them of their sin, and misery, and future danger, and because it would take them off from their carnal delights, and would call them to a life which they are utterly undispensed to. By all which it is apparent, that though you may believe the doctrine of Mahomet, or any common or carnal doctrine, without any grace of God, yet so can you not the doctrine of Christ, because it is of another nature.

Object. What kind of doctrine is that, that a reasonable man cannot believe? It seems, then, it wanteth evidence of its truth.

Answ. It wanteth not evidence suitable to its nature, and to an enlightened understanding, or to sound reason; but its evidence is not of itself sufficient to the carnal mind: not because it wanteth due evidence, but because reason is wanting to that mind; for reasonable, carnal men are not reasonable, as to the exercise, in these spiritual things. Well doth the Scripture call them blind, fools, and madmen, beside themselves, and unreasonable men. How foolish was Aristotle himself, and all his brethren, about matters of his own salvation, for all the strength of his reason in natural things!

5. Lastly, You must difference between a common, superficial, speculative belief and apprehension, and a deep, effectual faith: and then I add further, by way of answer to this objection, that if you speak of a common, superficial belief, the objection itself is false; for if this were not God's word, and yet I did so superficially believe it to be his word, that belief would not change and renew my heart, nor do those great things wherein this testimony within me doth consist. It must be a special, effectual belief, produced by the help of a special grace added to the word, which must do these works upon the souls of men. Such a belief as mere tradition, education, custom, prejudice, or worldly advantages, yea, or bare hearing and reading will produce, will not do these works; and if it were not the word of God, he would never accompany it by that special power and work of his Spirit.

Both these last parts of my answer are evident in the thing itself, and in daily, undeniable experience.

First, It is apparent, that besides a bare belief, there is also necessary, a sober, impartial consideration of the things believed, before they can make such a change upon the heart and life; for else they will slide away, and be uneffectual. Now, in things of this nature, it is not the mere external revelation, without internal, accompanying grace, that will bring the mind to such consideration.

Besides, while the heart of man is hardened, this consideration will not take effect; but all men's hearts are so hardened till grace soften them; so that you do but set a seal to a stone or wax that is not softened, while you read the word to a carnal heart, unless the Spirit set in with the reading. Also, men are engaged to contrary courses, and that so strongly that none but the Spirit of grace can disengage them, and cause them to receive the due impress of the word, which will turn them another way.

Secondly, Experience also may satisfy us in this point against the objection; for we see that many hundreds sit under the same word, and some do believe effectually, and some do believe superficially, and some believe not at all; yea, and, (lest you lay the difference on any preparations in the nature, temper, or education of the persons,) first, many that were of better natures, more sober, considerate temper, and of an engaging education, yet believe not, or not effectually; when others that wanted such advantages do believe: secondly, and the same men that have heard the same word seven years, or twenty years together, in vain, or persecute it as Paul did before his conversion, are after all that changed by it on a sudden, and receive it, and promote it.

And, to conclude, we see also by common experience, that thousands who do superficially believe the Scripture to be the word of God, and to be true, do yet find none of this change upon their hearts, nor that impress from the word, which may be a witness in themselves; so that it is not all that believe the word to be true, but all that effectually believe it, that have this effect. Such a belief as common means may produce doth it not; but the special belief in the regenerate doth it.

Object. You seem thus to prove the Scripture true, because you believe it; whereas you should believe it, because it is true: for what is this witness in yourselves, but your own belief.

Answ. I first prove it true, or at least discern it to be true, by other evidence, without me; and then I believe it, because I see that evidence that it is of God, and so is true; and having so believed it, I find those excellent effects of that belief in my soul, which do more strongly persuade me, that it is the word of God, than I was before persuaded, and do confirm me against all temptations to apostasy: so that my first belief, is not because I do believe; nor my second or following belief neither: but the first is, because I see by other evidence the truth of the word; and the second is, because by believing I have such divine and excellent effects upon my soul.

Sect. XIX.

Quest. But will this argument be of any use to persuade or convince another, or is it only for yourself? We that see not what is in your heart, cannot be convinced by mere latent reasons. Show us such works, and we will believe you.

Answ. 1. The principal use of this internal testimony, we acknowledge, is for the establishment of the believer himself; and therefore the principal success of this argument, is upon himself: and

therefore we do not use it as our first or principal argument, for the convincing of others.

2. Yet there is so much in it, for the use of others, as should move them to make trial of that doctrine and religion which others profess to receive such effects from; especially, considering, first, that they are sober and credible persons, and not light, deluded, vain, fantastical people only, that so profess: and if such testimonies shall be refused, and that of so many thousand persons of all degrees, ages, and sexes, and that in all countries and times, and that in a matter of fact, or about the inward experience of their own souls; what testimony then should be regarded? and how would human converse be maintained, and human affairs be transacted, if such testimonies as these shall be judged invalid? 2. Moreover, the external effects in the lives of the saints are so great, and so discernible by those that do converse with them; especially, whose nearness and familiarity doth give them the opportunity of a more full discovery; that even the unbelievers may see that which should convince them, that it is a true, divine, and excellent doctrine, which hath such excellent effects in the lives of the believers. And so great is this evidence, even to others, that if they be not convinced by it, or at least drawn to try that word and religion, which hath such effects, they are left unexcusable, and may justly be condemned, as sinning against reason itself, and shutting their eyes against a visible evidence. Thus far, therefore, the testimony in one, may be useful to another.

Sect. XX.

Quest. If the witness in ourselves be so full and convincing as you say, then, what need have we any more to make use of the Scriptures? Let the unconverted have recourse to Scripture, who have not the Spirit, but for us that have it, why should we leave a higher teacher to go to a lower? The like may be said as to the ministry of men: When we have once the Spirit, and are taught of God, we need not learn of men any more: for the promise is, that we shall not teach one another, saying, "Know the Lord, for all shall know him from the least to the greatest."

Ans. This reason is, most plainly, contrary to common reason, experience, and Scripture itself. First, It is not only one thing that man wanteth to enable him to understand the matters of his salvation: he wanteth first an outward word of revelation. Secondly, He wanteth an outward teacher, to tell him the meaning of the very terms themselves, which were written in Hebrew and Greek, and to remove difficulties out of his way. Thirdly, he wanteth inward light to cause him to understand this word, when he is thus taught: accordingly God supplieth this threefold want; the first, by giving him the Scripture; the second, by giving him the ministry, and other occasional teachers; the third, by giving him the illumination of the Spirit to help him to see by the former means, and to make the word and ministry to be effectual. I do not put the Spirit last, as if he were the least and lowest help, but because that in order of nature, the other two must go before, and the Spirit comes and sets them home, and makes them successful. He that knoweth not the office of the Spirit, nor to what use it is that he is given of God, but looketh that he should do a work which he is not sent to do, nay, which he abhorreth, that is, to teach men without, if not against, the Scripture and the ministry; no wonder, if he meet with a spirit of delusion, while he thinks he hath the Spirit of God. There is a twofold work of

the Spirit necessary, to reveal to us the truths of Christ: the first is the inspiration of prophets and apostles to reveal it to us from without, by preaching or writing, and to seal it by miracles. This witness of the Spirit was given when the Scripture was written, and delivered to the church, and so is past already, but still in force for our use and to our confirmation. The second is that illumination which must cause us to understand the word and ministry; this is it that we are now speaking of, and which is necessary in ourselves.

It is a mad thing for a man to say, I have eyes in my head that are not blind, and therefore I have no need of the light of the sun; or to say, I have eyes and sun, and therefore have no need of the light in the air, which cometh from the sun; or to say, I have all this light, and therefore I can read by it without a book; or to say, I have both light and book, and therefore can read without a teacher: for if a man would read, or see any other the like object, he must have all these, or more than one; you must have eyes, and eyes that have the power of seeing, and that not hindered by any inflammation or other disease; and you must have the light from sun or candle; and you must have a book, and have it opened, and have one to teach you so far as you have not learned.

God hath appointed you these three necessary means of your illumination and direction; the word, the ministry, and the Spirit: "What God hath joined, let no man separate." If you will foolishly go set one of these against another, or make one to exclude the other, as being sufficient without it, when God hath set them all together and made them all necessary, assigning to each a several part in the work of your illumination, you will abuse God and yourselves, and go without the light while you despise the necessary cause of it. You may as well say, I have meat, and therefore need no teeth; or, I have meat and teeth, and therefore need no stomach; or, I have all these, and therefore need no natural life and spirits to digest my meat. All these are several concauses to produce that effect: the office of the meat, the teeth, the stomach, the natural heat and digestive power, is not all one, though all to one end; nor is any one of these sufficient to that end without the rest, though each one may be sufficient to its own use: so the office of the Scripture is not the same with that of the ministry or Spirit; nor the office of the ministry the same with that of the Spirit and the word; nor the office of the Spirit the same with that of the word or ministry; though, yet, all have the same end and full effect, that is, the illumination of the sinner. Will you then say, that one is insufficient, unless it be sufficient without the rest? No; the sufficiency of them must be judged of in respect to their own several offices and parts in the work. The word is sufficient to produce faith and holiness, by the help of ministry, ordinarily, or some other guide, and of the Spirit, as ever necessary. The Spirit is sufficient to cause you to understand the word by the help of man's ministry; though he can do it without, yet this is his undertaken office, and he will not teach men to contemn his own ordinances and means. Will you say, that no wheel in your watch or clock is perfect, unless it will do the whole work without the rest; or will throw away all the wheels save one, because that one is perfect, without fault, when they are all appointed to work and move together, and none of them to serve without the rest.

And, first, for Scripture; it is the very book and matter which the Spirit is sent to teach us to understand. What do you expect the Spirit should teach

you to understand but the word? Would you have him bring you another gospel, when Paul would hold an angel from heaven accused, if he should do so? Gal. i. 7—9. Will you say, that a schoolmaster is insufficient in his school, if he teach not his scholars without a book? or, will you throw away your grammar or other books, because you have a good schoolmaster, and say, books are for them that come not to school? When Christ told his mind to his apostles, and bid them tell it to the world, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them, he promiseth to be with them to the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 20; that is, to be with the teachers of that same doctrine, which by these apostles was to be delivered, and not of a new doctrine. Paul chargeth Timothy to keep these things to the coming of Christ, 1 Tim. vi. 14.

These are the truths which the first pastors communicated to the next, and those were to communicate it, as to the people, so to faithful men, that might preserve it as they had done, 2 Tim. ii. 2. This is the word that is able to make men wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15; and to give them an inheritance among the sanctified, Acts xx. 32. By this word it is, that those must be washed, and cleansed, and sanctified, whom Christ will present pure and spotless to his Father at the last, Eph. v. 26. So that, to set the Spirit against his own word, and to cast it off on pretence that you have that Spirit, who is the author of it, and enjoyeth it, and is purposely sent to teach it you, and lead you by it into truth, and sanctify by that word of truth; this is impudent, unreasonable abuse, both of the Spirit and word, as, one day, deluded souls will find.

2. And for the ministry, if men were not stark blinded by the father of delusions, they could never imagine that God hath discharged them from submission, learning, or obedience to their lawful guidance by the word, as long as they confess the Scriptures to be true. Hath not God set in the body several members, not having all the same office? All is not an eye, nor all a hand, nor is the body without an eye or hand, 1 Cor. xii. 14, 17, 19, 28. The apostle commandeth Timothy to commit the same things which he had learned, to faithful men, who might be able to teach others also, 2 Tim. ii. 2. He directeth him how to choose and ordain elders in every city, and what men to choose and ordain, 1 Tim. iii.; Tit. i. 5. He tells him that he that desireth the office of a bishop, desireth a good work, 1 Tim. iii. 1. Peter biddeth the elders "Feed the flock of God which is among you, (or as some read it, in your charge, or under you,) taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind," &c. 1 Pet. v. 2—4. The command is most express to all the churches of the Hebrews: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you," Heb. xiii. 17. And, verses 7 and 24, they are twice more called, "Them that rule over them," and, as verse 7, "that preach to them the word of God." And the apostles ordained elders in every church, Acts xiv. 23. These were commanded to teach in season and out of season, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2; and therefore must be heard. They must feed the flock over which the Holy Ghost doth make them overseers, Acts xx. 28. Mark, the Holy Ghost doth make men overseers and pastors of the churches, and yet these men would cast off overseers, because they have the Holy Ghost. Christ commit-

eth to them as ambassadors, the preaching of the word of reconciliation in his name, 2 Cor. v. 19—21; and as guides, the ruling of the church of God, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5; Heb. xiii. 7, 17; and calleth them wise stewards, whom the Lord makes rulers over his household, to give them their meat in due season, Luke xii. 42. He saith, the elders that rule well, are worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in the word and doctrine, 1 Tim. v. 17. He brandeth the disobedient and untractable, with the name of unruly men, whom christians must avoid; whether it be the *ἀνακταί*, that are as soldiers that keep not rank and file, and will not know their colours; or the *ἀνυπότακτοι*, that know not how to be obedient, or submit to rule and government. The first sort, mentioned 1 Thess. v. 14, the second sort, Tit. i. 10, 6, though we translate both unruly. And is it not for the use of believers that have the Spirit, that these officers are set in the church? and is it not the church of believers that is commanded to hear and obey them? Nay, hath not Christ set them in the church purposely for the edifying of the body, and the perfecting of the saints, till we all come to a perfect man, &c. Eph. iv. 11—14; and purposely to keep christians, that they may not be as children tossed up and down with every wind of doctrine, according to cunning sleights and subtlety of men, by which they lie in wait to deceive? Nay, doth not Christ himself rule and teach by them as his officers; and say, "He that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me?" John xiii. 20; Mark ix. 39; Luke ix. 48. So that it is most evident that it was never Christ's intent to take down that ministry which by himself was set up, nor to make it needless, till men are perfected and have no more sin.

And as for that part of the objection from Jer. xxxi. 34, it is plain that it was far from the mind of the Holy Ghost, to make the ministry unnecessary to them that have the Spirit. For as the Spirit was given by the ministry of the apostles, so the same apostles were necessary for the building up of them that had the Spirit, and therefore did use to visit and teach the churches to that end, and set elders over them to be their constant guides and teachers. The text, indeed, doth assure us, that knowledge and the means of it shall much more abound under the gospel than before; and that more persons shall have knowledge, and greater knowledge, and that of the Spirit's preaching. But the plain meaning of the words, "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour and brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me," &c. seems to be this, they shall not be ignorant of God, as heathens, nor (as to the elect) without the saving knowledge of him, as hypocrites, and therefore shall not have need to be taught to know God, as men that do not know him; it shall be no such rare thing to know the Lord. But first, this denieth not, but that they may have need to be taught to know more of God, though not simply to know God. We need not teach men that which they know of God already; but we need to teach them so much as they do not know. And Paul himself saith of himself and all men, "That we know but in part here," 1 Cor. viii. 2, and xiii. 9. And we must "grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. iii. 18; Phil. iii. 12, 15. We have need to be fed with strong meat, after we have lived on milk, and to be taught higher when we have learned the principles, Heb. v. 11, 12, and vi. 1—3. It seems these objectors would not learn of Paul himself, if he were alive, because he is a man. Secondly, And is there not much necessary to be known, besides the simple

knowledge of God himself? We must know ourselves, and know many truths, and duties, precepts, promises, and threats, temptations, and dangers, rewards, &c. So that though the elect, after conversion, have not need to be taught simply to know God, yet they have need to be taught a further measure of the knowledge of God, and also to know his will and word.

As there is mention in Luke xv. of righteous persons that need no repentance, that is, no such conversion or repentance as the impenitent and unconverted need, which is a turning from a state of reigning sin to God, though yet they need the repentance of imperfect saints, and therefore must daily pray, "Forgive us our trespasses;" and he that saith, "He hath no sin, is a liar, and deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him: for in many things we offend all," 1 John i. 8; James iii. 2: so is it here; the illuminate do not need to be taught to know the Lord, as the blind world that know him not. Such a phrase also Christ useth to the woman of Samaria: "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst," John iv. 14: that is, shall never have that necessity of new supply as before he had; he shall not have the thirst of emptiness and former need, but yet he shall have the thirst of loving desire, and need of greater measure: so here.

Quest. Is it needful for that man to use extrinsic arguments to prove the Scripture and christian religion to be of God to himself, and to resist temptations, who hath the witness within himself to prove it by?

Ans. God's evidences must not be separated, much less must one be pleaded to the neglect of the rest. We find the apostles oft pleading the first arguments of miracles, and the eye-witnesses' credit, and the like, with the churches of believers: as the work within us is not the first testimony, but a secondary confirming testimony, so doth it not make the first unnecessary or void. Our internal testimony hath relation to, and dependence on, the evidences that are in and with the word itself without us. Besides that, by the external we must convince other men.

Sect. XXI.

Quest. Will this testimony within us be as useful and advantageous to us, in particular points of controversy, as in the main matter of christianity itself? May we not think that he that hath most of the Spirit, is likeliest to be in the right?

Ans. You must difference between those particular points that are essential to christianity, or of necessity to salvation, and those that are very useful, though not absolutely necessary, and those that are niceties of smaller use; also you must difference between the Spirit of holiness in general, and some special gift of the Spirit in particular. And so I further answer:

1. In points essential to christianity, or of absolute necessity to salvation, the witness within them will keep right the elect, who are true believers, when more learned, subtle men may be deceived.

2. In points of very great use to salvation, though not of absolute necessity, such true believers have a great advantage to hold right against all temptations, from this witness or work of grace within them. But yet as they may possibly fall into a scandalous sin, and be recovered, so they may possibly, for all the witness within them, be led into some foul and dangerous error, to the great wrong of the gospel, the trouble of the church, and the wounding of themselves. Yet, *ceteris paribus*, there being

equal helps, and other advantages, a godly man is liker here to be in the right, than an ungodly; but yet sometimes an ungodly man is righter here than he.

3. In the knowing of natural things, or the grammatical construction of the Scripture, and so in opening many particular texts, and in understanding and maintaining the truth in many particular, lower controversies, though the Spirit of holiness be much advantage to men, yet the particular and more common gifts of the Spirit, which ordinarily accompanieth natural wit and diligent study, is a greater advantage; and, therefore, it is ordinary for the Spirit of interpretation to be given, where the Spirit of sanctification is denied; and for God to give many the saving knowledge of himself in Christ, to whom he gives not the knowledge of many truths in nature or theology, nor the knowledge of the meaning of much of the Scripture, as to having those helps which are necessary thereto; for in these things, and in natural knowledge, God is pleased to work by natural means, and by men's industrious studies.

4. He that hath both the Spirit of sanctification and acquired gifts of knowledge together, is the complete christian, and likely to know much more, than he that hath either of these alone. Where nature, grace, industry, and outward helps all meet together, they make the most useful, accomplished men.

5. They that have the greatest measure of the Spirit, are bound to use study and human helps, in subordination to the Spirit. Diligence and common helps, with God's ordinary blessing, may bring them in a natural, acquired knowledge, and grace will sanctify it, and cause them to use it aright for God.

Sect. XXII.

But because they are points of great use, I will review two of these before mentioned, and show you, First, That it is a great advantage against temptations, to those particular sins or errors that are plainly against holiness, to have this witness of the Spirit of holiness in ourselves: Secondly, That it is a great advantage even to the holiest man, to the clear understanding and opening of Scriptures, to have natural and acquired knowledge, commonly called human learning, and to be a laborious, diligent student.

1. And for the first, all the reasons before-mentioned do prove it; for if the Spirit do so much befriend christianity in the main, it must needs also befriend the several parts of it, and apparent means and necessities to its support.

First, If any man should tempt a sanctified man to doubt whether the gospel written by Mark, or John, were the word of God; the same Spirit which attesteth to the christian doctrine in general, would do much by its testimony to fortify him in this. He would find something within him so suitable to those Scriptures, as would hold him to them in an honour and admiration; and so of others.

Secondly, If a libertine should tempt him to think that sin is no great evil, nor displeasing to God, and that it is only as men's consciences make it, and judge of it; the Spirit of holiness within him, would fortify the believer against this temptation. Alas, he hath felt that sin is bitter; and he hath that within him, that will force him so to judge. It goes against his present taste, as bitter things are to us; and it had need to be a very subtle argument, that should force the veriest fool, or child, or any man of sound senses, to believe that gall or aloes are sweet, when he hath tasted them. There is a Spirit in a saint, that is an enemy to sin, and causeth a hatred of it, wherever

he comes; and, therefore, is a great help against all such temptations.

Thirdly, If any man should tempt a true christian to question any of God's attributes, especially those manifested in his dealings with men; as whether he be wise, and knoweth all things; whether he be holy, just, and hateth sin; or whether he be good and merciful to those that fear him? the witness within him would help him very much to resist such temptations. All these attributes of God are written out in the believer's heart, and make up God's image there; he hath tried that God is most wise, and good, and holy, and just, and great: if any should say, that God is the cause of men's sin, he hath that within him that will not suffer him to entertain that conceit; if any should tempt him to carnal, corporeal conceits of God, he hath that within him that will not suffer him to be of such a mind.

Fourthly, If any should teach him, that there is no heaven, nor hell, but what is in men's own conceits; he hath that within him that will not suffer him to be of that opinion. The very life of grace within him, doth carry up his heart to heaven, and it is the end of his very religion and life; and the fear of God within him, doth cause him to fly from the jaws of hell; and he, as it were, hears the Spirit say to him, as the angel to Lot, when he carried him out of the danger of Sodom's flames, "Escape, fly for thy life; look not behind thee:" the Spirit within him causeth him to fear God, as one that can destroy both body and soul in hell fire.

Fifthly, If any should tempt him to doubt, whether Christ hath any congregated church on earth, as the seekers do; he hath in him the experience of comfortable communion in that church; and withal he hath that within him, which will not suffer him to have such base, extenuating thoughts of Christ, as if he were a titular king without a kingdom, or could not convey to men the benefits which he hath purchased, or had failed to fulfil his promises to his church, or to make good his ground, and maintain his interest.

Sixthly, If they would tempt him to deny that Christ hath any ministers in office, or to revile the godly ministers as antichristian, or to reproach them as no ministers of Christ, he hath that experience of Christ speaking in them, and working by them, and maintaining by them his truth, and order in his churches; which is a witness within him against such temptations.

Seventhly, If he be tempted to ways of separation and division, to withdraw from the minister as unworthy to rule him, or from the church as unworthy to communicate with such as he, and so to betake himself causelessly into separated societies; he hath a witness within him of the sinfulness of such a course. That one Spirit within him, hath possessed him with an inclination to unity, and such fears of divisions, and sense of their mischiefs, as a man hath of the dividing or wounding his own body: it hath given him that sense of his own unworthiness, that humility, that charity to others, that he is far readier to say, I am not worthy to join with the church, than, The church is not worthy to join with me. He feels such an insufficiency and ignorance in himself, that he rather takes himself exceedingly beholden to a minister, that will teach him, than grudges to be taught, or says, I will not be catechised, be ruled, by such as you. He so loves the church, order, discipline, ordinances, and ministers of Christ, that he will not easily be drawn from them.

Eighthly, If any should tempt him to withdraw from the communion of the church in the Lord's supper, the comfortable experience which he hath had there,

in the strengthening his faith, the quickening his graces, and killing his sins, would very much strengthen him against such temptations.

Ninthly, If he should be tempted to forbear the hearing of the word, or the singing of psalms to God's praise, or the prayers of the church; he hath that experience of the happy effects of these on himself, and that in his own heart, which correspondeth with these ordinances, that it will much corroborate him against the reasonings of deceivers.

Tenthly, If he be tempted to cast off the instructing of his family, or worshipping God in it, he hath within him a witness that family worship is due to that God, who must govern, and provide for, and defend him and his family; and his experience of the fruits of it, will do much to confirm him against such delusions.

Eleventhly, Against the main body of the antinomian doctrine, which lieth open to a plain discovery, and tendeth to a neglect and remissness in our duty; he hath that within him, that by testifying against it, may give him great advantage to escape. I will not stand to mention the particulars, having done it elsewhere.

Twelfthly, In a word, if any temptation do assault him, to any branch of atheism, infidelity, or ungodliness and libertinism, taking him off from duty, or encouraging him to sin, the witness within him will speak against it, and is a singular advantage to him for his preservation.

Especially in such cases as these, is this inward establishment more necessary:

1. When men are so furiously, or subtly, or incessantly assaulted by the tempter, that their reason seems to be nuplussed, and they are at a loss.

2. When they fall among seducers, who by interest or seeming piety, and sheep's clothing, or by cunning reasonings, or confident affirmations, or terrible threats, would bear them down from truth and unity, and do even bring them to a stand.

3. When poor christians are of so weak parts of reason, that they are not able to dispute against deceivers, then their inward experiences, and the Spirit, is evidently necessary.

4. When a man is in sickness, or near death, having his body and senses weakened, and so is less fit to make use of his reason in a disputing way, he may make singular use of the witness within him against all temptations.

SECT. XXIII.

I come now to the second point, to show you, that in points that are more separable from saving grace, learning, wit, industry, and outward helps may be so great advantage, that an ungodly man may excel in all these, and a godly man may be very weak: an ungodly man may be ordinarily in the right, when a godly man, without such helps, may be mistaken. And therefore it is a desperate and destructive conceit in any man, to think, that because he hath the Spirit, he is therefore more able to expound Scripture, or teach it to the people, or understand controversies, than learned men that have not the Spirit of holiness; or to think, that they should go to an ignorant, godly man for resolution and teaching, rather than to a knowing man that is not godly, as if the former were likeliest to know such truth. And upon this conceit, men cry down human learning, and ministers for esteeming it, and cry up the Spirit, to a use that God doth not intend it. I have no mind, the Lord knows, to set up any thing of man against God, nor God's common gifts above his special, nor to draw any soul into an undue esteem of any thing

that is in their guides, but only to show them the naked truth. I would entreat, therefore, all poor deluded souls, that are carried away with these forementioned mistakes, to lay by their prejudice and passion awhile, and to weigh impartially these following considerations.

1. Consider, God is the author of nature, as well as of grace; and so of all truths about nature, as well as about grace. All light is from the Father of lights, and all truths from the God of truth: it is therefore a wicked thing to call the knowledge of God's creatures human learning, in contempt, or as if it were not of God; only, indeed, it is a commoner knowledge, and therefore not proper to the church, and sanctified ones; but yet when sanctified, it is so proper to them.

2. Consider, as God is the author both of nature and grace, so of nature before grace; and so natural truths, or the knowledge of the nature of things, doth necessarily go before the knowledge of our recovery by Jesus Christ. And therefore, as both are contained in Scripture, so doth the word begin with the discovery of nature, before it mention the revelation of grace; "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," &c. is the beginning of the Bible. Our physics are the first part of God's word, laid down in Genesis, before the rest; and the necessity of this is evident. If God and man must enter a covenant, or if man must be under a law, having rewards and penalties, and the creatures are the materials of the duties and conditions; we must needs know first that God is, and what God is, as far as necessary for such as we; and what man is, and what the creature is that we must use, and what the reward and punishment are. Morality is but the modality of natural being; and the being should be considered before the mode: so that this part of philosophy, which we call our physics, is necessary and divine, delivered in God's word, and first delivered; yea, and it is oft repeated, as in Job, the Psalms, &c. And it was and should be a great part of men's study to know God's works, and God in them: for, saith the Spirit of God, "His works are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein," Psal. cxi. 2, 3. Oh how many high and excellent praises are given to God, by the saints in Scripture, in the contemplation of his works!

3. Consider, that the very creatures themselves, even the frame of heaven and earth, are a book written by the finger of God, containing in legible characters his image, I mean the discovery of his glorious power, and wisdom, and goodness. He made man perfect, as a part of this perfect world, and set him here to see, and love, and honour his Creator, as beholding him in the face of this glorious creation. So that it was man's duty to read this book, and find and honour God in all. But man stopped in the creature itself, and overlooked God, and so fell from God to the creature. Jesus Christ having undertaken the restoring us unto God, doth not destroy, but restore this creation: God is still our Maker; we have still the book of the creature before us, though blotted by the just punishment of our sin. It is still our duty to study, see, and admire God in this creation: though we have another work, even of redemption, to admire, and the Lord's day specially appointed for that, yet doth not that destroy the former, but advance it. We are brought back to the Creator by Christ the Redeemer, and bound now to magnify him for the works of creation, as much as before. It is a great sin of many, and most christians, that they forget this, or make so little conscience of it.

If you say, But what is all this to the matter of

human learning? I answer that in the next consideration.

4. Consider, that which you call human learning, is either the knowledge of things or words. It is honourable, in that it is knowledge; for ignorance and darkness is the kingdom of Satan. That learning, which consisteth in knowing things, is first and principally about the nature of them, to know what they are; and this, you see, we are directed to in the word of God, and by the book of the creature, which sheweth itself to us. So that our physics, which is a great part of human learning, is but the knowledge of God's admirable works; and hath any man the face to call himself God's creature, and yet to reproach it as vain human learning, if any shall know the glorious works of his Creator? The like I may say about the quantities and qualities of these works, and the uses of them for man's good, which take up the rest of the sciences and arts, which you call human learning, about things. And is this to be blamed, which the very word and works of God commend? Why, man, darest thou say that God hath made any thing, which it is a dishonour for us to study and know, except his secrets, which we cannot know?

Indeed, if any would pry into these secrets, or pretend to know more of God's works than he doth or can know, or do deliver his ungrounded conceits as certainties, or do lay more necessity or excellency in the knowledge of smaller things than of great, or do take up in the creature, and study it but for itself, and the mere delight or honour of knowing, and do not look to God, and search after him in all his works, or if he do not employ his learning and knowledge, when he hath it, to God's service, but to sin, or to his own vain-glorious ends; in any of these cases, I excuse no learned men; but this is but the abuse of learning. I confess it is too commonly so abused, and our books have too much vanities and uncertainties; but meat and drink is as much abused as learning, and yet you despise it not as needless. It is true, also, that many heathens excelled in this learning, and that they abused it in these above-said ways; but yet it was a divine light that manifested so much of truth, even to these men; and it was God's truth which they received by the study of the creatures, though they detained it in unrighteousness. Yea, so much excellency was in it, that the abuse of it will leave them without excuse, though they never had the Scriptures, nor heard of Christ. "For that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse," Rom. i. 19, 20. And dare you vilify that learning that so clearly giveth us the knowledge of the invisible things of God? You see, then, the study of God's works is a christian's duty.

And for the other part of learning, the knowledge of words, our sin and natural infirmity have made it a matter of that necessity. We cannot converse together without understanding one another's speeches.

This learning, which consisteth in the knowledge of words, is either the knowledge of their signification, either primitive and proper, or borrowed and improper; to which uses are grammar and rhetoric; or else the knowledge of their disposition, and use in reasoning, and directing, or expressing the mind, which logic performeth. And is there any man so unreasonable as to think either of these unnecessary? Is it not needful to understand the signification of Scripture words and phrases, before we can understand the matter by those words? And is it not

needful to discern when men do reason solidly, and when they jangle and miss the matter, or cunningly deceive? when men speak sense, and when they speak nonsense? What is a man without words, sense, or reason, but a beast? A grammarian is one that knows the meaning of the words, and a logician, one that knows how to use them reasonably. And would you be without either of these? If any abuse to cavilling sophistry, that is no more reason against the right use of them, than that men should not use reason, because bad men do abuse it. Consider, therefore, what learning true learning is, and then you will see that there is small reason to condemn it. When men speak against a thing before they know what it is, no wonder if they know not what they say.

5. The angels, and the glorified spirits of the just, know more of God's works, and all these words and matters in question, than the greatest scholar on earth doth, and if you come to heaven, you will know more yourselves, at least of that much which will then be useful to be known. And will you despise that knowledge, as human, which is angelical, and wherein the most perfect do most excel?

6. Can you understand any scripture, without the help of this learning, in yourselves, or others? The Spirit delivered it to the world in Greek and Hebrew; can you so understand it, before it is translated? If not, then the knowledge of those tongues is necessary in the translators. And would you have us so wholly take up all on trust from them, from age to age ever after, as not to know whether they translate it true or false; or whether there be any such thing as they tell us? If you yourselves must take it upon trust, from those that do understand it, when you do not, methinks you should so much the more honour and reverence them, whom you are fain to be so much beholden to, and whom you must trust in a matter of such concernment to your salvation; as, whether ever any of this was in the text of the Hebrew and Greek, which you find in the English? Sure that which is so laudable in the translators, is not to be condemned in your teachers.

What if the Rhemist papists tell you, that the Bible is falsely translated, I pray you what answer will you give them, if none of your teachers knew it to be otherwise, whose words you must take as credible persons? Send a Hebrew and Greek Bible into Wales or Ireland, and when that converteth souls without an interpreter, then I will begin to think learning less necessary: yea, or when yourselves can so understand it. Besides, if there be not some knowledge of the situation of places, of the customs and state of that country, of the proverbial speeches of those times and places, with divers like things, it is not probable that you should understand much of the Scriptures.

7. Consider well, to what use and end it is that the Spirit of holiness is sent, and then you will never think that this Spirit will serve you without common learning. This sanctifying Spirit is given to sanctify, that is, to give us the saving knowledge of God by the interpreted or expounded word, and to draw up our hearts from the creature to him, and to conform us to our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have believed: but it is not the office of this Spirit of holiness, as such, to teach men the knowledge of all natural truths, or the signification of words and phrases. Many thousand that have the Spirit cannot understand a Hebrew or Greek Bible; nor could they have told, by this time, how the year or the week goes about, nor how many years have been since Christ, nor what a year is, nor what day of the week goes over their heads, if they had never had the help of astronomers, or learned men. The

Spirit of holiness is given to bring men safe to heaven, and so it will do; but not to make them understand every natural or theological truth.

8. Consider, your very learning to speak, or read, or write, is as much human learning, as the learning to know the nature of creatures, and sense of strange languages. And if you renounce these, which you neither have by nature or grace, what persons would you be? You may as well say, therefore, that the Spirit will serve without learning to write, or read, or speak; for the difference of the cases is only in degree, and not in kind.

9. Consider well, that there are several employments that God hath for men in the world, and in the church; and accordingly there are several gifts of the Spirit. For salvation, he giveth the Spirit of saving grace, which shall teach men effectually the need of Christ, the evil of sin, and the like, but not every other truth. Those whom he will employ as interpreters of Scripture, and teachers, and guides to others, he will furnish with gifts that are necessary for such employments. And a man may teach others, that may not be sanctified or saved himself; and many are sanctified and saved, that are unfit to teach others. Are all prophets? Are all apostles? Are all teachers? Is all the body an eye or hand? God may give teachers a spirit of teaching, as he gave Saul a spirit of government, and many wicked men, in the first age, a spirit of teaching, interpreting tongues, miracles; and deny these to better men, because he intendeth not them to the same use. Public gifts are for public use.

10. Consider, you must distinguish between extensive and intensive knowledge; between knowing more and more truths, and knowing the same truths better, and more effectually. The Spirit of holiness is not given, to know more truths by than an unsanctified man can know, but to know the same better. You cannot name any truth which a gracious man knoweth, but a hypocrite may have a speculative knowledge of the same, and say the same words concerning it, as he can say. But grace makes a man know that heartily and affectingly, which another knows but superficially: but though the Spirit cause not the sanctified to know any more for number of truths, than a hypocrite may know; yet the commoner gifts of the Spirit by study and learning, causeth many ungodly men to know many truths, which thousands of the godly never knew: which truths, in their place, are usual and excellent.

11. Consider, that it is the work of the Spirit of holiness, to cause you savingly to know, at least, fundamentals, and the substance of christian religion: but it belongs more to learning, and a commoner gift of the Spirit, to enable men to defend these same fundamentals in disputation against an adversary, and orderly, methodically, and aptly to teach them to others, and rationally to explain them.

12. It is the work of the Spirit of holiness to give men saving grace in possession, but it more belongs to the common gifts of wit and learning, to define or describe these same graces, or movingly to talk of them. Many a man that never had faith or love, can give you a true definition of faith and love; and many a man that hath them cannot tell you what they be. Thousands believe savingly, that have not wit enough to tell you truly what believing is; and many thousands have the Spirit that know not what the Spirit is. So that an unsanctified man may trulier and more exactly describe any grace, by the help of learning, than you that have it by the Spirit of holiness, though you feel the powerful effects of it, which he never felt. I can give a truer description of any county in England, and the distance of one

town from another, by my maps, though I know not the places, than most men that live in those counties can do, because they know but a smaller part of it; and yet they know their own homes better, and their knowledge is more sensible and experimental, and beneficial to them.

And, by the way, you may hence perceive that ministers or others should be very cautious how they cast any from church or communion, because they cannot tell them how they were converted, or what faith, or love, or holiness is. Seeing the Spirit gives these graces to many, to whom he gives not wit to define them, nor words to tell you what they do know of them. Their lives will tell you better than their tongues, whether they be sincere.

Object. But how can men have faith, or love, that know not what it is?

Ans. They feel how it works within them, but they cannot describe it to themselves, or others. Are not divines themselves disagreed about the definitions of faith, repentance, and almost all graces? May not millions of poor men have health of body, that cannot tell you what health is; and have the humours in right temper, that cannot tell you what those humours are? How little know we what our own natural, animal, or vital spirits are; how our food is concocted; how sanguification and carnification are effected! How little know we of the soul itself, by which we know, and the life, by which we live! What wonder, then, if a man have grace, that knows but little what grace is? As one saith, (Lod. Vives,) "God gave man a soul to use, rather than to know;" so I may say of grace, God gives men grace to use, rather than to know, define, describe, or dispute about.

13. It is not the work of the Spirit, at least ordinarily, to teach men any particular truths, but what mere experience teacheth, without the use of outward means, by the industry and study of ourselves, or others, or both: but the Spirit worketh by these, and blesseth these to you. Every godly man hath more love to truth in general, and is more disposed to the reception of it, than others; and by the consideration of the fundamentals, the Spirit hath given him the knowledge of them: but as it was not without their own consideration, that the first were known, so are they not actually acquainted with all truths that after they shall know. It is not the work of the Spirit, to tell you the meaning of Scripture, and give you the knowledge of divinity, without your own study and labour, but to bless that study, and give you knowledge thereby. Did not Christ open the eyes of the man born blind, as suddenly, as wonderfully, and by as little means, as you can expect to be illuminated by the Spirit? And yet that man could not see any distant object out of his reach, till he took the pains to travel to it, or it was brought to him, for all his eyes were opened. When he was newly healed, he could not have told what was done in Samaria, nor seen what was in Jericho, nor what a town Tyre or Sidon was, unless he would be at the pains to travel thither. And if he would see Rome, he must be at so much more pains, as the place was more distant. Would you have been so silly as to say, This man can presently see Samaria, Tyre, Rome, because Christ hath opened his eyes? So is it here. If Christ have anointed your eyes with the eye-salve of the Spirit, and removed the inward impediments of your sight, yet it is not that you may presently know all truths, which you never heard of, or read of, or studied to know. You must study, and study again; and the further off and more difficult the truths are, the more must you study, and then expect to know by the blessing of the Spirit: let ex-

perience witness. Did you not hear all those truths which you know from the mouth of some teacher, or other person, or else consider and study of them yourselves, before you came to know them by the Spirit? Go not, then, out of God's way, if you expect his blessing.

14. Doth not experience commonly tell you, that men know more that study and have learning, than those that do not? Are not the ministers and other learned men, and godly people, that have studied the Scriptures long, the most knowing people in England? Nothing but mad ignorance or impudence can deny it. What man breathing knew as much the first hour that he received the Spirit, as he doth after many years' study and diligent labour?

15. To reject study on pretence of the sufficiency of the Spirit, is to reject the Scripture itself: for as a man rejecteth his land that refuseth to till it, or rejecteth his meat if he refuse to eat it, though he praise it never so much; so doth he reject the Scripture that refuseth to study it, or to study that which must first be known, or is necessary thereto. Meditation digesteth the word, which else is cast up again.

Object. We would have men study Scripture, but not human writings.

Ans. You would have men study Scripture, but not learn to understand the words of it, or the languages it was written in? What a contradiction is that! You would have men study God's word, and not his works; the book of supernatural revelation, and not the book of nature; as if both were not God's, or both our duty.

Object. Let men study the works of God, and spare not, but not books of human learning.

Ans. May we not take the help of those that have studied the same works before us? Then, if every man must begin all anew, and must make use of no other man's helps and experiments, we shall know but little, and knowledge will make but a pitiful progress. If we may take the help of men by talking with them, why not by reading their writings? However, it seems you will allow us tutors in human learning. Hath not God made men to be helpful to one another, and communicative of their knowledge? If these wise objectors knew not of any place or country in the world, but what themselves have seen, or of any actions in former ages, or later, but what they were eye-witnesses of, what moles would they be! You may next persuade us to creep into our mothers' wombs again, and refuse human help to come forth. If you will read or talk with travellers, to know what is in other parts of the world; and read history, to know what is in other ages of the world; why may not we read and hear philosophers, to know what they have found out about the nature of the creatures?

If you would never know any thing in physic by any books or teachings of those before you, that have learned more than you, but every man must begin all again himself, how many would such physicians murder; and what sots would they be! If you knew no more in astronomy, about the motions of the sun, moon, &c. the times and seasons, than you can find out yourselves by the observation of the heavens, what wise astronomers would you be! What forgetful men are our enemies to human learning, that think the Spirit enough without it; that yet they will every year buy a new almanack! Away with them hereafter, or else away with your folly; for, certainly, almanacks are certain parcels of the most aspiring, human learning, such as they are.

16. Consider, whether under pretence of magnifying the Spirit, you do not bewray most notorious

pride, in the magnifying of yourselves, and the contempt of those whom you are bound to learn of? Is it not palpable pride, for you that never bestowed the twentieth part of the study and pains, as the ministers of the gospel have done, to understand the Scripture, to be conceited that you understand it as well as they? Is it a knowledge that comes irrationally into man, he knows not how, when he never mindeth it? Is not the Spirit and diligent study together, like to do more for increase of knowledge, than the Spirit will do without such studies? Why should you, in proud censoriousness, think that godly teachers have not the Spirit, as well as you? They value it as much; they pray as hard for the Spirit; they confess the need of it as much as you; they have the same God, the same Christ, and the same promise as you; they show forth the fruits of it in holiness, as much as you; and yet proud men dare lift up themselves in boasting of the Spirit, and despising their godly, painful teachers, as being without the Spirit: not only saying, as Korah and his conspirators, Ye take too much upon you; are not all the Lord's people holy? but also saying, It is only the people that are holy, and the priests are unholy. And when all is done they can give no other proof of it, but either some common, human frailties, or the falls of some few, or the wickedness of the ungodly ones, whom their faithful teachers are as willing to cast out as they, and whom they disown as well as they do. You will confess, that a man that hath studied physic all his days, is likely to be a better physician, than you that never studied it; and a man that hath studied law, is likely to be a better lawyer; and that he were a proud man that would say, Though I never studied these things, yet by the Spirit I know them as well as you. And you would see your pride as well in this case of theology, if you did but know and consider, that the Spirit worketh by means and man's industry; and that the gift of interpretation, understanding languages, and the creatures, is not a gift of sanctification, but such as is common to unsanctified men, and especially to make men useful to others, and publicly serviceable to the godly where they live.

17. It is God's command that ministers should study to show themselves workmen that need not be ashamed, and to divide aright the word of truth, 1 Tim. iv. 15; and give themselves wholly to these things, 2 Tim. ii. 15. And all christians that will have knowledge must "apply their heart, and incline their ear to it; they must cry after knowledge, and lift up their voice for understanding; they must seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasure; and then, in this way, they shall understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God: for the Lord (thus) giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding," Prov. ii. 2-6. It is the description of the godly blessed man, (Psalm i.) that he doth meditate in God's law day and night; and therefore he doth not expect, that the Spirit should teach it to him, or give him the fruits of it, while he is at no labour to procure it, but forgetteth or neglecteth it: and for the study of the holy languages, and God's works, I have proved it our duty before. So that you may see, that they who pretend the Spirit as sufficient without hard studies and learning, they contradict the Scriptures which the Spirit did indite, and so make the Spirit contrary to the Spirit. But we will believe the Spirit in the word, rather than that in them.

18. The Scriptures plainly tell us, that there are several ages of men in Christ, some babes, some young men, and some fathers, 1 John ii. 12, 13; 1 Cor. iii. 1; and that they are to grow by degrees,

according to their time and standing in the church, from one age to another, and from lesser knowledge unto more. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe; but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," Heb. v. 12-14. Note here, First, That there are some truths hard, and some easier; some called strong meat, and some called milk. Secondly, That many may understand the easy principles, and feed on the milk, who yet understand not the harder truths; and yet both these sorts have the same Spirit: and therefore all that have the Spirit, understand not hard truths. Thirdly, Nay, these babes that have the Spirit, are said to be dull of hearing, and to have been long hearing from their teachers, and yet understand not; so hardly did they learn, though they had both Spirit, word, and teachers. Fourthly, Note, that these young christians, though they had the Spirit, must still live under men's teaching, for further knowledge. Fifthly, Specially note, that it was expected that they should have grown in knowledge, according to, first, their time, and standing in the church; secondly, and according to their use and exercise of their senses to discern. So that for all men have the Spirit, yet God expecteth not that they should be strong men in knowledge the first day; nor understand hard truths, till they had time, teaching, and exercise; yea, and oft they come short after all this, for want of their own use and exercise with diligence.

Hence it is, that when Paul giveth direction, what kind of persons should be ordained bishops, he saith, "Not a novice, (that is, a late convert, or young christian,) lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil," 1 Tim. iii. 6. It is here a matter well worthy your observation, 1. That young converts are not expected to have that measure of grace, as old, exercised christians. 2. That young converts or novices, are far apter and more likely to fall into the condemnation of the devil, by being lifted up with pride, than old, experienced christians are. These things are not spoken in vain by the Spirit; and these times have sadly manifested the truth of them among us. The Lord teach young christians to lay them seasonably to heart.

Nay, further, note this, if it were the work of the Spirit to give so full a measure of knowledge at the first to every one that hath it, as these think, then how could any of those Scripture passages be true, that tell us the saints do grow and increase, and that it is the nature of grace so to do; that at first it is as a grain of mustard seed: and we are commanded to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. iii. 18. Doth not all this plainly show, that grace is usually least at first, and must be still on the thriving hand; and so must our knowledge? How, then, can young, inexperienced christians think, that because they have the Spirit, they must know as much as their teachers, who have had longer time, and greater helps and studies?

19. Consider, also, that so great is the deceitfulness of the heart of man, and so cunningly doth the devil transform himself into an angel of light, to deceive men, that it is the easiest matter in the world for a man to be confident that he hath the Spirit of God, when it is only his own proud imagination, or

a spirit of delusion. The multitudes of heretics in the first ages of the church, did seem to have much of an extraordinary spirit, but it proved a wicked spirit, by their wicked doctrines and lives, even from Simon Magus, their leader, to many generations after him. Those men have not most of the Spirit that boast most of it; nor are they ever the likelier to have it, for quick concluding that other men are without it, whose hearts they know not. It is the easiest matter in the world to boast of the Spirit, and reproach another as carnal; but it is those that have the Spirit indeed, who have the fruits of the Spirit; and those have the greatest measure of it, that abound most in these. They that have the most effectual apprehensions of the greatness, and goodness, and wisdom of God; of their own sin, and the need of Christ and grace; of the truth and excellency of the life to come, and the vanity of this life: they that are most conformed to Christ in humility, meekness, and lowliness of mind, esteeming others above themselves, and serving one another in love; that have most hatred to sin, and care to subdue it, and victory over it, and can most deny the flesh its unjust desires; that are mean in their own eyes, and seem fitter to themselves to learn than to teach, in honour preferring one another; that are most sensible of the excellency of the unity of the church, and Christ's order therein; and therefore most abhor division and unjust separations; and that most willingly obey their overseers in the Lord, and submit to their just guidance, and love one another; that have the sweetest and most serious use of God's ordinances, and the greatest delight in God himself, and readiness to die; these are they that have most of the Spirit: but, alas! most that now boast of it, to the contempt of their guides, how far are they from this state! What railing accusations do they fill their writings and speeches with, most unlike to the language of the Spirit of Christ! What impotent slaves are they to their passions; and what proud boasters, and what despisers of government, unruly, and disobedient!

20. Lastly, consider whether it be not a most vile abuse of the Spirit of God, to make it a patron and shelter of idleness; besides the other fore-mentioned evils. God sets men to search the Scriptures, to seek, and cry, and dig for knowledge; to inquire of teachers and one another; to meditate and study the Scripture day and night, that their profiting may be known to all: and these wretched souls will not only disobey God, and indulge their flesh by ease and idleness, thinking these laborious studies too dear a price to pay for knowledge, or too hard a means to use in subversivency to the Spirit; but besides this carnal contempt of the light, they will reproach those that are more diligent and studious than themselves, and most impudently lay their own fault on their teachers; calling them, Lazy drones and idle; because they spend their life and strength in most laborious studies, and searching of the Scripture, and because they do not leave this work to go thresh or plough, as if that were the harder and more needful work for them that have set their hands to the plough of Christ: and yet, which is the very top of their wickedness, they dare father all this upon the Spirit; as if labour and study were needless, because they have the Spirit. Is it not enough for you to despise God and his word by your fleshly ease and idleness, refusing to study and meditate on Scripture day and night, but you must also blame them that are at more pains than yourselves; yea, impudently blame them for your fault of idleness; yea, and pretend the Spirit for all this wickedness. No wonder if God be avenged on such dealings, by giving you

up to a spirit that indeed doth befriend and own your course. In the first part, you imitate the ungodly world, who will not only refuse godliness themselves, as too grievous to their flesh, but also reproach them that will not so too; and so you will not only refuse the pains of studying the word and works of God, but reproach those that refuse it not as you do: but then you doubly exceed other ungodly ones, for they are not so shameless as to charge the godly, just with their own crime of profaneness, much less to father their wickedness on God's Spirit.

I know you use to allege that of Christ to his disciples, "Take no thought what to answer, for in that hour it shall be given you." But consider, 1. This was part of the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, proper to those times for the sealing up of Scripture. Those apostles had the use of languages without study; must not we, therefore, study for them? who then should have translated you the Bible? 2. What if God encourage us yet, to take no thought what to answer a persecutor, or (as Dan. iii.) "not to be careful to answer them in that matter, as trusting Christ with our cause and lives;" doth it follow, that, therefore, we must take no thought what to preach or pray, or how to understand the word aright, when Scripture hath expressly commanded the contrary? "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, (what time then shall we have to thresh?) that thy profiting may appear to all: take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, and continue therein; for in doing this (in this painful way of study, and not in idleness) thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee," 1 Tim. iv. 15; 2 Tim. ii. 15. See also Psal. cxix. 97, 99; Josh. i. 8; Psal. i. 2; cxix. 148; cxliii. 5.

I have said more than at first I intended on this point, because of our sad experience of the common abuse of such conceits of the Spirit, and because of the lamentable success which the deceiving Spirit now hath through this nation; such as I scarce ever heard, or read of in any credible history.

Yet again I will say, that there is no reason in all this, why any should deny the Spirit in the saints, or think that all do falsely pretend to it because some do, or that there is no such thing because some falsely boast of it: the best things may be abused, and the abuse of them is most dangerous. The Spirit saveth some, but is falsely pretended to by others; even as the name of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, is made by wicked men the common cloak for their sins, and they pretend themselves to be christians and God's servants, as confidently as those that are so. But it doth not thence follow, that God hath no servants on earth, or that there are no true christians. What if the devil, who is an enemy to God, will say he is God, and engage witches and wicked men to worship him as God, (as in the heathen idols he did,) will you, therefore, say that there is no God, because of the devil's false pretences? So, what if the same devil transform himself into a spirit of light and righteousness, and so go forth, and be a lying spirit in the mouths of deluded ones, and say that he is the Spirit of God, will you, therefore, conclude that there is no Spirit of God? Then you let the devil have his will, if he can so far wrong the Spirit, and blind you to your destruction.

Sect. XXIV.

I should add here yet one other use of the point in hand. If the Spirit of holiness be such a witness to Christ, and such an advantage to the soul, against all temptations to infidelity, then you may see that

all quenching and grieving the Spirit of grace, hath a tendency to infidelity itself, and doth obscure Christ's testimony that is within us, and so weaken our faith. And, therefore, what wonder if loose and careless professors of christianity do stagger at the truth of God's word, or be weak in the belief of it? And what apparent need is there that all christians should be very obedient to the Spirit, and take heed of the frame of their hearts and lives, lest they roll themselves into infidelity before they think of it, or know where they are! By these several ways, doth wilful sinning, and neglect of our hearts and lives, lead men towards infidelity itself.

1. By blotting out that evidence which was within them, of the truth of Christ, and so leaving it so dark, that they can hardly discern it. When they have weakened and blurred their own graces, and too much defaced the image of Christ within them, then it is easier than before to bring them to doubt whether the gospel have such noble effects; whether grace be so real a prevailing power; whether it be any more than the fruit of men's education or industry, or some melancholy disposition, or accidental and common alteration on the mind? They can judge of it sensibly no otherwise than as they find it themselves, and weak grace is next to none. And thus they lose their precious advantages, and lay open their souls to the vilest of temptations.

2. A careless life and wilful sinning do tend to infidelity, by weakening the faith itself by which they should believe. Not only blotting Christ's evidence within them, but also blinding their own eyes, and disabling themselves from that act by which it must be discerned. For as all other graces, so faith itself will decay, as the strength of sin increaseth. No wonder, then, if such complain of blasphemous suggestions, and darkness of evidence of the truth of the word, and that they are assaulted with doubtings about it, when they have cast this dust into their own eyes, or drawn this web over them. It must be a clear eye that must discern supernatural mysteries, and the things of another world. Had you obeyed Christ and his Spirit, in holy diligence, and an even conversation, you might have had all your graces thrive, and faith with the rest, and so have been better able to believe; and then that would have appeared an evident truth to you, which now you look at with wavering doubtfulness.

3. When men have taken to a course of wilful sinning, they grieve and quench that Spirit which must help them in believing, and therefore no wonder if they believe but weakly, without this help. I do not here consider the Spirit objectively, as I did before, in the fruits of it, but efficiently or actively, as that which must breathe upon his own graces, and assist the soul in the very exercise of them. How can you look when you have dealt so unkindly with the Spirit, that it should keep back the tempter, or clear your eyes and help your faith? What wonder if that faith be weak which is a fruit of the Spirit, when you have so far provoked the Spirit himself to depart? You make but an ill combat with the tempter, if you drive away this guide. If you defile his house and temple, no wonder if he leave you in the dark.

4. If you once take to a course of wilful sinning, you will contract such a love to your sin, that it will breed an unwillingness in you (so far as it prevails) to believe the word of God to be true; because you would not leave your sin, you will be loth that word should prove true, that would separate you from it. When men's deeds are evil, no wonder if they love darkness rather than light, John iii. 19: and your wills do much to master your understanding.

5. By wilful sinning you wound the conscience, and bring yourselves again under the terrors of God, and darken the evidences of your interest in his special love, and bring yourselves into doubting of your own salvation. And all this hath a plain tendency to infidelity; for if once you find your condition so sad, you will begin to wish that God's threatenings were not true, that so they might not fall upon yourself. When you once think, that if God's word be true you are undone, it will sorely tempt you to wish it were not true. And if you do but once wish it false, the devil may the easilier tempt you to believe it is false; for he hath a great advantage when he hath got so much room in a man's will. And a man will far more easily believe what he would have to be true, than what he would not: experience tells us this. It is a great power that the will hath upon the understanding in judging and believing. It will cause a man to study for reasons to delude himself, and take a seeming reason for current, and gladly hearken to any one that will seduce him, by speaking that which he would have to be true. It will make him snatch at any show of an argument, and stop his ears against all that is said against it. It will make him look on the clearest evidence for truth, with so much prejudice and passion, that it will be unlikely to convince him, till God shall set in for the penal manifestation of his justice, or by a gracious conviction for his recovery.

Hence it is that we so ordinarily find, that a galled conscience by wilful, heinous sin, is as great a leader of men to infidelity, as the mere force of the most subtle, argumentative deceits. When a man that seemed religious, and believed in a sort that Scripture was true, shall secretly or openly live in whoredom, drunkenness, deceit, and unjust gain, or any the like wasting, crying sin, when conscience is still gnawing him, and frightening him with the thoughts of judgment and everlasting fire; so that the man must needs believe one of the two, either that Scripture is false, or that he is in danger to be undone for ever; no wonder if he choose the former, and turn his ears to seekers and infidels, and pick up some crumbs of comfort from their dung. Men are naturally loth to judge hardly of themselves, or to believe that which is against them, and conclude them miserable. They first consider what they would have to be true, before they consider what is true indeed; and by such foolish devices they keep up a little quiet in their minds for a while, and keep off the terrors of execution by persuading themselves that there will be no assize. But, oh how short, how sad a kind of ease is this! How much better were it, to open the windows of the soul, and freely let in the light of Christ, and patiently consider of the worst while there is remedy, and believe the threatening while the execution may be prevented, than to find it all remedilessly true when it is too late. Ignorance or unbelief of certain danger is a poor way of escape. If it were but a sudden death that made an end of them, it were some ease to die unexpectedly, and not to know or believe till they feel the stroke; for then the foregoing fears would be put by: but this will be the increase of a perpetual misery, when men shall have everlasting leisure to review their folly, and to bethink themselves that they might have escaped if they would have believed the danger in time, and so have applied themselves for the prevention.

Sect. XXV.

Hence, also, you may further see how incompetent judges ungodly men are of the truth of Scripture and

christian religion, and how little the contradiction of such opposers should be regarded. You see how uncapable an unsanctified heart and a wicked life do make them of a sound, effectual belief, till God set in with his special grace; and, therefore, if multitudes of such, both Jews and heathens, believe not the gospel, but oppose and persecute it, it is no wonder. If you say, This is to disclaim all witnesses but those of your own mind; why may not other men see the truth of your gospel, if it be true indeed? I answer; it is not to disclaim men because they are not already of our mind, but because, by a vicious heart and life, they made it so easy for themselves to be deceived. If Christ's doctrines were but as the common precepts of philosophy, which man's nature and carnal interest did little contradict, then you might indeed think that one man might as well believe it as another; but Christ comes with his doctrine as a physician, to heal and save men's souls, and therefore finds them all that he comes to, under those diseases which have a contrariety and loathing of his medicines accompanying them. The temper of their corrupted hearts is against his truths. It is no more wonder if such believe not in Christ, than if a sick stomach abhor or cast up its physic. If the philosophers themselves affirm, that young men of untamed passions are unmeet auditors of moral philosophy, we may well say that carnal men of earthly, blinded minds, and unmortified lusts, are unmeet judges of christian verities; and such were all that ever rejected or opposed christianity. It is true that those which were converted by it were ill judges of this doctrine too, till God enlightened them; but free grace did, by the word, cause them to believe the word, and so make them abler to discern between truth and falsehood, in matters of that nature, for the time to come.

Sect. XXVI.

Lastly, it is hence apparent also, that the way to have the firmest belief of the christian faith, is to draw near and taste and try it, and lay bare the heart to receive the impression of it, and then, by the sense of its admirable effects, we shall know that which bare speculation could not discover. Though there must be a belief on other grounds first, so much as to let in the word into the soul, and to cause us to submit our hearts to its operations, yet it is this experience that must strengthen it and confirm it. "If any man do the will of Christ, he shall know that his doctrine is of God," John vii. 17. The melody of music is better known by hearing it, than by reports of it; and the sweetness of meat is known better by tasting, than by hearsay; though upon report we may be drawn to taste and try. So is there a spiritual sense in us of the effects of the gospel on our own hearts, which will cause men to love it, and hold it fast against the cavils of deceivers, or the temptations of the great deceiver.

So much of this witness within us, as far as concerneth our present design, viz. the strengthening of believers against temptations to infidelity.

And oh that my dear Redeemer would pour out upon my soul a fuller measure of his Spirit, to enlighten and enliven me, and make me more conformable to his image and will, and to keep continual possession within me for himself; that I might always bear about me a living, effectual testimony of Christ in my breast; and may have yet more of this advantage against temptations, which I have here opened unto others; and whatsoever I have spoken mistakingly of this Spirit, or defectively and unworthily of its admirable, curious, and yet unsearchable works, the Lord of mercy forgive it, with the rest of my transgressions, in the blood of his Well-beloved!

FOR

PREVENTION OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

AGAINST THE

HOLY GHOST:

A DEMONSTRATION THAT THE SPIRIT AND WORKS OF CHRIST WERE THE FINGER OF GOD.

MATTHEW XII. 22—32.

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do

your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

BECAUSE it hath pleased God to make faith in his Son Jesus Christ the means of obtaining pardon of all other foregoing sins, it is the great design of the enemy of mankind to keep us from this faith, or to destroy it in the bud: and because God hath made the extrinsic witness of the Holy Ghost in his mighty and wonderful works, to be the chiefest objective means, or last argument, by which unbelievers may be convinced of the truth, it is therefore the chief design of the devil to hide from men's eyes the force of this argument. To which end I have long observed that he proceedeth by these degrees. 1. He labours, if it may be, to keep men ignorant of the very matter of fact, that ever such works were done by Christ or his disciples. To which purpose, if he can, he will keep from them the gospel itself. If not, he will cause them to overlook and not observe these wonders which it doth contain. 2. If men must needs know the gospel, what it saith of the glorious works of Christ, his next endeavour is to make them conceive that all the history of these wonders is fabulous, and that never any such things were done as is here reported. By this temptation he assaulteth but few learned men who are well versed in antiquities, and must know that, by abundant, unquestionable history, and the very confessions of the enemies, the report of these works have been brought down to our hands; but rather he thus assaulteth the ignorant and half-witted men, who have gathered up a little of that knowledge which grew near to their own doors, but scarce knew what hath been done in other parts of the world, or what was done in any considerable time before them; especially if he can once get them to distrust their guides, and persuade them that nothing is to be taken upon trust from others, in such matters as our salvation is so much concerned in; and so deprive them of the benefit of the knowledge of their teachers. Two sorts, therefore, are in greatest danger of this temptation.

First, Those that are unreasonably diffident of all men. Because some are liars, therefore they will believe none; and because some histories are not to be credited, they will judge so of all: having not judgment to discern between the credible and the incredible; between that history which comes with evidence of truth and that which doth not; nor between that which we have cause to suspect and that which we have not. Yet do they hold their lands and lives by men's testimony. Two witnesses may take away either; which were an unjust constitution, were there not some natural credibility in men, and some natural friendship to truth as truth. If these men would believe nobody, and nobody believe them, how would they live and converse with mankind? If one could thus persuade an obscure countryman that no man is to be credited, you might easily persuade him that there is no such city as London, and no prince, no council, &c. and that we never had a king in England. There are some cases, wherein it is folly to believe men; and some wherein it is a kind of madness not to believe, where the circumstances are such as may plainly show us that there is no deceit.

2. Those also are liable to this dangerous temptation, who have broken loose from under the guidance and reverence of their teachers, and have got contemptuous or suspicious thoughts of them; by which they are rather induced to question a truth, because they report it, than to believe them, as learners must do if they will profit. If the devil can once bring men into this unruliness and disorder, by their pride, so that they can know no more than their own reading or hearing with the ordinary help

of the Spirit will afford them, and so lose the treasures of further knowledge, which is laid up for them in their guides, whose lips should preserve knowledge, and at whose mouth they should inquire of the law, Mal. ii. 6, 7; no wonder if such should question whether this which they read in English be the same Scriptures which were indited by the Spirit, and written at first in Hebrew and Greek. Much less can we marvel, if they be liable to sore temptations, when they read of Christ and his apostles, and their mighty works, to doubt whether ever there were such persons on earth, or whether they ever did such works or not. And we see already, by most fearful experience, that those people who first cast off their guides, and received evil thoughts of them as men not to be credited, are many of them already turned infidels, and deny the holy Scriptures to be true. God knew when he set up the office of pastors in his church, that common people would not all have hearts or time to use so much means for the obtaining of the full and settled knowledge of the matters of the christian faith, and thereunto belonging, as is necessary for the encountering of all sorts of temptations; and therefore was it his will that some should wholly give themselves to this work, 1 Tim. iv. 15; that they might be, by office, the helpers and strengtheners of their brethren; and as men repair to physicians for advice for their bodies, and to lawyers for their estates, so they might do to their overseers and teachers for their souls; and from them receive help for repelling of temptations, and for establishment in the faith. If one can make a silly countryman believe that lawyers are so false that none of them are to be credited, and that he should believe no man in such matters, you may next persuade him that all the laws of the land are counterfeit, and never made by king or parliament, because he never saw the records or rolls, or had opportunity himself to use those means that might fully satisfy him.

It pleased Christ at first to do his works in the presence of some chosen witnesses, and before one nation or people, and to show himself, after his resurrection, but to some; and to send them, as chosen witnesses, to the rest of the world, and to require the people, in all nations where they came, to believe their report. They could not at first hearing believe them as divine messengers, coming from God with extraordinary authority; but they must believe them as common men, about matters of fact, with a human faith; who still professed that they were eye-witnesses of Christ's resurrection, that they saw his works, and heard his words; and then they brought them up to a divine faith, by a further divine evidence. That such things were indeed done and said, they believed on the credit of the eye and ear-witnesses, having not opportunity of seeing and hearing themselves. That it was God that did and said them, they were convinced by the full evidence of divine wisdom, power, and holiness, that was in the words and deeds, the Spirit effecting that conviction: that the words of God were all true, they believed by a divine faith, because they were of God that cannot lie. So to this day God will have the first part to be handed down from the first witnesses by others, especially succeeding officers appointed to that end. That the first witnesses did indeed give in to their successors both their verbal testimony, and also the testimony which we now deliver in the sacred writings, that these things were spoken and done, this people must receive much upon the credit of others, especially appointed by office to preserve and teach them. But that these works and words were of God, the Spirit must persuade by showing them the

divine evidence; and that they are true must be believed because they are of God. So that if God be pleased, from first to last, to make so much use of the witness of man, for the begetting of faith, it is no wonder if the tempter have much advantage to make those men infidels that despise their guides, and will not receive the just and unquestionable testimony of men.

3. The next and last shift of the devil is this: if he cannot keep men from believing that ever such works of Christ were done, and so cause them to discredit the matters of fact, then he will persuade them that God is not the author of them. For if man once discern that they are the works of God, he will not easily be persuaded that they are delusory or evil; as when once they discern that the word is of God, they may well believe that it must needs be true. For he that cannot believe that God is true of his word, and good in his works, can hardly believe that there is a God; which almost all the world do profess to believe.

That mere man is the author of such miracles is so utterly improbable and impossible, that I cannot find that the devil himself doth expect it should be credited, and therefore is not very industrious to persuade men to believe it. But all his drift is to draw men to believe that he himself is the author of them. As I find it in Scripture, so do I by constant observation of Satan's order and wiles in drawing men to infidelity, that this which I have laid down is his usual method. If he cannot keep men from knowing of Christ and his works, he would keep them from believing the truth of the report. If he cannot keep them from believing that such works were done, his last refuge is to persuade them that it was by witchcraft or some power of the devil, and not by God. And if you dispute with an infidel, Jew, or pagan, in this order must you be put to deal with them: you may rationally prove, from the most credible history, that Christ lived on earth, and wrought miracles, and died, and rose again, and appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once, and in the sight of his disciples ascended into heaven, and sent down the Spirit upon his disciples, causing them commonly to speak strange language, and to cast out devils, and work miracles for a long time, both far and near. You may make them confess all this, or deny as credible records as any are in the world; and so go against the most palpable light. And therefore the Jews do ordinarily yet confess either all or most, at least, except the resurrection of Christ.

But then, the last sort that you must drive them out of is this: they tell you, The devil can do as much as all this; and he may do it for his own ends; though we ourselves can do no such works: yet little do mortals know what invisible powers there are, or what an evil spirit may do; and therefore these may be the works of the devil, as many the like are which are done by conjurers and witches.

I have thought meet, therefore, to speak somewhat on this subject, and to add it to the foregoing discourse. Though I easily foresee that it will be offensive to some, who will say,

1. That we do but bring scruples and temptations to men's minds, which else they might never think of.

2. That Scripture is not to be proved, but to be believed. But the reasons of my resolution and endeavours herein are these:

1. Because, if the foundation be not well laid, the building may be the easier shaken. Such christians do soonest turn infidels, that were christians they knew not why, or not on sound grounds that will endure an assault.

2. Because the lively exercise and prosperity of

all graces doth much depend on the stability of our belief.

3. Because I find that there are abundance of young students, and other christians, assaulted with these temptations, of which I have heard many complain that dare not make them known to many.

4. Because I have felt the experience in myself of the malicious suggestions of the tempter in these things.

5. Because I see such abundance of people that lately seemed to believe the Scripture, and to live godly, to turn either professed infidels, or secret deriders of Scripture, or sceptics that know not whether it be true or false: who go under the names of libertines, familists, seekers, Behmenists, quakers, ranters, &c. And it were worth the labour if any of these might be recovered. If not, I think it is high time for us to stop up the breach, and, if it may be, to prevent the apostasy of the rest, that we may not all turn infidels, while we zealously begin in contentings about inferior things.

6. Because I find, as is said, that this is the devil's last assault; and the last is usually the sorest: and the overcoming of the last is the conquering of the enemy, and the winning of the day.

7. Because I find that those that are assaulted with this temptation are usually men that must see reason for what they hold: and if we can convince this, (which is far from being difficult, in regard of evidence,) that Christ's great works, and his disciples', were done by the Holy Ghost, and not by evil spirits, then I think we show the credibility and certainty of the christian religion, and that it hath evidence, and is as demonstrable as the nature of such a subject can bear.

8. And lastly, I do this because of the heinousness and dangerousness of this sin of infidelity, especially as against the Holy Ghost, it being thus the unpardonable sin, and the sin that fasteneth all other upon the soul: all these reasons have persuaded me to this work.

And for the two foregoing objections; the latter of them is answered in my seventh reason, and is so unbecoming the mouth of a true christian, that I will not say against it what it deserves, because I know it will exasperate many that do befrend it: and as to the former, I say,

1. Christ himself, here in the text, hath put this occasion before me into people's minds, so that they cannot say, I raise occasions of doubting; they hear the gospel read more commonly than they are like to read this discourse.

2. That faith stands but totteringly, that standeth only because men hear not what infidels say against it.

3. The common temptations of Satan, and vile reasonings of the apostates of this age, do show that these scruples are not unheard of; and that there is more need to mention them, that we may destroy them, than to silence them, that we may keep them from being known.

SECT. II.

Having said thus much, by way of preface, of the reason of my discourse, I come next to the opening of the text: and therein it is not so much my intent to determine what the sin against the Holy Ghost is, which divines commonly dispute of, as to tell you how it may be proved that the works of Christ and his disciples were not from Satan, but from the Holy Ghost, or the power of God.

Yet, because I would go upon clear grounds, and make the text as plain before us as I can, I shall say something of the nature of this sin against the Holy

Ghost, though I have oft spoken of it already; and I shall crave the patience of those readers, who love not to be stopped in their way with men's names and judgments, while I yet make some mention of them for the sake of others, and I will do it somewhat briefly; and because the weight of the point, and great difference of men's judgments, will occasion me to mention the more of the ancients, I will meddle with the fewer of our latter expositors.

Text. "Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw."

1. Many wonder that there were so many in those days possessed with devils, seeing there are so few in these. Mr. Mead thinks that mad-men went then among the possessed. Luther thought all mad-men, or most, were possessed by the devil. However these hold, as there are some such yet amongst us which we have known, so it is most certain, that what way soever that possession did appear, there were many such, not only then, but of many ages after, and are at this day, where the devil doth reign with least contradiction. The true reason of the change is, because Christ hath mastered him and bound him up, and, in a sort, driven him out of his kingdom, so that he cannot do as before he did: of which we shall have occasion to speak more anon.

2. It was not deafness and dumbness that were the only evidences that this person was possessed, but these were concomitant effects.

3. The cure was done so suddenly, and without means, that caused that conviction which the next words import.

Ver. 23. "And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?" The evidence of God's power began to convince the less prejudiced and less hardened, that Christ was the Messiah.

Ver. 24. "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow (or he) doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.

1. The fact was so evident they could not deny it: this, therefore, was the last refuge for their infidelity.

2. They supposed that by some contract with that ruling devil, he had power to cast out those that were inferior. Not only Calvin, Beza, Grotius, &c. but many of the ancients conclude, that among the devils there is a certain order, and one that is the chief, and in power above the rest. Not only those texts prove this, that call him "The prince of the world, the prince of the powers of the air," &c.; (Eph. ii. 2; John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11;) but many others. He is here and elsewhere named Beelzebub or Beelzebub, that is, as is commonly interpreted, the god of flies, so called, as some think, by the Philistines, who supposed themselves freed by him from a plague of flies; or because of the flies that stuck on the blood of his sacrifices, as Haymo, and others; or in contempt by the Jews, as some think. Most suppose it is the same that is called Baal and Bel, and originally King Belus, as the said Haymo, (Hom. on Luke xi.) But Dr. Lightfoot saith, (Harmon. of the N. T. sect. 35,) the word Beelzebub was taken up of the more detestation, as importing the god of a dunghill; and the sacrificing to idols they called dunging to an idol.

If there be no sort of God's reasonable creatures without order and government, no not the devils themselves, who have their prince, (and for angels our writers manifest it from many scriptures,) what strange blindness is it in those men, that would only have the church without any order or government, and in this to be worse than the kingdom of Satan! That would have the people be both governed and

governors by a major vote, and so properly have no governors at all! When yet they are convinced by experience, that no other political societies can be so guided or preserved: armies and commonwealths must have rulers: all societies, all reasonable creatures in earth, or hell, or heaven, must have rulers: and must the church only have none? As some say, no teachers in office: as others, those teachers have no power of government.

Ver. 25, 26. "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?"

1. Here it is supposed that Satan hath a kingdom which he is desirous to uphold, a house that he would fain keep, a work which he would fain carry on: of which more anon.

2. Christ argueth from an acknowledged principle, that dividing tends to destroying.

3. He supposeth Satan not to be ignorant of this principle, nor so loose to his own principles and wicked interest, as to be drawn against it to the destruction of his own kingdom: would we could say as much of many godly men, or seeming godly, as to Christ's kingdom and interest. All this is most unquestionably true: of which more anon.

4. Christ is said to know this in their hearts, though they spoke it with their mouths; because it was not to him that they spoke it, but to the people, who began to be convinced by the greatness of the work.

5. It is not only this one conclusion, which he knew in their hearts, or which he fits his answer to, that this particular work was done by Beelzebub; but also that he himself was a friend of Satan's kingdom, and in a league with him, and did his work, and deluded men by magical power. And, therefore, Christ's following words, and these in this verse, do tend to clear him both in this fact and in the main.

Ver. 27. "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges."

Here is the second argument of Christ to confute their calumny. Most expositors do by "your children" understand, the disciples of Christ, who were children of the Jews; or at least some that followed not, who yet cast out devils in his name: some both these together: some understand it of the Jewish exorcists mentioned Acts xix. 13; or such as, being taught from Solomon a form of words, did cast out devils in the name of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: of which sort some think that really they did so, by the power of God, as we may do now by fasting and prayer sometimes. Others think, it is an argument *ad hominem* only, because they seemed to do so, or boasted of it. Cyril of Alexandr. De rect. Fide, (p. (mih), 307, Hieron. Auct. Imperfecti operis, Euthymius, Hilary, and other of the ancients, take it to speak of Christ's disciples; so doth Haymo; (Hom. in Luke xi.) so doth Lyra; but withal of those that followed him not, and yet cast out devils, which I suppose is likeliest to be the sense; so doth Erasmus, Beza, Musculus, Piscator, and most others of our latter writers. Cajetan takes it either of the Jewish exorcists, or those that followed not Christ, yet did it in his name. Calvin and Grotius suppose it is not meant of the disciples, but the exorcists. But I see no validity in their reason. The force of the argument of Christ lieth here: q. d. You see many that were born and bred among you, of your own neighbours and kindred, yea, some that follow not me, by the use of my name do cast out devils: and

you cannot imagine that all these should be in such a league with Beelzebub. These, therefore, shall be your judges; that is, sufficient witnesses to condemn you in judgment, as now their actions are the aggravation of your blasphemy.

Ver. 28. "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

As if he should say, If all these your blasphemous shifts be vain, and it be evidently God's power which I use in these works, then you are brought to a stand, you have no more to say, but must confess me to be the Messiah, and you may clearly see that the Messiah is come; for if a divine testimony, apparently such, will not convince you, what will? Note, that Christ's medium is not, if I cast out devils; but if I do it, and that by the finger of God: that he did it, they saw; that he did it by the finger of God, he proved before, and further proves after; that his doing it by the finger of God doth infallibly confirm his doctrine, and so prove him to be the Messiah, he now concludes: and it is like he hath respect to their own just expectations, concerning the power of the Messiah when he cometh, as if he should say, You know the Messiah and the kingdom of God shall come in power; and so you now see it in my conquering of Satan, and casting him out of his possession; and this he prosecutes in the next verse:

Ver. 29. "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house?"

Christ's first argument fully proved that what he did was against Satan's will, because it was against his interest; and therefore it was not done by his power, and consequently Christ was not his confederate, but his enemy. Here he goeth further, and proveth himself the Messiah, and to work by a power superior to Beelzebub, (as well as against him,) because he bindeth him, and casts him out; so that here is a double consequence to be inferred: first, he that doth these things is against Satan; and, secondly, he that can do such things is above Satan, or the power by which he doth it is above him, and therefore divine.

Ver. 30. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

There are divers thoughts among expositors about the sense of these words, though it be of no great moment to the main business which of them holds. Some think Christ here begins to turn his speech to the Pharisees, to convince them of their sin, and so tells them that if they do not vindicate him from such reproaches they are his enemies: some think that he respecteth both his own vindication and their danger, by such dealing, as if he should say, So far am I from being a confederate of Beelzebub, that I am the Captain of the field against him, and you shall find that, except you will join with me in fighting against him, you shall be taken as mine enemies yourselves. To this purpose is Erasmus' paraphrase. Some suppose that Christ would only prove here, that he himself is not for Satan, but against him, because he is not a furtherer, but a hinderer of his work and interest; others suppose that hence he would only infer, that Satan is not for Christ, but against him, (and therefore doth not lend him his power,) because that their designs are contrary; but I conceive that these two last together make up the true sense, Christ arguing (as Grotius notes) a *minore*, but concluding thence a mutual enmity between Satan and him: as if he should say, Your own proverb saith, he that is not with me is against me; and if neutrality shall be taken for enmity in such cases of war, how much more evident is the enmity between me and Satan where there is such a conflict, and when I conquer him and cast him out! The

Jews had another proverb among them seeming contrary to this, which Christ elsewhere doth accommodate to his present occasion, "He that is not against us is with us;" both ordinary among soldiers in the wars: when they have no need of men's help, or might rather expect their hindrances and resistance, they will say, If they be not against us they are for us; that is, it will tend to the promoting of our business, and we must look for no better from such kind of men. But when it is subjects and obliged persons that they speak of, or when their help is necessary and expected, then they say, If they be not for us they are against us; we may justly take and use all neutrals as enemies. So I conceive when Christ maketh use of these two proverbs, in the one he doth, in the words "for me," speak of men's true affection and friendship; in the other text he doth, in the words "for us," speak only of the event and tendency of these men's actions to the furthering of his cause. When Christ would prove that he is not a confederate of Satan, he doth it by the former proverb, "He that is not for me is against me;" but I am so far from being for Satan, that I destroy his kingdom. When the disciples saw one casting out devils in Christ's name, and forbade him because he followed not with them, Jesus said, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us;" (Luke ix. 49, 50;) that is, it somewhat tendeth to the furthering of our work. It is against Satan, and in such as profess not subjection to me, it is somewhat if they do not resist and hinder the passage of the gospel, much more if they bring any honour to my name. So we may say still: If you would know whether Christ will take you for his friend, and number you with the saved, then know that if you are not for him you are against him, and if you gather not with him you scatter abroad. But if you would only know how far he will tolerate you in his vineyard, the visible church, and how far your profession may be eventually for him and his cause, then remember that he that is not against him is for him; if he make but a common or hypocritical profession of his name.

Ver. 31, 32, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

This is the text of greatest difficulty, which hath occasioned that great diversity of expositions, we have to inquire after:

1. What the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is that is here mentioned?
2. What the speaking against the Son of man is?
3. What is meant by that affirmation, that all sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven?
4. What is meant by the negative exception, that the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven in this life, or that life to come?
5. The reasons of this negative exception?

1. The first of these is it that there is the greatest difference about. Some few think that Christ doth not speak to the Pharisees as if he judged them then guilty of that sin, when he spake to them, but as forewarning them lest they should be guilty of it. But most judge the contrary: and it seems that Christ speaks these words as showing the Pharisees the greatness of their sin and misery. I find not that the most ancient of the christian writers did much inquire into the nature of this sin, as far as their writings left us do discover. Cyprrian mentions

it among other great sins, which should hinder them from too easy receiving of the lapsed into the church. (Epist. 10. ad Quirin. 3.) Cyril. Hierosol. in treating of the Holy Ghost, mentioneth it as a reason why he should be cautious in his words, as if he were afraid lest he should be guilty of it by some unmeet expression of the Spirit. Epiphanius (Hæres. 34. vel. 54. contr. Theodotianos) makes it to be the vilifying of the Holy Ghost, or denying his Godhead. Hilarius Pictaviens. (in Matt. Com. 12.) makes it to be the denying of God in Christ. But Can. 5. a little more fully, he saith, that *Peccatum in Spiritum est Deo virtutis potestatem negare, et Christo substantiam adimere æternitatis*. This may well be noted as a part of this sin, when unbelief hath no other refuge but the flat denial of God's power, or attributing the evident effects of it to another; it is this sin, or near it; as anon we shall see. It may be, those ancients laid the stress of the argument in the text on this, who use from this text to prove that Christ did his miracles, *vi aut virtute divina*, "by the power of God," (as they expound the words,) as Tertul. Cont. Marcion. Lib. 4. Euseb. Præparat. Evangel. 7., Greg. Nyssen. Novatian. De Trinit. And those that hence prove the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, as Damascen. De orthodox. Fide de Sp. Sanct. c. 10. Greg. Nazianz. Orat. 24; and many more. Hierom seems to take this sin to be the blasphemous denial of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost too; for he expostulateth against readmitting such from this text, though in other places he seems to be righter.

Austin hath many expositions of this text, and descriptions of this sin in several places, which hath occasioned the schoolmen, and other papists, to make six sorts of the sin against the Holy Ghost, as taking them from him. But he doth most solemnly, and as of set purpose, set himself to open it, (Tom. 10. Paris.) De Verbis Dom. c. 11, where he noteth that Christ speaketh not of every word or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, but of one certain sort of sin or blasphemy against him; for he saith, the gentiles, Jews, and heretics, do ordinarily blaspheme the Holy Ghost, who are yet afterward converted and forgiven: as when it is said that God tempteth no man, it is not meant absolutely of every kind of temptation, but of a certain kind only; there being *tentatio adducens peccatum*, a temptation to draw to sin, which God never useth; and *tentatio probans fidem*, a temptation for trial of faith, which God useth. He rejected also their exposition that make it to be any heinous sin after baptism; and in conclusion, he determineth that it is the sin of final impenitency, and the final refusing that remission, which by the Spirit is given in the church; not as the papists expound him, as if he meant that all that refuse penance, (especially as a sacrament,) or priestly absolution, or indulgence, did sin against the Holy Ghost; but he means, all those infidels that will not, by baptism in faith and repentance, come into the church, where remission of sin is. And therefore, in conclusion, he giveth you his sense of both together, thus: *Ille est blasphemia cordis impenitentis, qua resistitur remissioni peccatorum quæ fit in ecclesia per Spiritum Sanctum*: It is the blasphemy of an impenitent heart, by which it resisteth remission of sin, which is given in the church by the Holy Ghost; that is, finally resisteth it, as before. So that a finally impenitent unbeliever doth, in Austin's judgment, sin against the Holy Ghost. And I think there is much of the truth in this, so you take it not as meant of all such persevering infidels, which seems not to be in Austin's mind; but of those only that are such upon a resistance of a certain evidence of the Spirit.

Ambrose seemeth to come nearer the matter, though briefly, and to take this sin to be the sacrilegious blasphemy of infidels, by which they take and affirm the very gracious and powerful works of Christ to be the works of the devil, thereby likening Christ to Satan. For he saith, (To. 4. de Pœnit. c. 4,) that this is expressed of them who said Christ cast out devils by Beelzebub, *Quod Satanæ hereditas in eis esset qui Satanæ compararent salvatorem omnium, et in regno diaboli constituerent gratiam Christi*: that is, They are the inheritance of the devil, who compare the Saviour of all to the devil, and did place Christ's grace in the devil's kingdom. And more fully (De Spirit. Sanct. lib. 1. c. 3,) *Si quis corporis specie deceptus humani remissius aliquid sentit de Christi carne, quam dignum est, habet culpam; non est tamen exclusus a venia, quam fide possit adsciscere; si quis vero Spiritus Sancti dignitatem, majestatem et potestatem abnegat sempernam, et putat non in Spiritu Dei ejici dæmonia, sed in Beelzebub, non potest ibi exoratio esse veniæ, ubi sacrilegii plenitudo est*: that is, If any one, being deceived by the shape of his human body, shall have lower thoughts of the flesh of Christ than is meet, he is culpable; yet is he not excluded from pardon, which by faith he may attain. But if any one deny the eternal dignity, majesty, and power of the Holy Ghost, and thinketh that devils were not cast out by the Spirit of God, but by Beelzebub, there can be no obtaining of pardon, where there is the fullness of sacrilege.

Chrysostom's exposition is much to the same purpose, that this sin against the Holy Ghost is the blaspheming of that divine power of the Spirit, which is apparent in miracles as distinct from the contempt of Christ, as appearing in his humanity.

Athanasius (if his) hath a discourse purposely of this sin, to show that it is the contempt and blasphemy against the divine power, in these miracles plainly discovered, and the refusing of Christ notwithstanding such a testimony.

To the same purpose doth Isidor. Pelusiota expound it; that those sin against the Holy Ghost, that, seeing Christ's miracles, yet will not believe.

It is to small purpose to mention the mistakes of Origen and Theognostus herein, as Athanasius *ubi sup.* reporteth them; or the mistake of the Novatians, as others report of them, that thought the denying of Christ, yea, every gross sin after baptism, was this sin against the Holy Ghost.

Hesychius, in Leviticus, takes it to be final unrepentedness and desperation.

Basil. (Magn. in Ethic. def. 35,) takes him to be guilty of this sin, who, seeing the fruits of the Spirit every way correspondent to piety, ascribeth them not to the Spirit, but to a contrary power. And (Reg. 273) he stretcheth it too hard in the application, saying, that is the sin against the Holy Ghost, when men ascribe the fruits of the Holy Spirit to the enemy: as most do who call the godliness of true christians by the name of vain-glory; and their zeal by the name of anger, and the like (if this be Basil, and not Eustathius Sebastienus). I will trouble you with no more of the ancients as to this point; only add, that I now see in them that the right exposition of this place was not so unknown then as I sometimes thought, for all that difference among them, which Dan. Heinsius, Pelargus, Maldonate, and so many more do wonder at.

Our latter expositors are somewhat more unanimous; but whether so near to the truth as most of the ancients, or many at least, we shall further inquire.

The papists do ordinarily reckon up out of Austin six several sorts of sin against the Holy Ghost:

Lyra (in Matt. xii.) comes up to our ordinary exposition of the protestant divines, that it is a sinning maliciously against the known truth: and thinks that the Pharisees knew Jesus to be the Christ, and would prove it from that: "This is the heir, come let us kill him," Luke xix.

Cajetan (in Matt. xii.) takes it to be the denial of the sanctifying Spirit, and the ascribing Christ's powerful works to the devil.

Maldonate (in Matt. xii.) having showed the mistakes of Philastrius, that makes every heresy to be this sin; and of Beda, that makes it to be the denial of remission by the Holy Ghost in the ordinances of Christ, in the church baptism, and the Lord's supper, and many others' mistakes herein, doth come near the matter himself; concluding that from the nature of this sin in the Pharisees, here mentioned, the description of the sin against the Holy Ghost must be gathered: and saith it is the ascribing of the manifest works of the Spirit to the devil. And he saith, that Pacianus, Anastasius, (Q. 68,) Hierom, Ambrose, Basil, speak to the same purpose as he about the nature of the sin, though they all agree not about the point of irremissibility.

Our own writers commonly agree that it is a set, malicious opposing the known truth: yet some put more as necessary. Most of them make it to be,

1. Against the Holy Ghost enlightening them, and working on them, and moving them within, and not only or chiefly against the objective testimony of the Holy Ghost in his works without.

2. And to be ever against knowledge.

3. And of set malice.

4. Many join opposition as necessary to make it up too.

5. And some say, It is only the sin of those that are or have been of the church. We shall consider of the truth of these anon.

Beza (on 1 John v. 4, 6) saith, It is a universal apostasy from God, whereby the known Majesty of God is of set malice opposed.

Bucer (in Marlorat. *in loc.*) saith, That they whose conscience is convinced that it is the word of God which they oppose, and yet cease not to oppose it, do sin against the Holy Ghost, because they sin against his illumination.

Musculus (*in loc.*) thinks it is baptized, illuminated persons, who knowingly, maliciously, and against conscience, do resist the truth. And he thinks that the Pharisees did it against conscience.

Calvin (*in loc.*) thinks so too: and saith, Such do sin against the Spirit dwelling in them; turning the work of God manifested to them by the Spirit to his dishonour, maliciously following Satan their captain.

Piscator (*in loc.*) saith, It is he that denieth the truth manifested to him by the Holy Ghost, and hateth and persecuteth it.

Pelargus thus describeth it, (*in loc.*) It is a voluntary and malicious renouncing the truth of the gospel evidently known, joined with a tyrannical, sophistical, or hypocritical opposition, or with an epicurean contempt of God, with an incurable contumely of the heavenly truth, and an incurable desperation.

Deodate (*in loc.*) expoundeth it of him who hath been driven by the extreme wickedness and impiety of his heart to utter words of blasphemy and outrage against God and his truth, of which he hath had the seal of persuasion and knowledge in his heart by God's Spirit: which is the chief sin of the devil and the damned, and the very height of the wicked's malice.

Stella (on Luke xi.) doth join with them in sup-

posing that the Pharisees did not indeed think that Christ's works were done by Beelzebub; but only would have persuaded others so against their own knowledge.

Cartwright (*Harm. in loc.*) saith, "That sin is not found among papists, Jews, or Turks, but such only as profess the gospel, or at least are approvers of the gospel and word of God." Better saith Pareus (*in loc.*): "It is their sin, who being convinced of Christ's doctrine and divine works, do yet ascribe them to the devil." If you would see their judgments yet more fully, almost every common-place book will show it you.

The Lutheran divines do go somewhat further, and make the sin against the Holy Ghost to be not only such a wilful resisting of known truth, but also an excusing of the Spirit of grace out of our hearts, and so they think the truly sanctified may fall into it. Yea, they are conceited that by this way they have the advantage which we have not, for reconciling this text, Matt. xii. with Heb. vi. and x.; this saying that all sin except that against the Holy Ghost shall be forgiven, and that in Heb. making apostasy incurable: whereby they, but ungroundedly, I think, do conceive that we who deny the apostasy of any saints, must deny also the existence of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is taken by many to be the same. Whereas, they make them both possible; and, indeed, there are some who hold the falling away of some saints, who think they may be again restored; and some who think they must and will be restored; and some who hold, indeed, that some of them may totally fall from grace, but that such can never be restored, they being the very persons meant in Heb. vi. and their sin, though not only theirs, being that against the Holy Ghost. I only name these as mistaken expositions of this text.

Illyricus makes this sin to be a persevering opposing of known truth, and persevering impenitency, whereto he also addeth, sinning against conscience, which, he saith, driveth out the Spirit and depriveth a man of his adoption. Twenty more of the Lutherans might be mentioned, that go that way, but it would be but a trouble to the reader, and therefore I pass that by.

Before I tell you what I take to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, I shall (but briefly) consider of the rest of the propounded questions, and tell you somewhat of others' sense of them, and then resolve all together. For I take it in so weighty a point, to be too bold and unmeet, when I purposely explain such a text, to tell you my own thoughts only, without premising the judgment of others.

The second question is, What is it to blaspheme or speak against the Son of man? It is agreed by the most, that the sense of these words is this: He that shall speak contemptuously or reproachfully of Christ as a mere man, supposing him to be no more: and, 2. That is so persuaded only because of his visible humanity and the common frailties which he is pleased to submit to, or from something which might easily, to a rash judgment, have an appearance of the sinful infirmity also of man; as his eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, &c.; this man shall have pardon.

The third question is, What is meant by the affirmation, "That all such sin shall be forgiven?" And it is commonly agreed on, that it is not the meaning of it, that all such individual sins shall be actually forgiven to all men; but as some say, They are more easily and ordinarily forgiven: as others say, They are forgiven to the penitent, and only they: which dependeth on the next.

Quest. 4. What is meant by this negative, "That

the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven in this life or in that to come."

Ans. It is the difficulty of this, that hath made the first question so difficult; what this sin is. Two opinions are very ordinary here: some think that the meaning is, They shall be more hardly and more rarely forgiven that blaspheme the Holy Ghost, but that it was never the mind of Christ to conclude in proper sense that it should never be forgiven. Of this opinion was Chrysost. *in loc.* who saith, that this sin is pardonable and pardoned to many, but that it is less pardonable and venial than other sins, because it is against a fuller discovery of the truth; Christ they knew not while he appeareth to them but as a man, but the Spirit they might see in his works.

Theophylact followeth him in this exposition, saying, that he that seeth Christ among publicans and sinners, and so blasphemeth him, though he repent not, yet shall not be called to account, that is, shall not be condemned, so be it he have a general repentance of sin; but he that saith Christ's miracles are done by Beelzebub, shall not be forgiven unless he repent, that is, particularly, of this sin.

Ambrose makes Simon Magus in a sort guilty of this blasphemy, and yet to have hope of pardon by Peter given him.

Augustin makes all the blasphemy pardonable, which others take this sin to consist of, and saith, that gentiles, Jews, and heretics do blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and yet have remission; but he certainly concludeth that final impenitency, which he took this sin to consist in, to be unpardonable.

The papists commonly say that, of divers sorts of the sin against the Holy Ghost, only final impenitency is absolutely unpardonable; but all the rest are more hardly forgiven than other sins. So the Rhemists, against whom Dr. Fulk contendeth that this sin is never forgiven. Lyra saith it is not easily pardoned.

Erasmus speaketh yet more doubtfully, that he shall scarce have pardon.

Maldonate will be stricter than Chrysostom, and therefore blameth him for expounding it of a more difficult obtaining of pardon; and doth himself expound it of an impossibility of pardon, as considering simply the nature of the sin which hath no excuse; but not impossible to God, who can pardon that which is inexcusable; as it is impossible for a rich man to enter into heaven, as to any human power, but possible with God. Thus he falls in with Chrysostom while he seemeth to dissent.

So Cajetan expoundeth, It shall not be forgiven, that is, not pardoned regularly. There is no rule to assure it; but yet, saith he, God is above all rules.

The Lutheran divines also do, many of them, go that way of making this sin remissible.

Wigandus and Mat. Index in Syntagm. Doct. Christian, (part ii. page 712, 716,) make it to be unpardonable while he remaineth in it; but labour to prove that we must not wholly despair of such as commit this sin, but that some of them may be recovered. But Ch. Pelargus doth contend for the absolute unpardonableness of it, against Bellarmine, Barradius, Salmeron, with their associates, in Matt. xii.

Grotius pleadeth for Chrysostom's sense, and those that go that way, and from "Heaven and earth shall pass away," &c. Matt. v. which is, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than my word," &c. Luke xvi. 17. He gathereth that the former member doth not affirm, but make the latter more difficult; and so he thinks there is here such a Hebraism; and the sense he giveth thus, Any crime

that can be committed, even calumnies, which are among the greatest crimes, shall more easily be forgiven than that calumny which is committed against the Holy Ghost. Like that, 1 Sam. ii. 25, "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall plead for him?"

But the reformed divines do commonly expound it of absolute unpardonableness, and judge all the former expositions of those ancients, and papists, and Lutherans, to be forced and unsound.

Some question there is also about the distinction of forgiving in this life, or the life to come; whence the papists would vainly gather their purgatory; but the reformed divines, and the ancients commonly, do expound it one of these ways: either as if he should say, He shall be punished both in this life and that to come; or, he shall neither have the temporal nor eternal punishment remitted; or, he shall neither be forgiven and absolved by the church here, nor by Christ hereafter: or simply, he shall never be forgiven: or, he shall neither have that gospel pardon, which all true believers have in this life, nor that sentential absolution which they shall have in judgment. (See Dr. John Reynolds of this, de lib. Apocr.) What Christ speaketh about the unpardonableness of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, is in direct facing of their tenet, which held that blasphemy was atoned for by death, though by nothing else; saith Dr. Lightfoot, Harmon. of N. T. (sect. xxxv. page 30,) for which he citeth the words of the Talmud.

The fifth question is, What are the reasons why this sin is more unpardonable than others?

Some say, because it is against God himself directly, and not only against Christ as man. Others, because it is that high degree of malicious wickedness, which is in the devils themselves, and therefore not fit for God to forgive: because, saith Ambrose, it makes the Saviour of all to be like Beelzebub, and placeth God's grace in the devil's kingdom. Many say, because other sins deserve some excuse, that is, may admit excuse; but this hath no excuse. So divers of the ancients, as Theodoret, (in Heb. x.) of the sinning wilfully there mentioned, which is taken to be the same. That which is not wilfully done, saith he, deserveth some pardon, that is, is capable of it. So that it seems they mean there is nothing in this sin which may move to mercy, or to abate the punishment, as matter of excuse. So, also, Maldonate, and many of his way. Our divines ordinarily say, because it excludeth repentance; not, saith Musculus, because it is against conscience, but because it is not repented of. And that is, say they, because through God's just judgment they are given unto blindness and to a reprobate sense, and forsaken utterly by the Holy Ghost, whom they have maliciously sinned against.

Some very few run into that mistake, as to fly rather to God's eternal decree of not giving them repentance, than to the nature of the sin that makes them incapable of it; but this putteth no difference between them and the rest of the non-elect. That which sticks with these is, that they are loth to yield that Christ died for those that sin against the Holy Ghost, or for any but the elect; and, therefore, they are loth to confess that he procured for them and bestowed on them the illumination or other gifts of the Holy Ghost which they reject, as if they were given to them as mercies and means tending to recovery, and therefore they would not yield that for rejecting such means and mercies they are unpardonable.

Erasmus giveth in his thoughts thus of the reason of the unpardonableness of this sin: "He that sin-

neth of frailty and is fit for pardon, shall have it ; but he that blasphemeth the Holy Ghost, whose manifest power he seeth in his works, shall scarce have pardon here or hereafter." See Amyraldus, his way of opening this De *Œconomia trium personarum*, p. 45, et sequentib.

This variety of expositions is no disparagement to the words of Christ, but sheweth (as Austin saith, and out of him Cumeranus in *Conciliat. hujus loc.*) that such depths are left for our exercise and humiliation.

Sect. III.

Having told you the judgment of learned expositors about this text, and the nature of this sin against the Holy Ghost, I shall next presume to tell you which I take to be the true sense of the words, and what this sin is, and how far unpardonable, and why, seeing among such variety of expositions we cannot receive all; and I shall lay down my thoughts in several propositions: first, for the negative, which is not this sin, and then as to the affirmative, what it is.

1. Every gross sin after baptism, or after solemn repentance and confession of the baptized, is not the sin against the Holy Ghost. This we assert against the Novatians (if they be not wronged) it is proved, in that many such have been known to repent and be recovered; as, also, because there is no description of this sin in the Scripture agreeeth to it.

2. Every sin, yea, gross sin, which is committed against knowledge and conscience, is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; else all men that commit gross sin, who are men of any knowledge or conscience, should be guilty of it, or most men at least; and none should be more guilty than those true believers that fall into any gross sin, as David did; for, doubtless, their knowledge of it is greatest, and their conscience most likely to rise up against it.

3. Every sin, though gross, which is committed upon deliberation, and consideration of God's prohibition and displeasure of Christ's death, of the evil of the sin, the ill effects, and the like moving reasons against it, is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is here spoken of. Though these be heinous aggravations of any sin, (and it is a very sad case that any that fear God should in such manner offend,) and will likely raise doubts of their sincerity in their hearts, and well may do in any that should frequently do thus; yet here is no evidence to prove it to be the unpardonable sin.

4. It is not every sin against the Holy Ghost, nor every blasphemy against him, that is this unpardonable blasphemy here mentioned; for then, every one that ignorantly blasphemed him should be unpardonable; and then, few Jews, or Turks, or infidels, that have lived within the sound of the gospel, should be curable, and so pardonable.

5. It is not all opposing or persecuting the known truth, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost: it may be a particular truth, and not the main christian faith, that is so opposed; or it may be done in a spleen against the person that holdeth it, rather than against the truth itself; or it may be done by fear of men, to escape some outward danger or suffering: as some in Queen Mary's days were noted to burn others against their consciences, lest they should be suspected of heresy themselves; and one is said to sit with others in judgment against one of them contrary to his conscience, who afterwards suffered himself: or else it may be from an imperfect light, not thoroughly convincing him of the truth, but leaving him in some doubts that he holdeth that truth, who yet by temptation may persecute it, as making against some lust or carnal interest of his own: and

if it will not prove murder or adultery to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, because they are done deliberately and against conscience, as David's were, I see not then, how it should prove persecution to be that sin on that account that it is against conscience; although perhaps it may prove the person graceless.

6. It is not all malice against God or hatred of him, that is this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; for there are haters of God of a lower rank mentioned in the second commandment and other places of Scripture; yea, every man, at least, that is unregenerate, hath some of this sin. Our natural apostasy lieth in a falling from God to our carnal selves and the creature; and consequently in an enmity to him, as one that would cross us in our way, and take us off our desired pleasures, and punish us for our sin: though we do not say, that every man is a hater of God, who hath any the least hatred to him in his heart, because we must denominate men from the affection that is predominant; otherwise all the godly might be called haters of God, seeing no doubt, so far as they are imperfect, their love to him is imperfect, and they have some measure of displeasure against his Spirit and ways, and so himself for them.

7. The sin against the Holy Ghost doth not consist in the hatred of God or his truth as good; for that is not possible, at least to man while he is in the flesh.

8. All persecuting the known truth out of malice, seemeth not to me to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is here mentioned; for if there may be a malice against truth in men unregenerate, yea, in all of them, though not blasphemers of the Spirit; and if they may persecute the known truth as is before showed, then this inward malice will, or at least may, have a hand in that persecution. The rage of all wicked men's lusts doth boil against whatsoever doth oppose them, and if God do not restrain such rage, and keep the apprehension of the danger of resisting upon their hearts, no wonder if ungodly men do in their passion even persecute the truth in malice, because it crosseth them in the way of their sin.

9. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not only the sin of professed christians, or only of those that approve of christianity; nor is always against the knowledge and judgment of the sinner: and therefore they err that say, that Jews, Turks, and papists, are not liable to this sin; and for aught I see, so do they that would find out such a sin as they describe in this text. They cannot prove that the Pharisees here spoken of did believe Christ to be the Son of God, or the Messiah, or that indeed his miracles were done by the Holy Ghost, and not by Beelzebub. For, 1. The Scripture saith, even of the rulers, that through ignorance they crucified Christ, and had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 2. It is most improbable that they who so longed for the Messiah should crucify him when they knew him, and yet deny him. 3. They continued to expect the Messiah while they crucified him and after, and so do their posterity from them to this day. 4. They delivered down this blasphemy to their posterity, as the reason of their not believing in Christ, because they supposed that his miracles were done by magic and by Beelzebub. 5. If the contrary doctrine were true, the Pharisees were christians in mind by belief, and only hypocritically denied their own belief; and then they denied him only with the tongue, and not with the judgment: so Peter denied him too, and cursed and swore that he knew not the man. If they say that they rested not in him, nor accepted him

with the will, but hated him, while they believed in him by bare assent, I answer: 1. Will not an assent have some power on the will, according to the nature and measure of it. If the understanding determine not the will, it surely doth much towards a determination, so that a common assent is like to produce a common consent, as a special assent doth a special consent. 2. I dare not say that the Pharisees that blasphemed the Holy Ghost were so far Christians as to assent to the truth, till I see some Scripture or reason to prove it. Many a text saith the contrary, that they believed not.

Nay, it is a very hard question to me whether it be not only infidels that sin thus against the Holy Ghost. And, as to this sin, which is described here in this text, it seems to me that it doth belong only to infidels, the Pharisees being such, and the sin reprehended in them being an aggravated infidelity, breaking out in blasphemy of the tongue, and wholly supported by a blasphemy of the mind. I doubt much whether any man that believes that Christ is the Redeemer, can be guilty of this sin, as in this text described. Only all the doubt is whether the text, Heb. vi. 10, do not describe a sin against the Holy Ghost, which Christians may commit, which falls under the genus here mentioned, though not the same in specie with the Pharisees'; or, whether that sin mentioned in Hebrews be the sin which is here called unpardonable.

And, if Ludov. de Dieu's exposition hold good, it is out of doubt that the text, Heb. vi. hath another sense. He thinks that it is not the commonly illuminate, but the truly godly believers that are there spoken of; and that it is so far from the intent of the Holy Ghost to tell us that such do so fall away, as that it is his scope to tell us the contrary: q. d. if such should thus sin, it were impossible to renew them by repentance; therefore it is impossible they should thus sin: and the sense of the Syriac interpreter, he saith, is, *Non possunt iterum peccare, ut denuo renouentur ad resipiscentiam, et denuo crucifigant, &c.*; It is impossible they should again sin to be renewed again to repentance, and crucify again to themselves the Son of God: and the Arabic, *Non possunt, &c. ut revertantur in peccatum quo renouentur ad resipiscentiam, &c.*; It cannot be that they should return to sin to be renewed to repentance. Or, if the exposition of some of the ancients be right, that it speaketh only of the not renewing of baptism, it would be little to this business. Or else, of not re-admitting them by penance, or any other means, into the church, or into a participation of their prayers. For myself, I conceive that the arguments to prove that it is not true believers that are here meant, are not cogent. If the apostle have respect to visible church members' privileges and benefits; of such it is but as they signify the true membership with the privileges of such. Yet I see not, if it be concluded that they are true Christians that are here mentioned, that it will follow that such do eventually thus apostatize: for, if we do not receive L. de Dieu's exposition as seeming strained, yet a threatening supposeth not that the subject will offend and be punished, but is a means purposely appointed to keep him from so offending. The legislator that saith no traitor shall escape death, doth not thereby tell us that there will be traitors, but tells us what shall befall them if there shall be such; and tells us us to that end, that, if it may be, there might be none, but the threatening might deter them from the crime. I think it is God's purpose to keep all his truly sanctified ones from apostasy. I am sure it is his purpose so to keep his elect. But, withal, I believe that he hath decreed that the end shall be accom-

plished by the means; and that is, that men shall be kept from apostasy by a holy fear of apostatizing, excited by the Spirit and threatenings of Christ, supposing also the co-operation of other graces. But whether this text of Heb. vi. speak of the same sin as Matt. xii. I will delay the fuller inquiry till I come to the description of this sin.

10. It is not every one that denieth Christ's miracles or the apostles', that is guilty of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. For if for want of sufficient information, or of true faith, he believe not that ever such works were wrought, this is not an ascribing them to the devil, nor a denying that the Holy Ghost only can do such works. Many that have believed none of the Scripture to be true, or that ever Christ and his apostles did indeed perform the works that are there mentioned, have yet afterward believed upon better information, and the illumination of the Spirit of grace.

11. It is not every word of blasphemy to the same importance as the Pharisees' here mentioned, that is this unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. For this sin lieth not in the bare words as separated from the thoughts of the heart. If a man in a frenzy, or in a melancholy, violent temptation, or in a fear to save his life, as Peter sinned, or on the like occasion, should speak those same words as the Pharisees did, that Christ did cast out devils by Beelzebub, this were not the unpardonable sin, if he think not so as he speaks, nor obstinately stand in it. It is common with most melancholy people that are near to distraction, or very deeply melancholy, to be violently haunted by the tempter to utter some blasphemous words against God; so that they are grievously perplexed, and are scarce able to forbear; and if they yield to the temptation, they think it is the unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. But the chief seat of that sin is in the heart; it doth not consist in bare words: unless the rest of the description be found in it, the words prove it not.

12. It is not every doubt or shaking of our faith in this point, that is the unpardonable blaspheming of the Holy Ghost; much less is it the temptation itself that will prove it. Even a godly man may be tempted to sin against the Holy Ghost; yea, and may too much give ear to the tempter, so that it may bring him to suspicions of Christ's works, or cause him to question in some doubtfulness, whether they were indeed by the power of God or not. But then he is not overcome by these temptations. Though they draw him to some sin, yet not to this unpardonable sin: though they cause his faith to shake, yet not to fail: though he begin to doubt, yet he recovereth, and turneth not an infidel. So that he comes not to conclude these works were done by Beelzebub, and so to blaspheme.

13. It is not the blaspheming of particular, more obscure, private, doubtful works of the Spirit, that is the unpardonable sin. We are commanded not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God or not. If it fall out that in this trial of the spirit, of a private man, or a party, we should mistake now, and think it is an evil spirit, when it is the Spirit of God, this is not the sin in question. If a man see you full of the joy of the Holy Ghost, and rashly say and think it is a diabolical delusion; or if he hear some true doctrine from you, and, mistaking in that point himself, shall rashly say, that it is the devil that teacheth it you; this is not the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. For this may stand with true faith in Christ, because it is not a blaspheming of that work of the Spirit, which is the great and necessary seal of the gospel, but of a more private work; and, therefore, even the godly, in a

mistake and in a rash zeal, may be guilty of it. If a papist shall say, that it is the devil and not the Holy Ghost that leads the protestants; or the Lutherans shall say so by the Calvinists, or the anabaptists by the defenders of infant baptism, this is not the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost here in question, though another sort of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost it is. Here are divers in this age that pretend to extraordinary revelations, or workings and teachings of the Spirit; and some to communion visibly with angels: if we go to try these spirits, whether they be of God or not, and find that the spirit of the ranters is a spirit of wickedness; the spirit of the libertines and antinomians, of licentiousness; the spirit of the Behmenists and quakers leadeth to popery, and to railing and contempt of the ministry; and seeing that their doctrines are contrary to the word of God, we conclude that it is an evil spirit that moves, that shakes, that transporteth these men. If now there should be some one true prophet among them, or one that indeed is acted by the Spirit of God in the main, and should really have visible converse with angels, which we will believe when it is proved, and yet mix with it some of the errors of the rest, and be taken for one of them, if we should mistakenly tell this man that it is an evil spirit that acteth him, or that he converseth with, this is not the unpardonable sin here mentioned, for the reason before expressed. The like we may say in many the like cases.

14. If a man should be falsely informed by those he liveth with, that Christ and his disciples were all wicked livers, and should not hear what can be said for his better information, and thus, hearing the miracles of the gospel with such prejudice, should believe and say, that they were all done by magic or evil spirits, which is like to be the case now of many of the Jews; though this be near to the unpardonable blasphemy, yet I think it is not it, while men hear not the true case, but are merely perverted by other men's lies, though they may hear the truth about the matter of fact, which they blaspheme.

15. The blasphemy against the Spirit, described in this text, is not the mere resisting, opposing, quenching, or hating the internal efficiency of the Spirit in the sinner himself, as many take it to be, who make it to be a sin against internal illumination only: but it is a sin against the external, evidencing, testifying works of the Spirit; and for aught I know, it may be committed as well by those that never had any internal illumination at all, any more than heathens and common, unbelieving Jews have, as by those that were illuminated. I find not any extraordinary illumination that these Pharisees had; but contrarily that they had eyes and saw not, and hearts and understood not, and were blinded by Satan: it was an external work of the Spirit which they blasphemed, and not an inward illumination of their own minds.

16. All final infidelity or impenitency, I think, is not this blaspheming of the Holy Ghost. Thousands may die impenitently, and in negative unbelief, that never heard of Christ. Many may die in positive infidelity, that have heard of Christ's doctrine, but not of his Spirit and miracles, or not in any manner fit to convince. Many may have a vulgar, superficial belief of all these, and yet die impenitently as to their other sins. Though these shall certainly perish; yet, I think, it is not as blasphemers of the Spirit.

17. It is not all desperation that is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Indeed, as desperation falls in with infidelity, or is grounded on it, as when men despair that ever the promises of God should prove

true and be performed, so desperation may be this unpardonable sin, if it be joined with this blaspheming of the works of Christ, as infidelity itself may be; but otherwise when a man believes that the gospel is true, but despaireth that ever he himself shall be saved by it, I take not this to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, though it be one of those that Austin once supposed it.

18. Presumption is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; though it be another that Austin once conceded to be it, if the papists mistake him not. I mean by presumption, either a false persuasion that we are the sons of God, when we are not, or else, a boldness in sin upon an ungrounded conceit of God's mercy; which are the things that we commonly call by that name. For, alas! the most of mankind, before conversion, are captivated by that sin, and the relics remain after.

19. It is not all envy at the grace or gifts of our brother that is this unpardonable sin, though that be another that the schoolmen fetch from Austin: no, nor doth it directly or properly lie in such an envy at all: that sin is great, but not the sin in question.

20. It is not all epicurean contempt of the christian religion, as Melancthon thought, as Pelargus allegeth him, that is this sin against the Holy Ghost. Epicurus was never guilty of this sin himself; and those who, from an epicurean spirit of sensuality, do condemn the christian religion, may yet not do it in a blaspheming of the works of the Spirit; but, perhaps, never heard or considered of those works; and, therefore, many such, for aught we know, may be recovered.

21. It is not all falling away from grace received that is this unpardonable sin. The godly may fall in part from true grace. Others may fall quite away from some common gifts of mercy, and yet neither sin this unpardonable sin here in the text; though apostasy may in another respect prove unpardonable, as final impenitence doth.

22. I think that the sin against the Holy Ghost consisteth not in the total excussion of special, sanctifying grace once received; because I think that those that have received this are preserved by Christ from such a total excussion or apostasy. Otherwise, if I did believe that there ever were such a total apostasy, I should think it were either of the same nature with this before us, or at least very near it, and of the like consequence.

23. No soul is guilty of this unpardonable sin, who believeth that Christ is the Son of God, and the Redeemer of the world, and would fain have part in the merits and mercy of his Redeemer. The sin against the Holy Ghost casteth out this; it is the sin of infidels; or at least, of men that would have none of Christ if they might: those, therefore, that would have Christ, and yet fear they have committed this sin, they know not what it is, nor what they are afraid of.

24. It is a sign that a man hath not committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, when he is troubled with fears lest he have committed it, and complaineth of his danger and sad condition. For it is the nature of that sin to harden a man in confidence against Christ, and make him think he ought to be an infidel; and, therefore, will rather despise Christ, than be grieved lest he have lost him, or shall be deprived of his benefits. These fears, lest you have sinned against the Holy Ghost, do show that you would not so sin; and if you would not, you have not: they show that you would not lose your part in Christ, nor be deprived of the fruits of his death and merits; and that shows that you yet believe in the death and

merits of Christ, and do not blaspheme him as a confederate of Beelzebub, as the Pharisees here did. So that of all people, poor, troubled, complaining christians have least cause to fear that they have sinned against the Holy Ghost. It is those that never fear it, that are most like to be guilty of it: for it maketh men secure.

So much for the negative, to tell you what is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, before I come to tell you what it is; which I have not done in way of contention or contradiction of others, but only for the truer discovery of the sin, and to prevent the causeless fears or desperation of any, who, by imagining that they are guilty of it when they are not, may be drawn to cast away their hopes, and give up all for lost.

For the affirmative what this sin is, I think it best to proceed towards the discovery of it by certain preparatory conclusions, ascending to it by just degrees: because that truths are concatenated, and one tendeth to introduce another into our understandings.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world; who, coming on that business to take away sin, by the sacrifice of himself hath made a sufficient satisfaction for the sins of all men, and prescribed a way by which he will have the benefits actually conferred.

2. The sufficiency of this satisfaction is to be measured, judged of, and denominated, in relation to the ends for which it is said to be sufficient; and those ends are freely determined of by the Father and the Redeemer, whose death, therefore, is sufficient, not to all things, but to what he willed it, or to those ends to which he did intend it.

3. The death of Christ was never intended to be a sufficient satisfaction for all sin absolutely, howsoever aggravated. It was no satisfaction for some, and therefore no sufficient satisfaction. It pleased him to except some aggravated sins from all pardon, in his gospel, and consequently in his dying, and in his intentions about the ends and effects of his death. Not, as some conceit, merely because they were the sins of such persons, viz. the non-elect, whom, say they, he died not for; for indeed he hath given to those men a conditional pardon of other sins, but not of these; but it hath pleased him to except the very sin itself considered in its own aggravated nature, from all pardon, without laying the reason only on the subject in whom it is found.

4. There must be somewhat, therefore, in the nature of that excepted sin, that must make it unfit for God to pardon it; or else it would be pardoned as well as others. And that must be either the greatness of it, or some special contradiction or inconsistency that it hath with the frame of God's design in the pardoning and recovering of sinners. The former it is not likely to be, at least, simply and proximately; for the greatest sinners have mercy offered them, and may have it on God's terms: so that if the greatness of their sin lie not in a contradiction of God's terms of pardoning, they cannot hinder them from pardon. So that if you ask, why cannot such sins be pardoned, the proper answer is, because Christ hath procured and granted out in the gospel no pardon of them. But if you further ask, why hath he not granted a pardon of them in the gospel, the answer is, because they were unfit for pardon, as having a special contradiction to the causes of a pardon, and to that design which the free-will of God hath laid: and so it is indeed the greatness, but not simply, but respectively, as being thus aggravated by an opposition to this pardoning grace; that is, the reason (as far as we may give one from the nature of the thing) why the excepted sins are unpar-

donable, and Christ hath made no satisfaction for them.

5. The sin against the Holy Ghost, therefore, must lie, in some such contradiction to the pardoning terms or way of God, rather than in the absolute greatness of the sin.

6. The tenor of Christ's promise, or covenant, by which he pardoneth sin, is, that whosoever believeth and repenteth, shall have all his sins pardoned. And this is in force to persons of every age, and at every season in this life. So that, by the tenor of this grant or covenant, final unbelief and impenitency are excepted from pardon directly, and nothing else: but consequentially, whatsoever is inseparably concomitant with them, or is inconsistent with faith and repentance in this life. That which is made the condition of pardon, is so far as a condition most plainly thereby excepted from pardon itself; that is, the non-performance of that condition is so excepted: else a man might have the benefit without condition, and then it were no condition, seeing it suspendeth not the benefit.

7. The sin against the Holy Ghost, therefore, must needs be some aggravated sort of infidelity or impenitency, or some inseparable concomitant of them. But a mere concomitant it is not, seeing it containeth in itself, as this text declareth, a reason of its own unpardonableness. It seemeth, therefore, that it is a sort of infidelity or impenitency itself. Yet that all infidelity, nor all final infidelity or impenitency, is not this sin, is probably showed before.

8. There is somewhat, therefore, to be found in the nature or present aggravations of infidelity and impenitency, that may conclude them unpardonable, besides the mere duration or final perseverance of them: and that is that is found in the sin against the Holy Ghost, and which constituteth that unpardonable sin: so that all final infidelity or impenitency is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; but the sin against the Holy Ghost, now in question, is always infidelity and impenitency, and always proveth final; but it is this specific sin before it be final: it is not the sin against the Holy Ghost because it is final, (that is, persevering to the end,) but it proves final because it is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Object. But how can that stand with Christ's words, who saith that all sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, except the blaspheming of the Spirit; then either final infidelity and impenitency are the blaspheming of the Spirit, or else they must be forgiven; and so infidels and impenitent persons will be saved?

Ans. I know this objection hath seemed so difficult, that it hath turned many out of that which I take to be the right way; but I think that this is the just solution. When Christ saith that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men, he speaks of the sin as it is in its own nature at present, without respect to the duration of that sin. As it is not every individual sin that he meaneth, so is it not sin as thus circumstantiated or modified; but sin specifically considered as it now is. There is no manner of sin, no sort of sin, but is pardoned to some men or other, except this sin against the Holy Ghost; but this is never pardoned to any. Though final infidelity and impenitency be never pardoned, yet the same sins are pardoned when they prove not final; and this is all that the text means, I think; but now the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost hath that in its present nature, from whence it may be concluded unpardonable, and from whence it will necessarily prove durable to the end. As for all other sorts of infidelity, they may be cured, and sometimes are, and therefore prove not final, but are

forgiven; but this ever proves final, and therefore is never forgiven.

9. It is the will of Christ to save his people from their sins themselves, as well as from the punishment of them; and to pardon no sin but what is mortified so far that it have not dominion over us. He will carry on the work of salvation entirely; both sanctification and justification or pardon together. Whatsoever sin therefore is incurable, the same is unpardonable.

10. Though the Spirit of Christ may be called a supernatural, that is, uncreated cause, a cause not working in a necessary, established, natural course, but freely; and though the graces of the Spirit may be called supernatural, in that they grow not naturally in us, nor are procured by any mere natural causes or works of ours; yet doth it please God to work on man as man, as an intellectual, rational, free agent, and so to work by means and ways agreeable to our natures, though supernaturally enforced and elevated, and more successful: whence is the common saying, that infused habits are wrought in us according to the manner of acquired habits.

11. As Christ hath granted the pardon of all other sins to them that will believe and repent, so hath he granted the pardon of former unbelief and impenitency to all that will believe and repent hereafter; as hath been, on the by, expressed before.

12. He that will not believe in Christ by the mere obscurer predictions of the prophets, might yet believe by the plainer preaching of John the Baptist, who pointed out Christ, and said, "This is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;" and he that will not believe by the testimony of John, might yet believe by the observation of the doctrine and holy life of Christ himself; and might know that never man spake like him, and that those were not the words of an impostor, nor of a common man. And he that would not believe by the works of Christ, or by any thing which they could observe in his person, might yet believe by the observation of his mighty works, which he did by the power and Spirit of God, and especially when that Spirit was given so fully and so commonly, and poured out upon his disciples in so many countries, so that thousands of them did speak strange languages, heal diseases, cast out devils, prophesy, or work miracles in one sort or other: and what I speak of sight, I say also of just report. He that will not believe upon just information of Christ's mere words, might yet believe upon information of his mighty works, and of his communicating such a Spirit to his church to do like.

13. He that will not believe upon the report of the glorious works of Christ and his servants, because he is not persuaded that ever such things were done, but thinks it is misreported by partial men; though his own wicked incredulity be the cause, yet may he afterwards, by further evidence, be convinced that such holy, wise, and mighty works were indeed done, and so may come to believe.

14. He that is fully convinced either by sight or the testimony of others, or any other way, (if any other may be expected,) that such holy and mighty works were done by Christ and his disciples, as the Scripture mentioneth, bearing on them such evidences of a divine power, or the finger of God, and yet will not believe that Christ is the Messiah, or Redeemer of the world, hath no other ordinary or extraordinary, external, objective means to convince him, which have in them a greater evidence, or may be expected to do that which the former cannot do. If such a man, therefore, be converted, it must be either by the same means which he rejecteth as in-

sufficient, or by a weaker means, or by none at all. To be converted by none, is not God's way of working with the rational creature; to be converted by smaller, when greater are enjoyed, and both smaller and greater despised, is as little his way as to do it by none. He that having opened the eyes of the blind, causeth him to see by the means of extrinsic light, doth thereby cause him to see more by a greater proportioned light than by a less; and never causeth him to see the light of a candle, who can see no light in the sun when it shineth in his face. It must, therefore, be by the same objective means which he despiseth, or not at all, that he must be converted and brought over to believe.

15. He that is so convinced, as is aforesaid, of Christ's works, and seeth this seal of his Spirit's operations annexed to his holy doctrine, and yet doth not believe that Christ is the Messiah or Redeemer, that his testimony is true, and the testimony of his apostles true which is thus confirmed, it must be either because he believeth not yet that those works are of God in a special manner, or else because he believeth that God is not true of his word, or in his works, nor to be trusted, but is a deceiver of mankind. If he believe this latter, then there is no higher testimony left for his conviction: he that will not believe God when he knows it is he, doth not indeed believe him to be God, that is, to be the most perfectly good and true. Nor can we reasonably expect that he should believe any other, seeing there is no truth or faithfulness in the creature but what is derived from the true and faithful God; or if he would believe a creature, when he takes his Maker to be a liar, this belief could not conduce to his conversion.

On the other side, if he will not yet believe that those works are of God, and the signs of his approbation, he must think that either they are of men only, or by devils; for good angels do what they do in obedience to God. The former he cannot believe without madness, because the weakness of man himself is so well known, that all men know that of themselves no man is able to raise the dead, to pour out such a spirit, and to do such other works as were done; nor did the Jews themselves, or any enemies of Christ on earth, that ever I read of, who were convinced that the works themselves were done, ever imagine or object such a thing, that such things were done by human power: if they had so believed, they had deified the creature against all experience.

It must, therefore, be Satan, or his power, that these works must be ultimately ascribed to, by those that considerately deny them to be of God. But to whomsoever they ascribe them, they leave themselves incurable, unless that means convert them which they do now reject. For there is no means left within the reach of the wit of man, by which God should evidence to men his owning of a doctrine or testimony of man, in a way agreeable to our nature, and the frame of God's works, which should be more clear and convincing than this which we have in hand. It is not fit for God to turn his creation upside down, nor subvert the frame and course of nature, to convince unbelievers. He is not a body, and therefore cannot be seen himself by mortal eyes; nor is he a voice, and therefore must be heard by a created voice. Angels are spirits, and not bodies, and therefore if they shall appear to us, it must be in an assumed, borrowed shape. And if they did, we should not easily know whether they were good or bad spirits, and whether they were sent of God, or not; but should be left much more in doubt than these works do leave us. Yet so far as apparitions of angels have been useful to his people, God hath

made use of them for the confirmation of his truth, both in the New Testament and the Old. He, therefore, that will not be convinced that such a Spirit is of God, and such works of God, as the doctrine of Christ and his apostles were sealed with, doth leave himself incapable of conviction, there being no greater evidences of God's attestation to be expected on earth; and though men may imagine that a messenger from the dead might be more convincing, indeed it is far less, and of more doubtful credit; and if men believe not, or will not be persuaded by a word so confirmed by the Spirit from heaven in such works, "neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead," Luke xvi. Or if we could imagine a possibility of more convincing, effectual evidence, yet we cannot tie God to our fancy, nor expect that he should use all means to satisfy us, that we can imagine might tend to our conviction. We must know what is fit for creatures to expect, in a rational and settled way of government, and not what is possible to be done; and God is fittest to judge what ways of revelation are convenient for him to use, and mankind to receive.

It is madness to expect that God should make the sun to stand still in the firmament, to convince every unbeliever; or that he should take us up to heaven, or let us have a sight of hell, to convince us. He that will choose his own evidence and sign before he will be convinced, would make himself the ruler of the world, and doth not submit to the rule of his Maker. What evidence can be mentioned *de facto* of a divine attestation, that ever God gave to mankind in any case, that is higher, clearer, and more convincing than those works by which he hath sealed to the Scriptures, and especially by the Spirit of Christ in himself and his disciples?

16. That he who doth make this the refuge of his unbelief, to impute the works of Christ and his disciples to Beelzebub, doth thereby make the devil to be as God, and God to be as the devil, and so, besides the casting away of the highest and utmost evidence of conviction, doth most intolerably blaspheme the Spirit of God: this I shall have occasion more fully to manifest in the body of this ensuing discourse.

17. As it is manifested that he who rejecteth this evidence of the Spirit must be convinced by the very same which he rejecteth, or never be convinced; so it is further manifest that he who hath been convinced that these works were done, and yet upon deliberation doth resolutely reject them as no testimony of God, cannot be convinced afterwards by the same testimony, without some greater illumination and operation of the Holy Ghost upon his mind, than he had at the first consideration. For he can expect no greater, but the same external, objective cause of his conviction; which, being but the same, will do but the same work. Only it is true that God could, if he pleased, and it were fit, send such an inward light into his soul, that should convince him of what he saw not before, even in and by the same external evidence. But without this special illumination of the Holy Ghost, it cannot be done.

18. It seems to me from this and other texts, that he who goes so far as is before mentioned against the Holy Ghost, viz. as after conviction of the truth of Christ's and his disciples' works, to deny them to be of God, and father them on the devil, and so to call God's Spirit, Beelzebub, and on this ground to be an infidel and impenitent, hath done such despite to the Spirit, and so heinously abused God by this blasphemy and rejecting of his grace, that he will utterly forsake that man, and judgeth it unfit to call him home to repentance, and taketh him for an un-

capable object of his mercy, and therefore will certainly give him up to a perseverance in his inidelity and impenitency to the end, and will never pardon him in this life, nor absolve him at judgment, but condemn him to everlasting, remediless misery: and that this is God's decree, and these limits he hath set to the exercise of his pardoning mercy in Christ.

And thus, by these steps, we are come up to the nature of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and the unpardonableness of it, and the reasons of that unpardonableness. In a word, it seems that the sin, as laid down to us in this text, is this:

When a man is convinced that Christ and his apostles, or other disciples, did perform those many and mighty works which are mentioned of them in the gospel, as working of miracles, speaking with strange languages, living in holiness, especially of Christ's own resurrection from the dead, or many of the chief of these; and yet shall be so far from taking these for a divine attestation, and believing in Christ as the Messiah, and receiving his holy doctrine confirmed hereby, that they shall in their hearts determine and be resolved that it was by the power of the devil that these works were done, and so make this the ground or refuge of their obstinate unbelief; in so doing, they commit the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, whether they utter the blasphemy with their lips or not.

19. Whether the bare rejecting of these acknowledged works, if the rejecter should not father them on Satan, be this unpardonable sin, if hereby a man take refuge for his unbelief, I shall not now determine. Only say, 1. That this which I have described is clearly it; and I will stop my determinations in what is clear. 2. That, as I have showed, it is scarce reasonably conceivable that these works, when once acknowledged, can be ascribed to any other but Satan, if they be disbelieved, or how a man can reject this testimony by any other than this blasphemous way. 3. But if another way may be imaginable, I will not secure that person from the guilt of this unpardonable sin, though I will not charge him with it, but shall leave that as I find it.

20. Another hard question lieth before us; whether it be only the blaspheming of this objective testimony of the Spirit that is the unpardonable sin, or whether also there be not a certain kind or degree of the inward illumination, and working of the Spirit, and that for repentance and sanctification, as well as to belief; which whosoever rejecteth, or at least in such or such a manner rejecteth, doth commit this unpardonable sin? I did before conclude, that it is not only against this inward illumination: now let us see whether it be at all specifically consisting herein.

I know that it is commonly thought that a malicious rejecting this internal light is the unpardonable sin. I purpose in so great a matter to deal cautiously. It is no small error to tell men that that is an unpardonable sin which is not, or that that is a pardonable sin which is unpardonable. I have, I think, plainly discovered from the text one description of the unpardonable sin: if any will bring more, it must be well proved from Scripture. Yet this I may say,

1. The inward work of the Spirit is either of common gifts, as learning, and the like, by succeeding our industry; or it is in extraordinary gifts, which yet are not certainly saving, as miracles, tongues, prophecies, &c. such as the sealing Spirit gave for the confirmation of christian religion at the first; or thirdly, it is in the special saving graces of Christ. The first of these concerneth not our present busi-

ness. For the other two, the Spirit is first considerable as effecting them; and then the effect itself is considerable as it should be reviewed by us, and be the objective cause of some further effect. Now when our question is, whether rejecting the Spirit within ourselves may be the unpardonable sin? I answer distinctly: 1. If the Spirit be considered as the efficient cause of miraculous gifts, it effects them irresistibly, where such gifts were given, and the resisting of that work is not this sin.

2. If we speak of this gift of miracles as an effect of the Spirit; so according to Christ's usual way of conveyance, I think it was in none but believers, at least by that called an historical faith; and therefore it could not be that sin which is an aggravated infidelity. Yet *in sensu diviso* I believe that the same man that is now such a believer, having the Spirit of miracles, may fall away to infidelity, and lose that Spirit; and that he may so lose it, as to sin against the Holy Ghost: not by resisting that Spirit as efficient, but by rejecting the testimony of its works objectively considered: so that if one that had found such gifts in himself should conclude that those gifts were from Satan, and so turn infidel and blasphemer, thus he may as well sin against the Holy Ghost which was within him, as without him.

3. As for the gift of sanctifying grace, which is it that concerneth us in these days: 1. I suppose that when the Spirit hath effected it in us, it is not lost; yet in specie it may be said, That for such a man that hath had such grace, to lose it and ascribe it all to Satan, and so blaspheme the Spirit that gave it, this would be the unpardonable sin; because, though the grace of sanctification in others may not be such a full, convincing evidence, because we cannot see their hearts, yet the grace in ourselves doth so expressly bear the image of God, that it may be a full, convincing testimony of the truth of Christ; and so the blaspheming of it, objectively considered in our reviews, may be this sin. But as long as such a thing doth ever exist, we need not say so much of this; only we may say, That though it never be, yet if it should be, it would be the sin against the Holy Ghost: I say not that all apostasy would be so, but this so aggravated. And perhaps we may expound some texts as forbidding or threatening such a sin, though it never shall be. But if they should be in the right that affirm against us a total apostasy of the truly sanctified as in being, then this would deserve a fuller consideration than now I conceive it doth. 2. And if you consider the Spirit of sanctification, not objectively but efficiently, then either in the effecting of grace, or before such effecting. In the effecting, it cannot be so resisted; for if it do effect it, the person is a believer and sanctified; if before, then either before a true, consequent sanctification, and that is not the unpardonable sin which hath sanctification and pardon following it; or it is said to be before it only, as being in duty as to us, and by appointment from God in order to it; and here sticks the doubt, whether the Spirit drawing us towards Christ or sanctification, may be so far resisted, as that the sin shall be unpardonable? If so, then it is either specified such from the degree or kind of work that is resisted, or from the manner of resistance. If it be from the degree or kind of grace or work resisted, then did not some sanctified ones once resist that same degree or sort of grace, before a greater and more effectual work did come and cause them to believe? If you say, no; then you must say that the same grace in kind and degree doth cause one man to believe which resisteth not, and another it doth not cause to believe who resisteth, and so no grace is necessary to overcome that resistance and

make a difference; and then it is man's will that must make God's grace effectual, and God did not give any more to him that believeth, than to him that believeth not. And whose doctrine this is, and how commonly and justly rejected, is known. But if you say that it is from the manner of resistance that this sin is specified, that manner must be showed. Is it the hatred of the truth, or maliciousness of our resistance? I have showed, that according to the degree of sin that is in us, there is a malice against the truth in all: not as truth, for so it is in none on earth, but as it is contrary to our carnal inclinations and interest. It must, therefore, be some certain degree or kind of malice, if it lie in that; but that I have not seen opened yet. Yet, 1. I will not say that certainly no resistance of the Spirit of grace in its efficiency is this sin; though I am not yet convinced of it, I dare not, in so weighty a cause, to be so confident and hold as to warrant any from that danger. 2. I am not of the mind of that learned doctor of ours, who thinks that the Spirit is never resisted in its efficiency, but only by disobedience in its precepts; I confess his arguments are pretty catches to show wit, and nonplus some disputers, but, methinks, they are not cogent. 3. And I add, That though this resisting the highest degree of common, gracious operations of the Spirit, be not (as I rather think it is not) the sin here in question, yet such a malicious, obstinate resistance there may be, as may leave a man in a case next to this, or so far forsaken that he is never likely to escape; that though his sins be pardonable, yet it may be a hundred to one that they will never be pardoned, as a most dangerous disease may be called curable where not one of a hundred is ever cured of it; so dangerous may it prove to go so far in striving against the Spirit of grace: many a thousand that did not commit the unpardonable sin, as I suppose, are yet, for their rejecting of grace, and obstinacy therein, forsaken by the Spirit, and given up to blindness and to a prostrate sense, and strong delusions, so that they never repent nor are recovered to salvation. If any think I conclude not peremptorily enough in these weighty and difficult points, I desire that the said weight and difficulty may excuse my cautiousness: so much of the description of this sin.

Object. But that text, Heb. vi. 4—6, seemeth not to agree to your description of this sin; for you make it to be the sin of infidels; there it is made the sin of such as were illuminated, and had been made partakers of the Holy Ghost. You make it to be a blasphemous rejecting of the objective testimony of the Spirit; there it seems to be an excussing of the internal gifts of the Spirit received.

Ans. 1. I have already showed that it is not very clear that it is the same sin that this text speaks of, at least as existing; but, perhaps, either a threatening of the godly to deter them from that sin, or a description of another sin. 2. But I confess I rather incline to think it the same sin, and therefore let that be now supposed: and, 1. I say that, in *sensu composito*, I said the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost was the sin of infidels; but not in *sensu diviso* always. They are infidels when they commit it; but before, some are, and some are not. This sin, Heb. vi. is total apostasy, and surely that is an apostasy to infidelity; and therefore such total apostates are all infidels. 2. It seems to me that this sin, Heb. vi. is the rejecting of the objective testimony of the Spirit of miracles or extraordinary gifts, by which the truth in those times was confirmed. For, 1. They themselves are said to have tasted of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; and it will be

granted that this was not the Spirit of true sanctification, if the thing were ever existent; therefore it is most likely to be the Spirit of extraordinary gifts, commonly called the Holy Ghost in those times, which those had that shall cry one day in vain, "Lord, have we not done many wonderful works, and cast out devils in thy name?" Matt. vii. And if they had themselves this Spirit of wonders, and yet fell away to total infidelity, it seems they did reject even the objective testimony of that Spirit as insufficient. 2. They could not, in those days, but be convinced of the matter of fact, that such works were done, when, in all churches, many of them were so common. 3. May not the crime that is charged on them intimate this, that they crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame? That is, as some learned expositors think, they judged him such a one as the Jews did that crucified him, and, to his open dishonour accused him of that same crime, and so justified their putting him to death; that is, they judged him an impostor; and so to judge of Christ, notwithstanding the testimony of those miracles which they had been convinced of, is the sin which we have been describing. 4. They could not be believers without believing Christ's resurrection, at least, which is one great miracle; therefore they must needs reject the testimony of that.

If you say that these are not said to ascribe these works to Satan, I answer, it seems implied in that, as is showed before, there is scarce another way to total infidelity imaginable with them that are convinced of the works as to matter of fact; but whether the rejecting of that testimony, without ascribing it to Satan, may be that sin or not, I before left undetermined.

Object. All total apostasy is here made the incurable sin; but all total apostasy is not the sin which you have described.

Ans. 1. It is unproved that it is all total apostasy that is mentioned in Heb. vi.; it being expressed only of them that had been partakers of the Holy Ghost, that is, most likely, for the operation of wonders, which all that profess christianity do not partake of. It is said also that they crucify Christ afresh, which it is doubtful whether, in that sense, all total apostates do.

2. Or if it should extend to all total apostates of those times and places, who must needs know that such mighty works were done, and such a Spirit given, yet it followeth not that it must needs extend to all total apostates in after-ages through the world; of whom many became professed christians by education, example of others, for reputation, or they knew not why, having no consideration of these great works, nor any knowledge in themselves or others of such a Spirit. If these shall afterwards totally withdraw their profession, on a false conceit that such a Spirit was never given to attest the christian verity, it is doubtful whether this be the incurable apostasy which this text describeth, which supposeth that the persons themselves had the Holy Ghost and its illumination, and lived among his mighty works.

3. If a man have been, indeed, a believer historically, he must needs believe that miracle of Christ's resurrection, which is essential to the christian faith; and if he withdraw not that belief of the matter of fact, and yet believe not Christ to be the Messiah or Mediator, it is hard to conceive on what other grounds he can do it than as against the Holy Ghost.

4. However, because this text is very dreadful, I will not undertake to prove any total apostate free

from this sin, but leave it to a better expositor, having found out that which is undoubtedly this sin; and the case of such apostates must needs be very dreadful, if it be not this sin that they are guilty of, having fled so far from grace as they have done, so that it is unlikely that ever they should be restored: especially if God had ever permitted true believers to apostatize totally, there being but one regeneration, but one baptism to signify and seal it, I should think there is but one resurrection from spiritual death, and that it were most likely that their sin were this incurable sin, from which they could not be renewed to repentance. And as I have said, I see not but the text may speak of such, as supposing the sin to be possible in itself, and such as we are in danger of, and should fall into, if grace by warnings and threatenings did not prevent it: though yet it be not future as to the event, because by these means it will be prevented.

Object. But why should not a total apostasy in the will, affection, and practice, be the unpardonable sin, though it be not total as to the understanding in point of belief? Is it not an aggravation of sin that it be against knowledge? and is it not likeliest to the sin of the devils, who believe, and yet are total apostates from God?

Ans. 1. If such a sin as a total apostasy of the will, without that of the understanding, may be found in man, I will not excuse it from this charge, though I will not affirm that it is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, but will leave it to further inquiry.

2. It is not, I think, the absolute greatness of the sin that we must here look at, but the inconsistency with the remedy.

3. I do not yet conceive how in this life the will can totally apostatize without the understanding: the case is much different between men on earth and the devils or damned. They may have their belief and knowledge, with a total apostasy in morals, and a full hatred of God and the Redeemer, because that absolute desperation doth accompany that belief, so that they look upon God as their unreconcilable enemy. But men on earth are in another case. To believe in Christ the Saviour here, is to believe in one that would be their Saviour, and offereth salvation to them, and hath not given them any cause to despair. And if you say, that by a causeless or mere penal despair they may be brought to it here, I must needs say, that I never knew, nor heard, nor read of any such, that by total desperation were brought to a total apostasy of heart, and absolute hatred of God, or the Redeemer. But other apostates we know too many.

If any think that these answers that I have given do not free this text, Heb. vi. from a seeming contradiction to Matt. xii. unless we take all total apostasy to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, and so give it another description than I have done, I leave them to consider whether that saying, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven," may not be meant as Grotius expounds it, not as affirming them remissible, but easier to be remitted, or nearer to it: as Luke expresseth that by, "It is easier for heaven and earth," &c. which Matthew expressed by, "Heaven and earth shall pass," &c. I mention not this as my own opinion, nor yet as taking the exposition of the following clause in his way, to be so probable as this; viz. that unpardonableness is but harder pardoned: but it is this clause alone that I speak of.

And though, in the point of irremissibleness, I have told you my own thoughts already, as being loth to strain such express words as those that say, "This sin shall not be forgiven;" yet, if any should

bring such reasons as should force me from that exposition, that which seems next to it in probability is this following : That it is Christ's purpose here to signify the reason why final infidelity is the unpardonable sin. As if he should say, If I had not done the works which no man else could do, and manifested fully the attestation of God by these miracles and works of the Holy Ghost, then you might have been saved by your former belief in the Messiah, without believing determinately that I am he : but now if you believe not that I am he, when I have showed you the attestation of God, you shall die in your sins, unpardoned.

And thus it should make only final unbelief against the Spirit's testimony to be unpardonable, and therefore unpardonable because the testimony is so full. This exposition supposeth that if Christ had not sealed his doctrine with such a Spirit and such works, then men might have been saved on those terms on which salvation was before attainable, that is, among the Jews, by believing in the Messiah to come indeterminately.

Near unto this also is the following exposition, which taketh the word "forgiven" in the text, for the conditional grant of forgiveness as it is given out by God in Christ ; as a grant of pardon under the sovereign's hand is commonly called a pardon, though but conditional, especially when the condition is but acceptance, as in our case ; which usually runs in the terms of an absolute grant. As if Christ should have said, If you sin against the Creator's moral law, you shall have a pardon in my blood, on condition you will believe. If you will not believe upon the sight of my person, and hearing of my doctrine only, I will vouchsafe you the remedy of my miracles, and those works of the Spirit which are the very finger of God discovered to you. But if you will not by this remedy be brought to believe, you shall never have a pardon upon another condition, nor ever have a higher objective remedy to cure your infidelity, that so you may have pardon thereof.

Yet this exposition supposeth that there may be an after success of the same remedy, though no grant of another ; and so a pardon thereupon may be received.

Some go further, and expound it thus ; as if all blasphemy against Christ's manhood, and all rejecting of him, if he had done those extraordinary works, should be pardoned without a particular repentance, by the general repentance for sins of ignorance. But this rejecting and blasphemy of the testimony of the Spirit shall not be pardoned without a particular repentance : and consequently a man might live and die in the former, and yet be saved, but not in the latter. If this extend only to the Jews that had not the discovery of Christ's works before, and that had a general belief in the Messiah, then it is near to the former exposition. But if it extend to the gentiles that have no faith in the Messiah at all, and suppose them to have actually a repentance on which they are forgiven without faith in Christ, yea, forgiven their rejecting of Christ, in case they hear only of his person, sufferings, and doctrine, without his miracles ; then it goeth much further than the first exposition.

Note, that in all these expositions it is agreed that though this blaspheming of the Holy Ghost be not a sin against knowledge and belief, (as others think,) that is, a sin of the will and tongue against the judgment as at present convinced, yet is it ever a sin against the highest means of knowledge and belief. It is not believing when they have the fullest evidence to force belief, though it be not a blaspheming of what they do indeed believe.

To gather the sum of all into a few words, for the memories' sake of the weak. This much is out of doubt with me, that this sin lieth in the rejecting of the objective testimony of the Spirit extraordinarily then attesting Christ's doctrine, as being the highest and last objective remedy of unbelief. The three persons in the blessed Trinity have each one their several ways of recovering man, and for the remission of his sin, and there are several ways of sinning against each of them, as men sin against their dispensations. When we had sinned against the Creator and his perfect law, he gave us his Son to be our Redeemer. There was his proper work for our pardon, together with the acceptance of the price of redemption, and the giving us into the hands of his Son, as his redeemed ones. The Son made satisfaction to justice, and sent forth to the world a conditional pardon under his hand and seal, with his word and Spirit, to persuade them to accept it. This is his work for our pardon, antecedent to our believing. The Spirit inditeth and sealeth this written, delivered pardon, by mighty works, and importuneth the hearts of sinners to accept it. If it be accepted, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost do actually pardon us. If it be not accepted merely as sent by the word of the Son, we sin against the Son by unbelief. If it be not accepted or believed, as sealed and urged by the Spirit, (yea, or if sealed extrinsically only,) then it is the sin against the Spirit, supposing that seal be discerned and considered of, and yet resolutely rejected. So that here are three, the last remedying means rejected at once. When man was fallen, the Father provideth a sacrifice for his sin, and but one sacrifice : the Son tendereth to us a remedying covenant, and but one such covenant : the Spirit of Christ, especially in his extraordinary works, is the convincing, attesting seal, to draw men to believe, and there is but one such Spirit and seal. He that sinned against the law of works, hath all these remedies in their several orders. But if you refuse this one sacrifice, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin : if you refuse this one remedying covenant, there is no other covenant after it to be expected : and if you refuse this sealing and sanctifying Spirit, which would draw you into the covenant, there is no other spirit or seal to be excepted. Thus much is out of doubt : and, therefore, he that finally continueth to refuse this sacrifice, covenant, and seal of the Spirit, shall perish for ever.

But then, whether the text further mean that he that doth once, or at any time, refuse this Spirit, shall be certainly given over to final infidelity or impenitency ; and whether the same means which was once refused, may not afterwards by a greater internal help and light become effectual, this I will not peremptorily determine, but only tell you my present opinion : that because the text doth speak so expressly, it is safest to interpret it so ; that whosoever doth blaspheme the Spirit, as is before described, shall be forsaken and left to final infidelity and impenitency, and so never have the pardon of his sin.

And whether there be any certain degree of the inward moving or illumination of the Spirit, which when it is obstinately resisted, or rejected, doth leave the sinner certainly remediless, I leave to the inquiry of them that know more.

Quest. But it is strange that, in a case of so great moment, God would leave things so dark and doubtful to us.

Ans. So much as was most necessary for our knowledge is most clear. For the rest, it sufficeth to know that such a thing is a sin, and of heinous aggravation, and bringeth the sinner into exceeding

danger; and it seems rather an act of God's great wisdom to leave those men in some doubt, whether their sin be curable or no, who would venture to go to the utmost line, and to approach so near to the incurable sin. It tendeth to the prevention of that sin in others, to let men know the doubtfulness of recovery: and yet it may tend to the recovery of those that are in it, to leave it but doubtful, that they may not be shut up under diabolical despair; especially while the main promise is cleared and secured to us, That whosoever believeth and repenteth shall have pardon. So that it is now the duty of all men to believe and repent, rather than to stand inquiring whether they have committed the unpardonable sin; and by so doing they may be assured that they have not committed it. For he that can repent and believe, did certainly never commit that sin. This, therefore, is the surest and speediest way to quiet them that are afraid that they have committed that sin. So much for the opening of the text.

Sect. IV.

Having, in the explication of the text, endeavoured to make known to you what the sin against the Holy Ghost is, I come next to the main thing intended, which is to endeavour the preventing of this sin; and that in the handling of this following doctrine, which is offered to us in Christ's reply to the Pharisees, verse 25, 26, 28—30.

Doct. The enmity of Christ, his doctrine and works, against Satan and his kingdom, his opposition to him, and conquests over him, are a certain evidence that it was not by his power, but by the power of God, that Christ did perform his wonderful works: and his apostles in like manner performed theirs.

The doctrine hath two parts, which we must distinctly handle.

1. That there is such enmity between Christ and Satan; such a combat of Christ against Satan, and such a conquest of him.

2. That by these it is certainly proved, that Christ was none of Satan's confederates, nor did work by his help or power.

The former must be done by comparing the disposition, interest, and works of Christ and Satan together, that so we may fully behold the contrariety; where we shall first show you what is the disposition, interest, and work of Satan, and then show you how Christ doth contradict and conquer him, and show his enmity to him in all.

Let us, therefore, distinctly consider, 1. Of the nature, 2. The interest, 3. The designs, 4. And the actions and endeavours of Satan; and of the nature, interest, design, and actions of Jesus Christ; and you will see the same contrariety between them, as is betwixt darkness and light, death and life, evil and good.

That there are such unhappy spirits as we call devils, or evil angels, I will not be beholden to the infidel to acknowledge; and to evince it to that sort of them that are now to dispute against, is needless: for if they were not convinced of it, they would not ascribe the works of Christ to such spirits. And for the Sadducees that believe not that there are good or bad angels, they shut their eyes against the light of the sun, and deny the undoubted discoveries of sense itself.

For, 1. We see that this earth on which we live is but a very small part of God's creation, and as a spot to the rest of his visible works; we see that there are sun and moon, and other planets, and a vast space above us, and about us. We see, also, that even this lower and baser world doth so abound with living creatures, that almost no place is desti-

tute of a plenty of inhabitants. The earth is inhabited by man with all sorts of beasts; yea, the worms and moles do live within it. The water is replenished with fishes; the air with birds and flies. And if the baser world be so replenished with inhabitants, is it likely that the more high and noble parts of the creation are wholly empty and uninhabited? or, if the earth have creatures so rational as man, is it likely that the nobler parts are furnished with such as are destitute of reason only? or, is it not to reason itself most strongly probable, that the more comprehensive and noble parts of the creation, which are above us, are furnished with more noble and rational inhabitants?

2. And that some of these are evil, by their own fall and faults, is further evident, as shall be declared anon. And because the proof of the being of devils will be despatched in our proof of their nature and works, to make short of it, we will refer it thither, and so next proceed to that.

1. The nature of these angels or evil spirits is considerable, either in regard to their substance, and physical powers, and endowments; and so they still remain excellent creatures; which is the honour of their Maker, but small comfort to themselves: or else it is considerable in regard of their moral qualities; and so they are most vile, and wicked, and totally depraved, and turned from God. The consequence whereof is their penal misery proportioned to their sin.

Their evil, corrupted natures are the fountains of their wicked interests, designs, and actions; and, therefore, they all follow this vitiated nature; which the abuse of their own free-will, by sinning and rebelling against God, was the first cause of.

This wicked nature disposeth them, 1. To dishonour God, because they hate him, as being totally apostatized from him, and punished by him, and know him to be unreconcilable to them, as they are to him.

2. Their nature inclineth them to seek their own honour, and to draw that which is due to God unto themselves.

3. They are natural haters of virtue and holiness.

4. They are natural haters of the good angels, who are contrary to them, and stand fast in the perfect obedience of God, and do resist and overcome these evil spirits.

5. They hate all mankind, and wish their ruin; but especially the saints, with their deepest hatred.

6. They love that which is evil, and are wholly inclined to it.

II. From these six parts of their wicked inclinations, we may know wherein their wicked interest doth consist: and then we may know who is for them, and who is against them.

1. The chief part of their interest is placed by them in the injury of God; though they cannot hurt him, they will wrong him, and so come as near it as they can. The kingdom of Satan is chiefly in hindering the kingdom of God.

2. Their interest lieth in being believed and worshipped themselves instead of God.

3. And in the suppression of true piety and righteousness, and banishing it out of the world.

4. And in the dishonour of the good angels, and prevalet against them, if they could.

5. In the ruin and destruction of mankind, and the disturbance and vexation of the saints that are against them.

6. And in the abounding and predominancy of all kind of sin, and the defiling and corrupting the works of God. Herein lieth Satan's interest, agreeable to his nature.

III. By this it is easy to know his designs, and what is the work that he would carry on in the world; for it is but this promoting of his interest according to his depraved nature. For these it is that he is so vigilant and diligent; for these ends he walketh night and day, and employeth all his endeavours to accomplish them.

But I suppose by this time I hear the Sadducee calling for my proof of these things, and asking, How we shall know that the devils have such inclinations, interests, and designs? To which I answer, that we that believe God's supernatural revelations in his word, do know it thereby; but for those that do not, they may know it by the evil actions of these spirits, which are so agreeable to these natures, interests, and designs.

IV. We shall next, therefore, speak of these actions of Satan, by which all the former are fully manifest. Three or four of these discoveries I have spoken of already in my second part of the "Saints' Rest," but yet shall add a few words more concerning them on this occasion.

I. By his transactions with witches, it is fully manifested that the devil is such a one as the Scripture doth describe him to be, and hath such designs and endeavours as we have now mentioned.

As for those men that will not believe that there is such a thing, but suppose all the talk about witches to be delusory, and that they are but phantasms that delude the persons themselves, or forced confessions by which they delude others, if they be not so proud as to scorn to hear reason, nor so lazy as to refuse the easy means of better information, nor so mad as to be incapable of understanding the plainest, satisfactory evidence, I would tell them how they may be cured of their error. First, Let them read well, with sobriety and impartiality, but these few small books following: Nicolas Remigius *Dæmonolatreia*; Joh. Bodinus *De Magorum Dæmonomania*; Jac. Sprangerus, an inquisitor of Collen, with his colleague, his *Malleus Malificorum*; Paulus Grellandus, a lawyer that judged them in Italy; Daneus, *Dialog. De Sortiariis*; Ulricus Molitor, his *Disputation to the Emperor Sigismond*, about Witches; Joachimus Camaracensis *De Natura Dæmoniorum*; Turquemeda Hispanus *Hortus*; Pet. Mamoreus *De Sortilegis*; Henr. Coloniensis *De Lamiis*.

Secondly, let them take a journey into Essex and Suffolk, and inquire of the cause why such multitudes of them were lately put to death; or let them confer with the justices of assize, or peruse the records, and see what was proved against them; and then I doubt not but there may be much done to their conviction: and if neither serve turn, let them fall out with some witch, and try whether they have power to do them hurt, so it may be done without discovery and danger.

The writers before mentioned are themselves competent witnesses, having been divers of them questors, or judges, that have themselves heard all the examinations and evidence, and the rest men that had sufficient opportunity to be informed of them.

Sprangerus and Grilandus wrote the histories of such as they had condemned, when they had put multitudes of them to death: so did Remigius, adding to those that himself had examined the histories of others, as they are upon record in the rolls of those courts or judicatories that did condemn them. In the like way had Bodin his information, partly from their own mouths and the witnesses, and partly from the court-rolls and the judges; and the writers are for learning, sobriety, judgment, impartiality, and known credibility and fidelity, beyond exception. If men of such place and reputation in their countries

had wrote so many falsehoods about matters of public fact, done before the country at assizes, or in open courts, and had falsely alleged so many public records, it would easily, speedily, and certainly have disgraced them; and they tell you the year, the month, and oft the day, the place, the persons' names, and tell you where you may yet find the records.

Remigius tells us of eight or nine hundred that were put to death for witchcraft in that small compass, in Lorraine; besides about eight hundred more that escaped. A notable witch in France, called Cenomannus Triscalanus, when he was condemned, promised to discover others if he might be pardoned; and, upon the king's pardon, was brought into public assemblies and conventions, where he knew the faces of those whom he had seen at their hellish sabbatims, and, upon the sight of them, told the inquisitors how they should find them marked: which they found accordingly. But he accused so many rich and poor, that favour and tenderness of the number and quality caused the persecution to surcease. This man confessed before the king (Carol. IX.) and a great company of his nobles, the very same things as the rest of them commonly did confess, about their assemblies, and the manner of their solemnities: Bodin and Remigius mention this. And the same Bodin tells us of thirty of them at once, falling out among themselves, and enviously accusing one another, and all confessing the thing to the death, and reporting the same manner of their common assemblies as the rest do: this was *apud* Cenomannus, in France, but newly then done. The manner of their assemblies we shall speak of anon. Of the many Valerian witches also that made the same confession of the manner of their contracts and assemblies, Daneus and Bodin give us the history; in Savoy the place is.

If now the incredulous will say, that all these people were falsely accused and unjustly burned, besides the sufficient witnesses, and the competency of the judges, their own confession may confute that objection. If it be said that they were forced to it, the contrary is certain of multitudes that confessed at the first accusation: yea, many of them refused to petition for their lives, but begged that they might presently die, professing that they were so cruelly used by the devil for not fulfilling his desires, or for having thoughts of repentance, that they had rather die than live such a life, which they could no longer endure: many of them also have been seen in their assemblies, and taken in the fact. Many of them have, by anointing them, taken their husbands or children along with them, who have accused them on sight, and they have confessed all. Yea, some have been seen at their meetings in the daytime, though that is not common, and in the midst of their feast, who at the naming of God or Jesus Christ have all vanished, and left their plate behind them, which have been brought to the magistrate, and the owners known by it, and been burned upon confession of the fact. And lest you say, that it is only silly, miserable people that are a-weary of their own lives that make such confessions, there have been many noble women, and counts, and barons, put to death in France, that have confessed all themselves, as Bodin and Remigius will tell you, with their names, the time, place, and confessions. Yea, doctors of divinity of the popish profession, that have been executed upon confession, and undeniable proofs. If you say, that all these were but phantasms and delusions, I answer:

I. If that were so, yet must it be a diabolical power that must do so much to delude men's phan-

tasies; and an evil spirit it must needs be, that would by such delusion abuse them unto evil.

2. But could a delusion carry people so many days' journey from home, where others have been seen and found them; even those that did but anoint themselves with their ointments? Could a delusion bring them into the sight of others? Could it enable them to do so much mischief in killing men, cattle and trees, corn and fruits, which they have commonly confessed, and hath been proved by the effects?

We had here at Worcester, the last assize save two or three, a witch condemned, among other things, for bewitching a gardener's child in Evesham, a girl, who voided flint stones and pebbles for many months, (by the uterine or urinary passage,) which were showed in the open court, of the bigness of a man's thumb some of them, of which the reverend pastor of that place, Mr. Hopkins, can give any man that doubteth satisfaction, and that sufficient search and observation was used to remove all suspicion of deceit. A hundred the like examples might be produced to satisfy any reasonable man that these things are not all phantasms.

Some of them have been seen in a storm falling down in the tops of trees, as birds do after their flight, some on the tops of houses; many have confessed that they raised storms, and were carried in clouds many and many times, and describe the manner how it was done. Many of their husbands have accused them, that often missed them out of bed in the night: some of them have beaten them till they forced them to confess all; and the men being possessed with a desire to see whether it were true or not, and how the business was carried, have pardoned their wives on condition they would show them their meetings; who being anointed with their ointment, have been presently carried thither, where they have found so great a number met together, as caused them to admire, and having accused their wives and those they have known, the thing was by them confessed, and they were put to death.

It is true that sometimes their minds are carried or employed without their bodies; a certain proof, saith Bodin, that the separated soul can nevertheless live, and move, and know, though without the body, and so is immortal.

At Bourdeaux, 1571, one of the witches confessing that she was wont to be at the meetings, and what they did there, (just as the rest commonly did,) the master of requests, Monsieur Belot, was desirous to see the truth of her confession by some experiment: she told them that she could do nothing while she was a prisoner; whereupon they let her out, and before them she anointed her naked body with a certain fat, which she had with her, and presently fell down as dead, and without any feeling at all: after five hours, coming to herself and rising up, she told them many things which were newly done about the country, which they found to be true by present inquiry. Bodin, p. 177.

In the year 1549, *apud* Nanetas, seven men undertook, before many people, to tell them, within such an hour, what was done in ten miles' compass: they presently fell down as dead, and so lay for three hours' space; and then rising up, told them what was done through the whole town, and a greater distance: whereupon they were accused of conjuration, or witchcraft, and put to death. *Idem*, p. 178.

So Turretanus, the judge that condemned her, reported of one that lay as dead before the fire, and her master beat and burnt her, and perceiving her utterly senseless left her as dead; but in the morning she awaked, and complained of her sores; and being accused before the judge, confessed she was at

an assembly, and confessed many evil deeds that she had done, and was burnt.

But yet it is more ordinary to have the body itself carried to their meetings, than to have these ecstasies, as many hundred proofs have manifested. And Sprangerus and his colleagues write that they understood by the confession of many that they had condemned, that they could sometimes go abroad only in spirit, and sometimes in the body, as they desired themselves.

But it would be unreasonable and unsavoury to some readers, in a treatise of this nature, to be too particular, or too large, though for my part I conceive these kind of sensible demonstrations to be the likeliest means to convince them that believe not the word of God, and a means not to be overlooked, or made so small use of as ordinarily we do.

And for those that yet will not believe that these things are true, I think they have far more to say for their incredulity, if their own eyes only had seen them; and yet it is likely they would have believed their eyes. One of the best arguments to know when sense is not deceived, is when the object appeareth to all men, or most men of sound senses, the same as to some, but if it be but one or two that see it, the deception is much more possible or probable: if all men's senses are deceived, then are we incapable of any certain knowledge or perception; and still I say, a rod or cudgel is the best argument to confute that error, that such may be beaten till they are sure they feel. If the testimonies of judges, justices, lawyers, and juries, that have examined and heard the witnesses, and are themselves as tender of wrongfully putting people to death, as these infidels are; if the confessions of so many hundred witches at the halter or fire be not sufficient; if the records of so many judicatures be not sufficient; if men of so great piety, honesty, judgment, and impartiality, may not be credited in a case which bringeth no gain to themselves; if the testimonies of so many several nations as France, Lorraine, Germany, Italy, that all have so abounded with witches, and put to death so many, be not sufficient; if the experience of all countries in the world, and all ages, who have found that same sort of wretched persons, be not sufficient; and, lastly, if the fresh experience of so many scores in a narrow compass at once imprisoned and put to death in our country, attested by so many thousand competent witnesses, and the frequent experiences of the judges in their circuits, be none of them sufficient to convince these infidels, I shall leave it either to God's grace or the devil's torments, ere long, to convince them.

Having spoken thus much of the certainty of the thing, that there is such a transaction of the devil with witches, and consequently that there is a devil, and multitudes of them, I shall next inquire how his inclinations, interests, and designs are manifested in this way.

I. And first, It is plain that he is a hater of God, and an enemy to his honour; whereto I will add, as the main point, that I am now to prove, that he is also a hater of the Lord Jesus, and an enemy to his name. Nothing more manifest than these are. For it is his constant custom, or most ordinary, to initiate all his professed disciples, I mean witches, by their renouncing God and their baptism, and religion, and the Lord Jesus. This is the first thing that they must do, when they will be witches indeed. And so many hundred have testified, by their own confessions, the truth of this point, even when they have been at the bar, or stake, and all agree so generally in it, that there is not the least room left for rational doubting.

Doctor Guilhelm. Edelinus, of the Sorbonne, in Paris, was condemned for witchcraft, 1453, (Johan. Charterius hath wrote the history,) on Dec. 24. He confessed that he was oft carried by night into the meetings of the witches, and there renounced God, and adored the devil in the shape of a he-goat.

In the year 1571, a blind man, condemned for witchcraft at Paris, revealed many others; one of them was a lawyer, who confessed, that by an obligation, which he made with the devil, he renounced God; and wrote this obligation with his own blood. This Bodin, Remigius, Sprangerus, and Grillandus tell you is the common confession of multitudes, whom they examined and condemned, and others of their knowledge, and the records of the judicatures ordinarily testify it; and this in several countries, Lorraine, France, Germany, and Italy, they all ordinarily confess the same thing.

In the year 1524, in the castle of Saint Paul, in the duchy of Spoletain, Paulus Grillandus having three in examination, the first confessed that, fifteen years before, she was brought by an old witch into the assembly of the witches, where the devil was among them, at whose persuasion she renounced God, and the christian faith and religion, binding herself by an oath to be faithful, and to obey the devil's commands, putting her hand to a book, which had a writing in it to that end; promising also to be present at the nightly solemnities and feast-days, when she was commanded, and to bring with her as many as she could; and that after that she had killed many men.

Apud Cenomannus, saith Bodin, lately very many were burnt that confessed all these things, that they went to these meetings, and thus behaved themselves on their sabbaths, as they call them: at least, saith he, thirty witches in their falling-out, moved with envy, accused one another; whose confessions did all with one consent testify their being carried to the meeting, their adoration to the devil, their dancings, and their abjuration of religion.

The history of all the Valerian witches in Savoy, in the year 1574, is written by Danaus and Bodin, and their confession was the very same, that they were carried to the meetings, and there abjured God, adored the devil, with much more, of which we shall speak anon. I will forbear giving more examples of this, it being so common.

And a second argument also there is, that the devil is both an enemy to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and also is afraid of his very name; in that it is the constant confession, both of the witches themselves, and of those that have been enticed by them to their meetings, that if they use but the name of God, or Jesus Christ, the whole company immediately vanish; and if they use the name of God in the midway as they are carried thither, they are presently let fall; and therefore those that entice them to their meetings do still charge them not to mention the name of God, or Jesus Christ, unless it be in disdain or reproach. There are many histories of this in the writers before named, which would seem very strange and scarce credible, had we not so sufficient a testimony of the persons' own confessions.

Saith Bodin, there was newly a witch condemned at Lochia, in France, on this occasion; her husband oft missing her out of bed, and finding her excuses false, suspected her of adultery, and threatened to kill her, unless she would tell him whither she went. The woman being afraid of her life confessed all, and told him if he would, he should see himself whither she went: and so giving him an ointment, and pronouncing certain words, they were both car-

ried to the sands at Bourdeaux, many days' journey off: the man seeing himself in the midst of a great company of men and women, and devils in an ugly shape, though it was human, cried out, My God! where are we? And immediately the whole company vanished. The man finding himself naked, in the morning got some help of a countryman that he met, and when he got home went straight to the justice, and accused his wife, who presently confessed all the matter.

At Lyons, a great woman who was an adulteress, and had that night lain with her adulterer, anointed herself in the night by a candle, and vanished; which the man seeing, did so too, and was carried after her, and found himself presently in an assembly of witches in Lorraine; and being afraid, and praying to God, they all vanished. The man finding himself naked and alone, as soon as he got home, accused the woman, who was burnt, having confessed the whole matter.

The like Bodin writes of a nobleman at Melodunum, who was enticed to see one of their meetings for the strangeness.

The like story hath Doctor Grillandus, that near Rome, in the year 1526, a countryman espying his wife anoint herself, and then vanish, did so cudgel her at her return, that he made her confess where she had been, and promised the next time to show him all; who, after the anointing, was carried with her: but though she charged him not to name God unless in mock or blasphemy, yet before the end of the feast, he disobeyed that direction, and all vanished: the man found himself naked and alone, and when it was day, he was informed that he was in the county of Beneventa, and being fain to beg clothes and to beg his bread, in eight days' space he got home, a hundred miles, and accused his wife, and she accused others, who were all burnt.

The same author testifyeth, that in the year 1535, in the Duchy of Spoletain, a girl of thirteen years of age, was enticed by an old witch into an assembly of them; who in a wonder cried out, Blessed God, what is all this? and they all vanished: and the witch was burnt upon her discovery of it to the people that found her the next morning.

I have mentioned these stories, to show how the devil hates and fears the name of God. In Remigius you may see later examples of the like concerning the name of Jesus Christ, at which the company have all vanished: sometimes calmly, oftentimes with a violent whirlwind, or tempest. But I will forbear the reciting the particulars, because you may there see them.

2. The same transactions of Satan with witches doth certainly prove the second branch of his inclination, interest, and design to advance himself, and to be adored. All the fore-mentioned writers and many others do bring us sufficient testimony of many hundreds of these unhappy wretches, confessing that, at their first engagement, they promise to worship and obey the devil: and that he hath his constant assemblies where they all meet, that are thus devoted to him: that they are carried thither through the air, some by one means, and some by another, but all by his power. These meetings they celebrate most commonly in the night, on a certain night in the week, where sometimes many hundreds (where these wretches abound) do meet at once. There usually they meet with as many devils as there are witches; but one is as the chief and great master of the assembly. He appeareth to them most commonly in one of these two shapes; either like a big, ill-favoured black man, or like a he-goat. The first thing that the assembly must do, is to adore their

great master, and the ceremony commonly is by kissing his posteriors when he is in the shape of a goat; then they must all dance round, back to back; next that, the devils and their servile drudges must couple as fornicators used to do: and after that they have a loathsome feast, ever without salt; and so they must give an account what mischief they have done since the last meeting, and then receive more powders and ointments to do more, and then they are carried home again: this is the ordinary work and manner of their assemblies: besides which they must do him a more frequent homage in their houses. These things be not private dreams, or uncertain stories of two or three men in a corner, but the common confession of many hundreds, if not thousands of them in judgment and at the stake, through France, Lorraine, Savoy, Germany, and Italy, delivered to us in writing by the judges themselves, impartial, honest, and very learned men. So that it is apparent by all this, that the devil's design is to rob God of his honour, and to be adored himself. Were it not for troubling the reader, I would recite many particular histories out of the foresaid authors to confirm it: but we have too much proof of it nearer home. As Christ must have his days of holy assemblies, so will the devil have his nights of wicked assemblies; as God must be adored, so will Satan be; as God will there teach his people by the ministry of his officers and church guides, so will Satan oft make speeches to them to persuade them to do evil, as they also commonly confess: as Christ will have us meet to be exercised in holiness, and learn to live holly, and mortify fleshly lusts; so the devil will have meetings for a strange, hellish filthiness and copulation: as Christ hath his holy sacramental feasts, in the communion of the saints, so hath the devil his abominable feasts for his impious confederates. As Christ will be worshipped also in our families in private, so would Satan; as Christ would have us be much in prayer to God, so the devil would have them much in seeking somewhat of him: inasmuch that he tormenteth and giveth them no rest, if they be not asking somewhat of him, of what nature we shall see next. Yea, some of them at their first entrance, saith Bodin, think not enough to renounce God and the faith of Christ, unless also they be baptized to the devil, and take to them a new name. And many of them have his marks upon their flesh, as hath been proved past doubt.

3. For brevity's sake, I will speak to the other parts of Satan's interest and designs together; and by these same dealings of his with witches, it is most certain that he is, 1. An enemy to all virtue and religion; and 2. An enemy to mankind, and one that seeketh and delighteth in their destruction; and 3. A lover and promoter of all wickedness, as I have told you it is common with them in their assemblies, and also at other times, to exercise unclean copulation with their disciples, some way the devil findeth to find exercise for their filthy lusts. I have been credibly informed of the like in England, by godly, judicious men, counsellors, justices, and others, that they have heard witches confess such copulation with the devil; and the name of God, as I have told you, he will not endure, unless it be in mockery or blasphemy: not that he is so afraid of bare names, or crosses, or relics, or consecrated creatures, or words, as the papists imagine, for certain history assures us that he easily ventureth on all these.

Bodin giveth us divers confessions of witches at judgment or death, that they held their meetings oftentimes at a notable cross which stood at the meeting of several highways, accounted by the papists a terror to the devil.

Remigius telleth us of an abbess, named Magdal. Crucia, 1543, who perceiving herself, after long reputation for a holy woman, suspected for witchcraft, to prevent further danger, fled to the pope and accused herself as a penitent, before any other did accuse her; and she confessed that, since twelve years of age, the devil had used to lie with her for thirty years, and that when she was at mass he hath oft carried the host to her hand from the altar, the people seeing it go through the air to her, but seeing none bear it; by which means she got the reputation of a saint. It was Pope Paul the Third that pardoned her. "This story," saith Bodin, (p. 206,) "was made known through the whole christian world;" where he tells of divers nuns of the same sort.

He telleth us, also, of divers that have confessed, That when the devil hath given them power to do any cure, they had direction to pretend that the image of such a saint must do it, and so to send people to that image, and there to pray to it, and present some certain things before it, and walk thrice about the chapel or temple, and so come home, and the cure was done. The reason that the witches gave of this was, That by it they might exercise their witchcraft without discovery or suspicion; but it is like the devil had further ends to draw people to such idolatry, at least it is clear that he doth not hate nor fear such idols.

Many authors, besides Bodin and Remigius, give us the relation of all the nuns in a nunnery in Germany, at Kentrope, at once possessed with devils, or mad, and seemed so to others; and one witch in the house confessed the fact, that she had bewitched them.

And for the delight that the devil hath in men's destruction, it is apparent by these three discoveries here:

1. In that it is the ruin of these poor creatures' souls that he seeks; and when he hath brought them once to the stake, he hath his desire of them in this life; and if they do but offer to forsake him, or begin to repent, he beats them, and vexeth them, and giveth them no rest till they have cast away those thoughts. And yet it is very observable what wages the devil giveth his servants for their work, and what it is that they sell their salvation for: he doth but delude them, and not keep promise with them about the earthly pleasures that they expect of him. Scarce any of them grow rich or great in the world by his service; though he feed them, he doth not refresh or satisfy them; though he carry them, yet most of them say it exceedingly wearieth them. All the pleasure that he seems to offer them proves but grief; and if they complain, he beateeth and abuseth them; so that their life is a very misery to the flesh, as their death, without true repentance, is the beginning of everlasting misery.

2. His malice also is further evident, in that he engageth all these his drudges, to draw as many with them to their assemblies, and into his service, as they can; even as Christ would have us draw as many as we can to his worship, and to obedience for their own salvation; insomuch that it is noted that the children of witches are so ordinarily of the same profession, that they are more to be suspected than any other sort. Saith Bodin, (p. 154,) I may not conceal this, that one witch is oft enough to make five hundred more; for there is not so ready a way again for those that are addicted to the devil to get his favour and to keep peace with him, as to draw many to his subjection; so that ordinarily the wife draws the husband, and the mother the daughter; and whole families sometimes do thus persist for divers ages, as hath been proved by infinite judg-

ments; that is, trials upon testimony and confession: so far he; and both he and many more give us abundance of examples.

3. Moreover, the employment which the devil sets them about doth show, beyond all doubt, that he delighteth in mischief, and is an enemy to mankind. It is a desire of revenge for some supposed wrong, that is oft the first occasion of his appearing to them. In their meetings and at other times he gives many of them a powder, which some of them say is the ashes of some child that they have murdered and burnt, and that they must cast in the way where those are to go whom they would hurt. To some he giveth other means, and to some a power to do it by words. There is few of them, if any, but are employed to do mischief, either in tormenting men and children, or killing them, or killing cattle, or corn, or fruits, or trees, or sinking ships at sea, or destroying men's houses or labours, or one such thing or other: this ours in England have at large confessed; thousands in the countries before named, beyond sea, have confessed this at their death.

A French baron, Baziorum Baro, that was put to death for witchcraft, did not only confess that he had killed eight children, and was purposed to have killed the ninth, and to have sacrificed him to the devil, even his own child, that he might gratify Satan; but also confessed that he did in his own closet, upon his knees, pray to the devil, who appeared to him in the likeness of a man, and did sacrifice to him; for the devil promised him admirable matters, and to make him a great man; but when he saw that he was a prisoner, and under such suffering, he confessed all, and was put to death: and it is yet undetermined what shall be done with his estates. Saith Bodin, p. 180.

Multitudes of them have confessed that they have killed those that have offended them, and killed cattle, corn, &c.; yea, many of them have eaten the flesh of those they have killed, and to that end, some transformed themselves into the likeness of wolves, that they might do it the more easily and securely.

In the year 1573, the parliament of Dolens did, on the 18th day of January, pass sentence of death on Giles Garner, of Lyons, whose sentence was printed and published at Orleans, Paris, and Seines. He was convicted on these articles: That on Michael's day he had, in a place there named, taken a girl of about ten or twelve years of age, and killed her, with hands like the feet of a wolf; and had devoured the flesh off her arms and thighs, and brought some of it to his wife: also, that a month after, in the same shape, he took another girl, and had killed her that he might devour her, as he himself did confess, if three men had not hindered him: also, that fifteen days after, in a place named, he had killed a boy of ten years old, and had eaten the flesh off his arms, thighs, and belly: and, lastly, that he killed another boy, at a village named, and that in the shape of a man, and not a wolf, with a purpose to have eaten him, if he had not been hindered, as he himself of his own accord, without any forcing, did confess; for which cause, he was condemned to be burnt alive. Saith Bodin; p. 185.

The like story is annexed of one Michael Verdun, and Peter Burgot, condemned by Jo. Boinus, 1521, at Vesonio, in December: mentioned by Wierus, also.

And, whatever the reason be, it is observed that they are most cruel to children, and the devil doth put them on more ordinarily to kill them than any others; inasmuch, that there have been confessions from themselves of many hundred children that they have killed. And herein the devil also is contrary

to Christ, who is tender of such little ones, took them up in his arms and blessed them, and said, "Of such is the kingdom of God," being offended with his disciples, that kept them from him.

And that this work of destroying and mischief is the very service that Satan employeth them in, is manifest in that he gives them no rest, unless they be doing hurt, and is still urging them to it, and taketh an account of them, how they perform it. Many of those lately put to death in Suffolk (whereof one was an old reading parson) confessed this, that their imps would give them no rest unless they were doing some hurt: when they have seen a ship at sea, they have urged them to send them to sink it, which was presently done.

At Poitiers, in the year 1564, three men and one woman were burned, (being condemned by Salvertus, the president,) who were convicted of the death of abundance of men and cattle, by means of a certain powder which the devil gave them, and they put under the doors or thresholds. These confessed that they were wont to meet in a very great company, at a certain cross, in a crossway, where the devil gave them their powder, to kill man or beast; and in the end of the meeting, would thunder out these words, with a terrible voice, *Avenge yourselves, or you shall die.*

Some of them have confessed, that at their meetings, every one must give an account how they used their powder, or what hurt they have done since the last meeting: where one tells of such a man or child killed, another of such a beast, another of such fruits; and those that give account of no hurt done, are beaten, some upon the soles of the feet, some elsewhere, and the rest laugh at them.

Some of them confess that if they do not the hurt that they are set on, they must redeem their peace with doing it on some others, and oftentimes on their own. Inasmuch, that many have confessed they have killed their own children, because they could have no rest else, when they had once refused to do it to others. Yea, oftentimes they have a desire to hurt some that the devil hath no power over, and though they use all their witchcrafts, they cannot hurt them, because God preserveth them: yet then will Satan vex them, if they hurt not another in their steads. Inasmuch that many of them in prison do beg that they may die, because they live such a miserable life, being beaten and tormented by Satan for not pleasing him, when yet he keeps not promise with them; nor, saith Bodin, is it found in all the trials and judgments that ever one of them was one penny the richer for him: and Remigius saith, of all that he condemned, or heard of, though many seemed to receive money from him, there was but one that could say, that it proved and continued money indeed.

Saith Bodin, (p. 150,) I know a man (who shall be nameless, because he is yet living) that acquainted me, that he was very much vexed with a spirit that followed him, and beat him, and pulled him, and kept him waking, and would not give over though he entreated him, but still called on him, *Command me somewhat to do.* And in hope to have been eased, he had taken a journey to Paris. When I perceived that he durst not open all to me, I asked him what profit he had got by the service of that master? He answered that he was put in hopes to get riches and honours, and to know secret things; but the spirit had still deceived him, and told him three lies for one truth; and that he was never the richer for him of a farthing, nor did he obtain the things which he desired, and for which he sought to him; and whereas he hoped to have attained many hidden

sciences, about the spirits, of planets, and the virtues of stones, and the like, he had learned nothing of him at all, but he was still calling on him to be avenged on his enemies, to cheat and deceive, and to do mischief. I told him, it was not hard to be freed from such a master, if, whenever he came, he would call on God for help, and with a pure mind and sincere heart would addict himself to the service of God. From that time I never saw the man, and whether he repented or no, I know not. He called the spirit his little master. So far Bodin.

I will stop the recital of more such examples, lest I seem tedious to the reader. By thus much it is most clear and past doubt, that the devil's transactions with witches doth certify us that he is an enemy to God, to goodness, to all mankind, and a lying, unclean, and wicked spirit, seeking to be adored, and delighting in all mischief and wicked works.

If yet any seem to doubt of these matters, as if they were but phantasms and delusions, I shall only add one testimony and one history more that such may be understood, if they will not understand. The testimony is Augustin's, in the fifteenth book, *De Civitate Dei*, who saith, that the devil's copulation with such persons is so frequent, and so fully attested by so many that had experience of it, and that have heard it from their mouths, that it seems mere impudence to deny it.

The history that I shall mention is of one Guilielmus Linensis, a doctor of divinity, of the popish profession, who was put to death for witchcraft, and confessed that he had made a covenant with the devil, which was found written in his pocket. He renounced all religion, and oft adored the devil, sometimes being like a man, sometimes like a goat: and the service he was bound to do for the devil was, to preach against putting witches to death, and to persuade as many as he could that they were but silly, deluded, melancholy people, and not witches indeed, and that their confessions were not sufficient to put them to death; whereupon his preaching so far succeeded as to take off the people and inquisitors, and to slack the persecution of them, by which means the witches were abundantly multiplied in those parts. He penitently confessed this, and was condemned, December 12, 1453. Pet. Mamorius Lib. de Lamiis hath written the history. And Cardinal Benno, Platina, and others of their own writers, do testify that there were many of the popes that dealt with the devil by covenants or witchcraft, for worldly greatness or carnal delights, and were rewarded by him in the end as they deserved.

If any reader should be so weak as to be offended, because I insert so much of these matters in a theological discourse of so high a nature, I desire them to consider,

1. That it is matter suitable to the subject that I am treating of.

2. It is that way of demonstration which is become necessary to that sort of infidels, that I have now to deal with, who will not believe the testimony of the Scriptures.

3. It is such a sensible discovery as the best have use for, to the resisting of some temptations, and may afford them no small advantage for the confirmation of their faith, of which see Zanchy, in his chapter of the Uses of the Doctrine of malis Angelis.

4. And it is a providence of God that such things are permitted; and such a providence as we ought not to wink at, or neglect, but must be accountable what good use we make of it.

5. I doubt not considering such matters as these doth make most of us too insensible and regardless

of the full nature of our spiritual and corporal danger, and makes us the more dull and formal in that necessary daily prayer, Deliver us from the evil one; and consequently the more liable to his malice and power; and that it makes us the more unthankful for what Christ hath done for our deliverance from the thralldom and slavery of Satan, and for God's daily restraining him, and saving us from his rage. I think, as the Israelites' deliverance out of Egypt from Pharaoh's bondage, which was a type of this deliverance of ours, was so great a mercy that it is prefixed before the Ten Commandments, that they might know that God ruled and commanded them therein as a redeemed people; and it was the name by which God would be known, he that delivered them out of Egyptian bondage, and they were still to remember it: so our deliverance from the slavery of the devil, which he would exercise over both our souls and bodies, is that great mercy which is procured to us by the Redeemer, which, as it is remembered in our baptism, when we renounce the devil, so it is to be daily remembered and valued, and thankfully enjoyed by us.

So much for the first way of Satan's discovery of his inclinations, designs, and interest, viz. his transactions with witches.

Sect. V.

The second sort of his actions is by apparent, extraordinary violence exercised on men's bodies, whether by possessions, obsessions, or other violence, by which he tormenteth and abuseth them, and manifesteth himself a hater of mankind, and one that delighteth in doing hurt. Such things we have seen with our eyes; such things all ages and countries have testified; such things the most learned and rational physicians profess they have seen, who are as apt as others to ascribe extraordinary things to natural causes. I have already in the "Saints' Rest," part ii. c. vii. sec. 3, cited many. Bodin saith, p. 147, that there was then living, when he wrote, a woman, called Domina Rossa, (he names the place in France,) who, from the eighth year of her age, was thus abused by the devil. She would be suddenly bound to a tree, or to a bed's foot, or to a manger in a stable, or one hand bound to the other with a cord, a twig, or hemp, or the hair of a horse-tail, and that so speedily, that no one could discern the doing of it. Doctor Picardus, and other divines, saw her, when she was brought to Paris, in the year 1552, and spent all their skill in vain for her delivery. Hollerius, the physician, at first laughed at them, and said she was melancholy, but afterwards, when in a great company of people he saw with his own eyes, the girl standing between two or three women, and, crying out, had her hands so suddenly bound together, that they could not untie the bond, but were fain to cut it, he confessed it was an evil spirit.

Augustin De Civitate Dei, lib. xxii. cap. 8, and in divers other places, doth confidently affirm that he hath seen divers possessed or tormented by Satan, and how cured; so do many others, if not most of the fathers, Greeks and Latin, give us full testimonies of the like, though the papists, the vile abusers of history, have done their best to overwhelm and bury the credit of all, in their heaps of lies; and not content with Metaphrastes, and their lying legends, their Staphilus, Cochlaeus, Bolserus, Lindanus, Thyraeus, and others, have vented their foolish, malicious fictions of Luther, Zuvinglius, Carolostadius, Bucer, Calvin, and who not that was contrary to them.

Sect. VI.

The third way by which Satan's designs are mani-

fested to be mischievous is, by the vexation of men by apparitions, noises, voices, and other such means, by which he hath suddenly affrighted some to death, some out of their wits, some into grievous diseases, and some he long continueth thus to vex; and many he hath affrighted to the use of unlawful means for their deliverance. Of all these sorts, or most, I could mention examples not far from this place, were it fit or necessary. And I know divers persons of good repute for judgment, and godliness, and fidelity, yet living, some in places of honour in the commonwealth, and some of reverend esteem and credit, that will give full testimony to the truth of these apparitions. And we have known houses so haunted and disquieted by them, that the inhabitants have been either driven out, or much troubled by them. The whole countries also have flocked to some places to hear them, where there were at set times constantly, either whistlings that would answer them in tunes, or voices that would speak to them. And we have sufficient proof of such as would familiarly talk, discourse, and dispute with them.

The poor Indians are so familiar with them, that by apparitions and the power of witches to do some cures, they are enticed to the worshipping of devils. So that our English preachers at New England do find it a hard matter to convert these deluded wretches from this evil; and to bring them to forsake their witches, which they call Powwaws: for then, say they, who shall help us when we are sick; and whither shall we go for healing? For though the devil delights to torment men's very bodies, and commonly such servants of his are even in outward respects the most miserable people on earth; yet some kind of cures he will do on their flesh, which yet doth usually relieve them but for a while, that thereby he may draw them to worship him, and seek to him, and depend upon him, to the ruin of their souls.

Partly to this, and partly to the foregoing section, belongs the misery of those called Ventriloqui, that have a devil speaking within them; for, doubtless, such there have been. Lodovic. Cælius Rhodiginus in his *Lect. Antiq.* (lib. 8, cap. 10) hath this passage:

Lest any should take this as a fabulous matter to be laughed at, I do hereby testify, that at this very time, even when I am publishing these things, there is in my country a woman of low quality, named Jacoba, out of whose belly I myself have heard the voice of an unclean spirit, small indeed, but articulate, and wholly intelligible; and innumerable people more have heard it as well as I, not only of Rhodigium, but almost out of all Italy. For the minds of great men being greedy to know things to come, they oft sent for her, and stripping her of all her clothes, lest there should be any deceit, did see and hear her. The devil's name was Cincinnatulus. To this name, when he was called, he would readily answer. If he were asked any question about things past or present, though they were the most hidden secrets, he would oft give wonderful answers; but if he were asked about things to come, he would always lie; and sometimes discover his ignorance, by using a grumbling, unintelligible voice. So far Cælius Rhodiginus.

But having spoken enough of this in the forementioned writing already, I shall forbear the adding here of any more.

Sect. VII.

The fourth way by which Satan hath discovered his enmity to God and men's souls, and his desire to be adored, is, his universal endeavours, and too great success, to bring all the world to the sin of idolatry;

a sin that one would think reason itself should have so disgraced and banished, that it should have found entertainment with none but very sots, that had not the use of their reason. Yet, how hath it prevailed in all ages, in all countries on earth, and among all ranks and sorts of men, and doth so in the far greatest part of the world to this day; how commonly did they adore the creatures; how many gods did they worship, and how base; what flocking was there to their oracles for advice; how confident were they, not only that those images did represent their gods, but that they came down into them, and dwelled in them, as our souls do in our bodies; what beast, or bird, or plant almost, that was not a god to one nation or other! And though I will not enter on the dispute, whether all their oracles were the mere delusions of men, or whether they were the real abuses of the devil himself; yet as it is scarce likely that so many ages and nations, and men of all sorts, philosophers and princes and all, should be so generally persuaded that such a thing there was if there had been no such thing, but without something real to uphold it, the reputation of oracles would have been destroyed in a much shorter time; so, if it were indeed nothing but a phantasm or delusion, it was certainly such a delusion as must needs have the devil's help to manage it and drive it on. It was devils that all these nations did adore and sacrifice to; and, by the work, we may see who was the master and contriver of it. He that seeth the great Turk obeyed through all his empire by so many nations, may well conclude that there is some power of his own employed for the procuring of this obedience, and keeping all these nations in subjection to him; and he that seeth so much of the world addicted to idolatry and worshipping of devils, may well know that there is some contrivance of the devil's that hath a hand in it, and that it is himself that procureth his own worship. From the time of Adam to this day, the far greatest part of the world have been enslaved to him. What were all the world but idolaters, except Israel, and a few proselytes, from Abraham, or Jacob, from whom they were so named, till Christ? and how hardly were the Israelites themselves kept from this sin! Though they were plagued for it both grievously and frequently, though they oft saw God witnessing against it by miracles, yet were they returning to it again and again; so that the prophets, one after another, were sent to reclaim them, and yet they relapsed, till, after many breakings, at last it broke them off, and broke them all to pieces, and there was no remedy. The learned Athenians were drowned in idolatry; the wise and valiant Romans were befooled and enslaved by it; and after all the light of the gospel, at this day, near two-third parts of the world are thought to be idolaters (not reckoning the Mahometans among them, but only such as are properly heathens or pagans). He that cannot see the inclination, interest, and design of the devil in all these effects of it, and in this planting, building, and maintaining of his own kingdom, is certainly very blind.

They that would know what nations, and how much of the world, are yet heathenish idolaters, may, to spare the reading of many, see it in short in Brierwood's *Inquiries*, cap. xii. p. 86, &c. and in Alstedius's *Encyclopædia*, lib. xviii. *Geograph.* part III. cap. xii.

Nay, among some of the wilder Indians, and other Americans, it is confidently affirmed by many navigators, that the devil useth to appear to them in visible shapes, and so to be worshipped by them commonly, as here he is by witches. And the Jesuits, and others, that have dwelt among them,

have given us the more full and particular assurance of it. To omit what is said of the Brazilians, and many of the most barbarous sort, I shall only add somewhat of the Japonians, a people more ingenious. In the Jesuits' "Epistles from the Indies," collected and published by Pet. Maffæus, lib. i. Gaspar Vilela writes to this purpose. Sometimes the witches, by the devil's help, do work some cures: one was missing many days, and by their help he suddenly appeared again. Another being dead, and carried to burial, when the bier was opened, there was no corpse to be found. By these and the like arts doth the devil deceive the miserable Japonians; who, to the rest of their wickedness, which is great, do add this cruelty, that they murder their own infant children. They are forbidden to think of the end of their lives, lest by the fears of death they should be deterred from their wickedness; and therefore they wish a sudden death, and think him blessed that so dieth. And some of them do worship the devil, and most familiarly converse with him, whom they call Jamabuxas: these, to get a reputation of holiness, do grievously punish themselves; they stand, they watch, and use very little meat for two or three months, till the devil tell them he is satisfied; and taking some of their mad companions with them, they get into a ship which they purposely sink, and so drown themselves. Besides, the devil is very busy to have the common people worship him in the shape of brute beasts. And as they are worshipping oxen he possesseth one of the men: and when they ask him his name, he tells them that he is the king of oxen. When they desire him to depart, he tells them he will not go out of the man, unless they will build him a temple. If they promise it, he departeth; if they perform not their promise, he returneth again, and tortureth the poor, oppressed man with divers torments, till they build him a temple, in which they worship the images of divers sorts of wild beasts, as deities; and some of them make it death for any one to kill an ox. Sometimes, also, with his enchantments he makes the hunters sick if they kill a wild beast; and, therefore, for fear, they humbly worship such beasts as the devil. All which he doth to this end, that mortals forsaking the true worship of God, might change the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and serpents. The superstition of the Japonians is manifold. Some of them worship I know not what dead man, called Amida, others one whom they call Xaca. Lastly, the sun and moon also are worshipped by them as gods, and so is the devil himself, to whom they build a temple; and in his temple they paint him much more ugly and deformed than we do. They have divers convents also of both sexes, distinguished by the white, red, or black colours of their garments, being of most filthy life and manners. So far Vilela.

The like you may find in the Epistle of Ludovicus Froius, lib. iv. p. 191, 192, who addeth, That there is a devout sect of them that make their dwellings in the tops of the highest hills, and will pass over any rivers by the mere help of the devil; who, that he may insnare the wretches more effectually in error, doth command them to go up to the top of a certain very high mountain, where they must wait for his coming till the appointed time. And then, about noon or evening, the devil offereth himself to them, whom they worship under the name of Amida, and he passeth through the midst of their assembly; after they have once thus seen him, their superstition is so deeply fixed in the very breasts and marrow of them, that it can never after by any reasons

be plucked out. So far Lud. Froius, where he addeth much more of the devil's appearing to them, and their worshipping him, which I omit.

See much more of them, and their wickedness, in Maffæus *Histor. Indic. lib. xii. p. 565—567*. It were easy to give you like reports of many more of those unhappy nations, but for tediousness. See, to the same purpose, Olaus Magnus *de gentibus Septentrionalibus*.

Yea, the Sinæ themselves, that so much excel the rest, are yet idolaters, and worshippers of devils.

Pet. Maffæus *Histor. Indic. lib. vi. p. 271, 272*, saith thus of them: Many of them adore dumb images and informed stones; for such are commonly the gods of the gentiles. Moreover, some make gods of the inventors of any arts, or of others that publicly or privately deserved well of them, and some of their parents, or dear friends, and to them do they erect statues, and build temples, and make vows, and offer incense; and not only to the dead, but, which is more detestable, to them while they are alive: others do, with all devotion, worship the sun, and moon, and stars, and specially heaven itself, whence all good comes on the earth. Some also worship infernal monsters, girded about with snakes, and vomiting out fire, as we picture devils in Europe, and that not so much to obtain any good from them, as to escape hurt by them; because, meeting oftentimes with such sights, they are the more afraid of them. So far Maffæus, with more to the like purpose. And about the Brazilian witches, lib. xv. p. 686, 687.

SECT. VIII.

The fifth way by which Satan discovereth his malicious inclinations and designs, and especially his enmity to the gospel of Christ and the salvation of the world, is by his incessant endeavours to raise heresies, and the power by which he animateth and maintaineth them. As when Moses first set upon his office to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt, Satan had his magicians to imitate and resist him; so when Christ first sendeth forth his disciples to seek and save that which was lost, Satan sendeth forth his ministers, partly by imitation, partly by opposition, and partly by divisions to hinder, and, if it might have been, to mar the work. The strange spirit that animated these men, the magical arts that they used, the vain fancies and abominable doctrines which they owned, the wicked lives they led, the unhappy ends they came to, and the palpable interpositions of the devil for their seducement and confirmation, did plainly show from what fountain they all sprung, by what father they were begotten.

Because it is so common a thing for angry and factious men to call one another heretics, I will here tell you what kind of men I mean, before I proceed further.

By a heretic, I mean one that, pretending to the name of a christian, doth yet cut off himself from the catholic church by some error, subverting the essentials or fundamentals of the christian faith, and usually by actual separation from true christians.

Where you may see that there are three sorts of heretics. The first are those that hold such errors as directly subvert the foundation, or so far subvert it that he cannot possibly hold the foundation itself while he holdeth that error, and yet doth not actually separate from the society and external communion of the church. This man is a heretic in heart and tongue, and such a one as cannot be saved; but yet not a heretic of the highest strain, nor of the commonest sort.

The second sort are those that, holding such

damning doctrines, do withdraw also from the external communion of the catholic church, or true, orthodox christians, and do set up separated churches of their own, pretending usually to more soundness in doctrine or worship than the true assemblies have among them. These are the common heretics of all ages of the church, who are composed of two parts, damning doctrine, and schism, or separation from the catholic church; the first as the soul, the second as the body. By the first, they separate from the church as invisible; by the second, from the church as visible: or, to speak more properly, by the first they separate from the true, internal, spiritual communion of the church; by the second, they separate from the external communion of it.

The third sort of heretics are those that separate only from the external communion of the catholic church; of which there are also three distinct sorts.

1. Those that separate only corporally upon some perverse conceit, that they should be defiled if they join in any of their assemblies, or the like reason, or on some error about communion not fundamental thereto; I will not determine whether the name heretics or schismatics is more proper for them.

2. Those that corporally separate upon the denial of the fundamentals of external communion, though they deny not the fundamentals of internal communion, or of faith; for such a distinction of fundamentals must be observed; as those that deny the office of the ministry, or a church government, or any essential part of that government, and upon that account separate from all the catholic communion: some call these heretics, and some schismatics: while we understand the matter, there need not be so much strife about the name. I incline to think that some of this sort may be saved, though salvation among them be rare and difficult.

The third sort is those that, besides the corporal separation, and the denying of fundamentals of communion, (external,) do also hold some dangerous error in other doctrines, which, though it subvert not the foundation or christian faith, doth yet sorely wound it: the salvation of these, also, I suppose possible, though difficult, if they so continue.

Though some call this latter sort all schismatics, yet, strictly, I suppose a mere schismatic is one that doth divide particular churches, yet holding communion with the universal church, and that both internal and external; for he may close with some particular churches, though he divide others. And these are of three sorts:

1. Those that separate from a true, particular church, without just cause, either through disobedience or the like sinful ground.

2. Those that separate not from the church, but yet stir up divisions and make parties in it.

3. Those that hold the principles of such schismatical courses in their minds, though they yet practise them not: these are but mentally schismatical, and not fully schismatics.

Having showed you whom I mean, I proceed to show how the devil hath showed his designs, and his opposition to Christ, by raising and encouraging such in all ages of the church.

The first heretics that we read of were the false apostles that troubled the church so about the Jewish law, teaching that a man could not be saved unless he were circumcised, and kept it; against whom the synod, Acts xv. was congregated, and against whom Paul oft contended, as the Epistle to the Galatians and Romans especially manifest. These so far prevailed as to draw the Galatians, as it were, to hearken to a new gospel; to disobey the truth, so that Paul was afraid he had bestowed on them la-

bour in vain; yea, they that would before have plucked out their eyes for him, did now take him for their enemy, because he told them the truth.

Next rose up Simon Magus, a Samaritan, who, by his strange magical works, was admired by the people, and called the great power of God, to whom they all gave heed at Samaria, from the least to the greatest, because of a long time he had bewitched them by his sorceries, giving out that he was some great man; but seeing a higher power manifest itself in the miracles of the disciples, and in the giving of the Holy Ghost, he was convinced into a belief that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and baptized into his name; yet never closing with him in sincerity, as his Saviour, he continued his former nature and designs, desiring to promote his own greatness, and not Christ's interest and honour, (as all his servants did,) by his new profession; and, therefore, would have bought of the apostles, with money, the power of giving the Holy Ghost, that he might have this added to the rest of his wonders, to make great his name, and to bring him yet into higher admiration of the people. Whereupon he incurred that heavy censure of Peter, Acts viii. 26, which though, upon a seeming penitence, which he was affrighted into, was so far mitigated, as that a possibility of pardon was opened to him, yet was he forsaken by that Spirit and grace which he so abused, and given up to himself, and so became a leader of a deluded society, and an opposer of the apostles. To Rome he would go on Satan's work, as they did on Christ's; and there, by his witchcraft, he got into so much admiration in the days of Claudius, that he was taken for a god, and had a statue set up to him with this inscription: "To Simon, the holy god;" or as others, "To Simon, the magician, a god." See Justin Martyr's Apolog. 2, of this. In his contending with the two apostles, Peter and Paul, for the glory of his magical works, he would needs fly in the sight of the people, and at the prayers of the two apostles, tumbled down, and either presently or shortly after ended his wretched life. This is attested by not one or two, but most of the writers of the first ages, that meddle with matters of church history. See Epiphanius of it, Lib. Hæres. 21. Cyril. Hierosol. Cateches. 6. When he professed (saith he) that he would go up to heaven, and was carried in the air in the devil's chariot, the servants of God, on bended knees, in concord, manifested that which Christ had said, If two of you, consenting, shall ask any thing, it shall be done. Sending up against the magician the dart of concord by prayers, they cast him down to the earth.

So Arnobius, Advers. Gentes, lib. 2, saith; The Romans saw the race or course of Simon Magus, and his fiery chariots blown away by the mouth of Peter, and vanishing away when Christ was named. I say, they saw him, that trusting to false gods, and being betrayed by them when themselves were afraid, was precipitated by his own weight, and lay with his legs broke, and being carried to Brunda, being weary with torments and shame, he again cast himself from the top of a high place. So Philostrius, lib. iii. De Hæres. and Theodoret, lib. i. De Hæret. Fabul. Sulpit. Sever. Histor. lib. ii. besides others.

How abominable the heresy of this magician was, may appear by all the history of the church.

Irenæus (lib. i. cap. 20) saith, That being by many glorified as a god, he taught them that it was he who appeared among the Jews as the Son, and descended in Samaria as the Father, and came into other nations as the Holy Ghost; and that he is the highest power, even the Father, who is over all, and doth endure men to call him by several names.

He led about a concubine, one Selene, or Helena, a Tyrian, whom he called the first conception of his mind, the mother of all things, by whom, at first, he mentally conceived angels and archangels, by whom, he said, this world was made; also, that his Enoea being here detained, was the Helena that occasioned the war of Troy, and the blinding of Stesichorus, and passing from body to body, at last was cast into a brothel-house, and this was the lost sheep which he came purposely from heaven to seek and deliver from bonds, and to give salvation to men by the knowledge of him; for seeing angels did not well govern the world, because every one sought to be the chief, he came to mend things, and descended transformed, and assimilated to powers, and angels, that he might to men appear as a man, being, indeed, no man, and so was thought to have suffered in Judea, when, indeed, he did not suffer. The prophets, he said, were inspired by those angels that made the world, therefore those that trusted in him and his Selene need not regard them any more, and being now free-men may do what they list, for men are saved according to his grace, and not according to righteous works; for works are not naturally but by accident righteous, as the angels appointed that had made the world, bringing men into bondage by such kind of precepts; therefore he promised that the world should be loosed, and these that be his set free from the rule of them that made the world. Their mystical priests, therefore, do live in lust, and use witchcraft as they are able, and use exorcisms and enchantments, &c.: thus Irenæus. Of which Epiphanius speaks more largely, reporting yet more of their filthy mysteries, and how he taught them that the flesh perished and rose not again, the soul only surviving, and that the gnostics had their original from him.

By all this it appeareth that this witch was the devil's agent, and that he had his help and doctrine both from him, and that he was sent to disgrace and oppose Christ and his doctrine, making the world believe, that it was he that in Jerusalem did seem to suffer under the name of Jesus, but indeed suffered not: and the world of wickedness that this wretch introduced by these sottish doctrines, backed with his witchcrafts, and the great success he had, and the trouble he put the church to, do show who was the master of the design.

Next to Simon succeeded Menander, saith Irenæus, lib. i. c. 24, a Samaritan, who also attained to the height of witchcraft. He taught them that the first power was unknown to all, but that it was he that was sent from the invisible to be the saviour of mankind, and that the world was made by angels, whom he also, as Simon, said were sent forth by Enoea; and that there is given by her to those that are taught of her such magical knowledge, that they may overcome the angels that made the world; and that his disciples do, by his baptism, receive resurrection and die no more, but persevere without growing old or dying: thus Irenæus: to which Epiphanius addeth, That he was Simon's disciple, and in most matters retained the doctrine of his master, but boasted that he was greater than his master was; but, saith Epiphanius, as those Egyptian asps, that, being put together in a vessel, the strongest eats up all the rest, and at last eats off his own hinder parts; so have these heresies been destroyed and rooted out.

Next to Menander arose Saturninus, (or as Epiphanius, Saturnilus,) an Antiochian, who retained much of the former doctrine, adding That they were seven angels that made the world, and man after their image, and that the Jews' god was one of the seven,

whom Christ came to destroy, because he would not be ordered, but would be over the rest; and that Christ did but seem to be born, to walk, to eat, to die, but did not so indeed: and that good and bad angels making the world, they made one good man and another bad; and the bad striving against the good, Christ came to help the good: that the spark of life that at first was put into man, returning to its own kind, is safe in all; but the rest, which is man indeed, and was of the angels, perisheth. Marriage and generation (he said) is of Satan; many of his followers eat not of living creatures, and, by abstinence, deceive many. The prophecies (he said) were some from the angels that made the world, and some from Satan. Thus Irenæus: and Epiphanius saith the same.

To Saturninus was joined Basilides, who would seem to advance these devilish heresies to a more rational sublimity, as they that list may read in Irenæus, Epiphanius, Tertullian, Eusebius, and others. He added, also, that Christ did not suffer on the cross, but took on him the shape of Simon, and stood by and laughed at them, and turned Simon of Cyrene into his shape, and so it was he that was crucified: and that he that will be saved must not believe in him that was crucified, but in Jesus that came in the shape of a man, and was thought to have been crucified. They make all actions indifferent, and the use of all lust. They make three hundred and sixty-five heavens and principal angels, as there be days in the year. Those that know their mysteries, know all men, but are known of none: but all must not yet be revealed.

Their foundations they lay in feigned notions about invisible things, as Jacob Behmen of late did his. They say there was one unbegotten principle, who only is the parent of all things. Of him was begotten the mind, that is, Christ; of the mind was begotten the word; from the word came prudence; from that virtue and wisdom; from both these principalities, powers, and angels. These made the first heaven, and begot more angels: those made the second heaven, and begot more, and so on.

To these succeeded Carpocrates, and the Nicolaitans, whose inhuman filthiness was such, and their devilish conceits so many and vile, that I will forbear to mention them. Only this, they made themselves like Christ, and some of them to be equal to him, and some the same with him; that good and evil differed not in deed, but in men's opinion. They worshipped images; they lived in such horrid ways of lust and filthiness as is not to be named. Epiphanius himself unhappily fell in among them, and knew their ways from their own mouths and actions, but happily escaped when they would have drawn him to their lusts. They have multitudes of amazing words and notions, like our Behmenists, that would bring a man into a suspicion of witchcraft to read them. They used witchcrafts, and several sorts of enchantments, and kept devils in familiarity with them, that, by their means, they might increase their knowledge and power.

To these succeeded the Cerinthians, the Cerdonites, the Ebionites, the Valentinians, the Marcionites, who, as they had all the general name of gnostics, from their own proud pretences of the knowledge of such mysteries as the catholic church was ignorant of, so were they called by the names of their several succeeding leaders, because every one added or altered somewhat from the doctrine of the former, yet holding the same in the main: and the Valentinians were more notoriously than the rest known by the name of gnostics, and the Nicolaitans and Carpocratians also assumed it before them.

That all these heresies were certainly of the devil, appears thus :

1. By the devilish doctrine which they preached.

2. By the most unclean, abominable lives which they lived, and ceremonies which they used.

3. In that they all were the offspring of Simon Magus, a witch: or, as Irenæus shows, (lib. i. cap. 30,) they were all his disciples, and continued the substance of his doctrines, with some additions, though many of them would not own his name.

4. In that they used enchantments themselves, yea, and had familiarity with devils.

5. And Christ still prevailed against them, and broke them in pieces; though the devil was still repairing his house as fast as Christ broke it down, and raising a new sect-master to make up the breach when an old one was rooted out.

And besides the main difference (which lay in the purity of doctrine and life) wherein the church of Christ did differ from these heretics; that was another, that the church was still one, and known by the simple name of christians and catholics; but the heretics were many, and every age had a sect partly new, and of a new name, and sometimes many in an age.

The plain design of the devil in all this was to uphold his own honour and kingdom, and to dishonour God and ruin souls, and to make the christian faith seem questionable to the world, by the multitude of sects that still pretended to the christian name; and to make Christ's doctrine and followers seem abominable, while some that were called christians were truly abominable.

I will give it you in the words of Epiphanius, who follows Irenæus in this application, as he doth in much of the history. When he mentioned their familiarity with devils to further their aspiring to highest things, he adds, Which sort of men Satan seems to have fitted and sent for a reproach and stumblingblock to the church of God; as having put on themselves the name of christians, that for their sakes the nations being offended, should abhor the profit of the church of God; and should refuse the truth declared to them, because of their savage wickedness, and incredible villeness; that, I say, their frequent villainies being taken notice of, they might persuade themselves that those also are such that are of the holy church of God: and so may turn away their ears, as I said, from the true doctrine of God; or at least beholding the dishonesty of a few, might cast the same reproaches upon all. And indeed this is the cause that most of the gentiles, wherever they apprehend any of that sort, will have no society with us, either as to giving, or receiving, or counsel, or hearing the word of God, and will not so much as lend us their ears, so much are they driven off and deterred by the wicked crimes of these men. So far Epiphanius of the use of these sects, which the devil maketh.

I have heard some of their successors, that are among us now, say, that these men were wronged by Epiphanius and others, both as to their doctrine and life: but it is not one or two, but all the church histories of those times, and discourses that occasionally mention them, that say the same things; so that if men be not impudently and wilfully incredulous, the truth of the history in the main is unquestionable. Nay, I have mentioned but a small part of the abominations of these sects; and if they will but read Epiphanius himself, they will see much more: and he himself doth it with an apology, professing that he was loth to have done it, lest the very naming of such abominations should do hurt: and profeseth that much is so vile, that he will not name it. And the more competent witness is he, in

that he fell in among them, and was either one of them notionally, or very near it. And before and after him, the church writers generally confirm his testimony. Clemens Alexandrinus deals largely with them: indeed, for the Nicolaitans, Clem. Alexand. Stromat. (lib. iii.) and Eusebius Histor. (lib. iii. c. 23,) and Theodoret, lib. iii.) do say, that they falsely pretended the name of Nicolas to their heresy, as Ignatius Ad Trallianus seems also to intimate. Yet Irenæus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius, and Hierom, thought that he himself was their leader. However, we know what they were, and that even, Rev. ii. 6, they are called by the name of Nicolaitans. And let our heretics, that would befriend them, note that God saith there, "He hateth them;" and it is well known that the Simonians, Menandrians, Carpocratians, Basilideans, Valentinians, and the rest of the gnostics, were, in the main, of the same litter and feather, as the Nicolaitans, whom God saith he hateth. And indeed, if they would take the testimony of Scripture against them, they might find more texts that condemn them than this. For they were most of them before the death of all the apostles; and it is evident that John calls them antichrists in his epistle, as being the men that denied Christ to have come, and suffered in the flesh, but said he did it in an apparition, or mere show, as such witches as their leaders perhaps might do.

It may be, some will be ready to blame me for so much as mentioning these old heresies, and taking up their names among us, lest it do hurt; but as the subject in hand doth lead me to it, so doth the sad judgment of God that hath lately befallen us. It is vain now to keep men from these heresies by concealing them, for a great part of them are visible among us; they have infected men that seemed to have had some fear of God: I shall say more of these anon: in the mean time, note that there is a great and notorious resemblance of the heresies of these times unto those. I know some will say, That if the gnostics were so filthy, then those among us are not like them, for they seem strict, and self-denying, and mortified; but note, that though all held the main points of their erroneous belief alike, yet they did differ somewhat in the point of lust and fleshly living among themselves; for, as Irenæus shows, (lib. i. c. 30,) Saturninus and Marcion were called continent, and so was their sect, for they forbade marriage, or persuaded men to abstain from it, thereby, saith Irenæus, frustrating the ancient work of God, and obliquely accusing him that made man male and female for generation; and those that forbade the eating of flesh, were ungrateful to him that made all for their use. Just so are there two sects among us lately sprung up, the one began in uncleanness and blasphemy, and all abominable riotousness, under the name of ranters; the other pretend to the extreme mortification of the Eremites, or rather of those last mentioned, and are called Behmenists and quakers, and yet in the main principles of their faith, wherein they disagree from the true church, they are among themselves agreed; as also, for the most part of them, in their practice of reproaching all ministers and godly people that are not of their way.

I must confess it is my opinion that we have been much to blame in not making known to common christians somewhat more of the nature of the heresies of the first ages, and the effects of them, by which they might have been better fortified against them; for now, for want of such information, the poor wretches take old, rotten, damned heresies, for new light from the Spirit of Christ, and many are ready, upon that very notion and account, to run

after them to their own perdition, little knowing or thinking that ever these heresies were in the world before, and how they were used by Christ and his church. Had they but known when and how their highly honoured fancies did first arise, and what they brought forth, and how they sped, and what men they were that handed them down from Simon Magus till the time of their burial, the devil could not so easily have dug them up again, and have got religious men to make a feast of them. My brethren, therefore, that may blame me now for mentioning them, must accept of this excuse of my doings, instead of a conformity to their minds, till my own be altered.

By the way, it is to be noted, that the success that the devil had by those old heresies, by which he attended the springing church, and the gospel of Christ, besides the hinderance of men's conversion in particular, was this: he occasioned the crimes of these heretics to be charged on all christians (as, out of Epiphanius, I said before); so that the common reports among the heathen, that the christians did eat their own children, and that they put out the lights at their meetings, and were unclean together, were raised from the wickedness of these Simonians and gnostics; and withal, by this means, the persecution of the christians was much increased and renewed, though yet the heretics themselves were not persecuted, as Justin Martyr affirms, (*Apolog. 2.*) and Origen, (*lib. vi. cont. Celsum,*) which might come from hence.

1. Because the heretics taking all outward actions to be indifferent, and good and evil to consist but in opinion, as some of their spawn among us also do, did judge it lawful to sacrifice to idols, or do any such thing that the magistrate bid them do, (which is Hobbs's religion,) rather than to suffer persecution; whereby they escaped, when the christians, that were more tender-conscienced, and knew of a higher Lord and Master in heaven, durst not do so.

2. And withal it is plain, that the devil was the grand agent, both in the heresy and the persecution, and, therefore, would not persecute his own, having no mind to destroy his own kingdom.

I might, but for tediousness, run down this sad history of the devil's sowing the tares of heresy from age to age till this very day, wherein it will appear, that he is a devoted enemy to Christ and his church; but I will overpass most of them, which you find in Epiphanius, Austin, Philastrius, or Theodoret, at pleasure, and only note next, his attempts to bring in Mahometanism and popery.

For the latter, he was as vigilant to corrupt the church itself, as to draw heresies out of it; to which end, he made special use of the pride, and pomp, and secular honours, and greatness of the bishops; so that, by degrees, he brought into most churches on earth too much error in some matters of doctrine, too much formality and superstition instead of true rational devotion in the worship of God, and too much tyranny and usurpation of authority over their brethren, instead of the true discipline and government of Christ. How much the church of Rome miscarried in all these, especially in this last, above all the churches on earth, is also too evident to those that are not unwilling to see.

And it is to be noted, that the more that or any church was corrupted, the less careful was the devil to raise heresies out of it, or separations from it, because he had rather, if it might be, hereticate the whole; and while he had so great hopes and likelihood of poisoning their daily food and habitations at home, he was the less careful to draw them into dangers abroad; nor would he disturb them much

with the clamours of heretics, while themselves did grow apace so like to them. This is the reason why the church of Rome hath had fewer separating heresies, since itself began to be corrupted, schismatical, and tyrannical, than it had when it was more pure, and than the catholic church had in the first and purer times.

And, doubtless, this design of the devil, to corrupt the church of Rome, and cause them to claim an universal episcopacy and headship over the whole catholic church, and to make that the centre of the church's union, is so evidently like himself, and suited to his ends, and so contrary to Christ, that he may easily be known to be his (that is, Christ's) adversary. Whether the pope be the antichrist or not, I am sure the devil shows himself an antichrist in his exaltation and usurpation. The millions of souls that have been drowned in superstition, and led blindfold in commended ignorance, do show who hath been the pilot in that sea. The blood that hath been shed in Germany, France, Spain, Italy, England, and other nations, by fire and sword, for the suppression of a reformation, and extinguishing of the light, do show, that he, who was a murderer from the beginning, hath led on the inquisitors and blood-suckers to the work. The wilful opposing of evident truths, the obstinate refusal of all healing means, the carnal maintaining of their own interest, and rejecting all counsels of the prudent and moderate, doth show who it is that befriendeth their usurpation: so doth the ground which they have laid for perpetual dissensions, by the horrible schism which they have caused and continue, making the catholic church a new thing, even the same with the Roman, and proudly calling the whole christian world to own their bishop as their head and governor, and declaring all that refuse it to be out of the catholic church, and resolving upon an everlasting separation from all that cannot so far stoop to them, and so unchurching all the churches of Christ in the world, except their own, and these that make themselves their subjects, and by proclaiming themselves infallible, putting us out of all hopes of a cure of the least of their abuses, injuries, or errors, till the sword cure it, or God open their eyes. All this shows that the devil hath been playing as great a game at Rome (by these pretended St. Peters) of late, as he did by Simon Magus in the beginning: besides all the corruptions in doctrine and worship, which they have introduced, teaching men to pray to and for the dead, to adore the bread and worship it with divine worship, to worship images, to pray to God in a tongue which they understand not, when they might as easily use that which they do understand, maiming the Lord's supper, with too many the like; professing that they can live perfectly, without sin, yea, and meritoriously, and supererogate besides, and lay up a treasury of merits to redeem souls from purgatory: these, and abundance more, show that the prince of darkness hath had too great a hand in ruling their conclave and counsels, and an evil angel hath kept the keys too long of the castle of St. Angelo, or else there had not been such key keepers imposed upon their church.

If yet any question whether the devil hath had a hand in introducing their tyranny and errors, and in laying the foundation of their schisms and corruptions, let him peruse the histories of one six or seven hundred years before Luther's time, and see how their popes entered, how they reigned, and how they ended. Let but their own writers, Platina, Ciaconius, Stella, and many more, be heard, who will tell you how some of them bought the popedom of the devil, how divers were conjurors, and multi-

tudes horrible adulterers, or murderers. The mere English reader may, in short, take up with what Dr. Prideaux will inform him, from the year six hundred and six till one thousand six hundred and twenty-three, and after; that is, from the beginning of Boniface the Third, till near the end of Urban the Eighth.

Thus hath the prince of darkness, Beelzebub, showed us his designs, and led on the armies that have marched against Christ, improving his craft and power, and deluding poor souls to be his unhappy instruments to blow out the glorious light of the gospel, and hinder its efficacy, and disturb and tear in pieces the church, and hold those in thralldom that Christ would rescue out of his hands.

And it is not altogether to be passed over, for the further discovery where the kingdom of Satan most consisteth, that the devil had formerly, in the times of popery, incomparably more power among men to appear to them, and haunt their houses and vex them, than now he hath. It is certainly known, that till the reformation, the haunting of houses and apparitions were much more common than now. And, at this day, it is much commoner among the papists than the protestants. I have spoken with old people, very credible for true godliness and honesty, that have professed when they were young, they have lived in such houses with papists, where they were vexed with them frequently day and night. I know, when we ask the papists the reason of this, they say, It is because Satan will not trouble his own. But, by that rule, all the Indians and barbarous heathens should not be his own, whom he commonly so troubleth. He will exercise his tyranny, and domineer as far as God restraineth him not: and we see he is more restrained with us than with them. Though I know, that as here he hath too many wicked men which are his servants, so he may and doth sometimes exercise the like tyranny; but it is not so common as it is with them. The like I may say of witches, which with them have been more numerous, saving that of late so great a number were found in two or three counties here.

The next work of Satan against the church, that we shall mention, is his setting up Mahomet, whose Alcoran was vnted about the time that Pope Boniface the Third obtained of Phocas his universal supremacy, above six hundred years after Christ. It is a doubt among divines, whether the Mahometans should be reckoned among infidels or heretics. For they confess, even Mahomet in his Alcoran, that Jesus Christ was a great prophet, that he was the mind of God, the wisdom of God, the word of God, and the Messiah which was foretold in the law and by the prophets; that he was born of the Virgin Mary, conceived without any earthly father, by divine inspiration; that he was righteous; that he gave sight to the blind, healed the lame and sick, and raised the dead to life again; that he was taken up into heaven, and shall come again. Thus much of his gospel God hath forced these multitudes of his enemies to attest.

But then they take up some of the old heresies, and say, that Christ was not crucified, but his image, or one like him, the Jews being deceived. They say, he shall come again on earth, at the end of the world, to confirm the law of Mahomet: the first propagators of the christian faith, they say, were good and holy men; but they would sottishly persuade men, that our books and religion are since corrupted, and that Mahomet's name is wiped out, of whom great matters were there spoken.

Whether we name them heretics or infidels, the matter is not great; but we know that they deny

Christ's Godhead, as the Socinians do, being taught it by Sergius, the Arian monk, who was Mahomet's schoolmaster, and the maker of their religion. And though they thus far own Christ, absolutely considered, yet, compared with Mahomet, they neglect him; and under pretence of the forementioned defection they hate the churches of Christ on earth, and are persecutors and professed enemies to the christian name.

So that a double hand of Satan is apparent in their profession; first, in the framing and founding of it; and secondly, in carrying it on. As he did by the rest of the heretics, so he hath done by them; while they retain and acknowledge some truths, as the unity of the Godhead, &c. they are made instruments of destroying the rest, and of ruining the professors of the true religion. I know Satan could not have procured them their great successes and victories, if God had not permitted and had a hand in it; but our sins had made us ripe for such a judgment. Victories and worldly powers have been the planters and propagators of their faith.

That it is of Satan, and one of his master-pieces in the great war that he hath with Christ, is manifest:

1. By the ancient heresies that bred it, and that it containeth.

2. By the dotages and self-contradictions of their Alcoran.

3. By the wickedness of it; encouraging them still to blood, allowing them four wives and as many concubines as they please, and promising them a sensual felicity hereafter; and contradicting the word of God in particulars, when they acknowledge the truth of it in general.

4. By the suitability of it to carnal minds, and the ready reception that it findeth with such; so that the vilest barbarians are quickly made Mahometans; and there is a greater part of the world this day that are Mahometans, than christians, merely by the force of the sword, and the sensuality of their religion.

5. And they will not suffer it to be disputed, nor reasoned of, but absolutely believe without asking for any evidence of its truth.

6. And the management and issue clearly shows it is but the devil's second army, (next to the pagans,) by which he seeks to hold his possession, and to hinder Christ's kingdom, and persecute his subjects. For, by force they have already banished the most of the christian religion from a great part of the world, where once it was glorious; and the rest they are still infesting; and those under their power they keep in much thralldom, and suffering, and disgrace. So that it is most clear, that the setting up of Mahometanism was one of the most successful oppositions that ever the devil made against Christ and the christian cause; having thereby rooted or kept out christianity from so great a part of the earth by such silly, palpable dotages.

After Mahometanism, let us consider how he hath yet proceeded to defile, or destroy, if it might have been, the remaining church of Christ, by renewed heresies to this day.

When Satan perceived that he could no longer keep up the tyranny and errors of popery undisturbed, but that Christ would send out such a light as should disgrace and dispel his darkness, he reneweth his old attempts again, and setteth upon Christ in his own kingdom, and falls upon the reformation in its own quarters. And as he set out Simon Magnus, at first, to follow Simon Peter, and Paul, at the heels, and disturb them in their work, and disgrace christianity, partly by the diversity, and partly by the evil doctrines and lives of such as pretended to be

christians; so did he send out the like sect-masters after Christ's reformers, to stand up against them by the same artifices, and to disturb the labourers, and disgrace the reformation, by the diversity and evil doctrines and practices of those who pretended to be reformers with them.

Two trained bands doth Satan here send out to encounter the church and truth of Christ. The first are a mixed company that all go under the name of anabaptists; the other are enthusiasts, that go under divers names, but agree in their main design, of whom I shall speak anon.

It was the subtlety of Satan to begin with the point of infant baptism, both because it was not all so expressly mentioned in Scripture, as some greater matters are, and, therefore, would hold more controversy and talk, and he might easier bring them to a confidence in their mistakes, or at least a suspicion of our doctrine; and also because if he could so far loose them from Christ as to make them repent of their former dedication to him, and disclaim it, he might think to have the more liberty further to assault them, and to have the more power over them himself. However it were, experience certainly informeth us that this egg did multiply to such a generation of vipers, as threatened to eat out the bowels of the reformed churches. They made the reformation odious to many. They began in a seeming simplicity and harmlessness, as if we had not reformed enough, but they must carry on the work where we left it, and cast out children from the church, as we cast out separation and errors; but when the spirit within them had once vent and field-room for agitation, it soon discovered itself to be of the great deceiver. In Germany, Thomas Muntzer preached the people into a rebellion, and got a numerous army of the seduced ones into the field, and while he promised them victory, they were routed and hewed in pieces, and himself put to a terrible death. In the city of Munster, they made head against the bishop, who was their prince; and expelled him and the magistrates, and put some to death, and made John of Leyden their king, who, after a little barbarous cruelty and domineering for a few weeks, was put to death with many of his new subjects, at the taking of the city. Yet some of them lived, and broke out into various sects: David George headed one party of them, who taught them that he was the Holy Ghost; and as the Father's doctrine saved them till Christ, and the Son's gospel saved them till now, so the doctrine of this David, who was the Holy Ghost, was as much higher than the doctrine of the Son, as the Son's was higher than the Father's. Thus did he take hands with the second sect, the enthusiasts, and join the two into one.

That second sect had many heads, in some things differing one from another. Some followed Schwenkfeldius, and some lurked and made no great noise with their opinions, as being not able to make any great party. Of these the chief leader was Paracelsus, a drunken conjuror, who had converse with devils, as Simon Magus the first master of the heretics had: by which it is not hard to know whence he had his new doctrines. This is not only testified by Erastus in his disputation against him, but by George Weter, a godly, learned man, that was Paracelsus' companion for two years together, who told him what wages Satan would pay his servants, and asked him why he would follow that course, and he answered him that he would shortly repent, and forsake them. Joannes Oporinus also, Theodore, Zuingerus, Bullinger, Conrad, Gesnerus, and others, do witness that he used magic, and devils, and would be so frequently drunk that men could scarce tell

when to speak with him. Oporinus had been his amanuensis and companion, and saith, he saw neither learning nor godliness in him, but skill in medicines: and that he would sit up till midnight, and then leap down on his bed with his sword by his side, and rising up, would so lay about him on the walls and floor with his naked sword, that Oporinus was oft afraid he would have cut off his head. This Oporinus was the learned, famous printer of Basil. Yet this Paracelsus was the great corrupter of divinity, the father of many new conceits contradictory to Scripture: upon his foundation his successors built, as Menander did on Simon Magus, and Saturninus, and Basilides, and others, on his. John Arndt magnifieth him; Weigelius calls him exceedingly illuminated, and his theology he calls the pure and uncorrupt Scripture of the prophets and apostles: this Weigelius was the chief of his followers and successors. Then steps in John Arndt, Julius Sperber, Jesaias Stiefel, and Ezekiel Meth, Paul Felgenhaver, and Jacob Behmen, whose books, much taken out of Paracelsus, and furthered by Kempis, Taulerus, and others, are now translated into English by some admirers of him, possessed by the same conceits. The cloudy nonsense, or wilful obscurity, draws them into admiration of them first, and they think there is sure some admirable mysteries in those enigmatical expressions, and so they are tired on to so long an expense of time in the search, till they are habituated to his arrogance and folly. What his doctrines are, what new prophecies he produceth, and discoveries of things before and about the creation, angels, the soul, heaven and hell, &c. which the Scripture revealeth not, is too commonly known in his books, which yet are pretty well locked up, and made more harmless by such ridiculous and yet hideous bombardical words, as Basilides, Valentinus, and the first heretics used. And indeed, never had the world a generation so like them in doctrinals as some of these late enthusiasts. Weigelius' books have a gnostic title; they all pretend to a higher knowledge of mysteries about angels, spirits, and spiritual states, and God himself, than the church knoweth; and yet they give us neither reasons with Aristotle, nor miracles with Christ and his apostles, to cause us to believe any of their new revelations: as if we must take them on their bare (scarce intelligible) words. They that would see more of these German prophets, and how Behmen had his doctrine from the books of Paracelsus; let them read Beckman's "Exercitations," p. 346, 347, and so forward.

From Germany let us pass a little into England, and see how the same devil in enmity to Christ hath here sent out his false prophets to hinder the reformers, and to have destroyed, if it might be, the work of reformation.

Just such another sect as some of the old gnostics did arise under the name of the family of love, who made one Henry Nichols the leader of their party. They turned almost all the supernatural revelation in Scripture to an allegory, and so denied even Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection, and ascension in sense, while they seemed to believe the words that did express it. They very much gloried in the light and spirit within them, and called the written word but the letter, and so would have brought down God's law as a dead letter, and have set up their own conceits, passionate fancies, and dreams, as the Spirit. Abundance of horrible doctrines they added, like those of the old gnostics, their predecessors. You may see some of them in Mr. Bailie's "Dissuasive," and Mr. Rutherford "Against Familists," &c. To these were annexed in Germany, the libertines, who denied the immortality of the soul, and made

good and evil to lie but in opinion, and many more like them of old (of which see Calvin, against them, and in his "Psychopanchia"). In England they were called antinomians, and some of them were much worse in doctrine and life than others. These two sects did here usually mix. The common road of this heretical devil being ordinarily by separation to anabaptistry, from anabaptistry to antinomianism or Pelagianism, for there the way parted, and from antinomianism to libertinism, and so to familism, and so to hell without repentance.

Of this tribe was Hacket, Coppinger, and Arthington, who lived a while as wrapped up in the Spirit, and in antinomian fancies, and a great number of their party called Grundletonians, from a village in Yorkshire, where they lived or met. I had an old godly friend that lived near them, and went once among them, and they breathed on him as to give him the Holy Ghost; and his family, for three days after, perceived him as a man of another spirit, as half in an ecstasy, and after that he came to himself, and came near them no more; but the hanging of Hacket, who died blaspheming, (the story is so commonly known that I need not mention it,) did much mar their matters; and Arthington's recantation, in a book called his "Seduction," did stay many: for he and Coppinger were the two witnesses that were to proclaim up and down London that Hacket was the Christ that was come to judge them.

Whilst these heretics assaulted the reformation and the gospel on one hand, the devil was as busy to stir up the church governors themselves to the disrelish of godliness, to superstition, and tyranny, on the other hand, who, upon the difference about ceremonies and subscription first, and afterwards upon the introduction of more of their forms of worship without law, did suspend, silence, expel, imprison, many learned, godly, sober ministers, that were most diligent in pulling down the kingdom of Satan, and did him the greatest hurt, by rescuing the ungodly out of his hand; besides a multitude of godly people that were troubled, banished, and driven to seek remote habitations, even as far as America. Upon which Satan got a further double and great advantage, besides the grievous breach and ruins that he made in the church. The first was, that he made practical godliness become odious and a scorn among the people, and the godly to be reproached as puritans, and men that were needlessly precise. The second was, that he kindled, on this occasion, a deeper discontent, in the minds of some of the persecuted, against their persecuting governors, than was meet, and set them in too keen an opposition against them. By which means the devil prepared us to those factions and animosities which presently broke out into an unhappy war: in which war, as in all wars, the reins being more loose, and soldiers having both provocations to stir up their pride, passion, and dissent from their enemies to the height, and also opportunity to vent their opinions, and to propagate them with less contradiction, because they were removed further from the inspection of able ministers, and were put into a proud, domineering, and licentious capacity; it came to pass that a few separatists and anabaptists, that were at first in the city and army, did grow in two or three years' time to a multitude, and by the policies of Satan and his instruments, did propagate and spread their conceits through the countries, and east both church and state, and the minds of men, into such distempers that they had fuller opportunity to fish when the waters were thus troubled; and the papists secretly fomenting the whole work, and all Satan's heretical agents combining upon their common interest, and

upon the libertine account of toleration for them all; at last, by many flagitious, abominable practices, they got so far into the saddle, and to that height and number, and to those advantages for the propagation of their way, which our eyes have seen, and the faithful have lamented: so that now they are upon the Munster principles, many of them seeking after reign and dominion, and think the time is come, or near, when the rebaptized saints must judge the world, and the kingdom must be theirs, and they must rule and bruise and break the nations, at least, for a thousand years.

A man would scarcely have believed that saw the first spring of separation and anabaptistry among us, that it would have produced those fearful effects, which we have since beheld. The devil knew better what was contained virtually in that seed, and what an inundation might follow the first breaches of our schisms, than we did; or else he would not have so far out-gone us in diligence; somewhat more we should have done to resist him, and less to assist him, than we did. He hath now got such an army of heretics to spit their venom daily in the face of Christ, that we may hear easily, by their voices, whether Satan be for Christ or against him. From separation and anabaptistry and antinomianism, they are proceeded to such madness and abominable conceits, and to so great variety of them, as I scarce read of in any time of the church, except in the days of the Simonians, Nicolaitans, and the rest of the gnostics in and near the days of the apostles, and in the time of David George and some others, in the reformation.

And here I may well note the seasons that this destroyer takes, for the sending forth his lying spirits, and spreading his heresies: it is when and where Christ is doing his greatest works. The apostles and their next successors, that had the most glorious work to do, had also the sharpest assault and greatest opposition from these heretics. The work of reformation in the days of our fore-fathers had the next part of Satan's malicious opposition. How loth was he that such works as these should have gone on! In England, he saw of late how earnestly men were set upon a full reformation; what resolution there was in rulers, and what desires in many of the people, to have seen a plenty of faithful teachers, and discipline faithfully exercised, and God purely and seriously worshipped; so that that great work was never half so likely to have been accomplished, if the enemy had not subtly interposed, and corrupted the heads and hearts of so many, and made them the destroyers that but a little before were forward to build. We could not foresee, in the height of our successful beginnings, that which Paul could then see in theirs, Acts xx. 29, 30; what grievous wolves should enter, not sparing the flock, and that of our own selves should men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. But, alas! while we slept, that envious enemy hath sowed these tares; so that I think we may almost compare with the first heretics for villainess and variety.

Some we have that turn Socinians, denying Christ's Godhead and satisfaction, and the Godhead of the Holy Ghost; some turn libertines, and some familists; some seekers, and that of divers strains: some downright infidels, under that and other titles; even deriding the holy Scriptures, and Christ himself, as far as they dare speak out for fear of blemishing their reputations. No heaven or hell do they believe but what is now within them, nor any higher felicity than to be epicures, nor any life after this which they shall live. And herein are far worse than almost all the pagans

on the earth, yea than the savage Americans, who commonly believe a life of happiness or misery hereafter. May you not see in these men how Satan befriendeth Christ? Nay, that the devil drives them on is yet more apparent, in that these very men, that believe no life to come, are yet as diligent and busy to make others of their mind, and increase their party, as if they had the greatest motives to impel them. Whereas, rationally, he that thinks man so contemptible a creature as to die like a dog, hath no reason much to regard whether men entertain his opinion or no; though he that believeth an everlasting joy or torment may see reason enough to move him to such endeavours, that men may escape the misery and be happy.

Besides these, we have had, and yet have, a horrible, hateful sect of men called ranters, who make it their very religion to swear out the most full-mouthed oaths by multitudes, and openly blaspheme the God of heaven, and so meet, and dance, and roar together; and commit whoredoms and filthiness without shame, owning it, and glorying in it, when they have been punished or examined: so that they seem to match the Simonians and Nicolaitans. They fall into trances, and there lie with their bodies swelled, and strangely acted, and then fall into their raptures and blasphemings. When the law began to restrain these for their wicked practices, the same deceiving spirit raiseth up another sect in their stead, called quakers, who hold many of their doctrines, and take their course in other respects; only, instead of ranting, open wickedness, they pretend to as great mortification of the flesh as the ancient Eremites, and more. They fall into trances, swell, quake, and tremble, and yell, and roar, and after the fit is over, fall a threatening judgments, sometimes against common sins: but the very life and venom of all their speeches and endeavours is against the ministry, to make them odious in the eyes of the people. As I have seen the letters of the ranters so full of the most hideous blasphemies against God, as I thought had never come from any but the damned, so have I had letters from these quakers myself, so full of railing and reviling, from end to end, as I never saw before from the pen of man, either mad or sober, nor ever heard from the mouth of any. Of these two last sorts, divers have run about naked, and some said they were Christ. One ran naked into Whitehall chapel in the time of worship: one eat his own dung, in imitation of Jeremy. To know more of them, see the relation of Richard Gilpin's case. Some of them pretend yet to greater sobriety, and make no great noise in the world; and those are but few, and men of commendable parts, who are deeply possessed with the fancies of Jacob Behmen, the German Paracelsian prophet, and the Rosicrucians, and set themselves mainly to a mortification of bodily desires and delights, and advancing the intellectual part above the sensitive, (which is well,) but the doctrine of Christ crucified and justification by him is little minded by them. They do, as the quakers, maintain the popish doctrine of perfection, that they can live without sin, or that some of them can. They aspire after a visible communion with angels, and many of them pretend to have attained it, and frequently to see them. The rest have that immediate intuition of verities by the Spirit within them, or by revelation, that it is above mere rational apprehension, and therefore they will not dispute, nor be moved by any arguments or scriptures that you bring, affirming that ratiocination cannot prevail against their intuition. The sum of their doctrines is, that we must be perfect; and for subjecting the flesh to the intellect, we must live in contemplation, lay by all offices in

the commonwealth, and own no fleshly relations, as they call them, not the relation of brother or sister, not the relation of a magistrate or of a master, not the relation of a father or mother, son or daughter, nor love any because of such a relation, but only as justice binds us to requital for what they have done for us. That none should own the relation of husband or wife, nor love each other as so related. That we should endeavour to be perfect, and therefore to forebear all carnal acts of generation, as being of sin and of the devil, and therefore husband and wife should part asunder, or abstain. That all things should be common, and none should own propriety, with abundance more, which are founded on certain vain, unproved fancies of Behmen, that God at first created man a spiritual body, in one sex only, and that containing both sexes virtually, having an angelical power of spiritual generation; and that this gross corporeity, and diversity of sex, marriage, and generation, are all the fruits of sin and Satan, with abundance more such audacious vanities, not worth the reciting.

The truth is, there is a strange combination of the endeavours of the papists and the devil in most of these late heresies. The matter and manner, the strange imposture, and transportations and motions, and wicked, abominable lives of some of them, and railing of others, do show that he is the father of it: so do the intolerable doctrines which they bring, and the opposition that all make to Christ, or the christian faith and communion.

And that the popish priests or Jesuits are the leading, busy actors of the whole game, we easily discern, both in that they are frequently discovered in it, and in that the whole frame of the design hath a popish aspect, and the face of their doctrines shows that they came from Rome. Their main business is to bring down the credit of the Scriptures and ministry, and if that were done, the papists would think they had the day. They also directly lead to their monastical and eremitical solitude, and making that rigour to the body, and denying marriage, propriety, and worldly employments, to be for their righteousness, which they trust in, and in this they must be perfect. But doubtless, the issue of this (as the powder-plot, and all other wicked attempts have done) will cast such a shame on the face of Rome, that it will prove no small wound to their cause, and, I hope, much cross their own expectations. I confess it doth very much to turn my heart from them further than else it would be,

1. To see their cause is such, and their doctrine such as needeth and owneth such abominable ways to maintain it; and that their most zealous, learned men are such as dare own and practise such wicked courses. Doth Christ's kingdom need such hellish plots and attempts for the sustaining of it? If the Roman kingdom were Christ's, it would not stand on such cursed props, nor would they go to hell for armour to defend it. It appears, that they will rather introduce all the heresies, blasphemies, and infidelity itself, by their secret seductions, than they will neglect to promote their own interests and designs.

2. And it confirms me much against them to see that the devil and the pope are both of a mind, and that Satan doth so notoriously join with them in the design, and show so much of his power and malice in the prosecution of it.

I have been somewhat long upon this work of the great enemy, to show how he brings up his band of heretics against Christ. I shall be the briefer in the rest; though they are such as might hold us long, if we stood upon the application of them to the matter in hand, as the usefulness doth deserve;

for they all put it out of doubt, that Satan is the leading enemy of Christ.

Sect. IX.

The sixth way by which the devil hath showed his enmity to Christ, is by open persecution of his subjects, and violence against his gospel and kingdom; in which, though he could go no further than God in wisdom saw good to permit him, yet so far hath he gone, as that the effects of his hellish rage are the subject of many voluminous histories, which being common in men's hands, I shall say but little of it.

As Satan was a murderer from the beginning, John viii. 44, maliciously supplanting our new-created progenitors, and drawing them under the guilt of threatened death, so when the eternal Word did interpose for their redemption, and opened again to man a door of life, the malice of the enemy is so far from being abated, that it is more enraged and engaged against us than before. He had before a malicious hatred to man, but now he hateth him as recovered yet more, and hath a special enmity to the promised seed, both Christ and all his members. And so speedily and openly doth this appear, that he arms one of Adam's sons against the other upon this account. The first man that was born into the world is so far overcome by this envious spirit, as to murder his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's good, 1 John iii. 12. And thus did he still rage against the promised seed, as in Egypt by Pharaoh and his witches or magicians, from whom Moses bore the reproach of Christ, that is, which the serpent principally intended against Christ, and which was cast upon him for the cause of Christ, Heb. xi. 26. So also from generation to generation.

But the seed incarnate, and seed now come on earth among men, did yet draw out more of the rage of the enemy than the seed as merely promised did. How quickly is Herod enraged by the tempter to seek his life, while he is yet in infancy, even to the murdering of multitudes of infants for his sake! How cruelly doth that devil that provoked Herod to keep his brother's wife, provoke him also to imprison and behead the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist! When it pleased the Lord Jesus to submit himself to an extraordinary combat with the tempter, Matt. iv. how maliciously did he seek to draw him to sin, even to that sin which is most abominable, the worshipping of himself instead of God! Of purpose did Christ submit to this conflict; because as happiness was lost by the first Adam, through the victory of the tempter, so must it be recovered by the second Adam, through his victory over the tempter. He that did conquer must thus be conquered, that sinners might be rescued from the captivity in which he held them. First, Christ must overcome by obedience, tried to the utmost by temptation, and then he must also overcome by suffering. By overcoming temptation he must overcome Satan as tempter, who had got the rule of the will of man; and by death he must overcome him as the prince of death, that had got the power of executing God's sentence, Heb. ii. 14.

The continual rage of Satan's instruments against Christ while he was on earth, did further testify his hatred of Christ. Though they confessed the glory of his works, and the excellency of his words, and though none of them could convince him of sin, yet they hated him. The reason he tells them, "Because they were of their father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth," John viii. 44. It is evident that it was an extraordinary enmity of Satan that possessed the

Jews with this rage against Christ, through God's permission, and wise and gracious ordering for the redemption of the world; for the Jews were at that time in an expectation of the Messiah, and ready to run after any other that called himself the Messiah. Those that came in their own name, without any testimony of mission from God, they would receive; but Christ, that came in his Father's name, with his testimony of prophecies, miracles, and the rest, him they received not. When false Christs came presently after him, according as he had foretold, they run out after them, one after another, even to rebellion against the Romans and the desolation of their nation.

All Christ's sufferings, as they were the effects of man's sin, and God's hatred of sin, and his governing justice, considering Christ as made sin for us; so were they the effects of the malice and rage of the devil, who now was at the sword's point with him, and at the closing stroke, and was doing the worst he could against him. This was the time that the serpent must eminently bruise his heel. Christ himself tells the Jews that so it was when they came to take him, that this was their day and the power of darkness, Luke xxii. 53. That is, in which the prince and power of darkness must so far prevail as to cause his shameful death, or else he could not be a sacrifice for sin, nor conquer and triumph by a resurrection, and lead captivity captive, and give the gifts of the Spirit to men upon his ascension. And therefore he would not call for that help from heaven, nor those legions of angels which were at his will, because this was the time of the power of darkness; but when his hour was not yet come, nor this murdering piece of the enemy ready to be discharged, then, though he were daily teaching among them in the temple, and stirring up their rage, yet laid they not hands on him. Two hours of the power of darkness did Christ especially meet with; the foresaid hour of temptation in the wilderness, where the tempter must be let loose in an extraordinary kind, and this hour of his suffering. It was Satan that here buffeted Christ by the hands of wicked men; that spit upon him by their mouths, that crowned him with thorns; that crucified and pierced him, and put him to death, and would have kept him there if all the power of hell could have done it.

When Christ had overcome and was ascended into glory, the enemy draws his sword against his servants, and provokes the deluded Jews to persecute them, and the high priests and Pharisees to stir up the people, and also the Roman power, against them. How furiously are the apostles threatened and scourged, even when they confirmed the doctrine of Christ by miracles! Acts iii. How cruelly is Stephen stoned to death! How quickly is James killed, and Peter imprisoned to the like intent! Paul haleth men and women to prison, to compel them to blaspheme; and when he could persecute them no longer, he is persecuted himself, imprisoned, scourged, tossed up and down, having many conspiracies against his life; every where are the Christians spoken against and persecuted, cast out of synagogues, called before kings, hated of all wicked men, having all manner of evil sayings and doings against them, for the sake of Christ, as he had foretold them it should be. So cruelly were the apostles themselves used, that it is supposed, that of the twelve, with Paul adjoined, there were none but John that escaped their murderous hands, the rest being all offered in martyrdom for Christ; and to John himself they did their worst, and banished him when they could not kill him. Their successors also succeeded them in their sufferings. The common lot

of christians was reproach, imprisonment, and cruel death; so that the Holy Ghost doth warn them all to expect it, telling them that through many tribulations they must enter into the kingdom of heaven, and that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, and not think the fiery trial strange. Few of the pastors of the church did then escape martyrdom. So that of thirty Roman bishops successively very few escaped this death. The like was the lot of other pastors, at Jerusalem, Alexandria, Carthage, and the rest of the world where christianity was set up.

That this was the doing of the malicious serpent, appeareth evidently:

1. In that the worst of men were their greatest persecutors: Nero led the way, and was most cruel; Domitian, and most of the rest, were of his strain; the best emperors and people had the least hand in it, for the most part.

2. In that it was for the maintaining of idolatry that this cruelty was exercised, together with the suppression of the christian faith.

3. The savage and hellish cruelty that they exercised doth manifest it. It were endless to mention the multitudes that were torn in pieces by wild beasts, hanged, burned, crucified, torn with pincers, thrust in with stakes from the fundament through the mouth, whipped to death, cast down from the rocks, beheaded, thrust by hundreds into places where they were burnt together, drowned, hung up by the heels, roasted on spits and gridirons, pressed to death, pricked with nails and reeds to death, hanged by one hand or by the middle till they died, men and women hanged naked by one foot till they died, put by multitudes into the fish-ponds and waters to be frozen to death, their skins flayed off alive, stoned to death, beaten with clubs, and many the like torments. The English reader that would see it in a narrower room, may read Mr. Samuel Clark's "Martyrology." Could any thing but hellish, unmerciful malice kindle and foment such flames as these? Nay, they hewed their own soldiers to death by multitudes, that were christians, and spared not men of any degree.

4. It is yet more apparent that it was the devil that thus raged, because they were his agents that were the great inciters of the emperors hereunto, as well as his interest that was the ground of the quarrel. For not only Apollonius Tyaneus, that famous sorcerer, but all the rest of the magicians or witches, were the great upholders of idolatry, and opposers of the christians, and causers of their sufferings. And doubtless it was not God that set the conjurers on work, but their own master by God's permission.

5. Moreover, this persecution doth more fully discover the enmity that Satan hath against Christ, in that it was the christians that were culled out to this cruel usage, when others were honoured, or let alone. Indeed, the Jews were hardly used, but not in that manner as the christians, for their religion, but the ground and manner was far different.

1. One main reason was, because they so oft rebelled against the Romans, which the christians did not.

2. And God hath subjected them to misery for their infidelity.

3. And yet a great cause was, because they held so much of God's truth as the doctrine of the Old Testament, and did oppose the pagans' multiplicity of gods, and their idolatry; for which the devil doth owe them also a grudge.

But for all that taught or did any thing against Christ and his ways, or maintained any vanity and wickedness, they were not troubled. The philosophers

might be of as many sects as they pleased, and oppose one another as bitterly, and yet never be haled to torments, unless any, with Socrates, would presume to speak against idolatry, the worship of devils; and then he also might feel it. Every country might have gods of their own, and as great variety as they would, and never be put to death or troubled for it. Only the christians are the men, through all the world, that must be hated and persecuted. Nay, it is very observable that though the heretics, that went under the name of christians, were the occasion of their reproaches, yet did they suffer them in their filthiness, and fall upon the orthodox christians. Justin Martyr, in his Second Apology, tells them that "Whatever these heretics be, it is most certain that they are not persecuted, nor put to death for their opinions." Origen, Against Celsus, lib. vi. showing that the Simonians were then quite worn out, for all they accounted idolatry indifferent, and so avoided persecution, saith further, *Immo nec ulla persecutio contra Simonianos unquam exerta est; sciebat enim malus demon doctrine Jesu insidiator, nihil periculi suis rebus imminere a Simonis discipulis*: that is, Yea, there was never any persecution raised against the Simonians; for the evil spirit that plotted against Christ's doctrine did know that there was no danger from Simon's disciples likely to befall his cause or affairs. If an army invade a country, which are half English and half Spaniards, and shall cull out the English and put them to the sword, and let the Spaniards alone, may not any man know that the general and commanders of the army are friends to the Spaniards, or special enemies to the English? So, when all idolaters, heretics, and impious persons are befriended, and only christians and professors of truth destroyed, may you not see that it is their grand enemy, and a friend to idolatry and heresy, that is the author of it?

6. Moreover, it is evidently from Satan, in that it is so propagated in the hearts and cruel actions of persecutors from age to age. It is not only one age, nor one emperor, that hath taken this course; but as at first, ten successively, with some breathing calms under the soberest rulers, of the heathen emperors; so afterwards when the heretics themselves got in power, they were as bloody and cruel as the pagans. Also, it was not in one country, or under one prince's laws alone, but every where they found the same hellish malice and its effects. And it was the magicians that instigated them in other countries too, above any other men. It was they that set Sappho, king of Persia, on his cruel persecution; and so in other places.

How cruelly did the Arian emperors, Constantius and Valens, use the christians! Fourscore ministers, that came to Valens to complain of the christians' sufferings, were burned together in a ship.

The Vandal Arians, under Gensericus, and many of his barbarous successors, are yet more cruel, and put the true christians, especially the ministers, to as exquisite torment as the pagans had done before them. Some were sawed asunder, some were made the food of swine, some anointed with honey and hung up for wasps to eat, some dragged by the heels, naked, through thorns and briars and stony ways, with many the like torments.

And what the christians have suffered from the Turks, and other Mahometans, through all their dominions, I think I need not recite.

And as you have heard what Satan hath done by infidels and heretics, which withdraw from the church; so, thirdly, if he can but get any that call themselves christians, and hold the fundamental truths, to be false to their own profession, and to

engage themselves in any worldly, ambitious designs, or to entertain any corruptions in doctrine, worship, or government, how ordinarily doth he make use of these for the violent opposition and persecution of the truth and servants of Christ! Whoever be the instrument, he careth not, so it be Christ and his kingdom that is opposed; yea, he had rather do it by them that pretend to be his servants than by any others, for then, 1. He can make their very misguided zeal an instrument of his cruelty; 2. And he can make the world believe that all these being christians, their religion is uncertain, and their natures as cruel as any others, when they so contend and persecute each other; 3. And it gratifieth his malice more to turn the name and profession of christianity against Christ, and to fight against him under his own colours, than to do it by open adversaries: 4. Besides that, such venom and corruption in the bowels of the church hath a greater tendency to its ruin than the withdrawing of any parts from it can have.

And, indeed, it is but false friends and real enemies, such as seem christians, but are not so indeed, nor were ever truly joined unto Christ, whom Satan employeth in these works of cruelty (excepting what lesser injuries may be done in a passion, as Asa did).

When Satan had by degrees seduced the church of Rome to so many innovations and errors, and had got such interest among them, and engaged them in such an ambitious, tyrannical enterprise as to domineer over all the christian world, both princes, pastors, and people, and to corrupt the doctrine and worship of Christ, upon this account he maketh them his instruments for as cruel and bloody persecutions of Christ's churches, and as malicious endeavours to hinder the light of the gospel, as ever were performed by infidels, Mahometans, or the filthiest heretics that ever I read of. I shall give but a touch on this, because it is so largely recorded in Fox's "Acts and Monuments," and Mr. Clark's "Martyrology," besides many others, which, for all their rage against them, shall stand as records of their hellish cruelty, to all generations.

Their murders upon so many thousands of the Albigenes and Waldenses, godly people of France, both there and in other countries whither they fled, is beyond most of the heathens' persecutions. Of many hundred thousand persons that were judged to be of the Waldenses' faith, against the pope's usurpation and corruptions, they so slaughtered, and scattered them and consumed them, that few of their societies were there left visible. Their own bishops complained that they could not provide lime and stone to build prisons for them, nor defray the charge of their food; the world was even amazed at the cruelties which they exercised. Thousands of men, women, and infants, they burned together in caves, forced them headlong from the rocks, burned them at stakes, and many ways butchered them, and at last assaulted them by armies, and forced them to defend themselves against this papal cruelty. They raised armies against them out of many nations, as against infidels, to merit paradise by their murders; and continued these wars for very many years; burning their towns, and driving the women, with their children, into the snowy mountains and caves to perish, or inhumanly butchering them.

To recite the cruel slaughters that they made also in Bohemia, was too long. The horrible murders that since then they have made in France, breaking faith with them, and killing them in the churches, when they were met to worship God; were it but that one massacre at Paris, and other cities and countries thereupon, it were enough to show that it

was the hellish enemy of Christ and his gospel, that led them on; and to tell all generations to come what principles hell and Rome are acted by, and how insatiable their thirst is for the blood of upright, righteous men! It is generally supposed that they murdered, at that time, ten thousand persons in Paris, and thirty thousand within a few weeks in that and other places: and that even then when they pretended peace, and seemed to live in quietness, suddenly rising in one night to this bloody execution.

Through the great mercy of God, we in England have tasted but little of their fury in comparison of their sufferings. Yet what days we had in part of Henry the Fifth's reign, and Henry the Eighth, and especially in Queen Mary's, and how many were stifled in prisons, and burnt at stakes, up and down the land, in four or five years' space, Mr. Fox in his "Acts and Monuments" hath acquainted you, and it is too near us to be quite unknown or forgotten.

The Spanish invasion, in 1588, was but a threatening.

The gunpowder-plot, by which they would have blown up the heads of the nation, lords, bishops, and commons, at once, in preparation to the rest of the tragedy; this was but a Romish squib to make sport with. Such murders as were committed on Henry the Third, and Henry the Fourth, kings of France, are but a popish salutation. A breakfast they gave us in Ireland of the cruel bloodshed of so many thousand, in a few days, as hath brought by the ensuing revenging war such a dinner to the actors as such inhuman wretches might well expect.

It were endless to mention the blood that these leeches have sucked, by the devil's appointment, in the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain, and other countries. Were there no more to discover the hellish and Romish fury, but the Spanish inquisition only, it might for ever shame and confound the agents and their principles: it were too long to relate all their subtle, deceitful examinations, tedious imprisonments in a dark, narrow, nasty hole, separate one from another, where it is worse than death for any to give them the least relief, or let them speak to one another, or hear from one another; and this, perhaps, for two or three years, if they die not the while: and then they are tormented with the cruellest tortures that they can devise: their bodies stripped stark naked, in a remote dark cellar, the inquisitors sitting on seats, appointed for the purpose, to direct the tormentors, and intermix their examinations and reproaches; their hands are first tied behind them, and cords tied thereto, and weights at their feet, and so they are drawn up by a pulley to the top of a gibbet, and let down again, and at last strappadoed; when they are drawn to the height with greater weights at their feet, they are suddenly let fall almost to the ground, where the cord stops them, and puts all their limbs out of joint: besides which they anoint some of their feet with oil, and set them to a fire to scorch, and then lay them on their backs in a narrow trough, where a keen cross bar under their backs, doth hinder them from coming to the bottom, and there, covering their faces with a fine cloth, they open their mouths and pour water from on high till they drive the cloth into their throats, and then pluck it out again. Their thighs and legs they bind with small cords, and strain them till they sink into the flesh. And in all this, they will not permit the modest virgin, or gravest matron or lady, to have the least rag to hide her nakedness.

And all this is to force them to recant and confess others, even all that they have but talked with about matters of religion, that so they may have more of the same employment. And when all is done, they array them in a coat all over painted with devils and

fire, and lead them forth before the people on a scaffold, with their tongues tied with their devices, and so to a fire, where they are burnt to death.

These are the generation that crept into our armies and cities, and country in England, and provoke the deluded people to call for liberty of conscience, that the papists may have liberty here, who deal thus mercifully with others, where they have full power.

By this time, I hope, it is no hard matter to discern what a friend Satan is to Christ and his kingdom, who will not by his good will let one godly christian escape his rage, but pursues them in all ages, in all countries, with all sorts of torments and cruelties, by all sorts of enemies; and will not suffer so much as any propagation to be made of the gospel, any discovery of saving truth, or opposition to darkness and wickedness, but he presently raiseth a war against it, and sendeth forth his blood-hounds to fall upon the instruments, and all that do befriend them.

Object. Other men suffer in the world at the hands of others as well as christians.

Ans. I have said already that Satan is an enemy to all mankind; but as his malice is most against Christ and his kingdom, so by what hath been said it may appear, that he doth not so openly rage against any others. Though yet, while he seems to favour and befriend them, and use them as his servants, he doth indeed exercise more cruelty on them than he doth on the faithful in their sharpest torments that he inflicteth on their bodies.

And, indeed, he is but preparing them for the everlasting torments, by making them here his slaughter-men, and drenching their souls in the guilt of blood; which also in this life doth sometimes overtake them, as was before noted of the Irish; who having murdered many hundred thousands of their peaceable neighbours, in a manner exceeding all former persecutions, I think, that ever were read of by pagans, Turks, or former papists, for hellish cruelty, were at last, by the revenging sword of war, by plague and famine, the most of them swept off from the face of the earth. Concerning which, and the Spanish inquisition especially, and other things here recited, I again wish you to peruse Mr. Clark's "Martyrology," which I think a very useful book, for common people who have not learning, time, or means, to read over those many large volumes in several languages which are there contracted; it being very necessary that they should be acquainted with the combat that hath been maintained between light and darkness, the war that Satan hath managed against Christ, from the beginning to this day; and who have been Satan's instruments, and what their exploits. And I believe that those who are tempted to popery, will find in such history a competent preservative.

Sec. X.

If all this afford not sufficient evidence, let this also be added, to clear the rest, that there is in the very hearts or natures of the servants of the devil, of what place, degree, or nation soever, throughout the world, an inbred hatred and enmity to the kingdom and true subjects of Jesus Christ.

This is apparent in the whole course of their lives, whereby it is manifest that it is not only the effect of misinformation and prejudice received from others, or of bare education, or difference of opinions, or the like, but the effect of those different masters whom they serve, and captains whom they fight under, and spirits which do actuate them, and principles and doctrines by which they are acted.

By these two ways is this enmity fully manifested.

1. By the hatred which they have to Christ's ways and servants.

2. By their resistance and reluctancy against his persuasions, and the difficulty of drawing men over to his ways.

1. For the first, it is evident that it is not only the heathens, heretics, or papists, but every wicked man and servant of the devil that hath an enmity in his heart to Christ and his ways. Though they are born with us in the same country, of the same ancestors; though they profess to believe the same articles of faith, and be of the same religion, yea, though they will cry out against former persecutors, and honour the memory of the martyrs that have suffered for Christ, and keep holy days for them, yet have they a general hatred to the ways and servants of Christ themselves. Nor can any infidel say, that this is a quarrel among christians themselves, and therefore no proof of Satan's enmity to Christ. For, 1. All know that multitudes will be of that religion which the prince is of, and take that side that saves themselves, and tendeth most to their worldly advantage. 2. And Christ taketh none for his servants indeed but those that are heartily so, and soundly believe his gospel, and hope for salvation, and love him as their Redeemer, and God by him, and so live according to his laws. These, and these only, are christians indeed. Those that are of Hobbs's religion, to be christians because the prince commandeth them so to be, as if Christ had no power to command them himself, nor the Father had laid any such command on men, and those that are seeming christians they know not why, upon mere custom, and because it is in credit, professing to believe what they believe not indeed, and calling that God's word which they are resolved not to obey, Christ will not own those for his people. Whatever their title be, or whatever religion they thus customarily profess, it is certain that they are the servants of the devil, who obey him, whose hearts are devoted and lives employed to his service. The name of Christ may be easily entertained for worldly advantages, but the christian doctrine, nature, and conversation, all these men do unanimously abhor; only while the common grace of Christ is preparing them, they may lie under convictions, and have some good wishes and purposes for him, and by the restraint of that common grace, they may be hindered from open rage and persecution, and so they may by the prosperity of the godly: but when they are loose, they show what they are.

For all this we need not go to history for our proof: we have had experience of it all our lives to this day: even here among us, where religion and piety is in as much credit, and hath as much countenance, as most ever it had in the world, yet there is not a man that is discerned to fear God, and live after the laws of Christ, but he is the scorn and by-word of the ungodly about him: so that in the best times, in one degree or other, the apostle's words are verified, that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, 2 Tim. iii. 12. Mark that; he doth not say, All that will say they are christians; but, All that will live godly in Christ Jesus. For these have the true christian nature, and obey him whom they do profess. Where is there a city, or village, or family, where the servants of Satan and Christ live together, but Christ's servants are hated? Yea, no relations or interests will reconcile them. If the children obey Christ, they are opposed by their own parents: husband and wife are at enmity on this account; masters hate their servants for serving that Christ whom they themselves do call their Lord. Though they never hurt them or

do them any wrong, yet wicked neighbours do hate the godly. Yea, though they live in greater love, and patience, and meekness, and innocency, than any others, and though they are faithful to them, and do them all the good they can, yet are they hated by them.

And that this is the devil's quarrel, is yet more evident in that the worst of men that have most of the diabolical nature, and live after the will of the devil, are the greatest enemies to all true christians. If there be any nation so unhappy as to have a sensual, wicked prince, he is presently a persecutor of all that live godly: if he have Nero's wicked heart, he will likely have Nero's bloody hands. What covetous extortioner or oppressor, what whoremonger, drunkard, swearer, blasphemer, curser, railer, do you know almost, that is not a bitter enemy to godliness, and to the people that most diligently obey and worship Christ?

And it is not only their persons, but it is their doctrine and practices which they hate; that tenderness of conscience, and carefulness to please God, and avoid all known sin; that diligence in holy worship, reading Scriptures, praising God, praying to him, &c. which Christ commandeth: these are the things which their natures do abhor.

As the papists in Ireland, some of them stamped the English Bible under feet, and cursing it, said, This is it that hath bred all the quarrels; so even among those that profess the same faith with us at home, it is the gospel, and the worship of God, and obedience to Christ, that is the occasion of all the quarrel. When the wars had let them loose in England, multitudes found this to their sorrow: when if a man had but prayed or sung a psalm in his family, he was ready to be dragged out of his house as a roundhead and traitor. This is a known truth up and down England in garrisons and villages. And before that, when the vulgar spirit of malignity was but a little let loose, (by the bishops' persecutions of godly men,) upon occasion of the book of dancing and sports on the Lord's day, and of bowing to altars, and such like; it did so commonly rage, that it was, all over the land, a matter of common scorn and reproach for a man to pray in his family, or read God's word, or sing a psalm; nay, if he would not come out and dance as they did, or look on as one of them, or would not go with them to the ale-house, or would not swear in his common talk, he was the common by-word, as a precisian or puritan. So that if we had no other proof of Satan's hostility to Christ, this one would put the question out of doubt: when, through the whole christian world, the servants of Satan are haters of Christ's servants, how near to them soever they be, and are manifesting their malice on all occasions as far as they dare; when kingdoms, cities, towns, families, are all daily embroiled in this dissension, and the witnesses of this war between Satan and Christ, I know not how we should any longer doubt which side it is that Satan is on. If, after all this malice and bloodshed, men will yet think that he is on Christ's side, let them taste of his fury that believe it not when they see it.

2. Moreover, the enmity is apparent in the hearts of all Satan's servants unto Christ, by the resistance that they make before they will be recovered, and by their obstinacy against all means that should persuade them to turn to Christ. Though you show them the clearest reasons, and silence all their objections, and convince them that it is their own good and happiness that Christ would draw them to, yet will it not bring them over to his way. Though they profess to believe him to be the Son of God, and

their Redeemer, and his gospel to be true, and make it their religion to be his servants by profession, yet will they not be so indeed. How many sermons are lost upon them! How many plain instructions, exhortations, and earnest persuasions lost! How much patience, mercy, and other means in vain as to their recovery! What other religion in the world are men so backward to, till Christ overpower them, and change their hearts? What faithful minister hath not had experience of this? What godly christian hath not proved it? Certainly there is a hellish power in men's souls that bolts the door to keep out Christ, and strives to keep his old possession. Oh the multitude of subtle and fierce temptations, by which the great adversary keeps up his kingdom! And what a stir there is before a soul is recovered from his power! Truly all faithful ministers of the gospel, who are Christ's ensigns, and are employed under him for the carrying on of his war, have so great experience of a satanical opposition to their message and labours, and to Christ himself, that I should think they need no other evidence of the enmity, for the repelling of any temptation to the contrary. Oh the painful life that faithful pastors are put to by the mere opposition of the serpent to their labours! What work doth he make them! What work of theirs doth he mar! What studies and earnest endeavours doth he frustrate; and cause them oft to lie down in sorrow and say, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" How oft doth he send them home with tears, for the ignorance, and sensuality, and obstinacy of their people; and make those our enemies for telling them saving truth, who are obliged by so many bonds to entertain it! Yea, how many ancient, laborious ministers do see so little fruit of their labours, that even in old age and at death, they are almost ready to cry out, in the grief of their hearts, We have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought! Never can we speak to a poor sinner for his conversion, but Satan within him speaks and pleads against us, and ordinarily shuts his ears and hardens his heart against all that we can say. Never do we stand up in public to speak to people for their conversion in the name of the Lord, but Satan stands up against us, and contradiceth us. When we think we have such clear demonstrations that no man can gainsay them, they are not convinced. When we speak as plain as we are able, they understand us not, but we are to them as barbarians. When we beseech them in the name of Christ, they yield not. When we tell them, it is the adversary that dissuadeth them, and make it appear that it is for their ruin, and that it is filth and dung that they sell Christ and the hopes of salvation for; yet doth it not prevail to take them off from the ways that apparently lead to their destruction, nor to cause them to entertain the counsel of Christ. Many a time have I been so confident of the clearness of the cause, that I should have made no question of prevailing, at least so far as to bring men to consideration, and to the use of means for their further information, if it had not been the power of Satan that did withstand us. Such an evident folly and unreasonableness is there in the ways of Satan and sin, that one would think less ado might serve to persuade men of reason from them unto Christ. It were strange if ministers that live in this warfare, and spend their time and strength in it, and suffer so many knocks and hard usages from the enemy, should not be convinced, and thoroughly convinced, that such a war there is, and that Satan is the resolved enemy of Christ.

Sect. XI.

Yet further, the devil's enmity against Christ is apparent in his contrary precepts and persuasions. The ways that he would draw men to are as contrary to Christ's ways as darkness is to light, and death to life. Hence is the conflict that preachers have with him in their ministry, and all men in their hearts and lives, that will escape him. What truth of Christ, especially that is practical, doth not Satan malign, and stir up men to contradict? What one holy duty doth Christ command, which Satan doth not uncessantly oppose, and seek to draw us from?

If you ask, How is this manifest, that Satan useth such endeavours? I answer, by the sense and constant observation of his temptations with their effects. Consider these temptations both as exercised on the wicked or on the godly, and the truth of the point will easily hence appear.

What a multitude of subtle devices hath he to hinder the conversion of a sinner to Christ! what prejudice and false conceits doth he possess him with! How many several ways doth he take, sometimes by enticements, and the pleasing baits of worldly glory, and the delights of the flesh; sometimes by terrors, by threatenings, persecution, or adversity! When he is foiled at one weapon, he presently betakes himself to another; when he is beaten out of one hold, he hath another to retire to. How many sorts of baits hath he to cover his hook! temptations of all sorts; fitted to men's age, their callings, their relations, their former actions, their bodily temperature and constitution, and the times they live in, and the persons they converse with! What have we to do with which he maketh not a snare? what mercy do we receive, what creature do we use, which he maketh not a temptation to us? What man that was ever recovered from his power, may not look back and remember the wiles and devices by which he was before detained, and the devil's industry to have kept him from Christ, and by what means he hindered his conversion so long? Certainly, every soul that is recovered to Christ by the gospel is fetched out of the very paws and mouth of the lion, and snatched as a brand out of the fire, and fetched as it were from the very suburbs of hell. The resistance is such, by such shifts and solicitations, that it fully discovereth the devil to be the author.

And as for the godly that are recovered, because they are yet in the way, and not at the end, in the field, and not with the crown on their heads, it is God's will that the enemy shall have leave to assault them while they are here; and in such a manner he doth it that they can discern that it is of him. They cannot set upon a work that is pleasing to Christ, but the tempter resisteth them. When do they ever study, or preach, or exhort, but he resisteth them? when do they set upon the reformation of any faults in themselves, in their families, in the neighbourhood, or in the church, but Satan resisteth them? Christians, you have a singular advantage above all men to discern the malice of Satan against Christ, and so to be confirmed in the truth of your belief, and to repel all blasphemous temptations to the contrary. How can you ever doubt whether Satan be against Christ, who live in the combat, and have fought under Christ against him so long, and felt so many of his sharp assaults, and received so many wounds and foils by him, as you have done? Have recourse to your own experience, for it must needs be a great advantage; and, especially, note how the enmity is disclosed in these particulars following:

1. Do you not observe that the bent of Satan's temptation is against God and the Lord Jesus Christ?

How doth he persuade men to false, unworthy thoughts of God; to think of him either as unholy, to encourage them to sin, or, as cruel and unmerciful, to take off their love from him and drive them to despair; yea, where he hath opportunity, he persuadeth them that there is no God! When men fall into melancholy, which it seems doth give some advantage to his temptations, whether he were before godly or ungodly, knowing or ignorant, it is ten to one but he is violently tempted either to believe that there is no God, no Christ, no Scripture true, nor the soul immortal, or else to speak out some blasphemous words of God. Multitudes of persons have I spoken with in this case, that have been so terribly assaulted with these temptations day and night, that they could not rest. Though some of them scarce ever thought before of such matters, nor ever heard them from any other, and others of them never doubted of them; yet now, which way ever they go, and whatever they do, such thoughts come into their minds. Many have I known live in continual fear lest they should blaspheme God, and could hardly keep in the words, and wherever they were, they were still haunted with such solicitations to blasphemy, they could not hear or pray, but they were urged to blaspheme; and some of them have been overcome, and have let out blasphemous words, and then the tempter hath persuaded them that their sin was unpardonable: such a miserable life have many under his continual, malicious buffetings. And though there be something in the melancholy disease that may cause troubles and perplexities of mind; yet why it should still work thus against God, and Christ, and Scripture, and that in almost all persons, and so violently, I cannot imagine, if the hellish enemy did not take advantage hereof for these temptations.

2. Do you not find that the bent of all temptations is against the truth and ways of Christ, and those holy works that he calls you to? What are they but to draw you from holiness to unholiness, from obedience to disobedience, from heavenliness to earthliness, from temperance to sensuality, and, in a word, from every virtue unto every vice, or at least to those where he hath most hopes to prevail? Do you not feel sometimes, if not very often, when you should be earnest with God in secret prayer, an unreasonable withdrawing and disturbance within you? It is a duty that costs you nothing, and subjecteth you to no losses or hazards in the world; and yet when you would draw so near to God, do you not find that you are drawn back; and though you have leisure and liberty, yet the tempter will draw you to be unwilling, and all the while you are at it, is either taking down your affections, carrying off your thoughts, casting in distempers, or urging you to be short, make haste, and give over before you have well begun; so that you may easily feel that there is a devil that is against your communion with God, and envieth him his worship, and would have you rise and go away without the blessing? The like you may find in your meditations; if you do but set yourselves purposely and seriously to meditate of Christ or the life to come, or any necessary subject, how doth the tempter clog you, or take you off, or keep down your affections, so that you can hardly make any thing of your meditations! If you endeavour by gracious conference or counsel to win others, or to edify each other, how many diversions and hindrances shall you meet with! Whereas, in vain talk, in folly and sin, you may go on without such resistance. What sin is there that you may not even feel Satan pleading for, and promoting or commending to your hearts? How often is he kindling the fire

of lust, and blowing at the coal of pride and ambition, and enticing you to an esteem of the things of the world, or to venture upon some forbidden pleasures, and to account them far greater pleasures than they are! Truly, I feel that enmity to Christ, his truth, and ways, in the daily solicitations or temptations of the devil, either hindering good, or drawing to evil, that methinks should do so much to convince a very infidel, if he did feel the like, that certainly the doctrine of Christ is true, and his ways are good, or else the serpent would not so oppose them. I find he is fighting against Christ and his Spirit in me, day and night. Whence can all that unreasonable dissuasion and withdrawing from Christ and duty else proceed? I know the heart is bad, and may bring forth such fruits without much tillage; but as the heart would not have been so evil, but for the evil one that deceived us; so as bad as it is, I can find that there is an instigator of it unto further evil than else it would of itself commit, and that when it is let alone, it is not so prone to evil, nor so backward to good, as it is under such temptations. He that hath such a fight within him, and lives himself in the continual trouble and duty of a soldier, and is fain still to stand on his watch and guard, or else be overthrown, and feel the wounds, hath less reason than any man else in the world to doubt whether Satan be an enemy to Christ, or whether it be not a good cause that hath so bad an enemy.

Thus I have manifested on Satan's part, that he is at utmost enmity with Christ, and therefore could not be the causer of his miracles, nor lend him his power for the building of his church; and so that the sin against the Holy Ghost, which the Pharisees were guilty of, was a most unreasonable sin, and a rejecting of their Physician against so full a testimony of God, that it was a righteous thing that they should die in their sins.

Sect. XII.

I shall next proceed to show you, on Christ's part, that he is as great an enemy to Satan, as Satan is to him; and by his nature, interest, design, and works, to make it plain that he was so far from being beholden to him for his help, that it is Christ alone that must utterly confound him.

And, 1. For the nature of Christ, it is manifest to us by his doctrine and his works, that it was most holy; seeing so holy a doctrine and life could not else have proceeded from it. He challenged his adversaries to convince him of sin, John viii. 46, but never man could do it. It was his good deeds that were charged upon him as his crimes, as that he healed on the sabbath day, that he was among sinners as a physician among the sick, that he called himself the Son of God, &c.

That he was merciful, and a lover of mankind, was as evident as light in the sun: as we shall touch anon when we come to his works. This was a nature perfectly contrary to the nature of devils, who are unclean, impure spirits, and haters of God and man. Satan was a roaring, devouring lion; Christ was the Lamb of God. Satan rageth against those that hurt him not; Christ prayeth for his enemies. Satan would set all the world upon blood and revenge; Christ bids them forgive and love their enemies, and learn of him to be meek and lowly, and commandeth Peter to put up his sword.

2. And for his interest, it is perfectly contrary to that of Satan. If God be dishonoured, and man destroyed, and himself honoured, the devil hath what he would have. If God be honoured, and man saved, and Satan shamed and confounded, Christ hath what he would have. Satan's kingdom consisteth in sin-

fulness and contentions, divisions and revenge, and in the ruin, and misery, and calamities of mankind: Christ's kingdom consisteth in righteousness towards God and man, in peace with God and among ourselves, and in joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17; James iii. 16, 17.

3. So also was the design of Christ most perfectly contrary to the design of Satan. The design of Satan was to rob God of his due obedience and honour, and man of his grace and salvation, and to be man's idol himself: the design of Christ is to glorify his Father, John xvii. 4, and xiii. 31, 32, to bring man to his due obedience, Acts xxvi. 18, to restore him to the grace of God, and recover him to salvation, and to root out all idolatry, and especially the worship of devils, from the world. I do but name these briefly, because it is his works wherein all these are manifested, and in the mention of those works we shall have occasion to review them.

Sect. XIII.

When God had created man, it was his pleasure that he should perform to him a tried obedience, and that he should have life and death propounded to his choice, and his happiness or misery should be in the hands of his own will, and that the tempter should have leave to assault him with his temptations, seeing God had given him so many helps against them, as in reason should have sufficed to hold him to God, against the persuasions of the strongest temptation; and seeing that obedience is little worth, which will be cast off as soon as men are tempted to disobey. Upon this permission the tempter makes his onset, and quickly deceiveth man, and wins the day. By this conquest he got a double power over man, the Lord in judgment leaving him to be delusively ruled and ruined by him, whom he had chosen before his Maker to believe and obey. First, he had got an interest in his mind and will, and so could rule him by his temptations. Secondly, he was made God's executioner, and so had a power to punish him. But mercy provided a remedy, and the Son of God interposed, and undertook the rescue of the sinner, and the preservation of the world, and the recovery of God's honour in the reparation of the injury, and to assume the nature of man to these ends; that so he might conquer Satan in the nature that was conquered, and might offer himself a sacrifice for the demonstration of justice in the same nature. The first declaration of this undertaking was unto the serpent himself, Gen. iii. 15, but doubtless in the ears of man to his comfort. Where note the first breaking out of the enmity. Satan had played the enemy to man, and deserved to be taken by him as his enemy. The promise to man is part of the condemnation of the serpent. That is man's recovery and life, which is his misery and destruction. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." By the serpent is meant both the instrumental serpent, whom the devil used, (as no doubt Eve knew; it being not agreeable to the nature of spirits to be of themselves visible, but to borrow corporal instruments and visors when they will sensibly converse with man,) and also here is meant the devil himself, the tempting serpent. By the enmity is meant a very natural antipathy or hatred of one another; which shall be born and bred in man and corporal serpents, and continue in Satan; and is not only caused by extrinsical means, informations, or accidents; and which no rhetoric can extirpate, any more than nature can be extirpated by arguments. This enmity is on man's part, 1. In the woman her-

self; and, 2. In her seed. A threefold seed she was to have, and, in their measure, it was to be in them all.

1. In her natural seed as such, there was a natural enmity put from that day, to the diabolical nature; as there was unto the terrene, serpentine nature. So that as a man abhorreth all the kind of serpents, and either flieth from them, or seeketh to kill them, so doth he now naturally abhor the devil, and would fly from him or hurt him if he could.

That this enmity is put into our whole nature, appears, 1. In that we all find it there. Good and bad abhor the devil. Even they that serve him, yet abhor him.

2. In that we find it true of the instrumental, terrene serpent, that our whole natures have an enmity to their whole nature.

3. In that it is expressly spoken of the seed of the woman without exception.

4. In that it is first spoken of the woman herself in order before any of her seed: whence we may conclude, 1. That if it were by that sentence put into her, then must it be in us; 2. And if first in her, then by her conveyed to us as her seed.

Yet is this no enmity to the wicked works that Satan tempteth to: for we are naturally his captives as to them; and that is by a voluntary captivity; but it is to the person and nature of the devil himself, whom man now fears and abhors as his enemy and tormentor. And, therefore, it is said, that we are all our life-time subject to bondage, through the fears of that death whereof Satan is the prince, Heb. ii. 14.

From hence it may appear, both that this enmity to the diabolical nature was not in man before the fall, and that sinful man hath some advantage hereby for the resisting of temptations, and the entertainment of those means that tend to his escape.

The second seed of the woman is the supernatural seed, Jesus Christ; indeed the seed of the woman, though not of the man: in him there is an enmity answerable to his nature and office; a perfect enmity to the satanical nature, as sinful and murderous, and cruel to man; and an enmity of office and design.

The third seed is the church regenerate, who have, as men, a participation of the first enmity; and as regenerate and united to Christ, a participation in their degree of the latter enmity, even such as was in Christ himself, which is against the evil works of Satan, as well as against himself and his penal executions and torments, which all men hate.

The perfect enmity, then, is in the perfect seed, who, as he conveyeth to us his holy nature, doth proportionably convey to us an enmity to Satan and his works: and as he actually employeth us as soldiers in his army to fight against Satan, so do we participate of the enmity of his design and office; but at such a distance as is the private soldier from the general; saving that his ministers and other subordinate officers partake yet somewhat more of this enmity as to office and employment, for they are standard-bearers and leaders under Christ the general in this warfare, and so are doubly engaged against Satan.

And as the regenerate participate of both sorts of enmity, so the unregenerate partake both of the enmity against Satan and the enmity against Christ: for as they are naturally the seed of the woman, they have an enmity against the diabolical nature or kind, and against them as executioners of wrath upon men; and as they are wicked, so they partake of the diabolical disposition, and so are in enmity to the holy disposition of Christ and his sanctified ones: so that Christ must war against them when he warreth for them; against their resistance when

for their deliverance, for they are voluntary captives, and will join with the enemy, and fight against him that pursueth for their recovery, before they will be brought back. Yet this they do not as for Satan, for they are personally at enmity with him, and so far as they can but see him in a temptation, they are the more fortified against it; but it is as for themselves, even their carnal selves, to whom they are fallen, and addicted upon their fall from God: for the deceiver still blindeth them, and makes them believe that his ways are for their good.

Thus you see two armies formed presently upon man's fall. The devil is general of one, even Beelzebub, that is called the prince of the devils. His angels, or companions in sin, are the first and chief part of his army, who walk to and fro, compassing the earth, Job i. 7, 22, lying in wait to deceive and devour: for as they were multitudes of evil spirits that fell with the chief of them, so are they all of his disposition and kingdom, and manage the same design against man; and wicked men are the other part of his army. This army is employed to hold what Satan had got, and to hinder the rescue and redemption of his captives, and to fight against Christ that hath undertaken the work, and against all those especially that are in any special way by Christ employed for the recovery of souls; and, consequently, to make man twofold more miserable by rejecting of the remedy.

The other army is commanded by the blessed Son of God, who is therefore called the Captain of our salvation; for the design of it is to fight with Satan, and rescue and bring back his captives unto God, and so to save them from the wrath to come. The soldiers of this army are both the good angels and the regenerate part of men. Whether the angels were ministering spirits to Adam in innocency, is more than I find made known in Scripture, and therefore think it unsafe and imprudent to conclude, either that they were or they were not. But it is certain that they were afterwards; and if they were so before, yet it is certain that it is a new office and task that they have now undertaken; even to help towards the rescue and recovering of the captives. If they do not now begin to be angels or messengers from God to man, or ministers for man's good, yet they now begin to be employed in this way of service, under Christ, for their restoration. They have all listed themselves now under the Lord Jesus Christ, and are contented to be employed by him for the saving of sinners. The Son must sit on God's right hand till he make his enemies his footstool; and the angels are all his ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 13, 14. Nor do they disdain to stoop to this service of Christ for lost man. For, though they are excellent spirits, yet are they his servants "by whom God made the worlds, and whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power; when he had, by himself, purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: being made so much better than the angels, as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they," Heb. i. 2-4.

Thus find we these angels executing their office; sometimes ministering to Christ himself in the flesh, Matt. iv. 11; sometimes searching into the mystery of redemption, 1 Pet. i. 12. More than twelve legions of them were ready to have rescued him from the hands of the Jews if he would have desired it, Matt. xxvi. 53. They subverted in the delivery of the law to Moses, Gal. iii. 19; Acts vii. 53; they

attended Christ into the world, revealing him to the shepherds, and unanimously praising God at his birth, Luke ii. 9—14. So far were they from disdaining their incarnate Lord, or his service for lost sinners, that the heavenly army, or host, do praise God for it, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good will towards men;" and when in this warfare one captivated sinner is recovered, there is joy in heaven among these angels, Luke xv. 7, 10. They are present with us in our assemblies, which are the well-ordered troops and companies of this army; and their presence we must regard, 1 Cor. xi. 10. They are witnesses of our good or ill behaviour, Eccl. v. 6; 1 Tim. v. 21; and, therefore, to be revered as the chief of our fellow-soldiers or servants, but not worshipped, Col. ii. 18. "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God," Rev. xxii. 8, 9.

You see, then, that the angels are a chief part of the army of Christ, and serve under him for the saving of sinners from the devil; and, therefore, you find them contending with the devil, though with the meekness of the lamb, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee," Jude 9. They convey the departing souls of the righteous unto Christ, Luke xvi. 22; they encamp round about them that fear the Lord, and deliver them, Psal. xxxiv. 7, even as they carried Lot from the flames of Sodom, and could do nothing till he were come forth, Gen. xix. 15, 16, &c. And no wonder that they stoop to the help of man; for it is to the angelical similitude or dignity that Christ doth advance us, and join us to them, by making us like them or equal to them, Luke xx. 36. We are now their particular charge, Matt. xviii. 10, that we may be hereafter their companions, Acts xii. 15. They help to the increase, preservation, and defence of the church, Acts viii. 26; x. 7, 22; xi. 13; xii. 11; Dan. iii. 21; vi. 22; Isa. lxiii. 9. When the whole army are drawn forth in their glory they are a principal part: you may take a view of all in Heb. xii. 22—24: "We are come to mount Sion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling," &c. And in the head of this army will Christ appear at the end of the world, when he hath won the field and comes in triumph to confound his conquered enemies, and to be glorified in his redeemed, delivered saints; that they who have now passed through this warfare "in patient enduring tribulations and persecution, may, in that righteous judgment of God, be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which they suffered; it being the righteous thing which God will then do, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble us, and to us that are troubled rest with the saints, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day," 2 Thess. i. 5—10.

And as the angels are one part of his army, so are the saints another, who must fight for themselves under Christ's conduct, of whom we shall have occasion to say more anon.

Thus you see the Redeemer's army moulded, and of what members it is composed. We should next observe their progress and exploits; but lest you mistake in the matter of their success, by mistaking the design and nature of the fight and conquest, mark well these things following, by the way, before we go further.

1. That it pleased God in his sentence of sinful man, to lay on him unavoidably certain temporal calamities, and to enable the serpent to bruise his heel. So that we must eat our bread in the sweat of our brows, and the earth must be cursed for our sakes, and we must return to dust from whence we came, as to our flesh.

2. And, therefore, it is none of the Redeemer's undertaking to prevent these sufferings and death.

3. But his work is to save us from our sins, Matt. i. 21, and from the wrath to come, 1 Thess. i. 10, and to reconcile us to God, 1 Cor. v. 19, 20, and justify, sanctify, and glorify us, Rom. viii. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 11; and to sanctify our present sufferings to these ends, Rom. viii. 18, and to moderate their sufferings in order thereunto, Heb. xii.

4. And the way of our conquests is not always nor principally in a visible prosperity and worldly greatness and dominion; but ordinarily by patience and contentedness in our sufferings: it being grace and the prosperity of the soul that we fight for, it must be done by that way that hath the true and certain tendency to these ends, and not by carnal pleasure and prosperity, which are ordinarily our greatest adversaries. In patience we must possess our souls, if we would secure them against the storms of Satan, Luke xxi. 19. It was this way that Christ himself did conquer, who is the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. And we must consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds, Heb. xii. 2, 3. We must follow him bearing our cross if we will conquer: for we have need of patience, besides doing God's will in actual obedience, that we may inherit the promised crown, Heb. x. 36. It is not by conquering kingdoms, and becoming masters of other men's possessions, but by taking joyfully the spoiling of our own goods, knowing in ourselves that we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance, Heb. x. 34: when for his name's sake we are killed all the day long, and counted as sheep to the slaughter, when we suffer tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, sword; in all these things we are conquerors and super-conquerors, through the Captain of our salvation that hath led us this way, Rom. viii. 35, 36. For as this our Captain was himself made perfect by suffering, (not in his nature and holiness, for that was before perfect, but in his military work, and actual obedience, and righteousness therein consisting, and his aptitude to be the leader and deliverer of others,) and this for the bringing of many sons to glory, Heb. ii. 10; so will he have us follow him in the way that he hath trod, and through many tribulations to enter into his kingdom; and to suffer with him, that we may reign with him, Rom. viii. 17; and in this way he will not be ashamed to call us his fellow-soldiers or brethren, Heb. ii. 11—13. Thus must we in ourselves be made partakers of the sufferings of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, we also may be glad (as triumphing victors) with exceeding joy. And if thus we are reproached for Christ, we are happy; for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth on us, 1 Pet. iv. 14—16. Blessed, therefore, is he that thus "endureth temptation: for

when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him," James i. 12. Here is the patience, and faith, and victory of the saints.

I know the carnal heart will be ready to say, If this be your victory, I desire none of it; any one may so conquer, as to be trodden down and ruined. Whereto, I answer, the power and victory of Christ is still manifest, in these particulars following.

1. In that it is not in the power of the tempter to conquer the graces of the saints, nor to separate them from the love of God in Christ, Rom. viii. 38, 39, which he had rather do if he could, than to trample upon their bodies, or keep them in poverty or trouble for a time. He can be content to let you have dignities and honours, so he could but rob you of the dignity of saints, and cast out the image of God again from your souls. He can let you enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, that thereby he might deprive you of the celestial pleasures. He will let young men rejoice, and their hearts cheer them in the days of their youth, and walk in the ways of their own heart, and the light of their eyes, if they will but forget that for all these things they must come to judgment, Eccl. xi. 9. He judgeth not himself, as he persuadeth blind infidels to judge, that it is better to win the world than to save our souls; he would let you have the kingdoms and glory of the world, if it were in his power, so you would but give him the worship due to God, Matt. iv. 9. Our victory, therefore, lieth in maintaining our innocency, and not obeying his wicked seducements, and this may be as well and better done in adversity than in prosperity: adversity, therefore, is no sign that Satan is the conqueror.

2. Moreover, the business of Satan is to keep men from God; if Christ, therefore, do bring men nearer to God by adversity, he conquereth the tempter that would keep them from him: but it is clear by experience, that the souls of the faithful are kept closer to God in suffering times, than in prosperity; they are then more sensible of the vanity and emptiness of all worldly things, and weaned from them, and do fly to God with more earnest desires, and more sensible of the folly of sinning than at other times: and, sure, the soul is most victorious against Satan, that is nearest God, and hath most of his love, whatever befall the body in the mean time.

3. If an increase of all graces appear on the soul in time of affliction, then is it not very hard, to an opened eye, to see Christ's victory in the afflictions of his people; for that which makes a man better, is the best condition, in the judgment of Seneca himself, and of reason: but grace useth to increase in affliction, therefore we may well account it our victory.

4. If God be most honoured by his people in adversity, when they suffer for his cause, then we may well see, that, even in our sufferings, Christ may be conquering, for it is God's dishonour that the tempter doth endeavour; but it is certain, that God is usually more honoured at such times, when his graces are exercised in the eye of the world, and when his servants confess him in the midst of persecution. How hath Christ been more honoured on earth than by the martyrdom of his followers, and their confessing him in the midst of cruellest torments?

5. If Satan be most confounded, dishonoured, and disappointed in the sufferings of the faithful, then may they well be said to conquer in their sufferings; but it is certain, by all experience, that Satan hath been never so confounded, shamed, and disappointed, as when his cruelty and wickedness is most manifestly

discovered, and his way thereby the more abhorred, and yet the righteous the more confirmed. The histories of heathenish and popish persecution, that are upon record for the view of posterity, will give a greater wound to the cause of Satan in their hands, than ever it had been like to have received by our prosperity. How many thousands among ourselves have been confirmed in a hatred of popery, by the French massacre, the Spanish inquisition, the cruelty in Queen Mary's days, the gunpowder plot, the Irish butcheries, &c. that have known little of the arguments that are used by either side in disputation!

6. If Christ's kingdom thrive by his people's sufferings, he may well be said to conquer by them. But that his kingdom hath thriven by our sufferings always in purity, frequently in numbers of his true disciples, the experience of all suffering ages can bear witness.

You see now that here are two armies in the field of this world, one under Christ, and the other under Satan, and what are their several interests and designs, and what it is to conquer, and by what means Christ and his soldiers overcome, and how you may judge rightly of the issue of the fight, who hath the better, and who the worse.

Sect. XIV.

We shall next a little consider of the history of Christ's conflicts with Satan, and the success, and show you by how many ways he hath fully discovered to us, that he is the chief enemy of hell. And I will, for brevity, overpass all the history of the Old Testament, and begin at the New.

1. Before he came in the flesh, the angels are sent from heaven to acquaint men that he came on this very business, and to this end, to conquer Satan, and rescue his captives, and save his people. Matt. i. 21, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Luke i. 30—35, 68—80.

2. Before he was born himself, John the Baptist is sent into the world as his forerunner; and before Christ doth solemnly set upon his great work, John must be sent to prepare his way. He is sent to bid Satan defiance, and to proclaim and begin the hotter part of the war, being "filled with the Holy Ghost even from the womb; to turn many of the children of Israel unto God: to go before Christ in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord," Luke i. 15—17: "to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of God; to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death," Luke i. 77—79. For it was his office to be the voice crying in the wilderness, saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" and to bid them "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand;" and to tell them of the promised salvation which was raised up, "That we might be saved from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us; that we, being delivered from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life," Luke i. 70—76. This man hath the honour to initiate Christ into the solemn entrance upon his military work by his baptism, which had the same general nature with our baptism, but not the same in special. It was not to convey to him the remission of sin, as it is to us, for he had none; nor was it to engage him to himself, as we are engaged to him; but it was to engage him solemnly in the same military work against sin and Satan; as the general may glory in wearing the

same colours which he gives his soldiers, to signify that they are of a party, and go all on one and the same design; only one as general, and the rest as common soldiers. Though we be not to do the same works against Satan in all things as Christ, yet are we to fight against him in our ranks and places, as Christ did in his. He is entered as General and King by his baptism, and we as soldiers and subjects, by ours.

At this his baptismal engagement, and taking the field, John gives him his testimony: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." And the Father giveth him his testimony by a voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. iii. 17; Luke iii. 22. And the Holy Ghost beareth witness in descending on him in the form of a dove, Luke iii. 22. Thus you see Christ take the field in his own personal engagement.

3. Being thus engaged himself, he is immediately set upon personally by the tempter, being led into the wilderness by the Spirit, and purposely submitting himself hereunto. The reason of this conflict I told you before. As the first Adam being assaulted quickly after his entrance into Paradise, and institution of the sacramental trees, was overcome by the tempter, so must the second Adam overcome the tempter, and that in a like conflict hand to hand, presently after his baptism. Satan must lose his prisoners in the way he got them, and Christ must do what Adam could not. The victory must be got by the public person in our nature before it be got by each man individually in his own person; for so was it lost. Here was the first great overthrow of the adversary. Here was the serpent's head broken as he is the tempter, as on the cross it was afterwards broken as he is the tormentor, as is said before. And as Adam lost the day before he had any offspring, so Christ wins it in his own person, before he doth solemnly begin to preach the gospel, or calleth any of his disciples, as far as I can find in the text.

That this was a solemn combat, and a considerable part of Christ's work, appears by the solemn preparation and management; for though Christ's fasting forty days in the wilderness was a preparation to all his after-performance, as well as this one, yet more immediately for this as a special part of it.

It was not merely a fantasm, as some have imagined, that Christ was thus assaulted and used; and yet it seems to be in the spirit, though real, as Paul was taken up into the heavens; how far in the body, or out of the body, I think we cannot judge.

Nor should it be matter of offence to any, that Satan should have so much power of Christ as to carry him, as is there expressed, seeing it was but in order to the temptation, and by Christ's own submission and consent, and did but prepare for the greater conquest; and the enemy departed as overcome, at his command. This was the issue of this leading conflict, between the two generals hand to hand.

4. When Christ had thus conquered Satan himself, he presently invited men to take his colours, and goeth about preaching the gospel himself, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe the gospel," Mark i. 14, 15. His first call is to sinners to relinquish the deceiver, and come out of their captivity; for what is repenting, but forsaking sin and Satan, and returning unto God? Luke tells us his text that he preached on once at Nazareth, which shows us his design: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to

the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," Luke iv. 16, 18. This is his next assault of Satan, by his own personal preaching.

5. The next thing he doth is to choose his twelve apostles, and constitute them commanders of his army under him; with whom, also, he joineeth seventy disciples; and to these he gives commission to make an onset upon Satan, and exercise the power of his word and Spirit. These go forth and cast out devils, and work wonders, and come home as young soldiers encouraged by this first success, and triumphing that the devils were subject to them.

6. The whole course of Christ's life was perfectly contrary to the will of Satan, and perfectly conformed to his Father's will. A life of perfect innocency is a life of victory over the tempter. He never yielded to his wicked desires, so much as in one sinful thought, or word, or deed, being holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, like unto us in our troubles, but not in our sins, Heb. iv. 15. By all this, also, he set us a pattern that we should imitate him as near as we could, and resist and conquer as he had done. If a life of perfect, unblamable innocency, and perfectly devoted to God, be not a full proof that Christ was an enemy to Satan, then light is not contrary to darkness.

7. The whole work of his life towards others was contrary to Satan, and was nothing else but a destroying of his kingdom. We read not of any thing else that he did on earth.

1. Whereas, Satan is an enemy to the honour of God, what did Christ else but seek his Father's glory, and do his will, in the saving of men? He rectifieth our misapprehensions of his nature; he tells us of his spirituality, his greatness, his goodness, his holiness, his righteousness, John iv. 6; xvii. 11, 25, 26; Luke xi. 2; Matt. v. 45, 48, and giveth him the glory of his attributes and works. He giveth men the most perfect instructions for God's worship, and taketh them off all self-invented and false ways, Matt. v. and vi. throughout; and Matt. xv. 3, 4, 8, 9.

2. Whereas, it is the devil's work to draw men to sin, and keep them from God; it was Christ's work to go up and down to preach the doctrine of life, and to tell them the necessity of repentance, and offer them grace if they would accept it and return. So that he accounted it his meat and drink to seek the salvation of a poor Samaritan woman, John iv. 32, and therein to do his Father's will. He was so oft with sinners as a physician for their cure, that the Pharisees reproached him for being their companion, because he disliked their proud separation, and practised, on the contrary, the course of compassion for their recovery and restoration.

3. It is the devil's work to do all the hurt that he may, even to men's bodies as well as souls; it was Christ's course to do good, and only good. Of all his miracles that he wrought, there was never any wrought in malice and revenge. He used not the divine power to blind, or lame, or kill any men, no, not his worst enemies, when he could easily do it, and justly might have done it; but he goeth up and down doing good, Acts x. 38, giving sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, health to the sick, and life to the dead. He feeds the hungry, and hath compassion on them that are ready to faint. What is the whole history of his life, but a catalogue of good works? When men reject his gospel, he will not take them at the worst, but rebukes his disciples that would have called for fire from heaven, and

tells them they knew not what spirit they were of; that is, in this desire: they considered not how unlike it was to his Spirit, or his design and business in the world, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them, Luke ix. 55, 56.

8. Christ's enmity to Satan appeareth in this, that he openly professeth to take him for his chiefest foe, and sendeth him a defiance, and telleth him, that he will maintain his kingdom in despite of all his policy and power. Mark well that speech to Peter, Matt. xvi. 18, "I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Whether it be Peter's confession, or Peter himself that is here called the rock, is no great matter, as to the popish interest. For the same promise that is here made to Peter upon this personal occasion, is elsewhere made to the rest of the apostles. The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone, Eph. ii. 20; so that it is more than Peter that is the foundation, that is, the principal living witnesses of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and the principal instruments of the propagation of his kingdom.

The church of Christ seemed not so great, nor did any thing visible to the world then promise so great an increase of it, as might give occasion of such a prediction; but here you may see closely laid together these observable things:

1. That it was Christ's purpose and design to gather him a church.

2. That the apostles, who at that time did not so much as understand the doctrine of Christ's death, resurrection, or ascension, which afterwards became fundamental articles of faith, must yet be the instrumental foundation of the church, and these weak men must become the invincible rock.

3. That it was the gates, that is, the powers of hell that would be the opposers of this church, and Christ expecteth their most malicious and furious assault.

4. That yet these hellish powers should not prevail; but though they should assault and storm this church and rock, yet should they not take it, or overcome.

5. That he lets them know this beforehand by way of defiance.

6. And that even when he knew that he must shortly be put to death, having first suffered many things of the priests and elders of the Jews, as in the next following words he tells his disciples; where Peter, this rock, is yet so far from being fitted for so great matters as Christ speaks of, that he takes him aside and rebukes him, and saith, "Be it far from thee;" q. d. God forbid that this should befall thee; favour thyself.

7. By all which it is evident that Christ foreknew the things to come, and how his church should be gathered, prospered, and preserved against all the malicious rage of hell.

9. Christ's enmity to Satan is also evident in the enmity that he manifested to all that tended to the interest of Satan, and furthering of his kingdom: what did ever offend him, but that which pleased the devil? What did he condemn, but that which the devil desired and promoted? Nay, when any advice was given him that tended to the furtherance of the kingdom of darkness, though it were for his own bodily ease or safety, yet did he abhor it. Take that notable example, Matt. xvi. 22, when Peter had made a faithful confession of Christ, and received that great commendation and promise from Christ thereupon: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall

not prevail against it:" yet, presently, when Christ begins to tell them of his sufferings at Jerusalem, Peter, in a carnal, misguided love, takes Christ and rebuketh him, and saith, "Far be it from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee;" q. d. God forbid that any such evil should befall thee; favour thyself; do not wilfully cast away thyself. One would think that Christ should have taken Peter's loving advice in good part, it being but to persuade him to save his own life. But Christ knew that if he should not conquer Satan on the cross, the world must perish, and there was no recovering us out of our misery; and therefore that this counsel of Peter did tend to the greatest advantage of the devil's kingdom, that could be imagined. The thanks, therefore, that he gives him is but this; he looks angrily about him, and saith, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things of man." Here is a strange change of speech to that man, that he had but a little before so commended and honoured; he was the rock even now, and now he is Satan. It was some foul change in Peter; some great evil that could procure this. Where do you read Christ ever speaking with so great severity, except once or twice to the obstinate Pharisees that blasphemed the Holy Ghost? When his disciples were rejected, and would have had fire from heaven to revenge the quarrel, he doth but rebuke them. When he was on the cross in his sufferings, he prayeth his Father to forgive the murderers; so far was he from this severity merely for himself, especially when it was but for his bodily interest. But here, when the advice seemeth for him, how severe is he with Peter! He gives him the devil's name, Satan, because he did the devil's work, and pleaded his cause, as if he had been an adversary to man's redemption. The indignation was on this account, that Peter befriended the enemy's design, and so proved a Satan, and a tempter unto Christ; and therefore he tells him that he was an offence to him, as savouring more of the things of man than of God; and bids him get behind him, or get out of his sight; a word, one would think, enough to have broken the heart of Peter; the very same word which he useth to the devil, when his temptation came to be intolably impudent and blasphemous, "Get thee behind me, Satan," Luke iv. 8. How clear a demonstration is here of the unreconcilable enmity of Christ to the devil and his interest! Before he showed it in the conquering of his own immediate temptations; and here he sheweth it by repelling a temptation from one of his own apostles, whom Satan had prevailed with to be his instrument.

10. But the great, the full, the admirable discovery of the enmity of Christ to the kingdom of Satan, was this, that he thought not his whole humiliation from first to last too much for the overthrowing of it, nor too dear a price for the redemption of his captives.

He condescended first in his incarnation, to assume our nature, the most astonishing condescension that ever the world knew; that he, "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; and did make himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Phil. ii. 5-9.

All his life was a wonderful condescension; to walk among men in human nature, and converse with sinners, and be despised, reproached, and abused

by his own creatures, and to submit to human frailties, except sin, even as great princes, when they will command their armies, will sometimes submit to the hard condition and offices of soldiers; so did Christ in his military state.

Yea, all his bloody sweats, and scorns of sinners, his crown of thorns, his cross, his death, his grave, do all testify the enmity he bore to the kingdom of the devil, that would endure and stoop to all this to expugn it, and to undermine him. He openly proclaims his end in all this: "That he might destroy, through death, him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 14. He tells the world what enemy he was opposing on the cross, and that his work was but to redeem us from that enemy, Eph. i. 7, and ii. 14—17; that we might have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sins, and breaking down the partition wall, and abolishing in his flesh the enmity, to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God, in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself: who, blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it," Col. i. 14, 20, 21, and ii. 14, 15. They were foolish men that crucified Christ, but he overlooks them, and takes notice of the enemy that he came thither to contest with, and makes his cross a means of victory, and place of triumph, even over those powers that fain would have overcome him.

And as Christ hath done thus much against Satan on the cross, so we shall next see what he hath done against him since, in his doctrine, and by it on the hearts of men, and openly in the world, and first in his word.

11. It is one of Christ's principal works by his doctrine, to make the devil more odious to the sons of men, and to bring them into a fuller knowledge of his mischievous disposition and designs, that so they may avoid him, and more valiantly resist him; to which end, he first gives them to know his nature by his names, and calleth him by all those names that may make him hateful to man, or awaken them to the war which he calls them into against him; and certainly, this is so contrary to Satan's interest, that none but the foes of reason can imagine that Satan was the author of it, or did lend Christ his power to attest it by miracles.

By all these names of disgrace do we find the devil named in the gospel.

1. He is called, frequently, Satan, an adversary; to let us know that it is he against whom we are listed under Christ, Matt. iv. 10; 1 Pet. v. 8.

2. He is called *ἐχθρός*, the enemy, Matt. xiii. 28, 39. The name by which we denote those whom we oppose, and that hate us.

3. He is oft called *διάβολος*, because he is a calumniator, or false accuser; and he who, by accusing us, would have God to condemn us.

4. He is called *ὁ πονηρός*, the evil one, or the wicked one, Matt. xiii. 19, which is the hatefullest title in the world, as signifying him to be both the first in evil for time, and the deepest in evil for degree; as being the very worst of all creatures, and also the father or cause of evil to others by his temptations.

5. He is called *ὁ πειράζων*, the tempter, Matt. iv. 3; to acquaint who it is that would draw us from God and happiness, and how he would do it.

6. He and his companions are called *πνεύματα ἀκάθαρα*, unclean spirits, oft; as being of a filthy disposition, and the cause of men's uncleanness, and contrary to the holy, sanctifying Spirit of Christ, whose office is to purify our hearts and cleanse us from our sins.

7. He is called the strong man armed, keeping his house and goods in peace, till Christ come and bind him and cast him out, Matt. xii. 29.

8. He is called the serpent, and the old serpent, Rev. xii. 9, 14; both to let us know his subtlety and his enmity, and venomous, hurting power, and to remember us of the mischief he did us by his first deceiving us.

9. He is called the dragon, the great red dragon; yea, all these four names, or five, are given him together, Rev. xii. 9; the great dragon, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.

10. He is called "A roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," 1 Pet. v. 8. Yea, all these three titles are given him together: the devil, our adversary, and as a roaring lion, &c.

11. He is called a murderer from the beginning, John viii. 44; to tell us what he hath done to us, what he is doing and would do, and what he would have men do to themselves and to others, both soul and body.

12. They are called the angels that kept not their first estate, Jude 6; to let us know their apostasy.

13. He is called Belial, 2 Cor. vi. 15; as being the head of all those rebels and outlaws that have cast off the yoke of subjection unto God.

14. Of the name Beelzebub we have spoken before.

15. He is called "The prince of this world," John xii. 31; as being the leader of worldly men who rebel against God.

16. He is called "The god of this world," because these worldly rebels make him their god, and he would be honoured and obeyed as God, 2 Cor. iv. 5.

17. He is called "The prince of the powers of the air," Eph. ii. 2; to show that he hath a kingdom or army of evil spirits, against whom Christ and his army must wage war.

18. He is called "The ruler of the world," Eph. vi. 12; because rebels are ruled by him against God.

19. He is called "The father of murderous wicked men," John viii. 44; to show that all wickedness had its rise from him.

20. He is called, Rev. ix. 11, by three names: The angel of the bottomless pit, as being destined there to be miserable, and to be the companion of those whom he can draw thither with him; also Abaddon, which signifieth a destruction and mischief, as being the very plague and ruin of mankind, a name perfectly contrary to the name of Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour, who is anointed to the office of saving men from this destruction; also, he is there called Apollyon, the destroyer, to the same purpose, as delighting in our destruction, and making it his very business. Many other names are given the devil in the New Testament, and in the Old, which I will not stand to recite; by all which Christ endeavoureth to make Satan odious, and men jealous of him, and watchful against him, and fully manifesteth his enmity to him.

12. The Lord Jesus doth not only by names, but by assertions, lay upon Satan the odium and blame of all the evil that hath been done in the world, as the original of it; and heaps upon him so much disgrace by the opening of his vileness, as never was

done by any other : never was Satan so stigmatized, and reproached, and laid naked as in the gospel ; so that among all christians the name of the devil is the most odious, accursed name that is imaginable, and intimateth a perfect irreconcilable enmity to them, and in them to him : when among the pagans it was a name of less dishonour, and they made less difference between good spirits and evil, and called both demons by the same name ; and manifested no such enmity to them, though some God had planted in nature, ever since the fall.

The first sin that ever was in the world, Christ chargeth upon Satan as the deceiver. He publisheth his own sin, "As not abiding in the truth, and falling from his first estate," John viii. 44; Jude 6; and saith that there is no truth in him, John viii. 44. He telleth us that it was he that deceived Eve, 2 Cor. xi. 3; and that he is a murderer from the beginning. All the resistance that his gospel hath in the world, and all the sins that yet are committed, he proclaimeth Satan to be the cause of, by his temptations. He chargeth him with sowing tares of heresy and profaneness in his field, Matt. xiii. 39; and as doing this as his enemy. He tells us that it is the devil that taketh away the seed that was sown, that men receive not the word of life, Luke viii. 12. He calleth wicked men the children of the devil, John viii. 44; 1 John iii. 10. He tells us that all that commit sin are of the devil, so far as they are sinners; and if sin prevails, Satan prevails; and tells us how the two families may be known asunder, 1 John iii. 8—10; "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." He is said to sin from the beginning, and to be that wicked one; and Cain who killed his brother, to be of that wicked one, 1 John iii. 8, 12. When Paul, a leader in Christ's army, doth charge one of Satan's champions, Elinas the witch, Acts xiii. 10, he doth it so as to charge his general through him: "O full of all subtlety and mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" When Judas was disposed to betray him, Christ telleth us the reason, the devil put it into his heart, and entered into him, John xiii. 2, 27. And before saith of him, John vi. 70, that he was a devil, as being on his side, and to do his work. Do but mark the Scripture expressions, and you will see through all a constant war carried on between Christ and Satan; and a hostility in all Christ's words and actions to Satan and his kingdom. It was Satan that filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost, Acts v. 3. The man of sin, and son of perdition, is the servant of Satan, and his coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, 2 Thess. ii. 8—10. This is one of Satan's chief commanders, and therefore an antichrist. All those fugitives that forsake their colours, and turn from Christ, do turn aside after Satan, 1 Tim. v. 15. When Christ cashiereth any, and turneth them out of his church, and delivereth them to destruction, he is said to deliver them to Satan, 1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20. When Paul was hindered from coming to the Thessalonians, once and again he saith it was Satan that hindered him, 1 Thess. ii. 18. And when the churches of Smyrna were to be persecuted, it is said that the devil shall cast some of them into prison, Rev. ii. 10. The congregations and company of heretics and ungodly men, who are the church's enemies, he calleth the synagogues of Satan, Rev. ii. 9, and iii. 9; for they are those societies by

whom Satan's work is done, and those assemblies in which he is served publicly, as by the witches in their assemblies he is more secretly.

Yea, when rulers of nations are drawn into sin and misery, it is by the malice of this common enemy. It was he that "stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel," 1 Chron. xxi. 1. It was he that "was a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets," 1 Kings xxii. 22. And when judgment is to be executed, especially on the people of God, it is he that is commonly permitted to be the executioner, for God will employ his creatures according to their own natures and offices; when he will burn, it shall be usually with fire; when he will drown, it shall be with water; and so, when he will destroy, he will send a destroying angel, whose nature doth more incline him to destroy: when the Israelites murmur, he sendeth evil angels among them, and they are destroyed of the destroyer, 1 Cor. x. 10; Psal. lxxviii. 49. These are the dogs that God sendeth to drive home his sheep.

The idols also of the heathen, and idolaters, are called devils, and being God's greatest enemies, and to which he beareth the greatest hatred: Lev. xvii. 7; Deut. xxxii. 17, "They sacrificed to devils and not to God, to new gods, newly come up, whom their fathers feared not." 2 Chron. xi. 15, when Jeroboam had made him priests of the meanest of the people for his calves, and had expelled the priests of the Lord, it is said that he "made him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves that he made;" and "they are said to sacrifice their sons and daughters to devils," Psal. cvi. 33. These things are spoken to the reproach of devils, by the Spirit of Christ in his prophets before his coming, conformable to which are his own and his apostles' speeches since.

By all this, Christ's enmity to Satan is most evident, he having done and said so much to his disgrace, and making his name odious to all his disciples, that thereby he may fortify them against his temptations, and encourage them to the war to which he calleth them.

13. Moreover, to testify this enmity yet further, Christ listeth all his servants in their baptism, of purpose to fight under him against Satan and his kingdom: so that it is essential to a disciple of Christ to be a soldier against the devil. How full an evidence is this to shame all blasphemous suggestions, as if Christ were on Satan's side, and borrowed his power! No wonder if the devil would have men renounce their baptism; for it is the very entrance into an engagement to fight under Christ against him to the death. This the church hath used generally to express in baptism; and therein to require that the baptized do renounce the devil with the world and the flesh, his instruments and agents: so that so many baptizings as there are in the world, so many solemn engagements are there to oppose the devil, and so many abrenunciations of him.

14. And the laws that Christ Jesus giveth his people do yet more fully discover this enmity, and put all perfectly out of doubt. For, 1. He commandeth them in general to resist the devil, and do all that they can against him, James iv. 7; not to give place to the devil, Eph. iv. 27, but to stand against his wiles, Eph. vi. 11: and he pronounceth such open hostility, that if his followers will not abstain from all wilful correspondence with Satan, they shall be no servants of his. He will have them defy him, and hate all his ways, and not to have familiarity with any of his open, known servants. They must cast such out from among them, and not so much as eat

with them, nor receive them into their houses, or bid them God speed, lest by so doing they be partakers of their evil deeds. They must rebuke a brother if he do that which is pleasing to Satan, and withdraw from him, if he do not hear and amend, that he may be to us as a heathen or a publican, 1 Cor. v. 10, 11, 7; 2 John 10, 11; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14; Matt. xviii. 15—17; and he is to be delivered to Satan, in some cases, as is aforesaid: and, lest any should think they may play on both sides, Christ assureth them of the contrary, that they cannot serve him, unless they will set themselves against the devil and his works; for there is no possibility of reconciliation or communion. "The things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?" 1 Cor. x. 20—22. And we must not join in marriage with the known servants of the devil, because of this enmity and necessary distance. "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," 2 Cor. vi. 14, &c.

This is the discipline of Christ's army, and this is one of his laws of war, that no man shall have familiarity or converse with the enemy, upon pain of his displeasure.

More particularly: the laws of Christ are most expressly contrary to the will and interest of the devil. It would be too long a task particularly to survey them, though it is our best and most cogent evidence of the point in hand. The devil's work is to rob God of his glory, and of the hearts and service of the sons of men; Christ's laws do enjoin us to love God with all our heart, and soul, and might. It is the devil's employment to go up and down, and compass the earth to draw men from honouring God, and even to draw them to curse him to his face, Job i. 6—9; ii. 2—6. The Lord Jesus condemneth all blasphemers and despisers of God, and commandeth us the greatest reverence to his majesty. He will neither permit us to take his name in vain, or swear rashly by it; nor yet to swear by any creature, that we give not away his glory to another. He will not have us worship so much as an angel, much less the souls of men, and much less stocks, and stones, and images; or sun, or moon, or stars; and, least of all, the devils: whereas, it is Satan's design to draw the world to worship the creature instead of the Creator, and change the truth of God into a lie, and the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and beasts, and creeping things, Rom. i. 23, 25. Satan would draw men to routs, and riots, and profane assemblies, and keep them from the assemblies where God is truly worshipped. Christ hath appointed the first day of every week to this end, that in the solemn assemblies we might learn our duty, and send up our requests to heaven, and give God the homage of praise which we owe him

(in our measure). Satan is an enemy to all good order and government, and human society. Christ commandeth us order, and obedience, and telleth us that God is not a God of confusion. Satan is the prince of malice, hatred, contention, and divisions. Christ is the Prince of peace, and love, and unity, and concord, and strictly chargeth his soldiers to maintain these among themselves, and to avoid all mutinies and schisms; and tells them that this is the second commandment like to the first, that we love our neighbour as ourselves; and that this is his new commandment, that we love one another, and that in so doing we shall be known to all men to be his disciples, and shall please him, and be like to God, who is love. Yea, he commandeth us to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, and pray for them that hurt and persecute us, if ever we will be the children of our heavenly Father, and so his true disciples. How perfectly contrary is all this to Satan, his disposition, and will, and way, who delighteth in blood, desolation, and misery, and is always putting his servants to seek revenge, and kindling thoughts of malice, censoriousness, and bitterness in their breasts!

The devil tempteth men to do hurt to one another, and to murder: Christ condemneth those that shall but be rashly angry with their brother, or call him fool, or use any such railing and reproachful words. Satan is a spirit of uncleanness, and a tempter to uncleanness and filthy lusts: Christ condemneth as much as an unruly eye, even looking on a woman to lust after her. Satan is a robber, and a tempter of others to stealing and robbery: Christ condemneth the coveting of that which is another's, and the very desiring to be rich, 1 Tim. vi. 9; Prov. xxiii. 4; xxviii. 20, 22. In a word, there is nothing in all the world more perfectly contrary to the will of Satan than is the law of Christ; whatever his wicked nature doth desire, or commend, or endeavour after, it is here discommended and strictly forbidden.

Yea, further note, the exceeding enmity appeareth in the exceeding strictness of these laws of Christ; he will not allow us so much as to speak one word that is pleasing to the devil, nor to think one evil thought. Though he will pardon our infirmities, of his grace, yet will he not allow the least; yea, he makes us know, that without the sacrifice of his blood, the least could not be pardoned.

See here, by the way, a most full testimony for Christ out of the mouths of his very enemies. Do not they reproach his laws for being so precise and strict, and taking them so much off from their sinful pleasures? Here, then, is a witness that Christ is no friend to sin, or the spirit of iniquity that tempteth men to sin. Of those that I have known turn infidels, some of them have done it on this account, because while they professed themselves the servants of Christ, they were so restrained and hampered by his strict and rigid laws, that it was a weariness to them, not having renewed, suitable dispositions, and they could endure it no longer, but as soon as the vain reasonings of some apostates against Christ had let loose their infidelity, and opened them a gap, they quickly ran out. Would you have Christ show yet more enmity to Satan and his kingdom, in his laws? sure, those that already so much grudge at the strictness of them would not.

15. If all this be not enough, let the sanction of these laws be called in for a witness, whether Christ be at sufficient enmity with the devil. I have already told you of the penalty of church censures, and delivering up to Satan; besides which he himself will chastise his children when they offend, and

make them smart if they will be meddling with sin. He commandeth parents, masters, rulers, and all in authority, to correct evil-doers, and if they will not repent and reform, he will judge them to everlasting misery; and by his laws hath made hell to be their portion; so that they who will serve the devil here, shall be sent as cursed unto everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, and live with him that ruled them. Would you yet wish a higher discovery of Christ's enmity with the devil?

More particularly he condemneth, especially, all idolatry and worshipping of devils, and approveth of God's law, that saith, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;" and yet could the blasphemous Pharisees take him to be one himself. It is like a friend of Satan's kingdom, to put to death all his confederates here, and to denounce everlasting torments against them hereafter.

16. If this yet suffice not, consider Christ's threatenings against the devils themselves: as he proclaimeth their present misery, as you have heard, so doth he threaten their future misery. He maketh us know that they are apostate angels, accursed from God, and that they have "left their first habitations, and are reserved in everlasting chains unto darkness, unto the judgment of the great day," Jude 6. He telleth us, God spared not the angels when they had sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Yea, he lets the devils know, to their terror, that though they now tempt, and vex, and grieve the saints, who are Christ's followers, yet shall these saints judge them, 1 Cor. vi. 3. Yea, "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our very feet," Rom. xvi. 20. As he promised, so will he perform it; that, though the serpent bruise our heel, yet shall our heel bruise the serpent's head. How can the devil, who is the prince of the sons of pride, endure to be thus reproached, and vilified, and threatened, and triumphed over, if he knew how to help it. Sure, he that doth threaten everlastingly to torment him, is none of his friends or confederates.

17. The very business of Christ, by his Spirit, word, ministry, mercies, and judgments, is to overthrow Satan's kingdom, and bring men out of his service and captivity. What is Christ's work that he is still driving on in the world? Is it not the converting and confirming of souls? and what is that but to deliver them from the devil, and bring them home again to God? What else doth he require renovation for? why else doth he send his Spirit to renew us? This is the work that he sendeth all his messengers on, to beseech men to be reconciled to God, and forsake the devil that drew them to forsake him. Every soul that Christ converteth is translated from the kingdom and delivered from the power of darkness, and brought into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, Col. i. 13. And to this end he telleth his ministers that he sendeth them "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Christ," Acts xxvi. 18; "that we may save ourselves, and them that hear us," 1 Tim. iv. 16. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. Men that are not wilfully blind may see here what relation Christ standeth in to Satan, even as the general of the field, commanding all that army that

is against him, and seeking the rescue of his captives from his hands.

18. Consider, further, what a notable combat there is between Christ and Satan for the rescue of every sinner that is recovered. It is not done easily, nor by an arm of flesh. Satan is the strong man armed; the heart of every unconverted sinner is his garrison; his armour, and ordnance, and fortifications, are temptations, deceit, prejudice, passion, sensual rage, and carnal interests, and worldly allurements: by these he keepeth his garrison in peace, till Christ come and besiege him; and then what a storm is made; what trouble and fear is the soul brought into! Christ planteth against it the ordnance of his word, he discharge the terrible threatenings of his wrath, and tells the sinner he must change his master or burn in hell; there is no remedy; it must be one of these two. He fitteth his ministers, who are to make this battery, with a holy skill for his work, and giveth them his Spirit, which is, as the gun-powder in our battering-pieces, the chiefest cause of all the execution; so that, as they fight against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places, Eph. vi. 12, so are they furnished with spiritual ordnance for that end. I speak not my own thoughts, but the word of Christ: "Though we walk in the flesh, yet do we not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience," 2 Cor. x. 3—6. You see here the battery raised, and the ordnance mounted and doing execution. Converted souls have felt all this. Upon this battery the jailor came trembling in to Paul and Silas, Acts xvi. begging for quarter, and asking what he should do to be saved. Upon this battery three thousand yielded at once, Acts ii. and being shot to the heart, with a healing bullet, they also cry for quarter, and offer to yield themselves to mercy, crying out to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" One of these did light on Saul, a persecutor, by the highway, and struck him down, and made him also yield to mercy and cry, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" Acts ix. Many a thousand did the apostles, by these engines, bring to submission in the narrow compass of Judea, in a very short space. When men stand out long, Christ sendeth to them some ministers to parley with them and offer them mercy, that they may know it is not an enemy to them but to Satan, that doth make the assault, and to acquaint them his intentions are all for their good; and usually it is one that hath found the like mercy himself, and endureth such a battery as they now do endure, that "knowing the terrors, and the goodness, and mercy of the Lord, he may persuade men," 2 Cor. v. 11. And if Christ resolve to win that soul, he will not withdraw the siege till he have battered to the ground their former prejudice, and levelled their high imaginations, and taken down their impenitent obstinacy, and dismounted all their carnal reasonings, and brought the thoughts into a captivity to Christ, and bound the strong enemy, and cast him out; but usually the conflict is sharp first, or long, or both. Many strivings and troubles doth the soul first endure, Christ haling it one way, and the devil another way, so that the man is almost torn in pieces. Sometimes he would repent and return, and then he is off again; the enemy will not so let him go, but pleasures, profits, and carnal company are all brought

out to bring him back: then he would sit down and be quiet in his sins, but Christ will not let him alone, but battereth his heart again, till at last he forceth him to yield, and by the power of love, assisted with holy fear, constraineth him to judge, "that if Christ died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again;" 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

I do most seriously profess, that if I had but this one argument to prove the enmity of the Lord Jesus against the devil and his kingdom, even the experience of the great conflicts in the work of a true conversion, I should think it enough to confute all the cavils of infidels, and all the blasphemers in the world. Can a soul, that hath felt how Christ assaulted Satan and expelled him, by what means he did it, and what it cost, be ever persuaded more to question his holy, sin-hating nature and design?

19. Yet further, to manifest this enmity to the utmost, the Lord Jesus doth possess all his sanctified true disciples with such a spirit of enmity to Satan and his ways, and so contrary to him, as they never had before, and as none else but they in the world do possess: he giveth them a Spirit which maketh them new creatures, and turneth their very hearts from the works of darkness, and maketh them hate the tempter and his temptations; a Spirit which washeth, sanctifieth, and purifieth them, and maketh them ashamed of that which was their glorying, Rom. vi. 21; 1 Cor. vi. 11; a Spirit which warreth in them against Satan and the flesh, and is contrary to it, Gal. v. 17; Ezek. xi. 19, and xxxvi. 26. They that walk in this Spirit do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, Gal. v. 16. By this Spirit, he that rose from the dead doth quicken them that were dead in trespasses and sins, and walked therein in time past, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom they also had their conversation in the time past, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, Eph. ii. 1—3. Where this Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom from Satan's bonds, 2 Cor. iii. 17. This Spirit makes men like to God, and therefore must needs make them unlike the devil: for it makes us holy as he is holy, and perfect in some sort, as our heavenly Father is perfect, Matt. v. 48. And he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 11, 17. It is a Spirit of holiness and life, Rom. i. 4, and viii. 2, 10, given us on purpose for the mortifying of the flesh, Rom. viii. 13, and to make us fervent in serving the Lord, Rom. xii. 11; and if any man have not this Spirit, he is indeed none of Christ's, Rom. viii. 9; nor will he own any worker of iniquity, Matt. vii. 23. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into his one body, and are all made to drink into one Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 13. This Spirit doth the second Adam, who for us was made a quickening Spirit, (1 Cor. xv. 44,) bestow upon all his members, to cast out all the interest of Satan, and make them a habitation of God, Eph. ii. 22. How strong soever the prince of darkness is, and how weak soever we are in ourselves, yet he of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named doth grant us, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by this his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, where Satan dwelt before by infidelity, and we may be rooted and grounded in love, Eph. iii. 15—17. The evil spirit that is in men lusteth after envy, Jam. iv. 5. But this Spirit doth cause us to abound in love, and by it we are taught of God to

love one another. Of all other, this is one of the fullest evidences of the holiness of Christ, that he hath possessed his people with such a Spirit of holiness; and the fullest evidence of his hostility with the devil, when he possesseth his people with a new nature, in some sort divine, so exceeding contrary to the satanical nature: so that it sets their hearts against him and his ways, and awakeneth them to a vigilancy against his deceits, and maketh all their new desires and endeavours to be nothing but an opposition of him and his kingdom. If you know not whether Christ were a friend to Satan, or befriended by him, open your eyes, deluded infidels, and see what is the business that he hath set his disciples on, and what is the drift of the lives of his truest followers through the world. What do they but hate the devil and his ways, pray against him, speak against him, withdraw his followers, disgrace his service, pull down his kingdom with all their diligence? I challenge the vilest infidel on earth to show me that society of men, that are so unlike the devil, and so averse to him and his service, as the true servants of Christ are: again, I challenge them to show me such a society.

20. And as the saints' contrariety to Satan, so the constant conflicts which, by the workings of the Holy Ghost, they feel against him in themselves, is a full evidence of Christ's enmity to him. What true believer doth not perceive a continual war between Christ and Satan in his own soul? Christ is working his heart to God, and Satan is drawing him downwards to the creature: Christ is lifting him heavenward, and Satan clogs him, and draws him to the earth: Christ would possess him with right thoughts of God, and his ways, and the life to come; and Satan would blind him, and possess him with delusions and false conceits. Christ would bring us to a contempt of this world in comparison of a better; Satan would be still setting us upon ambitious, covetous, rising designs, and have us lay up our treasure on earth. Christ is still working us to meekness, humility, and self-denial; Satan is fermenting our hearts with pride, self-esteem, and self-seeking. Christ is still working us to unity, love, and peace, to forgive wrongs, and calm and moderate all our passions, and to love our enemies, and study to do all the good that we can; Satan is still sowing the seeds of division, and hatred, and contention, and revenge; breaking in pieces churches, commonwealths, families, and relations, raising tumultuous passions in men's minds, and drawing them from all good, and provoking them to all evil. And though he cannot have his will where Christ hath cast him out, yet doth he by his suggestions let them know what his will is, if he might have it.

Yea, in the very point in hand, about our believing in Christ, we find a war in us between the persuasions of Christ's Spirit and of Satan. So industrious is the enemy to draw us to infidelity, that if the Spirit of Christ did not resist him, and carry on his own work, there would not be a believer in the world. And truly I cannot believe that the devil would so incessantly tempt us to disbelieve the Scriptures, if they were according to his mind; or to depart from Christ by unbelief, if Christ had been his confederate.

I must profess that this hath been a mighty support to me in temptations of this nature, and hath showed me manifestly the falsehood of the deceiver, and the truth of christianity: the more the tempter hath importuned me to doubt, the more sensible I have been of this war in my own soul. I daily, also, on other occasions, do find such a conflict between Christ's Spirit and Satan, that my life is a warfare: and the church may well be called militant, while it

abides in this condition. I know all these wars in my soul do certainly prove that there are some contrary, invisible powers that raise them, and therefore that there is a spirit of light and of darkness, of good and of evil, which are in wars one against another. I find by many passages in the manner of the conflict, that it is not merely from myself, but hath a higher cause. I know also thus much more, that there is no strife, but there is something that is striven for; hence, I am confirmed that the promises of Christ are true, and that there is an everlasting glory and misery. Else, why should Satan keep such a stir to deprive me of the one, and bring me into the other; and why would Christ do so much to save me, if there were no salvation. There is some prize that the enemy expecteth if he could conquer; and that can be nothing but my everlasting undoing. There is also some prize that Christ so contendeth for, and that is certainly my everlasting felicity. So that the very experience of this war in my own soul doth much conduce to the confirming me in the faith.

21. Consider further, that all the wits of men and angels could never have laid such a design for the vanquishing of Satan, as Christ hath revealed in the gospel, and came down on earth to execute. That so powerful a commander should be made general of the church, that Satan can have no hopes to win the field: that mercy should be so wonderfully magnified in our redemption, and God therein represented amiable to man, when Satan had drawn us, even in our innocency, to look on God as one that envied us our knowledge and delight: and thus the heart is drawn up in love to God by the constraining power of his wonderful love. That justice should be so eminently demonstrated, and the lawgiver vindicated, and the breach that was made in the frame of government and morality repaired, and God manifested so holy, and such a hater of sin, and yet the sinner saved from destruction. That so free a pardon should be tendered to the world, and salvation offered on such gracious terms, without the least derogation from God's law, or the least impediment to holiness and good works, yea, to the greatest promoting and advantage of it that could be imagined: and that free grace should be so far from indulging and strengthening sin, that it is its greatest enemy, and giveth it the most mortal wound: all this was beyond the wit of any creature to have designed. That when man had come short of the glory of God by his fall, the Son of God should become the Captain of our salvation, and lead us up to that, or a greater glory. That by a death which he deserved not he should destroy the death that we deserved. That we should be reconciled to God by his death, and saved by his life. That he should become a sacrifice for sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. That the human nature that was so debased and depressed by the malicious temptations of apostate angels, should, by the occasion of that debasement, receive such advancement, and be set above the angelical nature in the government of the world, and should judge those evil spirits that did seduce us. That under this head the eternal God should gather him a selected corporation for his praises, and for this wonderful mercy of redemption should have the thanks of his glorified saints for ever. These, with many other mysterious and wonderful passages of this design, do show the greatest enmity to the kingdom of the devil that can be conceived of, and would convince poor infidels if they did but well discern the perfect, well-jointed frame of the whole design.

22. Consider yet further; what admirable helps

hath Christ vouchsafed us in his word for the vanquishing of Satan, by the repelling of his temptations. What is a great part of this gospel, but a directory to his church for the management of this war, and how we may so demean ourselves as to conquer?

1. He doth unmask the deceiver, and telleth us, both generally and particularly, of his stratagems, depths, methods, wiles, and snares, Rev. ii. 24; 1 Cor. vii. 5, 6; 2 Cor. ii. 11. Never were his destroying projects so disclosed: so that now we may escape unless we will either wilfully wink, or put our foot into the snare when we see it, or swallow the bait when we know of the hook.

2. He hath opened unto us the ends of the tempter, and the danger of yielding, and told us of the everlasting misery that he would lead us into.

3. He calleth on us frequently to take heed, to watch, and stand on our defence, and to beware of carelessness and sleeping in this danger.

4. When we fall asleep, he giveth us the loudest alarms and warning-pieces to awake us, enough, one would think, to rouse up the most careless soul alive!

5. He telleth us of the devil's malice and design, that he is our adversary, and walketh about like a roaring lion, night and day, seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. v. 8.

6. He furnisheth us with all the christian armour for defence and offence.

7. He teacheth us how to put it on and use it. Let us transcribe one direction. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints," Eph. vi. 10—20.

8. Also he doth animate and encourage us to be valiant and stand to it, and not to turn our backs or yield; not to give place to the devil, Eph. iv. 24, nor forsake our ground. He telleth us into how many shapes he will turn himself to deceive; sometimes into a serpent, and sometimes a roaring lion, and sometimes into an angel of light, pretending to bring us a greater light than Christ hath given us, as he would give Adam a greater knowledge and wisdom, and as the first heretics were made believe by him, they knew more than the apostolical churches, and therefore were called gnostics. His ministers also do transform themselves into the ministers of righteousness, and will pretend to preach righteousness, and justification, more exactly than Christ's ministers do, 2 Cor. xi. 14—16. But into how many shapes soever he shall turn himself, Christ telleth us, if we do but resist the devil, he will fly, Jam. iv. 7.

9. Yea, he is pleased himself to lead us on, and to bid us follow him and trust him, and hath given us an example for us to imitate.

10. Yea, and he giveth us a promise, not only of his assistance, but of a certain victory, assuring us, that "greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world," 1 John iv. 4; and that the God of peace will bruise Satan under our feet: and bids us be of good cheer, for he hath overcome for us, and will overcome in us, and in the greatest trials we shall be over-conquerors through him, Rom. viii. 37, and that none shall pluck us out of his hands, John x. 28, 29, nor the gates of hell be able to prevail against his church.

23. If all this be not yet enough, consider the work, the havoc, the destruction, that Christ hath already made against Satan in his kingdom, and the success that the foresaid means have had. When he was on earth himself, though he did many great works, yet still he omitted not the casting out of devils; and the same power he gave to believers, when he was ascended, Mark xvi. 17, 18: he commanded them forth, and they could not resist the power of his word; he forced them to confess his superiority and prevailing power; he made them acknowledge that he did torment them before the time of his full and final conquest, by casting them out of their possessions, and overcoming their cruel, malicious endeavours, Matt. ix. 32, 33; xii. 22, &c.; xv. 22, &c.; xvii. 17—19, &c.; Mark v. 15—18; Luke iv. 33, 34, &c.; iv. 42, &c.; xi. 14, &c.; and he healed all that were possessed with devils, Acts x. 38; and the principal enemies that his apostles set against, were conjurers, that worked by the help of the devil, as you may find by the foil they gave to Simon Magus, the leader of them, and to Elymas, the sorcerer, whom Paul blinded, Acts xiii. 9—12; and they forced out the devil from a damsel that had a spirit of divination, and got her masters much gain by soothsaying, when they were confessed by him to be the servants of the living God, Acts xvi. 16—18; when the Jewish exorcists thought to do the like by the bare name of Jesus and Paul, the devil prevailed over them, and caused them to fly naked and wounded, Acts xix. 13—16. So many books of magic and conjuration, or their black art, did the gospel cause them at once to bring forth and burn at Ephesus, that the price of them came to fifty thousand pieces (or shekels) of silver, Acts xix. 18, 19: a mighty blow to the devil's kingdom.

Yea, it is certain, from current history and church records, that the gift of casting out devils, and making them confess themselves mastered by Christ, did remain in the church for a long time after the apostles, even for three or four hundred years at least, though not in that glory and frequency as with them. I have formerly showed out of Cyprian, Tertullian, &c. how the christians did provoke their judges to try them upon this account, and offered themselves to suffer, if they did not make the devils in the possessed confess themselves to be devils, and show themselves afraid of Christ. Yea, the writers of the first ages frequently mention it as a thing that the pagans themselves knew, as you may briefly see (besides divers others) in those testimonies which Grotius hath gathered on this point, in his Annotations on Mark xvi. 17, out of Justin Martyr's Colloquium Tryph.; Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian, Minutius Felix, and Lactantius. See also what I cited before, in the disputation out of Augustin, De Civitate Dei. No where could Satan keep his possession, where the power of Christ did assault him.

2. And as Satan was thus cast out of men's bodies, so were all his oracles overthrown; and they that had before deluded the world, did suddenly cease when christianity did approach; Porphyrius complains of this against the christians, as being the

cause of the silence of their idol gods; thus also did Christ vanquish Satan, and remove him from his throne.

3. Also Christ did overthrow the worshipping of devils, and root out that idolatry that carried away the world. Before the light of the gospel did break forth, what abominable idolatry was exercised through the earth, even in the most learned and civil nations, at Athens and at Rome! but the gospel brought them all to shame, and expelled this darkness, and wherever it comes, idolatry flieth away, according to the measure of its success.

4. When Satan raised up his witches and enchanters to uphold his kingdom, and bring idolatry again into credit, as Apollonius and the rest, the gospel prevailed against all their power and devilish devices.

5. When Satan raised up the most learned philosophers to resist the gospel, yet did it prevail against all the power of their carnal wit. And doubtless it was the purposed designment of God that the gospel should be sent forth in such a place and age, where were the most learned enemies that were in all the world, that so all their learning might be non-plussed, and the gospel of Christ might triumph over it. When were there so many learned men in the world, as about the time of Christ, and his apostles, and the following time that the gospel was conflicting with the opposition of their sciences? If ever reason or learning could have disgraced Christ and his truth, it would have been then. But Christ used other kind of weapons than theirs. They pleaded with words, and he with mighty works; they used sophisms, and he shined into men's souls with an insuperable light. Their weapons were weak and carnal, but his were strong and spiritual; their wisdom to him was foolishness, and his seeming foolishness proved wiser than they; and by weak and simple means and instruments did he overcome and confound their might and strength.

6. Yea, when the Jews themselves did plead abused Scripture against them, yet were they confounded, and their resistance of the gospel hath brought on them such a curse as hath made them the astonishment of the world; even the same that Christ foretold should befall them; and the same that they wished on themselves, (not knowing what they said,) "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

7. And when Satan raised up his army of heretics, Simonians, Nicolaitans, gnostics, and the rest, though they came instructed with witchcraft and wicked arts, yet Christ confounded them, and a little time did break each sect in pieces, and when new sects succeeded them, the like did befall them; so that those that were the great scourge and vexation of one age, (as the libertines, rangers, quakers, the offspring of separation and anabaptistry, are now with us,) were scarce known to the next, but by their names and by report. The church of Ephesus had Nicolaitans among them; but they hated their doctrine as Christ himself hated it, Rev. ii. 6. The church of Smyrna had blasphemers among them, that said they were Jews, but were not, but were the synagogue of Satan; but they prevailed not, Rev. ii. 9, 10. The church of Pergamos dwelt even where Satan's seat was, and had them that held the doctrine of Balaam, teaching men to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication; they had also them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ hated; and yet they held fast Christ's name, and denied not his faith, even in those days wherein his faithful martyr Antipas was slain among them, where Satan dwelt, Rev. ii. 12—15. The

churches of Thyatira had among them the woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, and did teach and seduce the professors of christianity to commit fornication, and eat things offered to idols; and though the church were guilty of tolerating this, yet Christ did confound these heretics, and cast the woman Jezebel into a bed, and them that committed adultery with her, into great tribulation, and killed her children with death, that all the churches might know that it is Christ that searcheth the reins and hearts, and will give to every one according to their works; and those that had not known this doctrine, and these depths of Satan, he cautioneth and directeth that they may persevere and overcome, Rev. ii. 20—25. The church of Sardis had some among them that defiled their garments, but the faithful kept clean. The churches of Philadelphia were troubled with some of the synagogue of Satan, which said they were Jews, and were not, but did lie; yet did they keep the word of Christ's patience, and Christ did keep them from the hour of temptation, Rev. iii. 9—11. Thus you see how common it was with the churches to be pestered with heretics; and yet the light of the gospel, and Christ's discipline, did quickly scatter them and confound them, as they sprung up.

8. And when Satan made his hottest onset by his band of persecutors, even in the midst of persecution did the church increase her strength and glory; and the martyrs' blood was the church's seed, as Tertulian speaks. No fire was hot enough to consume the gospel; no rage was strong enough to bear down Christ; no sword was sharp enough to pierce his truth; but he goes on and prevails, and overcomes the very persecutors. And here let all be laid together, and let it be well noted what a victory Christ obtained of Satan, when he conquered the Roman empire in special: when Satan had afoot all these bands at once, and all of them his strongest and best-armed soldiers, viz. the Jews, with their misinterpreted law; the idolaters, with their oracles and popular rage for the defence of their ancient worship; the conjurers and sorcerers, with their devilish conjurations; the heretics, with their witchcrafts and juggling delusions; the great learned philosophers of all sects, with orators, poets, and the rest of their learned men; their raging, unmerciful persecutors, and the great and potent emperors, that had mastered and then ruled so much of the world (the Roman empire being then in the height of its glory); yet all these could not subdue the gospel, nor hinder the persecuted christians from such success; as that sorcery, conjuration, oracles, idolatry, heresy, persecution, all is overthrown; and the Roman emperor lays down his crown at the feet of Christ, and subjecteth all his glory to his will.

But yet a greater victory than all this was the overcoming of men's corruptions, and conquering their fleshly lusts, and purifying so many millions of polluted souls, and setting up Christ's government, where Satan had long ruled. And so this kingdom of Christ within us is his most excellent kingdom upon earth. And thus you see Christ's enmity to Satan by the utter destruction and ruin that he hath made in his kingdom.

24. Yet further consider what an army Christ hath yet afoot against Satan to this day, and how they are employed; and by that time all this is laid together, we may well say that those blasphemers are bewitched into madness, that can yet imagine that Satan did lend Christ his help, or is a friend unto his cause, or Christ to his.

In the present army that Christ hath afoot, let us but consider these three things, or parts: his

officers, his common soldiers, and his warlike instruments, arms, and ordinances.

1. For his officers, the very business that he calls them to, is to spend and be spent for the saving of souls and the destroying of Satan's work. What are they to study all the week, but how to resist the deceiver, and save men from his snares? What are they to preach in public of, but to cry down the powers and works of darkness, and turn men from the power of Satan unto God, and to proclaim all those to be rebels that follow the deceiver? What else must they watch over their people for in private, but to rescue them from his deceits? To this end must we reprove and instruct them with all patience, meekness, and long-suffering, 2 Tim. ii. 25. What is it that they must pray for else on their people's behalf? Yea, and they must first see to the saving of themselves, and look to themselves as well as their doctrine, 1 Tim. iv. 16, and must be sure to be found well-grounded in the faith; and such as are delivered from Satan themselves, and no other should be chosen to this work. Nor should they be novices, or young converts, that have not had sufficient standing and experience; lest themselves, being puffed up with pride, should fall into the condemnation of the devil, 1 Tim. iii. 6. So that look how many true ministers of Christ are upon the earth, so many leading enemies of Satan there are, proclaiming Christ's enmity to him, setting him daily at defiance, beating him out of his possessions, and recovering to God the souls that he had captivated.

2. Consider also Christ's common soldiers, and their employment. What is the life of a christian, but a militating against Satan? What else doth Christ call him to? and what else is he as a christian employed in? So that look how many true christians are on the face of the earth, so many professed, avowed enemies of the devil there are, that live upon the spoils of his kingdom, and lay out themselves to procure its overthrow.

3. Consider also the armour and ordinance of the saints. All God's graces, I have before showed you, are against Satan; and so are all the ordinances of Christ. In baptism, I have already showed, we are listed against him and renounce him. Preaching, I have showed, is the battering of his garrisons. The Lord's supper is a renewing of that first covenant, wherein we were engaged against him, and a remembering us of our duty and engagement. Prayer is directed purposely to the ruin of his cause. Reproofs and admonition are the reclaiming of his deceived ones. Discipline is for a just separation of Christ and Satan, the precious and the vile, and the shaming of all that is like him, and the weeding of his tares from the church of Christ.

You see, then, how the devil is assaulted and daily baited by the christian army through the world. So many true christians as there are, so many daily or frequent prayers are put up against the interest of the devil; and so many there are that bend themselves to disgrace him, and destroy his works.

Hence it is that the very name of Satan is so odious, especially among them. How many volumes are written by them against him and his designs; and how disgracefully do they speak of him in them all! The very libraries of the christian world are such a wound to Satan, and such mortal darts in his sides, that he would have, by any cost, prevented or consumed them if he could. There it stands on record, what he is, and what he hath done, and how he hath been used in former ages: e. g. saith Augustin, Conc. ad Catechum. Contr. Judæos, Pag. et Arrian. tom. vi. p. 23, "What is the devil? He is an angel, by pride separated from God, who stood no'

in the truth; the author of lies; deceived by himself, and desiring to deceive others. This Satan is become the adversary of mankind, the inventor of death, the institutor of pride, the root of malice or evil, the head of wickedness, the prince of all vices, and the persuader of filthy thoughts. Thus is the devil assaulted daily, and by all this army is Christ opposing him, and therefore, doubtless, is his greatest enemy.

25. Consider, also, how Satan reigneth where Christ hath not pursued him with his gospel, as among the poor Indians, where he appears among them and is worshipped by them, and where Christ hath withdrawn his gospel. If men knew and considered the difference between those places and these we live in, they would surely see that Christ is Satan's enemy.

26. Consider, also, how little is done against Satan by any other besides Christ. How did he prevail before Christ's opposing him; and who is there on earth that hath done so much against him as Christ hath done; and how would he have reigned if Christ had let him alone? All the learning and civility of the Greeks and Romans did rather confirm than extirpate their idolatry and worshipping devils; and, indeed, all the light that doth oppose him among any other sects, are but some sparks that Christ hath lent them, and some small reflections of the gospel on them.

27. Note, also, that constant experience telleth us that all sin and wickedness doth befrend infidelity; this is a known truth. The more any man woundeth or debaucheth his conscience by living in wilful sin, or selleth himself for carnal pleasure to work wickedness, the more he is disposed to infidelity, and the easier is he drawn from Christ; and the worst men are his enemies, and the best his truest servants, through the world; which shows the enmity between him and iniquity.

28. Besides, Christ promiseth the crown to those only that fight manfully against Satan, and overcome. Read Rev. ii. and iii. which shows his resolved enmity.

29. Moreover, the very nature of the happiness that he promiseth, is to be perfectly rescued from Satan and his sinful works, and to be as unlike him as is possible for us to be, and to be separated as far from him as heaven is from hell: this, also, further declares the enmity.

30. Lastly, if yet after all this any will be hardened in this vile infidelity, they shall find at last, when he comes to judgment, whether Christ were a friend to Satan or not; when they themselves shall be condemned to those torments which were at first prepared for the devil and his angels. I run over these passages so briefly because I have stood so long upon this point, and the evidence is so clear that it seems needless to say more.

Some think that Michael, the archangel, was Christ: but it is most likely that he is a prince among the holy angels, and so a leader of the army of Christ; certain it is that he is a chief agent in this warfare; and as he strove with the devil about the body of Moses, (whether Moses's dead body, or Moses in the basket when he was exposed to the waters, I determine not,) so we find some description of this war in Rev. xii. 7, &c., "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out

with him. And I heard a loud voice saying, in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast out unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Whatever be the particular drift of these words in general, I am sure they discover his enmity, conflict, and success.

And thus you have seen (I doubt not to call it) a full demonstration, "That for this very purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," 1 John iii. 8. And that he is already fallen before the gospel, Spirit, ministry, and other servants of Christ, as lightning from heaven, Luke x. 18.

So much of Christ's holy war.

The Uses, or Consecratories.

The premises thus demonstrated do afford us further light for our information in these three following points or consecratories:

1. From what is said, it is manifest even to reason that Christ is indeed the Messiah and Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and his gospel true, and the christian religion is of evident certainty.

For if Christ's mighty works were not wrought by Beelzebub, as the blasphemers of the Holy Ghost did imagine, then it is most certain that they were of God: for that they were truly done, I have showed before in the first discourse; and none can make doubt of it that is not a stranger to the records of the world, and especially of the church; or that knows with what clear, unquestionable evidence these matters of fact have been brought down to our hands. And, as Augustin saith, that the world should be converted by miracles, when there were, indeed, no miracles, would be itself the greatest miracle: and then, that no human power could raise Christ from the dead, or do the works that he and his disciples after him performed in several countries and nations of the world, is so far past question, that I never met with man yet that doubted of it. It remaineth, therefore, that it must be either by the power of God or of Satan, that these works were done. Of this the Pharisees themselves were easily convinced, and therefore had no other refuge for their unbelief, but only to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and say that it was by Beelzebub that all these things were done: and, indeed, there is nothing else that is left them to pretend: and how vain and absurd this blasphemy is, I dare say, is demonstrated in what is already said; so that it remains that the gospel is certainly of God, and these glorious works of Christ are of God, there being no other power to which they can be ascribed. Nay, here being, moreover, the fullest, positive evidences, that it is the very work of the Almighty God, that Christ hath set a foot, and is still carrying on. If proof may be called proof, this is proved.

Quest. But are not the miracles themselves a sufficient argument to prove themselves to be of God,

without fetching all this proof from the scope and use of them?

Ans. They are themselves sufficient. 1. For all the devils in hell are not able to do that which Christ and his apostles did, if they were willing. 2. And if they had a natural power, yet want they a moral power or license from God: for it is as certain as that God is the just and faithful Governor of the world, that he would never give devils leave to delude them by such miracles, without controlling them, and giving us sufficient light to discover the deceit. All this is fully proved before.

But yet, though miracles are sufficient of themselves, God hath abundantly provided for our satisfaction: and lest any should say that evil spirits are so far from our knowledge that, for ought we know, they may do as great matters as all these; or, at least, may blind the eyes of the beholders, to make them think that they are done indeed; as when witches seem to be turned into wolves and cats, to the eyes of others, and their own: and how far Satan can cheat poor mortals we cannot tell. I say, lest any should think they have this excuse for their infidelity, the Lord hath given them as full evidence that Satan is no friend to these works of Christ, as that the light of the sun proceedeth not from the abyss, or seat of darkness. Blessed be the Lord of truth and light, that hath set such an unquestionable seat to his gospel, and given such an advantage to the faith of his people, and called us to believe nothing but what he hath evidenced to us to be true, by giving us so full an evidence that it is his revelation: that we may more comfortably do or suffer for our religion, and forsake all the world for the glory that is promised us, when we are so sure that it is God himself that hath promised it. Had God but left us in the dark in this point, what a loss should we have been at in every duty and temptation! How could we have resisted the lusts of the flesh, and the allurements of this world, if we had not had good assurance that there are better things hereafter this way to be attained? How could we have laid out ourselves heartily in God's service, or endured the scorns of the licentious world; or have differed from them in our course, and have forborne to run with them into riotous excess? Who will run cheerfully that doubteth whether there be any prize; or sow in tears that knows not that he shall reap in joy? But, now, how cheerfully may we run; how light may we make of all our sufferings! With what alacrity and delight may we go through all duties, when we know who it is that hath promised, and on whose word we trust our souls! Now, what an argument is here ready to shame and repel all temptation, to make us contemn this empty world, and deny our flesh and carnal self, and patiently run the race that is before us, and, in a word, to be christians indeed, and to live according to the rates of our profession or belief! Oh! what a blessed help is here to get up the heart in each day to God, and to facilitate our meditations on heavenly things! Alas! all the striving in the world would never have stirred our hearts to heaven, if we had not seen a glory to entice them. Love is not driven, but drawn; and nothing would have drawn them but that which is true as well as good; and no truth is fit to take with man but that which hath evidence; nor any beyond the measure of its evidence. I know the schoolmen, and some of our own most reverend divines, do say that the christian religion is *evidenter credibile, sed non evidenter verum*. But, indeed, nothing is credible but what is true, nor evidently credible but what is evidently true. But, then, this I confess is true, and so their words may be admitted that it is evidently credible, be-

cause it is evidently a divine testimony, and I desire no more evidence of truth; but it is not *evidenter verum in se*, but only in the credit of the testifier: but though there be not *evidentia rei*, it is as good if there be evidence that it is God who doth attest it: so that evidence of verity there must be; for, as Mr. Richard Hooker saith of them that would not have Scripture proved to be God's word, but believed only, "How bold and confident soever we may be in words, when it comes to the trial, such as the evidence is which the truth hath, such is the assent; nor can it be stronger, if grounded as it should be."

If we live faithfully, if we suffer cheerfully, if we die comfortably, and lay down our bodies in the dust in hope, we may thank God that hath given us such evidence of his truth, such helps to discern them, and his Spirit to fit us for the receiving and improving of them.

And therefore what a great wrong is it to the souls of believers, both that teachers do no more to the well-laying of this foundation, and that themselves do no more study and consider of these evidences! Certainly, whichever may be the most constant belief, that is like to be the most constant which is settled by sound evidence. And for want of this it is, that seekers, and quakers, and apostates, do now of late prevail, to overthrow the faith of some, because that when they hear the objections which they never heard before, they are unable to answer; and the faith which was built on borrowed grounds, doth fall at the first assault; and they think they have found the falsehood of their former religion, when they have discovered only the falsehood or infirmity of their former belief.

And if men should resolutely resist seducers, yet Satan himself will be ready enough to assault them; and if they never be tempted to doubt of the truth, yet can they never so well improve that faith, to holiness and consolation, which hath not evidence in our minds that it is certainly God himself whom we do believe.

The fullest evidence discerned doth certainly beget the strongest faith, and the strongest faith will produce the greatest holiness and consolation: so that you may perceive how much doth lie on this.

And, doubtless, evidence itself is none to us, if it be not discerned. And the frequent and serious consideration of it doth help to make the deepest impression; and, therefore, those that never hear or read these evidences, do want very much that advantage that God hath provided for their faith; and those that daily consider them in their strength, will find their faith exceedingly increased, and so all graces increased therewithal.

Yet I know that it is the common method of the devil to set in most cunningly and violently with his temptations, when a christian doth first set himself to look for evidence of the truth of his religion, and bring it under consideration; and, therefore, many imagine that all such seeking for proof is but the way to loosen men's belief, and overthrow them; but they should rather direct such novices in the faith, which way they should go about this work most safely, using the best evidence, and taking along with them the help of judicious teachers, and waiting for the reception of certainty by degrees, seeing it is not possible by ordinary means that all the evidence should be received in the beginning, and at once: I say, such directions for the right managing of this work may be very necessary to them; but wholly to take them off, and persuade them to take up all their faith on trust, and make up that in blind confidence, which they have not in

true evidence, this will prove no wise or friendly advice at last.

The second consecratory is this: from hence it appeareth that the matter of fact was then so evident, that the most malicious enemies of Christ did acknowledge that such mighty works were done by him: this was, then, past all doubt among the worst and cruellest of his persecutors; only all the question was, by what power he did them? For this was the only refuge that they had left them for their unbelief, that it was by sorcery, and by the power of Beelzebub, that these works were done.

What I say of Christ's own works, is true also of the disciples' works after his ascension. Say these Pharisees, "What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it; but that it spread no further among the people, let us straightly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name," Acts i. 16, 17. We see, then, that they were past all doubt that these miracles were done, though they blasphemed the Spirit by which they were done.

So when the Holy Ghost did fall upon the church, they heard them speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance; and when it was noised abroad, the multitude of devout Jews came together, that were come out of all nations to Jerusalem, and they were confounded to hear them speak in all their own languages. "And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, and Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, in Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes, we do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine," Acts ii. 2—13.

You see there is no question here whether the thing was done; but only what was the cause of it; whether it was God's Spirit by which they spake these languages? or whether all the church were drunk, and drunkenness could cause such a thing? And, indeed, there could be no doubt of the fact, when not only the multitude in so populous a city were witnesses of it, but also when they might have gone to the christian assemblies, and heard the like again for their conviction in all countries and nations round about where the gospel was spread, and this for twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty, if not a hundred years together. So that there was no room left for doubting about the matter of fact, whether such things were done indeed or not.

And to this day we find that the Jews, by tradition from their unbelieving ancestors, do tread the same steps, confessing Christ's works, but accusing him either of sorcery, or of I know not what acquaintance with the ineffable name, by the virtue whereof they say he did them. And so we find in their own writings yet, that when the christians dispute with them, they will not begin with Christ's works or doctrine, but will only begin with the description of the Messiah; and then they argue thus: If the description of the true Messiah belong not to Jesus Christ, then whatever were his works or doctrine, he cannot be the Messiah; but that description belongs not to him. The major they would prove from their carnal, false description of the Messiah, who must be the temporal deliverer of their nation from captivity,

which Christ hath not done. All this you may see in their own writings; as in their history wrote by Salomo, filius Virgæ, translated by Georg. Gentius, you may find where, in the disputations before the pope and the king of Arragon which they boast of, they conclude, that if we will show them a man of the tribe of Judah, that shall gather together all the dispersed Jews, and bring them from captivity into their own land, and build the temple and re-edify Jerusalem, and set up the worship of God again according to the law of Moses, in as great glory as ever it was, and make the nations of the world to reverence the Jews, and bring in their riches and glory to them, this man they will take for the Messiah; but no other will they believe to be him, whatever works he do. So that these carnal people, looking so much at their carnal deliverance and glory, do expect just such a Messiah as Mahomet is to the Turks; and while they feel not their spiritual necessity and misery, they despise the remedy, and are prejudiced by this false description of the Messiah against all arguments that can be used with them; and yet justly are deprived of the carnal things which they do expect.

Quest. But if they were so fully convinced of Christ's miracles, and the disciples' after him for so many years, it is a wonder how their hearts can be so blinded and hardened as to continue in unbelief.

Ans. It is God's righteous judgment to permit it, but the causes of it were divers.

1. This which I have last mentioned was the chief; the gaping after a carnal deliverer.

2. The fore-mentioned blasphemous conceit of Christ working by the devil's power was another cause.

3. The reverence which they had to Moses' law, and their misunderstanding it, was one of the greatest causes of all; for they knew it was the law of God, and they concluded that no spirit could be of God that spake against his law, nor any work of God that was done against it; and therefore they concluded that the Spirit of Christ was an evil spirit, and his works of Beelzebub, for they had been warned by Moses to credit no worker of wonders that would draw them away from God. But all this was because these wretches did not understand that Moses' law was but for a time to be their schoolmaster unto Christ, or to teach them Christ, and endure till he came, and that all the types did cease when the substance should appear. And this ignorance is it that misleads them and undoes them.

4. And yet, doubtless, as there were many thousands of them converted in the apostles' days, so among many of them, both great and small, there was secretly a forced belief in Christ, which fear of persecution, and other carnal respects, did cover.

For the confirmation of this, I will give you but the brief sum of a story which a learned, godly father doth relate, and that is Epiphanius, In Hæres. 30. Ebion. Going about to prove that the Jews had secretly among them the Gospel of Matthew, John, and the Acts, in the Hebrew tongue, he falls into the relation of the conversion of one that acquainted him with it; and that was one Joseph, a Jew, living in the days of Constantine the Great, and advanced to honour by him, who, receiving commission to build churches to Christ at Tiberias, Capernaum, and other places in his own country, he there fixed his abode, and having very sumptuous buildings at Scythopolis, he there entertained Eusebius Vercellensis, whom the Arian emperor, Constantius, banished; and Epiphanius going thither to visit Eusebius, professeth most solemnly that he had all this whole relation from Joseph's own mouth, being then about

seventy years of age. To wit, that this Joseph lived with the patriarch of the Jews, called Ellet : this patriarch being ready to die, sendeth Joseph to the bishop of Tiberias to desire him to come to him, under pretence of being his physician. The patriarch beseecheth the bishop to baptize him ; whereupon the servants are commanded to make ready some water, as if it had been for some medicinal use, and then they were all commanded to withdraw. Joseph looks through some crevice in the door, and seeth the bishop baptize the patriarch, and the patriarch giving him a sum of gold, desiring him to offer it to God for him (as the manner then was when any thing was dedicated to some pious use, they offered it to God). Three days after, the patriarch dying, bequeathed the tuition of his son, not yet of age, to Joseph and another honest man. These things stuck in Joseph's mind, and made him desirous to know more of the christian religion. And there being a certain secret place of supposed treasure, which Joseph had now the keys of, he opens it and findeth no money, but the Gospel of John and the Acts of the Apostles translated into Hebrew, and with them Matthew's Genealogy. The reading of these increased his perplexities, but yet did not persuade him to be baptized. After this, the patriarch's son (he supposed his name was Judas) fell into the company of some lewd young men that enticed him to wicked courses, as to fornication and filthy lusts, and to certain tricks of sorcery or magic, by which he might obtain his lust with those he desired. Joseph and his other guardian chide him, and follow him, and dissuade him from his course, but could not prevail, and divulge it they durst not. Upon a time he went to the baths, by Gadara, which were then famous for curing many diseases ; and there being a fair hard by, the people came flocking thither. It fell out that in the bath was a woman of extraordinary beauty, at whose sight Judas was pierced with lustful desires ; of which, while he gave some signs, the woman, being a christian, fortified herself with the name of Christ, and afterwards, when he solicited her, she reproached his messengers, and despised his offered gifts. The young man, being sad at his disappointment, his companions draw him in the evening to certain sepulchres which were in caves hewed in the rocks, and there they fall to their witchcraft, and with spells, and charms, and impious devices, they think to conjure the woman to yield herself presently to his lust. It pleased God to make this known to Joseph's companion, the other guardian of the young man ; and he told Joseph ; and sadly lamenting the case of the young man, they secretly went after them, and after sunset, in the twilight, they came to the sepulchre door, and there looked in and saw them at their charms among the dead bodies ; and when they had done, they secretly withdrew. When the young men were gone, they went into the sepulchre, and found their mixtures of blood and dust, and instruments of witchcraft, and understanding all the matter, they waited to see the issue : but charms could not prevail against a christian ; whereupon, Joseph saw yet more of the power of christianity, but yet he was not converted to Christ. Next this, he saw, as it were, Christ in a vision, saying to him, I am Jesus, whom thy ancestors crucified, believe in me : but this moved him not. Then he fell into a sore and desperate disease, and Christ appearing to him again, tells him that he shall be recovered if he will believe, which he promised to do, and recovered ; but continuing obstinate, he fell sick again, and that so desperately, that they had no hope of his life. The Jews coming about him to perform those ceremo-

nies, and give that advice, which they use to do to dying men, one of the chief of them, an ancient man, skilful in their law, came to him, and whispered these words in his ear, Believe that Jesus, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, being the Son of God, and afterwards born of Mary, is the Christ of God, and was raised from the dead, and shall come again to judge the dead and the living. And thus Joseph came to know that among their last mysteries, the Jews secretly persuaded dying men to believe. This Epiphanius again most solemnly protesteth that Joseph told him in order as is related, with his own mouth ; as also that he hath heard the like from another Jew. And that, as he travelled from Jericho, through the deserts of Bethel and Ephraim, this Jew joined himself with him, and Epiphanius fell into discourse about Christ's coming : the Jew did not contradict him in any thing, which made Epiphanius wonder, and ask him the reason : the Jew answered, that when he was once like to die, the Jews whispered these words in his ear, *Jesus Christus crucifixus Dei filius de te judicabit* : Jesus Christ crucified, the Son of God, shall be thy Judge.

Thus much of this history I have recited out of Epiphanius, to show what conviction was then among many of the Jews themselves ; which things this holy man so oft and earnestly protesteth he heard with his own ears. As for the rest of the story of Joseph, I shall not stay to recite all, because I am at the thing which I did intend already ; only, in a word, after this, Christ appeared to him again in a vision, and gave him power to do a miracle for his conviction ; but yet he delayed his return, till at last, being advanced by the young patriarch, Judas, to a great dignity, he exercised so much severity over the wicked priests, and rulers of synagogues, that they conspired against him, and pry into his ways, and one day rush into his house and find him reading the Gospels, and, snatching the book out of his hand, they draw him to the synagogue and scourge him, till the bishop of the city came and delivered him. After this, meeting him on the way, they cast him into the river Cydnus, and thought they had drowned him ; but being delivered, he then delayed no longer, but professed himself a christian, and was baptized, and so went to Constantine the emperor, and told him all that had befallen him, who made him a count, and gave him power to build churches among the Jews, which was all that he desired.

So much to prove that the fact of Christ's miracles was unquestionable with the Jews.

3. The premises, thus cleared, do further inform us, what an unreasonable and abominably impious a sin this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is, and therefore no wonder if it have no forgiveness.

Unreasonable I may well call it, for it is against the clearest evidence that can be desired. What, is there but one to be found in heaven or earth that could enter the lists with Satan, and overcome him, and rescue his captives out of his hands, and must that one be accused of being Satan's confederate ? Is there but one that had power and will to destroy the devil's kingdom ; and shall he be accused of building it up ? Must he condescend so low by his incarnation, to the wonder of men and angels, and stoop yet lower by a life of suffering, and yet lower in his agony, on his cross, and in his grave, and all to undermine the kingdom of darkness ; and, after all this, shall he be supposed to build what he so destroyeth ? Shall he lay out all his time and pains against Satan, and cast him down wherever he comes, and dispossess him of the bodies and souls which he possessed, and make the world to wonder at the batteries which he makes, and at his great

execution upon the interest of hell, and yet shall he be accounted a friend to it? Shall he be at so great cost in this holy war, and not think his blood and life too dear, and expose himself and all his army to so great hazards, abuses, and indignities, so that thousands must lay down their lives in the flames, and suffer the most cruel torments from tyrants and the raging multitude, and all to pull down idolatry and wickedness, and to set up the interest of God on the earth, and yet shall Christ be accounted a friend of the devil's? Shall he lay such a design to subdue Satan, and save mankind, as all the world could not have laid; shall he establish such a frame of laws, so perfectly contrary to the will and interest of the devil, and seal them with the mighty power of God, in doing such works as no man else could do, and yet shall these very works be said to be done by Beelzebub? Oh fearful, wilful blindness, and unreasonable wickedness, of such obstinate unbelievers!

Shall Christ send forth such an army of apostles, martyrs, and holy believers, to go up and down the world, making it their work to assault the kingdom of darkness wherever they shall come, charging them not to spare, for cost or pains, or their own lives, so that this work may be accomplished, and promising them the reward of glory if they fight manfully and overcome, and threatening everlasting misery if they do not; and yet must he be called Satan's friend? Shall he give his disciples, for a hundred years, the power of working miracles in his name, and by these to cast out idolatry and impiety; shall he list all that will come in to him, by baptism, expressly to fight against the devil; shall he actually expel him from so great a part of the world, silence his oracles, shame his worshippers and confederates, and cast down his laws and government in men's souls, and thus turn the world upside down, battering down Satan's garrisons and strong-holds, and binding him, disarming him, and casting him out; and after all this shall be said to do these things by Satan's help? Shall he set up a whole frame of worship, ordinances in direct opposition to him, and animate his disciples with a holy spirit, quite contrary to Satan, and keep them continually employed against him, publicly or privately, making it the whole work of their lives, and continually maintaining by his Spirit the conflict against Satan in their souls, giving them daily victory over him, and bringing them more and more out of his power, and yet shall he be said to be on the devil's side! In a word, shall he go before them himself as their general, and lead them, and conquer for them, in them, and by them; even conquer and rout the whole army of Satan, Jews, idolaters, heretics, conjurors, cunning sophists, and philosophers, mighty monarchs, bloody persecutors, raging multitudes, and, above all, their own hearts' lusts, and all the allurements of the world, temptation of the devil, and interest of the flesh, and thus bruise Satan under their feet, and cause him to fall as lightning from heaven, and bind the dragon that he cannot deceive, or devour as he did; and yet, after all this, shall there be found a heart in the breast of any creature of God, yea, of a redeemed one, that shall entertain such cursed thoughts as these, that Christ doth all this by the power of the devil! Judge, all men, by the unreasonableness of this iniquity, whether it be not just with God to leave such a soul as hopeless and remediless. And whether it be not such a wilful, malicious resisting of clear light, and rejecting of the remedy which was provided and offered, that it is very meet the sin should be unpardonable.

2. And consider further, whether the impiety be not yet greater by far than the iniquity or unreason-

ableness of it. Indeed, it is the very height of ungodliness; and, as it seems to me, in some respects, far worse than the very denying that there is any God. For, to give you the sum of it in a word, what is it less, if with reverence of God's name and majesty we may speak it, than to make God to be Satan, and the devil to be God? For,

1. When God hath showed himself to them in his power by miracles, in his wisdom by his gospel truths, in his holiness by his sanctifying Spirit, and in his wonderful mercy in the whole design; yea, when his image is more clearly written and engraven upon this work of redemption in the whole frame of it, from first to last, than it is on any visible part of his works; yet do these wretches say, that it is the devil, and not God, that hath done all this.

2. Hereby, also, they make the wise, almighty, and holy God, to be one that either hath not the government of the world, or else doth govern it by delusions, and give up his people that would most willingly know the truth, to be deceived by the evil spirits, causing them to work miracles for our seduction, and giving us no remedy, but leaving us unavoidably to be led into a life of error and of misery, drawing us into a course of continual labours and suffering to no purpose, but merely to our vexation, sin, and ruin; and all this by a lie confirmed by such miracles, that we have no way possible to discover the deceit. This is the very image that they draw of the great and gracious God, and these are the things which these infidels must affirm of him. And whether this be not plainly to make him to be Satan, the most Good to be the most evil one, and an enemy to truth and goodness, and to mankind, let but right reason itself be judge.

And, then, on the other side, do but consider whether they do not make a god of the devil; for they give him that all-mightiness as to raise the dead, and work the rest of the miracles that were wrought. They ascribe to him that wisdom as to lay the great design of the gospel, and to be the author of that word of perfect wisdom; so that whereas it is the heretical, contentious, envious wisdom, which, being from beneath, is earthly, sensual, and devilish, James iii. 15—17; which bringeth envy and strife, and therewith confusion and every evil work: they make the wisdom from above, which hath prescribed us the rules of purity, peace, gentleness, tractableness, and mercy, and good works, to be from the devil. They make him also to be most good and amiable, as being the cause of all those good laws, promises, and good works that Christ hath done, and of all those holy performances before mentioned, by which he hath so battered the kingdom of sin, and cast down the great abominations of the world, and brought in light and holiness into men's souls, making on them those holy changes, and possessing them with that renewing, sanctifying Spirit. If all this be the work of Satan, is not Satan most holy and good, and so most amiable, and to be beloved by mankind?

Moreover, they make him to be most righteous, as being the author and confirmer of those righteous laws and ways. They make him to be the supreme governor of the world, that can do all this, and carry it on so without control. They make him to be most merciful, and a lover of mankind, that will do such things as these for their good: and they make him to be the chief enemy to his own kingdom of sin and darkness, in doing more than all the world besides to batter it down.

Judge, now, whether these blasphemers do any less than make a god of the devil, and put God in his stead; and then judge whether the heart of man

can devise a viler sin, and whether it be not worse than atheism itself, which saith that there is no God; for such a god as Satan is, is worse than none.

And as this is the heinousness of this unpardonable sin, so consider, further, here, whether every infidel must not run, if he know what he doth and whither he goeth, upon the like horrid conclusions: for if most certain history itself may drive them to acknowledge the matter of fact, concerning the works of Christ and his apostles, and thousands more of his disciples; and so to confess that these works must needs be either of God or of the devil; there is, then, no way left, but either to be believers, if they say they were of God, or to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, if they say they were of the devil: and what a sin that is, I hope, by what is said, you may see, if you are not willingly blind.

And, now, I further leave it to consideration whether Mr. Richard Hooker said not truly, that "It is not a thing impossible, nor greatly hard, even by such kind of proofs, so to manifest and clear that point of the truth of Scripture, that no man living shall be able to deny it, without denying some apparent principle, such as all men acknowledge to be true. And these things we believe, knowing by reason that Scripture is the word of God."

Indeed, the absurdity that infidelity would lead to is no less than the denying that there is a God, who is most wise, most good, most great, or *Optimus Maximus*, as nature hath always well called him; and that is, to deny the most certain, intelligible verity among all the whole world of certainties and intelligibles: for though these things that are nearest sense are first known in order and time, according to the course of our natural reception; yet nothing in the world is so illustriously and eminently intelligible and certain as that there is a God: so that if this principle were denied, I doubt not upon that ground to deny and destroy all the rest, and to prove that no man knoweth any thing; and not only that sense is fallible, but that there is no such thing as a man in the world, nor any other being, truth, or good, if there be not a first being, truth, and good. So much for the informing consecratories.

The subject directeth me to add somewhat yet more practical, by way of further application of the point; but because it is information that was the main thing which I intended in this discourse, I will say but very little and briefly of the other.

And, 1. If this be the state of the war between Christ and Satan, you see what a help poor, captivated sinners have for their recovery, if they will but take it, and make use of it in time. Christ Jesus leadeth an army for your relief; he layeth siege to your souls by his word and judgment. O yield, and forsake your former master, before you receive the wages that is your due; yea, make it your daily cries to God, that he would save you from temptation, and deliver you from the evil one, and that his kingdom may come, and his will be done within you, as Christ hath taught you daily to pray. If a poor bird be in the talons of the kite, her cries will make you know her case; but sinners that are in the jaws of Satan, do not lift up their cries for help. O cry, and cry aloud, while help is near; you are yet but as the lamb that is caught by the wolf, but not killed: if you stay till your impenitent souls be torn from those bodies, there is then no relief to be had; but you are undone for ever.

2. Hence you may see, from the state of this war and Satan's enmity, how exceedingly the godly are beholden to Christ for their recovery; yea, and how much the ungodly themselves are beholden to him for the offers of help, and for so much restraining of

the malicious foe. It is a miserable case that witches are in, that have the devil so oft appearing to them in ugly shapes, and carrying them about, and abusing their bodies; but if the promised Seed had not bruised the serpent's head, we should all have been in a far worse case: then devils would have been our daily companions, and have used soul and body far worse, making us their slaves and drudges, and tormenting us for our labour. It is a sad case to see how he useth some melancholy and mad people, how he haunteth some persons or houses with apparitions; but much more sad to see how he captivateth men's understandings with errors, and their hearts with impenitency and contempt of the grace of God. How great is that mercy that hath rescued you from such a tyrant; or, at least, waiteth to be gracious, if you do not obstinately reject his grace!

3. Hence, also, we may see what encouragement every true christian hath to go on with confidence in the holy war. Fear not the devil, any further than to prevent his deceiving you. You serve under a general whom Satan feareth. Though he would make all others unbelievers, that he may torment them, yet he himself believeth and trembleth, James ii. 19. The name of the Lord Jesus is dreadful to the devils: you march under his banner, that hath already conquered, and that is certainly both able and willing to overcome. Oh, what should we silly mortals do, if we had not such a Captain of our salvation? But now, while we look with one eye of faith upon the life and death of the Lord Jesus behind us, and with the other upon the Lord Jesus in glory above us, and upon the same Christ that is coming to raise and judge the world before us, we may well cry out, with the apostle, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. For he that now sounds the trumpet of war will then sound the trumpet of victory, "and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed: so when this corruptible hath put on incorruption, and this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 52—58.

4. Lastly, seeing this is the state of Christ's church, to live in a continual war with Satan, and to serve against him under Christ, let all christians then remember their condition, and their baptismal vow and covenant with Christ, and stand to their colours, and live as in a continual fight; and do not either basely yield, or lazily sit down, or foolishly imagine the field is won, and the fight is done, as long as you are in the body. How far soever you have gone, and how much soever you have done or suffered, as you love Christ and your souls, think not that all is done, and there remaineth no more work or danger.

1. There is yet a tempting, malicious devil alive, who would have you, that he may sift you as wheat, Luke xxii. 31.

2. There is yet a remnant of his seed within you, even sin, which will betray you to him, if you be not wary.

3. You have more of your race to run, more time to spend; and many that begun in the Spirit do end in the flesh.

4. There are yet many and great duties in this time to be done.

5. There are yet many snares of temptation before

you, and you may meet with such as yet you have not met with.

6. The last assaults and trials are usually the greatest.

7. Your resisting graces are weak and imperfect in degree.

8. You have no assurance or command of the time and measure of the Spirit's assistance.

9. God will have all obedience tried and honoured by opposition: that which costs nothing is nothing worth; and all his followers must pass under the cross, yea, take it up, and follow their General; and through the fiery trial, escape the fiery torment.

10. Perseverance, only, must put on the crown. Though perseverance itself be purposed to the elect, yet is the possession of the crown suspended on it as the condition. To him that overcometh, and only to him, will Christ give to eat of the hidden manna, the tree of life in the midst of paradise, and to dwell in God's temple, and never to go forth. Be valiant and vigilant, therefore, that you may be victorious.

And because your safety and everlasting welfare lie upon it, I will here briefly name you a few directions, which are necessary to be followed, if you would escape the devil's rage; and with them I shall conclude this discourse.

Direct. 1. Keep up hard thoughts of Satan, that so your hearts may be kept against him as your enemy; and as hard thoughts of sin, which is the means of your destruction. The affections and actions do much follow our thoughts and apprehensions.

Direct. 2. Beware of the wounds of wilful sin; it is a fearful advantage that he gets by every such.

Direct. 3. Be acquainted with all the christian armour, and the use of it; and put it on, and go not one day, nor on any one business, unarmed; especially with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Read Eph. vi. Labour for a good understanding of the word, and to that end study it day and night.

Direct. 4. Do not continue children in knowledge and grace; for children are easily deceived, tossed up and down, and carried to and fro with every wind of doctrine, according to the cunning craftiness of Satan and his instruments, who lie in wait to deceive, Eph. iv. 14. Grow according to the time and means which you do enjoy, Heb. v. 11—14.

Direct. 5. Keep in rank and file, and not only under Christ, your General, but under those particular officers that he hath placed over you, except you can groundedly say, that they are turned traitors, and fight for the enemy. You must know your own particular company, and colours, and commanders; that is, your particular church and church guides,

as well as the general. Stragglers are easily snatched up and destroyed; the ruin of many thousands in most ages of the church, and in particular in these times, hath come from hence, that they have proudly contemned their teachers and overseers in the Lord, and thinking themselves as sufficient to guide themselves, and taking a straggling singularity and separation for a way of piety, have departed from their colours, and been deceived by the deceiver, and destroyed by the destroyer.

Direct. 6. Entertain no familiarity with Satan's familiars. When you must be among them, let it be as an enemy to their sin and their master: and let them be sure to know it, if you have opportunity. But use none of them as your familiars, lest they bring you before you are aware to have him to be your familiar who is theirs. One witch useth to entice many into the confederacy; and so doth one sinner entice many into the snare.

Direct. 7. Keep out of Satan's way; avoid occasions and opportunities of sinning; lest the devil catch you, as he did the woman that one of the fathers mentions, at a stage play, and said, he found her upon his own ground. If you will be thrusting into ale-houses, or needless recreations and pleasures of the flesh, or among enticing baits of lust, or into ways of worldly gain or honours, take that you get by it, if you are surprised by Satan when you least fear it.

Direct. 8. Be sure to learn well the two great lessons of humility and self-denial. The proud are the common prey of the devil. Of them he may make heretics, infidels, or almost what he will; for the Spirit of Christ forsaketh them. And self-seeking is his greatest engine for our ruin; of which self-denial doth disarm him, and enervates all his temptations.

Direct. 9. Keep near to God in Christ; the nearer God, the safer from the devil. His name is a terror to Satan, and a strong tower to the righteous, to which if they do but fly, they are safe. Be much with him, therefore, in all his holy ordinances; especially in secret prayer and contemplation.

Direct. 10. Be sure to offend as well as defend. It is not safe to stand still to be shot at. Do as much work for Christ, and as much hurt to Satan's interest, as possibly you can. Be still studying the ruin of his kingdom, as he is studying the ruin of your souls. Be as diligent to do good in your places to all about you, and to destroy the works of the deceiver, as he is diligent to do harm, and destroy the works of Christ. Hold on thus doing, and be faithful to the death, and you shall receive the crown of life, Rev. ii. 10, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah shall save you from the devouring lion of hell.

A POSTSCRIPT

TO THE

DISCOURSE OF THE BLASPHEMING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

SINCE this was printed, I met with a book of a reverend divine's, (now with God,) Mr. William Lyford, wherein, among others, that are more deeply charged, I am confuted as one guilty of errors, or heresy, or I know not what. (Chap. v. sec. 3, p. 144, &c.) My error lieth in a wrong description of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and thus he begins the charge:

"A learned man, correcting the common opinion of divines touching this point, doth think that this is it, which is called the sin against the Holy Ghost: when men will not be convinced by miracles that Jesus is the Christ."

Reply, 1. He is a man that pretendeth not to much learning, but is unfeignedly willing to know the

truth, and to bring this controversy to the test of God's word; but little did he think that his opinion in this was of that moment as to be enumerated with the intolerable errors against the Deity, or divine worship of the Holy Ghost, or the rest in the black bill.

2. It is only the common opinion of our modern, reformed divines that I there contradict; but whether the ancient doctors were more for their exposition or for mine, I leave them to judge, that have considered what I have said before, as also, whether the said doctors be not taken into the black bill as well as I; yet will I not say, that I had rather err with them, than be orthodox with our moderns; but I will see better reason for it than this author allegeth, before I will condemn them, or depart from their opinion.

3. The description is too short, as the next page in my book will show: to the not believing, he should have added blaspheming, by ascribing the works of Christ to Beelzebub, and he had taken in all my sense.

But three things he opposeth against my definition.

1. That miracles are not a sole, sufficient conviction to beget faith; the proper end of miracles was to bring the mind to a marking of the doctrine, &c.

Reply, 1. Little do I know to what purpose is this observation, or how it is any opposition of my doctrine, unless he meant to argue thus: If miracles be not a sole, sufficient conviction to beget faith, then the blasphemous rejecting them is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; but the former is true, therefore. Answ. I deny the consequence, and never look to see it proved.

2. I distinguish of sufficiency. It is alone sufficient to its own use or office, but not sufficient to the whole work of conversion or producing faith. Miracles presuppose the doctrine of the gospel, and are the seal of that doctrine, proving it to be of God. Who ever said that the seal was sufficient without the instrument sealed? The question was, when the gospel was preached, whether it were true or false. The infidels said it was false; Christ proves it true by his miracles, for these were God's attestation of it. Now, to this use, these miracles are sufficient objectively, in their own kind; but this excludeth not the need of the Spirit's internal efficiency on the soul, much less the need of the gospel, the truth of which it serveth to confirm.

And as for the testimony of the prophets, on which, he saith after, "their belief was to be grounded, and not on miracles alone." I reply, 1. Either miracles alone, or the believed testimony of the prophets alone, are a sufficient proof of those doctrines of Christ, to which they do attest; but both together is more than one; and the sense of the prophets was not so easily manifested to unbelievers, to be so undoubtedly full for Christ, as that we could imagine it to be equal to miracles for their conviction. We hear how men differ still about the sense of as plain Scriptures, who seem yet very godly on both sides; and we see how little the Jews to this day are convinced from the prophets; and we find expressly, in Scripture, that miracles were the ordinary, convincing means, which I have proved in the preface to the second part of the "Book of Rest."

2. The testimony of the prophets was of no validity to any that believed not the prophets, and that was almost all the world except the Jews: for the apostle to have proved the gospel to be true by the prophets, to the gentile world, had been but to prove one unknown thing by another.

3. And how would you have proved that those prophets spoke true to the nations that would have

called for proof? It was by miracles that Moses and many of the prophets did prove their doctrine, and by these you must prove them to the world, before they would receive their witness to the gospel. And is it not as clear, or much clearer, means of conviction, to appeal directly to the more numerous miracles that were near at hand, than to those so far off, whose truth the world would be readier to question?

I must freely confess, for my part, it is the evidence of truth in the gospel that owneth the Old Testament, which is my best objective help to believe that Testament.

Moreover, I would fain know whether that illumination of the Holy Ghost, which you say men do maliciously oppose, who sin against the Holy Ghost, was a sufficient means of thorough conviction and belief, or not. If not, then doth not your reason confound your own definition, as much, at least, as mine? If it were, then it seems some unbelievers, or unregenerate men, have sufficient grace to conversion, which is not effectual: which doctrine, I conjecture, will not well relish with your orthodox friends.

The second assault is thus, against these words of mine: "When men will not be convinced by miracles."

Mr. L. Will not? It is not in our choice whether we will be convinced or not, &c. Many are convinced against their wills; others are not convinced, though they desire it: the heretic useth means to prove his way to be truth; he would persuade himself that he is in the right, but cannot; and, therefore, the apostle saith he is self-condemned, because he holds on his way against the convictions of his own conscience. It is not in my choice whether I will understand or remember. These are not commanded faculties.

Reply. All men confess that the will hath not that plenary, despotical command of the understanding, memory, or passions, as it hath of the hand, foot, or tongue. But, 1. If these are not commanded faculties, then the whole school of all sects that I am acquainted with, have erred. And in philosophy, and so high a point about man's soul, it becomes not so young a scholar as I am, to follow the singular opinion of Mr. L. before all the world. What is the offence against my doctrine, but that it seemed singular? And must I side with one man against all the world, to cure my singularity, in siding with the ancient doctors against many moderns?

2. If the understanding be not a commanded faculty, then its acts are not imperative acts: but its acts are imperative acts; therefore, for the minor, I have the consent of the world.

3. If the understanding be not a commanded faculty, then are not any of its acts *participative*, free: but the acts of the intellect are *participative liberi*; therefore.

The consequent of the major is certain: for the intellect is not free of itself, but is necessitated by the object, and wrought on *per modum naturæ*, further than as it is commanded by the will.

The minor is proved by common consent, and the very name of *liberum arbitrium*, which taketh in the acts of the intellect, as is commonly maintained by divines. It is proved also by the argument following.

4. If the understanding be not a commanded faculty, and its acts free, *participative*, then is it not capable of moral virtue or vice, of duty or sin: but it is capable of duty and sin, of moral virtue and vice, *participative*, as it is free; therefore.

The consequence of the major is apparent, in that voluntariness is absolutely necessary to actual sin:

it is no further sin than a man is some way voluntary ; that is, either willing of the thing itself or its cause ; or not willing the contrary, or the means of prevention or cure. Nature hath taught all the world to excuse him that is wholly unwilling, and so could not help it.

But the minor is certainly true. He that will undertake to prove that all the errors of the intellect are no sins, will justify those that Christ will condemn. Ignorance, error, unbelief, undervaluing God and spiritual things, are very great sins, and not to be justified. Specially, it is an unfit task to be undertaken by those that write of the intolerableness and damnableness of error and heresy, and in such a book as this is. If, indeed, the understanding be no commanded faculty, nor any man able to be wilfully an unbeliever, it being not in their choice, then let no more write or speak against errors and the toleration of them ; nor provoke the magistrate to meddle with men that cannot help it, how great soever their error may be.

5. If the intellect be not a commanded faculty, and, by participation, free, then no wicked man can by the most devilish, vicious habits of his will, make his understanding worse than it is. But the consequent is proved false by Scripture and constant experience : therefore, &c.

6. If the intellect be not a commanded faculty and *participative*, free ; then God is the chief cause of all its sinful error : but the consequent is false and abominable ; therefore, so is the antecedent.

The consequence is evident, because either God or man must be the chief cause of our errors : not man, if he have no command of his intellect, for he is forced to it, and cannot avoid it. If God make it the nature of the intellect to be moved *ad modum nature*, and to be void of liberty, and wholly from under the command of the will ; and if the same God shall set before us those objects that thus necessitate the intellect, it is past all doubt that he is the principal and necessitating cause of all its errors ; which is a doctrine unfit for a christian to maintain.

7. If it be no whit in the choice of our wills, whether we will be convinced, and so become believers, then no preachers should offer it to men's choice, nor persuade them to a right choice, nor use means with their wills. But the consequent is most unchristian ; therefore, so is the antecedent.

8. If it be not in a man's choice whether a man will be convinced and believe, then no man needs God's grace to cause him herein to make a right choice : but the consequent is false ; therefore, so is the antecedent.

9. If it be not in man's choice to be convinced and believe, then no man is to be blamed by God or man, much less condemned or punished, for not making a right choice herein : but the consequent is false ; therefore, so is the antecedent.

10. But because this learned man did make so strange of it, that I should say, Men will not be convinced by miracles, let us see whether the Scripture use not this strange language as I do. And first, it is strange how he could overlook what he cited himself, from John iii. 19, 20 : " This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world ; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Darkness was in the understanding, and not a false pretence of darkness on the tongue. And this darkness is damnable because men love it better than the light ; and love is in the will ; and so is the hatred mentioned in the next verse.

" Men perish because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved ; and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they

should believe a lie, that all they might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thess. ii. 10—12. And he that " will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God," 1 Thess. i. 8, doth find their wills guilty of their understandings' ignorance. And why else is faith called " an obeying of the gospel," 1 Thess. i. 8, and " obedience to the faith," Rom. i. 5, when obedience is certainly a voluntary thing ? I think " coming to Christ " is believing ; and he saith, " Ye will not come to me that ye may have life," John v. 40. It is the willingly ignorant that Peter condemneth, 2 Pet. iii. 5. Christ saith to the unbelieving Jews, " How oft would I have gathered you, and ye would not ! " And Job saith, " Yet would I not believe that he had hearkened to my voice," Job ix. 16. And sure there are still such men in the world as say, " Depart from us ; we would not the knowledge of thy ways." The guests that were invited to believe in Christ, Matt. xxii. 3, made excuses and would not come. They that " did not like to retain God in their knowledge, did God give over to a reprobate mind," Rom. i. 28. What should I stand to cite multitudes of the like texts for ?

11. If the very passions may do much towards the determining of the understanding, much more may the will do : but the passions may do much towards it ; therefore. The minor is known by too common experience, that *impedit ira animum ; perit omne judicium cum res transit in affectum*.

12. The will may command the thoughts ; therefore it can command the understanding. It can command it to think or not think ; to think of this and not of that ; and by turning away the thoughts it can hinder knowledge or belief.

To conclude, I appeal to the experience of all the world, whether the understanding be not much biased and commanded to believe, or not believe, according to the inclination of the will. That which a man would have true, he can easily believe ; and that which he would not have true he will very hardly be brought to believe, unless the timorous passion cause credulity ; in which respect we say, *facile credimus et quod volumus, et quod non volumus*.

Yet one argument more, which I forgot. If the understanding be not a commanded faculty, then was God the chief cause of Adam's first sin, and so of all the sin and misery in the world ; but the consequent is intolerable, therefore so is the antecedent.

The reason of the consequence is evident ; for if God made the intellect such as must irresistibly be determined by objects, and caused those objects to be presented to it that must so determine it, and made a law to condemn that determination as sinful ; then it is apparent that God did irresistibly necessitate all the sin, and so the penal misery following.

But you say many are convicted against their wills.

Reply, 1. Your friend, Mr. Pemble, that thought that truth and goodness were all one, would not have yielded that. 2. They are willing of truth as truth, though they are more unwilling of it as hurtful to them. 3. What of that ? If some be convinced against their wills, doth it follow that all are so ; or they in all things ; or that the will hath no command of the understanding, because it hath not an absolute despotical command ?

But you add, others are not convinced though they desire it : and you instance in heretics that are said to be self-condemned.

Reply, 1. It follows not that because some light of evidence is so clear to nature, that the will cannot cause the understanding to reject it, that therefore it is so with all light ; or with this in question ; and

that the will cannot cause the understanding to be unbelieving.

2. You should instance in cases where there is *plena voluntas*, or else a resistible evidence. Austin puts the case off, whether faith be in the power of the will, and answers affirmatively; not because any man's will, without true grace, will believe; but because he that believeth is willing to believe; and he that is truly willing to believe, doth believe.

3. I do not believe your exposition of the self-condemnation of heretics. I remember a heretic once strongly pleaded that exposition, to prove himself no heretic, and that erroneous persons should be tolerated. There are three senses that the text will far better bear, either of them, than yours. First, they are self-condemned meritoriously, deserving their own condemnation. 2. They are self-condemned by the testimony of their own evil ways, which may be brought in against them to their condemnation. 3. And they are self-condemned effectually, in that they separate themselves from the communion of the catholic church, before any sentence of the church hath condemned them by excommunication.

But that your strange opinion is not true, is evident thus. If that be true that all heretics do sin therein against their own knowledge, and so know themselves to maintain errors, then all heresy lieth only in the tongue, and in hypocritical dissimulation; and then all heretics are orthodox, and sound in the faith, as to the understanding, and only take on them to err when they do not: but the consequent is certainly false; therefore, so is the antecedent.

Oh what a difference is there between God's language and yours! The Scripture saith that they are given up to believe a lie, 2 Thess. ii. 11. You say, it is but a desire and pretence to believe a lie, but they cannot believe it. The Scripture saith, that they err, deceive, and are deceived, their understandings are darkened, blinded, &c. Your doctrine makes them not to err, nor be blinded, or deceived, but only to desire it, and pretend it, making themselves worse than they are. For so far as a man erreth, he knoweth not that he erreth. Christ saith of unbelievers that indeed they "believed not," Matt. xxi. 25; John v. 38, 47; vi. 36, 64; viii. 24, 25; x. 26; xvi. 9; 2 Cor. iv. 4; John x. 25. But you make it as if they did believe, and would not confess it.

Yet further, I pray you see whether you accuse not the Lord Jesus for using the same phrase which you accuse me for, that "men will not be convinced, or believe." Luke xxii. 67, "The elders, priests, and scribes, led him to their council, and said, Art thou the Christ? tell us: and he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:" "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe," John iv. 48. You see, Christ saith, "They will not believe," as well as I.

And you see here that he determineth the main cause against you about the sin against the Holy Ghost, while he tells you that the Pharisees believed not; and therefore did not oppose the known or believed truth. Of which more anon.

Mr. L. Thirdly, I demand, are miracles a convincing way of revealing Jesus Christ? Were the Jews that saw them, really convinced, or not? If not, then they do not sin against the Holy Ghost, which are not convinced by them. For, as himself saith, no man was bound to believe that which was never convincingly revealed: if they be a convincing means, and if those Jews which saw Christ's miracles were really convinced, and yet opposed Christ's kingdom, then human nature is capable of sinning against the Holy Ghost in that way that our divines have defined the sin; that is, maliciously, after the

knowledge of the truth. And so did those Jews sin by the testimony of that very text which Mr. B. allegeth for his opinion, John xv. 24. They hated Christ after they had seen and known him. It is not an act incompatible with the rational soul, as he supposeth, to hate God and Christ, whom we have seen and known.

Reply, 1. The word "convincing way," is ambiguous. Either it meaneth "an objective sufficiency to convince, *in suo genere*," and so they are a convincing means. Or it meaneth "an objective sufficiency in regard of the whole sort of objects." Or, "a universal sufficiency in *omni causarum genere*." Or, "an actual convincing." The three last I deny, as I affirm the first.

2. But you seem to mean it of actual conviction, or else you would never make your second question of equal importance, viz. "Whether the Jews were really convinced?" To which I say, "Those that blasphemed the Holy Ghost, were not then convinced."

3. I was not so far beside myself, as to intend by that saying which you recite, that "no man was bound to believe that which he was not actually convinced of," but "that which had not objective evidence in *suo genere*, sufficient to convince;" else I should have said, "That no man is bound to believe but he that doth believe; which, methinks, should seem no sweet morsel to any ordinary understanding."

4. They are a convincing means, and yet the Jews were not then really convinced by them, nor some of them ever.

5. You do not fairly change or obscure the case in controversy. Whether ever any of those Jews had believed before, and after fell from it, I never determined, but the thing that I affirmed is, that at that time when they sinned against the Holy Ghost, they believed not the doctrine of Christ to be true, and so did not persecute the then known truth. Now you talk of "hating Christ whom they had known, and after they had known him;" but the question is whether they knew him.

6. Nor is it all knowledge that is in question; but whether they then knew him to be the Son of God, and the Messiah, and his doctrine to be true.

7. Christ doth not say, as you feign him to say, John xv. 24, that they had known him; he only saith, "they had seen;" that is, his great works and his person, and hated him and his Father; when he expressly said, ver. 21, that they will persecute his disciples, "because they know not him that sent him."

8. It was such ill, unfriendly dealing as, by a strange unhappiness, I meet with from other learned, pious divines, that this reverend man should here publish to the world, among his list of errors and heresies, that "I suppose it an act incompatible with the rational soul, to hate God and Christ, whom we have seen and known:" a mere forgery; never such a passage, that I know of, did fall from my pen or tongue. This strange yet common untruth and injustice makes me resolve yet less to give credit to all that good and sober men shall say of the party that their zeal is kindled against, in the heat of their oblivious disputations. The words that I wrote were these: "That which some divines judge to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, (an opposing the known truth only out of malice against it,) it is a question, whether human nature be capable of; and whether all human opposition to truth be not through ignorance, or prevalence of the sensual lusts; and so all malice against truth, is against it only as conceived to be falsehood, or else, as it appeareth an enemy to our sensual desires. So that

I think none can be guilty of malice against truth as truth." And is this the same that I am feigned to suppose? I do affirm not only that it is possible to hate that Christ and God, whom a man hath formerly known, but also, whom at present he doth, in a common sort, know to be the only God and Christ; yea, and that all wicked men and infidels do so; which is clean contrary to that which I am feigned to hold; but I say, that this hatred is not of truth as truth, or of good as good; and this I should have thought I need not, against excellent reformed divines, to have been put to prove.

As for Mr. Lyford's confirmation of his opinion from Heb. vi. and x. *valeat quantum valere potest*; I shall leave the reader to judge of it as he seeth cause, for I see nothing that I should stand to reply to, or that can prejudice the cause that I maintain; only let the reader, 1. Observe what I have before said on the same texts. 2. And observe that Mr. L. still puts the case of "malicious persecuting the truth which was once known," or else confoundeth it with the other, when the thing denied is, that "all that sin against the Holy Ghost, do maliciously persecute the truth, which they then know or believe, when they persecute or hate it, or that any do hate the truth as truth."

If I had said, as Mr. L. doth, that these apostates had "tasted the heavenly gift of justification," how many tongues and pens would have let fly at me; as experience in a better cause hath told me.

The last section against me is in confutation of these words of mine: "I think none can be guilty of malice against truth as truth; and to be at enmity with truth because it is an enemy to our sensual desires, is a sin that every man in the world is in some measure guilty of, therefore that is not the true definition of the sin against the Holy Ghost."

Mr. L. "He that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved," John iii. 20. 'Some of the Jews both saw and hated both Christ and his Father,' John xv. 24. 'Cain hated his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.' Now to hate the light because of its intrinsic properties, namely, to discover and reprove men's evil deeds; to malice the truth because it is an enemy to my lie; to hate my brother because his works be righteous, and my own evil; what is this short of opposing the truth because it is truth?"

Reply, 1. You speak full enough against your own cause. He that hateth the light *eo nomine*, as it reproveth his evil deeds, hates it not as light; for to reprove his evil deeds is an effect of it, and not convertible with light. Besides, the very metaphorical term of light signifieth not truth as truth, but truth as discovering, and so as effecting. What doth this text say, but the very same which I affirmed, that there is a hatred of truth, as it is an enemy to our carnal or sensual desires? The same man may love the truth as truth, yea, and as it discovereth his brother's faults, or any thing that he would know.

2. Did ever good expositor, on John iii. 20, think, that all that hated the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd, did sin the unpardonable sin?

3. Of John xv. 24, I have spoken already. Of Cain's hating his brother, I say, that he hated him because his works were righteous, crossing and re-proving his own evil works. But that righteousness was not hated *sub ratione formalis aut boni aut veri*, not as good, or as truth, but as apprehended evil. *Veritas qui veritas*, or *bonum qua bonum*, cannot here be hated by man,

4. Whatever man hateth is hated by him *sub ratione mali*; this is certain, from the definition of

hatred. But the *ratio formalis boni*, or *veri*, is not the *ratio formalis mali*; therefore whatever man hateth, it is not hated by him *sub ratione boni aut veri*.

Yea, *verum* and *ens* are so proper objects of the understanding, and *bonum* of the will, that in *quantum apparent*, they are embraced by human nature as such. And whenever truth or good is hated, it is only as apprehended either not true, and not good, but evil in itself, or as evil to the person, by depriving him of some dearer appearing good. These things I thought had been unquestionable, and yet I was so modest as but to say, "I thought thus:" I may next be enrolled among the heretics, by some zealous orthodox man, for saying that I think a man is a reasonable creature, and I think on the like grounds.

Mr. L. "But if you spitefully oppose truth, and cast reproaches upon it, only because it appears an enemy to your sensual lusts, especially if it be after illumination, and tasting and professing the good word of God; this is no excuse, but rather a manifestation of this great sin; because such a person doth tread Jesus Christ and his covenant of grace under foot; he treads him under all those base lusts which he prefers before him. And thus to oppose truth, by Mr. B—'s leave, I think very few men in the world are guilty of."

Reply. If by truth here you mean only that Jesus is the Christ, or the truth of christian religion, or its essentials, the reproaching of this, by apostates, I have spoken of more at large before in this discourse, to which I shall refer the reader. But that is not the case in hand.

2. I have proved, and shall further prove, that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not only the sin of such as have believed, or professed belief; no, nor the sin of any that believe while they do believe, and so not of a believer *sensu composito*; for it is an aggravated species of unbelief. Though yet it is sometimes the sin of those that were once some kind of believers.

3. But if you speak of all truth in general, I still say, that it is a common case, maliciously to oppose the truth, because it is against men's lusts. For, 1. All men's nature hath in it a hatred of God, and his holy truth and way. 2. That which men hate, they maliciously hate in this case. 3. And they that so hate it may oppose it, and actually resist the Holy Ghost in the ministry, and at their hearts. 4. The godly are cured of this but in part. 5. These sad days of faction do commonly proclaim it of abundance of professors, who so reproach that truth which is against the interest of their party.

4. Yea, if you mean it of the power of godliness, or practical truth, or yet of christianity itself, if you will prove that all who maliciously oppose the latter before profession of christianity, or all who maliciously oppose the former after profession of christianity or baptism, are guilty of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, I will quickly prove to you that these are commoner sins than you talk of; and indeed such as the converted did themselves commit, at least many of them, before conversion: and therefore it cannot be the unpardonable sin. Were it believed to be so, it might turn thousands among us into despair.

I shall conclude all with some fuller discovery from Scripture that the Pharisees were not then mental believers, no, nor ever before; nor convinced that Christ was the true Messiah, nor believed that his works were the attestation of God; but took him for an impostor, and his works to be done by the power of Beelzebub.

1. Christ saith, they believed not John himself,

Matt. xxi. 32; Luke xx. 5. John x. 24—26, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." See ver. 33, 37, 38. John xii. 36—40, "While ye have light, believe in the light. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, Lord, who hath believed our report? Therefore they could not believe, because Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, and understand with their heart," &c. Acts xvii. 5, "The Jews which believed not, moved with envy," &c. Acts xix. 9, "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude," &c. So Acts xxviii. 24, 26. Rom. x. 2, 3, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge: for they being ignorant of God's righteousness," &c. John v. 38, 44—47, "For whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?" John vi. 36, "Ye also have seen me, and believe not." So ver. 64. John viii. 24, 45, 46, "Ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. If I say the truth, why do ye not believe?" In the very text, Matt. xii. 25, Christ is said to know their thoughts; by which it seems that they thought as they spake. And what need he else bestow so many arguments to confute them, when he might have told them plainly that they were convinced already and dissembled their belief? but we never find any such word from him.

So Acts iii. 17, "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Acts xiii. 27, "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voice of the prophets that are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him." I Cor. ii. 8, "For had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." John i. 10, 11, "The world knew him not: he came to his own, and his own received him not." So I John iii. 1.

I shall add no more but this: he that after all these passages of Scripture observed, and the whole story, Matt. xii. considered, shall yet believe that these Pharisees were believers in heart even when they blasphemed the Holy Ghost, and so that this sin is always committed against present knowledge of the truth of that which is reproached; yea, or that these Pharisees did ever believe before, and were now turned apostates, and so that this blasphemy is the sin of apostates only; I would advise that man, that he would not also believe that the understanding is not a commanded faculty. And were I worthy to advise my reverend brethren of the ministry, as I would not have them befriend the smallest error, so would I not have them too rash in defaming the truth and their brethren, in a groundless confidence on their own understandings; nor to call others fools or erroneous, till they are sure that they are wiser and more judicious themselves; and to give the world a better proof of their illumination, before they draw up too large catalogues of errors, and proclaim their fitness to be censurers of the world. At least, that they would not begin too young to boast thus of their own commanding intellects. I confess I can far more patiently hear a confident, though mistaken, confutation of others from a man of sixty or seventy years of age, than from one of thirty. I am in the fortieth year of my age myself; and yet, though I adventure to condemn a palpable error, or to defend a truth when others assault it, I think myself twenty years too young, at least, to lay about me with that confidence against the heterodox, in controvertible points, as I hear many do. If some young, raw preachers did but know how loathsome it is to judicious men to hear them talk against things that they understand not, they would better employ their zeal and confidence. Though I must also confess, that it is a very sad thing, that with ancient, reverend, and sober divines, such reasonings as these that I have now encountered should seem sufficient to ground such censures, and to kindle in others an operative, contentious zeal. It is light and humility that must reconcile and pacify us; which are so rare, so hardly got, and so imperfect in the best, that we must look towards a wiser and better world for our so-much-desired unity and peace.

June 5, 1655.

THE

ARROGANCY OF REASON

AGAINST

DIVINE REVELATIONS,

REPRESED;

OR, PROUD IGNORANCE THE CAUSE OF INFIDELITY, AND OF MEN'S
QUARRELLING WITH THE WORD OF GOD.

JOHN iii. 9.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

IN the beginning of this chapter you have a lecture read by the great Teacher of the church, to a

scholar that was newly entering into his school. He is yet but a *catechumenus* in preparation to be a christian, rather than one indeed; having good thoughts of Christ, but not believing in him as the Messiah, nor engaged by baptism to be one of his disciples: and accordingly doth Christ suit his doc-

trine to his condition, and teach him first the great principle of christianity. What success it had at first, we find in the text, but not what was the issue at last; though by other texts we may probably conjecture.

First, The scholar is, by name, Nicodemus; by sect, a Pharisee; by place, a ruler of the Jews, or one of their great council. For the frame of his mind, the degree of his preparatory knowledge or belief, you may discern it, 1. By the season of his coming: 2. By the motive that prevailed with him to come: and, 3. By the confession that he makes of his belief. From all which you may see, First, That he believed that there was a God, and that it belonged to God to teach mankind; and that it was his way to teach by men; and that it was man's duty to seek after God's teaching from his messengers, and come to them and request it; and that whoever could give sufficient evidence of his mission from God, should be heard by men; and that Jesus Christ did truly and undoubtedly work miracles; and that such miracles as Christ wrought were an undoubted proof that God was with him. All these things, it is apparent, he did believe, by these words, ver. 2, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him."

Secondly, From hence also you see, that it was the evidence of Christ's miracles that had thus far convinced him, and drove him to Christ, as a teacher come from God, and consequently one that was to be credited: but that he was the Messiah, here is yet no confession.

Thirdly, And as his belief was but preparatory, so this change upon his heart doth appear to be no better, for he hath not yet learned the lesson of self-denial, and preferring the known truth and duty (of seeking after the mind of God from his messengers) before the credit of the world, or his life; and therefore he comes to Jesus but by night, as being afraid to own him in the face of his enemies.

Yet doth not Christ cast this cowardice in his teeth to his discouragement, but fitteth his medicine to the strength of the patient, as well as to the disease: for there was more malice and raging zeal against the truth, among the Jews, than among the gentiles; and so more dangers and sufferings, which a novice might not be so fit to encounter with. And, therefore, Paul, when he went up to Jerusalem, did preach the gospel privately to them of worldly reputation, which, among the gentiles and inferior Jews, he preacheth publicly, lest, through the prevalency of men's pride or cowardice, his physic should not do its work, but he should run or labour in vain, Gal. ii. 2.

The first and great thing that Christ presently falls upon, is to let this man know, that this much will not serve his turn, (to confess the miracles, and so the divine mission of Christ,) but that he must also truly believe the office that he is sent upon, even to be the Messiah, the Mediator, and the Redeemer of the world, and must openly be engaged to him as such a one by baptism, and so own him and confess him before the world, and receive his renewing Spirit, for the illumination of his understanding, the purifying and quickening of his heart, and the reforming and after-guidance of his life.

This work Christ calleth by the name of the new birth, or regeneration, and tells Nicodemus, "That except he be born again of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Not that there is the same necessity of the washing by water, and the purifying by the Spirit. For by "water" is principally meant that covenant which baptism did sign; even the confession of Christ,

and dedication to him in the relation of redeemed ones, children, disciples, and subjects, on our part, and his re-engagement and relation to us: yet "water" itself is the thing nearly signified in the word, and the use of it is of divine appointment, and not to be neglected where it may be used; but the necessity to salvation is placed in the relation, or thing signified. As it is common to say to a soldier of the enemy's, If thou wilt change thy general, and take the prince's colours, and fight for him, thou mayst have pardon for thy rebellion. Where taking colours is a duty; but the necessity is placed in the change of his relation and practice; for if there were no colours at hand to give him, yet if he be listed as a soldier (or if not listed, yet, if by open profession and action joined to them) it will be accepted: or else, as Grotius expoundeth it, "By water and the spirit is meant, a washing, cleansing spirit;" of which see him *in loc.*

This change that is here called the "new birth," is not the new creation of a substance, or destruction of our former substance or faculties; for we have still the same natural powers of understanding and willing; but it is the change of the disposition, habits, and acts of those faculties: and, with submission to the contrary-minded, I conceive that it is not only our real, qualitative change that is here called the "new birth;" but that the word is more comprehensive, as I before expressed, including our new relation to God in Christ, as sons and disciples to Christ, and servants, subjects, or soldiers under him: with a removal from our former relations which we were in by corruption, and are inconsistent with these. So that it comprehendeth both our new relations to God, to the Redeemer, and to his church; where we have a new Father, Husband, Lord, and fellow-servants; new brothers, and sisters, and inheritance; though yet we renounce not our natural brethren, parents, and inheritance, as the popish, monastical votaries conceive, any further than as they are contrary to the interest of Christ.

The reasons that persuade me to take regeneration in this extent, are,

First, Because it is the entrance into our whole new state that is here so called, without any limiting expression.

Secondly, Because we are said to be born of water as well as the Spirit: and certainly baptism doth as nearly and truly signify our justification, and relative change, and new covenant engagements, and adoption, and church-membership, as it doth our qualitative renovation. Nor do I see how any fair exposition can be given of that saying, "Except a man be born of water," which shall not include the change of our relation, as well as of our dispositions. And the like I may say of other texts, which mention regeneration, which I will not now so far digress as to recite.

Having seen what Christ teacheth Nicodemus first, let us next see the success of his doctrine. Nicodemus fastened too much upon the metaphorical term of "being born again," and withal not understanding the meaning of it, nor the scope of Christ, he presently expresseth his ignorance and unbelief by this question, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Hereupon Christ returning an explicatory answer, telling him not only the nature of the new birth, but also the mysteriousness of its causes in the effecting it, and showing a plain reason from natural agents, why the mysteriousness of this should not make it seem incredible; yet doth Nicodemus return a second answer like the first, "How can these things be?"

Which words do import not an absolute unbelief of the truth of what Christ had said, but a great ignorance of his meaning, and a not-discerning of that evidence fully which should have caused full belief; but a strong apprehension of the improbability of the thing affirmed, and thereupon a great doubting of the truth of the affirmation.

And note here the aggravations of Nicodemus's fault:

First, They were the words of one that he himself confessed to be a teacher come from God, and that sealed his doctrine by such miracles as none could do, except God were with him: and doth God send any messenger with a lie, or any teacher that knoweth not what he teacheth; or will he seal untruths, or senseless absurdities, with such unquestionable miracles? Sure, a man that was once convinced that God sent the messenger, and sealed the message, should be confident that the matter of it is divine, and should never once suspect it of untruth.

Secondly, Though Christ did, with frequent asseverations, aver the truth of his doctrine, yet did Nicodemus stagger through unbelief.

Thirdly, It was the very catechism and rudiments of piety, and christianity, which were so strange to him.

Fourthly, The term, by which Christ expresseth spiritual things, he understandeth all in a carnal sense; yea, and after that Christ had told him plainly what birth he means, not carnal, producing a fleshly creature, but of water and the Spirit, producing a spiritual creature, yet doth not Nicodemus understand him for all this.

Fifthly, Yet was this man a ruler of the Jews, even one of the great sanhedrim, and one reputed skilful in the law; one that professed himself a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which had the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law; one of those that boasted of God, and of the law, Rom. ii. 17—20. Yet he that should teach others had not learned these rudiments himself.

Sixthly, And when Christ used a familiar instance, to show him that things are not therefore incredible, because invisible, or because we know not the nature, cause, and end of them. We may know that it is when we cannot know what it is, or whence, or why it is, or whither it tends, as in the blowing of the wind is evident; yet doth not Nicodemus cease his doubting on this account, but asketh "How can these things be?" The spirituality and mysteriousness of the thing made it seem improbable to his uninformed intellect; and the seeming improbability made him doubt of the verity. Because it was past his apprehension to conceive how it should be, therefore he doubted whether it were true or not. He had not so much rational consciousness of his own ignorance, or so much confidence in a teacher sent from God, and sealing his doctrine by miracles, as to acquiesce as a learner in his teacher's credit, concerning the verity of the thing, while he was seeking to get a clearer discovery of its nature, rise, and ends.

So that here were all these sins together manifested in this answer: great ignorance, even in a ruler; unbelief, doubting of the conclusion, when he had acknowledged the premises; an unteachableness, in part, when he professed himself to come to learn; an arrogant conceit of the capaciousness of his understanding, as if Christ's words, or the plain truth, should be sooner suspected, than his shallow capacity.

From this picture we may well conclude what is the ordinary shape of man's corrupted disposition, and we may all know ourselves by knowing Nicodemus;

and from hence I may raise this observation of us all:

Doct. The corrupt nature of man is more prone to question the truth of God's word, than to see and confess their own ignorance and incapacity; and ready to doubt whether the things that Christ revealeth are true, when they themselves do not know the nature, cause, and reason of them.

They will make every thing which they understand not to seem improbable, and all such improbabilities will make it seem incredible, and the incredibility of a part makes the whole seem incredible; and thus men will be infidels, or feed their infidelity by every thing that themselves are ignorant of; and make it the chief reason why they will not believe or learn, because they do not already know and fully understand the things to be learned and believed: and so God must be accused in every thing that moles and worms are ignorant of.

When the Jews acknowledged the prophets to be of God, and sometimes would profess to receive and obey any message that God should send by them, yet when they heard what it was in particular, which he sent, then, if it did not suit with their interest and carnal reason, they would not believe it, or obey it, but rather persecute the messenger, and think, that sure such a message could never come from God; so that they must like the particular matter before they would believe that it was of God: and so God's word shall not be God's word, unless it please the blind and carnal reason of man.

So you may find they used the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. xlii.; they entreat the prophet to go for them to God, by prayer, and for advice, and bind themselves with seeming resolution to obey; saying, "The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things, for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us; whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee, that it may be well with us when we obey," &c. One would have thought that these men would have believed, and obeyed any thing that God should send to them, after such a vow as this; and yet, when they heard that the message was contrary to their own minds and opinions, chap. xliii. 1, 2, it is said, that "all the proud men" gave this answer; "Thou speakest falsely, the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say this."

A full instance you have of the like corrupt disposition in John vi. When Christ doth but tell them that he is the bread that came down from heaven, the Jews murmur, ver. 41; but when he insisted on it, that "He was the living bread, and that he would give his flesh for the life of the world, and that he that eateth him should live for ever," these spiritual things they did not understand, but understood him carnally, and thereupon reject the truth, because they understood it not; so that (ver. 52) they fall a striving among themselves against Christ's words; saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" even like Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" They will not believe it is true, or that it can be, till they know, themselves, how it can be; and when Christ yet pressed home the mystery further, even some of his own "disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" ver. 60. And though Christ proceeded to open the mystery to them, and spake that more plainly which he had spoken allegorically; yet it is said, ver. 66, that "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him;" inasmuch, that he asked the twelve, whether they would go also, intimating the greatness of the number of revoltors upon

this slight occasion; forsooth, because he spake that which they understood not, and would have taught them what they had not humility and patience enough to learn; and because they did not reach it at the first hearing, therefore they thought it improbable and incredible. Many more such instances we might give you from Scripture, but, alas! it is a truth that needs no further proof; there are as many living witnesses of it as there are men on earth; the unregenerate being conquered by this corruption, and the regenerate weakened and hindered much by the remnants of it.

For the further improvement of this observation, I shall, first, open further the nature and workings of this corruption; secondly, and then show the reasons of it; and, lastly, make some application of all.

1. Sometimes the weak intellect of man is stalled at the quiddity or nature of things; and then, being arrogant as well as ignorant, it will not believe that there is such a thing, because he cannot reach to know what it is.

On this account, some question whether man have an immortal soul, because they cannot reach to know, as they expect, what that soul is: and some will not believe there is such a thing as the Spirit of God dwelling in his people, because they know not what that Spirit is: and some think that there is no such thing as inherent, sanctifying grace, or the image of God renewed upon the souls of the regenerate; but that all talk of these spiritual, supernatural changes are mere fancies and conceits; and all because they know not what this sanctity and gracious inclination is. They think there is no such thing as communion with God, because they know not what it is; nor any such thing as a spirit of prayer, because they know not what it is.

And, indeed, if this were a wise and right reasoning, then there should be nothing in being but what we know the formal nature of, which is as gross a conceit as most in the world. What if you know not what an angel or spirit is, doth it follow that there is none? What if you know not what is beyond the visible creatures out of sight, doth it follow that there is nothing beyond our sight? By this rule you may say that there is no God; nay, all the world must needs say so, if this were right reasoning, for no man hath a true formal knowledge of God's essence, and therefore must say there is no God, because they know not what God is: nay, it is a great question whether such men must not deny the being of almost all God's creation; for it is but little that we know of the forms of things, in comparison of what we are ignorant of. You know not what the fire is, nor what the light is, nor what the air and wind is; for all the great pretences of the world. Men are ignorant of the formal nature of these: and will you therefore say that there is no such thing as fire, or light, or air, or wind? You know not the formal nature of the sun or moon: is there, therefore, no sun or moon? Alas! there is not a pile of grass, nor the smallest creeping thing, that you thoroughly know, and yet you know that such things there are. A beast knows not what a man is, and yet he apprehendeth that there is such a creature: and no man thoroughly knoweth what he is himself, and yet he knoweth that he is.

And, for the soul itself, it is a most easy and obvious truth, that we have such a soul; but it is not so easy to give a definition of it. As the way to know that you have eyes in your head, and eye-sight, is not by seeing those eyes or eye-sight, but by seeing other things by them: for the eye was not made to see itself, nor do we see the sight of the eye; but by that eye and sight we see other things,

and thereby know that we have eyes and sight; for he that hath not eyes and eye-sight can see nothing at all; so the intellective soul was not made directly to understand itself, and its own intellection, but to understand other things, and thereby to know that we have an intellectual soul: for he that understandeth, doth understand something, and thereby he understandeth that he doth understand, and so, that he hath an intellectual faculty; for he that hath not an intellectual soul can understand nothing at all; yet I will not presume to determine the controversy, whether the intellect do know its own and the will's elicit acts, by direct intuition of the act itself. It is as unreasonable a thing, then, to doubt whether we have such intellectual souls, because they know not themselves directly or fully, as long as they know other things, as it is to doubt whether we have eyes, because they see not themselves, as long as they see external objects.

2. Moreover, this corruption doth often discover itself, in that men will not believe the truth of the thing revealed, because they cannot reach to understand the causes of it; so, many will question God's decrees of predestination and preterition, because they cannot reach the cause. And many will deny the very work of creation, because they cannot know the way of creation. They will question whether they have immortal souls, because they cannot tell how they are caused, whether by seminal tradition and propagation, or by immediate creation. They will deny the work of God's differing effectual grace, because they know not how it is given out, or wrought in the soul.

And as well might they deny that they have flesh or bones, till they better know how they were caused in the womb; and they may as well deny that they have any blood in their bodies, any nutrition or augmentation, till they better know the mystery of sanguification and other nutritive works; and as well may they say that the sun doth not shine, or warm us, till they know how it is that these are caused by the sun. They know not how the plants are animated and specified, nor how they suck their nutriment from the earth, and yet they know that such things are. They know not how the silly snail doth form her shell, or nature for her; nor how the feathers of the peacock are so beautified, and the several sorts of birds, beasts, plants, fruits, are so diversified and adorned: and yet they know that such things are; or, as Christ telleth Nicodemus here, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and you hear the sound thereof, but know not whence it cometh," &c. And do we, therefore, say that there is no wind, because we know not whence it cometh, or what is the inferior cause of it? Will you say that the sea doth not ebb and flow, or there are no earthquakes, thunder, and lightning, because men do so little know the causes of them. *Felix qui potuit*, &c. It is not every man's lot to reach such causes; nor any man's on earth to know the causes of all things which he knoweth to be, nor fully the causes of any one.

3. Moreover, this folly of man's heart doth discover itself thus: in that men will not believe the truths revealed by God, because they cannot see God's ends and reasons, and the use of the things. Many an evident truth is rejected by the proud wit of foolish man, because God hath not told them why he hath so determined and ordered the business; or, if he have told it, yet they understand it not. So many infidels and Socinians do deny Christ's satisfaction as a ransom and sacrifice for sin, because they cannot see any reason for it, or necessity of it. They cannot see but God may pardon sin without

satisfaction; and then, what need of all this ado, or what likelihood that God would lay so much on his Son, or make so great a business of this work for our good, and his glory, if all was needless? and thus many deny the universal extent of his satisfaction, as being for all mankind, because they are not able to see the reason and use of it. They thrust in their dead *quorsum* as a sufficient answer to the most express words of God, and ask what good will it do men to be ransomed, and not saved. They fear not to say that this is a thing unbecoming God, and such a weakness as men could not be guilty of: so that if we can prove that such a thing there is, they will not fear to charge it on God as his unreasonable weakness. The like we might show in many other points.

And must God unlock to us the reasons, ends, and uses of his truths and works before we will believe that such things are? We will allow parents to conceal the reasons and ends of many precepts from their children; and a prince to conceal the reasons of many laws, and to keep to himself the *arcana imperii*, the mysteries of state; and must God open all before he can be believed? Is not the wisdom and the will of God the most satisfying reason in the world? Must you have proper reasonings and intentions in God; or will you have a cause of the first cause, or an end of the ultimate end of all? Alas, how little do the wisest men know of the use and ends of many a creature, over their heads, and under their feet, which their eyes behold! yea, how little know they of the use and ends of many a part of their own bodies! And yet they know that such things there are.

What abundance of whys hath an arrogant infidel, upon the reading of Scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelation; which must all be satisfied before he will believe? Of all which, God will one day satisfy them; but not in the manner as they would have prescribed him.

4. Another expression of this arrogant ignorance, is, when men will not believe the several truths of God because they are not able to reconcile them, and place each one in its own order, and see the method and body of truth in its true locations and proportion; nay, perhaps they will believe none, because they cannot discern the harmony.

What abundance of seeming contradictions in Scripture do rise up in the eyes of an ignorant infidel! as strange apparitions do to a distracted man; or as many colours before the inflamed or distempered eye. These self-conceited, ignorant souls, do imagine all to be impossible which exceedeth their knowledge; and because they cannot see the sweet consent of Scripture, and how those places do suit, and fortify each other, which to them seemed to contradict each other, therefore they think that no one else can see it; no, not God himself. They are like an ignorant fellow in a watchmaker's shop, that thinks nobody can set all the loose pieces together, and make a watch of them, because he cannot. When he hath tried many ways, and cannot hit it, he casts all by, and concludeth that it is impossible.

And upon this account many cast away particular truths, though they will not cast away all. Some cannot reconcile the efficiency of the Spirit with that of the word, in the conversion and confirmation of sinners, and therefore some exclude one, and some the other, or own but the empty names: some cannot reconcile the law and the gospel: and too great a part of the teachers, in the christian world, have been so troubled to reconcile God's grace with man's free-will, that, of old, many did too much exclude grace; and, of late, too many exclude the natural

liberty of the will, upon a supposition of the inconsistency; only the names of both were still owned.

Many cannot reconcile the sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction, with the necessity of man's endeavours, and inherent righteousness; and therefore one must be straitened or denied. Many cannot reconcile common love and grace, with that which is special and proper to the elect; and therefore some deny one, and some another. The like might be said of many other cases, wherein the arrogance of man's wit hath cast out God's truth: if both parts are never so express, yet they are upon this unbelieving, questioning strain, "How can these things be?" How can these agree together? How can both be true? when yet it is evident that God hath owned both.

It is certain, that the truths of God's word are one perfect, well-jointed body, and the perfect symmetry or proportion is much of its beauty. It is certain, that method is an excellent help in knowing divine things; and that no man can know God's truths perfectly, till he see them all as in one scheme or body, with one view, as it were, and so sees the location of each truth, and the respect that it hath to all the rest; not only to see that there is no contradiction, but how every truth doth fortify the rest. All this, therefore, is exceedingly desirable, but it is not every man's lot to attain it, nor any man's in this world perfectly, or near to a perfection. It is true, that the sight of all God's frame of the creation, *uno intuitu*, in all its parts, with all their respects to each other, would acquaint us with abundance more of the glory of it than, by looking on the members piecemeal, we can attain; but who can see them thus, but God? at least, what mortal eye can do it? And we shall never, in this life, attain to see the full body of divine, revealed truths, in that method and due proportion, as is necessary to the knowledge of its full beauty. It is a most perfectly melodious instrument; but every man cannot set it in tune, so as to perceive the delectable harmony.

What, then, because we cannot know all, shall we know nothing, or deny all? Because we cannot see the whole frame of the world, in its junctures and proportion, shall we say that there is no world, or that the parts are not rightly situated, or feign one to be inconsistent with the rest? We must rather receive, first, that which is most clear, and labour by degrees to see through the obscurities that beset the rest; and if we first find, from God, that both are truths, let us receive them, and learn how to reconcile them after as we can; and if we cannot reach it, it is arrogance, therefore, to think that it is not to be done, and to be so highly conceited of our own understandings.

5. Another way by which this arrogant infidelity worketh, is this: when men will not believe any revealed truth of God, unless they can see a possibility of accomplishing the matter by natural means; and, therefore, whenever in reading the Scripture they come to a work that passeth the power of the creature, the Nicodemites stagger at it through unbelief, and say, "How can these things be?" and the fixed infidels, with Julian, deride it. When they read the Scripture miracles, they cannot believe them, because they are miracles. Is this a likely matter, say they, that such and such things should be? And, why is it unlikely? because it is too hard for God? What! doth his creature know his infinite power? And can you set him his bounds, and say, Thus far God can go, and no further? Thus much God can do, and no more? Is it ever the more difficult to God because it is impossible to such as we? Will you say, that a horse cannot carry you on his back because a fly cannot? Creatures may be compared to creatures,

but between the Creator and the creature there is no comparison. Have you read how God posed Job in point of power and knowledge, Job xxxviii. 39—41. But who is he that hath posed God? What is that work that should be difficult to him, that by his word or will did make all the worlds? Are they greater works than those which he hath certainly done, that you speak of so incredulously? If you had never seen the sun, or moon, or stars, or earth, or sea, and had merely found it written, that God made such a world, it is like you would as doubtfully have said, "How can these things be?" If you had no more seen the light or sun, than you have seen the angels, or souls of men, it is like you would have as little believed that there is such a thing as light or a sun, as you now do that there are angels and immortal souls: but I hope you are satisfied in the things you see; and may not they shame your incredulity of the things you do not see? You see there is a sun, and moon, and firmament, and earth; you know these had either a maker and cause, or else were eternal, and as an eternal cause to themselves. If they were eternal, or made themselves, then they are the first being and cause, and so are gods. And is it not more reasonable to believe one God than so many? and to believe that God is a perfect, incomprehensible, superintellectual Being, than to believe, that the senseless earth is a god? Is it not more reasonable to conclude, that this one perfect, eternal God made all things, than that every stone did make itself; or that the sun, or moon, or any creature, made itself, and the rest? If you believe, that all things are the works of God, then you see that with your eyes that may shame your foolish, dark incredulity. Do you see a greater work, and think it unlikely that the same power should do a lesser? Do you see so much of the world that was made by a word, and do you ask, "How can these things be?" when you read of any miracle or unusual work. If it were yourself, or such as you, that had been the doer of such works, you might well say, "How can these things be?" But God is not as man in his works or word.

6. Yea, many times when men do but hear, read, or think of some objection against the truth of God's revelations, which they cannot tell how to answer themselves, they presently begin to stagger at the whole truth, and question it on every such slight occasion. If any new difficulty arise in their way, they are in the case of Nicodemus, saying, "How can these things be?" Though they have heard never so many arguments to confirm them, and have been long receiving them, and seen an evidence of truth in them, yet every new cavil or hard objection doth seem to enervate all this evidence.

If men were as foolish and incredulous in the matters of the world, their folly would easily appear to all men. When a man hath studied physic seven years, or twenty years, he shall meet with many new difficulties and doubtful cases, and many old difficulties will never be overcome; and yet he will not, therefore, throw away all, and forsake his study or profession. Will a student in law give over all his study, upon every occurring difficulty or seeming contradiction in the laws? If any students in the universities should follow this example, and doubt of all that they have learned upon every objection which they are unable to answer, they would be but ill proficients; or if every apprentice that is learning his trade will forsake it every time that he is stalled and at a loss, he would be long before he set up shop: on this course, all men should lose all their time, lives, and labour, by doing all in vain, and undoing again, by going forward and backward, and so know nothing, nor resolve of any thing.

It is most certain that all men are very imperfect in knowledge, and especially in the highest mysteries; and there is none so high as those in theology about God, and man's soul, and our redemption, and our everlasting state; and, doubtless, where men are so defective in knowledge, there must still be difficulties in their way, and many knots which they cannot untie. Can you expect, till you are perfect in knowledge, to see the whole frame of truth so clearly as to be able to answer every objection that is made against it? Why do you not lay together the evidences on both sides, and consider which of the two is the clearer case? What if you cannot answer all that is brought by the devil and cavillers against the truth, can you answer all that Christ and his servants say for it? I dare say you cannot, unless you take every impertinent vanity or falsehood for an answer. God needs not you to be the defenders of his truth. He is able to vindicate it himself against all the enemies in the world: otherwise, if he had called you chiefly to this work, he would have furnished you for it; but he first calleth you to be scholars to learn that truth, that he may help you over all difficulties in his time and way.

We are next to show the causes of this unhappy distemper; why it is, or whence it comes to pass, that men are so prone to doubt of God's truth, upon every difficulty or mystery that is in their way, and to question all when they are stalled in any thing; and to deny the very things that are certain, when they are puzzled, and at a loss, but about the manner, cause, reason, or ends of them: and among others, the causes of this great sin are these following:

1. Man is naturally desirous of knowledge, and to see things in their own evidence; and, therefore, he is often an unmannerly, impatient suitor, to be presently admitted into the presence chamber of truth, and to see her naked without delay. Nature will hardly be satisfied with believing, which is a receiving of truth upon trust from another; no, though he give us the most convincing arguments of his veracity; no, though it be God himself: nothing will satisfy nature but seeing. If the wisest men in the world tell them that they see it, or know it; if the workers of miracles, Christ and his apostles, tell them that they see it; if God himself tells them that he sees it; yet all this doth not satisfy them, unless they may see it themselves. They think this is but to be kept at a distance without door, and what may be within they cannot tell: every man hath an understanding of his own, and therefore would have a sight of the evidence himself, and so have a nearer knowledge of the thing, and not only a knowledge of the truth of the thing by the testimony of another, how infallible soever; and therefore we are all prone, when difficulties seem great, to say, with Thomas, "Except I see, I will not believe," John xx. 25; but, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed," ver. 29. How far this desire of knowledge is in nature as from God, and how far it is in nature as corrupted, I will not stand to debate; but that it is in us we feel, and this is a preparative reason of our doubting and dissatisfaction, if not a proper cause.

2. This nature of man is yet so much more desirous to know, that though it do see things in their own proper evidence, yet is it not satisfied, unless it also see the whole, and comprehend all things, with all their reasons, causes, and modes. Man affecteth a certain infiniteness in knowledge; he would know all that is knowable, and so would be as God in knowing: and if he be ignorant of any part, he remaineth unsatisfied, and so is ready to quarrel with all; and like froward children that

throw away their meat or clothes, or what else they have, because they cannot have what more they would have. Every little child will be asking you, not only, What is this? or, What is that? but also, Why is this so or so? and, To what use is it? And so do men in the matters of God; and if you satisfy them not in all, they will scarce be satisfied in any thing.

3. Besides this, there is indeed a great dependence of one truth upon another; and they are (in morality) as a well framed building, or as a clock, or watch, or the like engine, where no one part can be missing without great wrong to the whole. Now, when these men cannot see all, they do indeed want those helps that are necessary to the perfect seeing of any part; and then they have not the skill of making use of an imperfect knowledge, but are ready to take it for none, till they conceit it full and perfect; and thus are still detained in unbelief, and quarrelling with that which they did or might know, because of that which they did not or could not know.

4. Moreover, it is most certain that when God calls us at first to the knowledge of his truth, he findeth us in darkness; and though he bring us thence into a marvellous light, (Acts xxvi. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 9,) yet he doth this by degrees, and not into the fullest light or measure of knowledge at the first; so that we are at the beginning but babes in knowledge. It cannot be expected, that a man that was born blind, with an indisposition of understanding to spiritual things, and that hath lived in blindness long, should presently know all things as soon as he is converted. They do not so come to knowledge in earthly things, which they are more disposed to know, and which are nearer to them, much less in heavenly things. The dispositive blindness of the best convert, is cured but in part, much less his actual blindness. For (as I have said before) if a man have his eyes never so perfectly opened, who before was blind, yet he will not see any more than is near him, within sight: if he will see other countries, places, or persons, he must be at the pains and patience of travelling to them. And so in this case, when God hath opened the eyes of the blind, they must yet expect to know but by degrees. Oh what abundance of things are young converts ignorant of, that are fit to be known! They are but entered into Christ's school to learn, and can they think to know all the first day or year? But, alas! many that are nominally entered, bring not with them the true disposition of disciples, and therefore quarrel with their Master and his teaching, instead of diligent seeking after knowledge. Men have not the patience to stay at school, and wait on Christ's teaching till they have got so much knowledge as might dispel their doubts. They must be taught all at once, though they are incapable of it; and must know all presently, or in a little time, and with little pains; or else they will not believe that Christ can teach them. And so they run away from him, like foolish, impatient scholars, because he did not bring them to more knowledge, and will not stay the time that their own ignorance doth naturally require for so great a work.

5. And there is also much diligence necessary, as well as time and patience, before men can come to so much understanding in the heavenly mysteries, as to be able to resolve the difficulties that occur. If you stay never so long in Christ's school, and yet be truants and loiterers, and will not take pains, no wonder if you remain ignorant. And yet these men will expect that they should know all things, and be satisfied in the answer of every objection, or else they will suspect the truth of Christ. Will sitting

still in Christ's school help you to learning? Do you look that he should teach you, when you will not take pains to learn what he teacheth? You know in law, in physic, in the knowledge of any of the sciences or languages, no man can come to understand them, much less to defend them against all opposers, and to resolve all objections, without so long diligence and pains-taking in his studies as the greatness of the work requires: and shall every young, lazy student in theology, or every dull, unlearned professor, think to see through all Scripture difficulties so easily, or else will he suspect the truth which he should learn? It may be you have been professors of christianity long, but have you studied the Scriptures day and night, and consulted with men of judgment in such things, and diligently read the writings that should unfold them to you, and held on in this way till you came to a ripeness of understanding and ability to defend the truth against gain-sayers? If not, what wonder if every difficulty do puzzle you, after all your unprofitable duties and profession?

6. Moreover there is a great deal of other knowledge necessary to the thorough knowing of the sense of Scriptures. Though the unlearned may know so much as is of absolute necessity to salvation, (and will save, if it be heartily believed and improved,) yet there is much learning necessary to the fuller understanding of them, and to the resolving of all doubts and difficulties that may occur: and this is not because Christ hath delighted to speak obscurely, but because our distance and imperfection, and the nature of the thing, doth make such learning to be necessary. For if Christ speak in the Syriac tongue, and if the Scriptures be written in Hebrew and Greek, (which were then fittest to divulge it,) how can it be expected that Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, or any that understand not those languages, should understand them so fully as those that do? For no bare translation, though never so exact, can give us the full sense of the original words. Besides this, all countries have their peculiar, proverbial speeches, which are familiar with them, but would seem nonsense, or of a contrary sense, to others, that were unacquainted with them: and Scripture must and doth contain such proverbs as were usual with those to whom it was written, or the matter spoken. They had also many peculiar customs of their countries, which are supposed in Scriptures, which if we understand not, the plain text will seem dark to us. The like we may say of matters of geography, about the situation of places; and of chronology, for the due computation of times; and of other history, to know the state of church and commonwealth; and many other parts of learning, which the very nature of the matter proclaimeth to be necessary for the resolving of Scripture difficulties. Now, when unlearned men, or young, raw scholars, that want all or most of these necessities, will yet expect that they must understand all, and see through all difficulties, and be able to answer every cavil, what wonder if they be frequently stalled, and tempted to unbelief, and say, "How can these things be?"

If you say that then it seems none but learned men must be able to resolve these doubts, and defend the Scriptures against opposers; and we must take all upon their words:

I answer, you must explicitly know all that is of flat necessity to salvation, and learn as much of the rest as you can: but if it be undeniable, that you do not know more, that is, enough for the resolving of the foresaid doubts, why should you be offended that we tell you so? Either you do indeed see

through all difficulties, or you do not: if you do, then you are established; you are none of those that I speak of; you will not suspect the truth, nor say, "How can these things be?" but you are able to confute all that would seduce you. But if you do not see through these difficulties, should you not humbly confess it, and not quarrel with those that tell you so? And for taking it on others' words, you must in reason do it, if you have no other way, and if you have reason to think that they know that which you do not know; but if you think that the learnedest men do know no more than yourselves, and are as unable to resolve these doubts as you are, you go against the full light of the whole world's experience. Let their writings bear witness, wherein they do indeed resolve them; and do you call them to a trial, and see whether they are able or not: and let any that understandeth the matter, and is competent, be the judge.

7. Yea, some men are so far from having all the fore-mentioned qualifications for knowledge, that they have not a natural strength of understanding, or capacity to conceive of difficult things; and yet they will expect that all should be made plain to them, who cannot understand a plain case in law, physic, or any other profession that they are not versed in, no, nor any great difficulties in the things that they are more conversant with.

8. Besides this, it is most certain, that when the best men have done all that they can, they will here know but in part. Perfection of knowledge is reserved for the time of our perfect blessedness; and he that knows but in part, is not like to see through every difficulty; and this imperfection, joined with the corruptions which we shall anon mention, doth cause these suspicions of the truth that should be entertained.

9. There are some truths also which are not well understood without experience; and it is only sanctification that giveth that experience; and, therefore, the unsanctified take them but for fancies, and suspect the truth of that word which doth assert them.

10. But one of the greatest causes of this sin, is the pride of men's hearts, which makes them forget their great ignorance, shallowness, and incapacity. Men have such arrogant understandings, that be they never so empty, they think themselves immediately capable of receiving any truth that shall be delivered to them. And if they understand not what they read or hear, they never suspect their own wit, but the writer or speaker; because they are at age, and are now past childhood, they think they need no more to make them capable. Little know they the nature of that knowledge which they want, and how it must be attained; they know not that there is a certain higher order among truths, and that one presupposeth another, and all the lower are pre-requisite to the higher; they know not how many hundreds of the lower preparatory truths must be known before some of the higher can be well understood: they would go to the top of the stairs, without going up the lower steps. It would make a sober man wonder to see the impudent pride and arrogance of some ignorant men, that when they have need to sit many a year at the feet of some teacher, and humbly learn that which they know not, they will as confidently pass a present censure on the things that they understand not, as if they were as thoroughly acquainted with them as the best; and if they see not the evidence of a truth, they will as confidently and scornfully call it an error, as if they were indeed most capable of judging of it; when men of true understanding do see that truth as clear as the light.

If they hear a confident seducer, that hath a glossing tongue, and plausible cavils against a truth, these arrogant wits will presently conclude, that he is in the right, and cannot be answered; as if nobody can do it because they cannot; when, alas! men of understanding may presently discern gross ignorance and absurdity, in that which shallow brains are so confident of. We can scarce meet with the man so grossly ignorant, but he is confident of his own understanding, and wise in his own conceit. So that when we may expect that they should say, What ignorant, foolish wretches are we, that cannot understand the word of God! they are ready to accuse or suspect the word, and say, "How can these things be?"

11. And this arrogance is much increased by the very nature of ignorance, which is, to be even ignorant of itself. He that never saw the light knows not what light is, nor what darkness is as differing from light. A dead man knows not what death is: a brute knows not what brutishness is, because he knows not what reason is.

There is a good measure of knowledge necessary to make some men know their ignorance. What can show a man his error, but the contrary truth? This is it, therefore, that hinders men's conviction, and makes them confident in their most false conceits; seeing they want both that light and that humility which should take down their confidence. We have as much ado to make some men know that they do not know, as to make them know that which they know not, when once they will believe that they do not know it: especially, if men have but any plausible, natural wit, or a little taste of learning, or a little illumination in some greater matters, which in gross ignorance they did not understand; they presently think that all things should be now plain to them. It is the ruin, or dangerous perverting, at least, of many young zealous professors, that formerly lived in great ignorance and ungodliness; that when God hath showed them their error, and brought them to see the excellency of a holy life, the new light seems so glorious to them that they think they know all things, and need but little more; and now they are illuminated by the Spirit of God, they think that they should understand all truths at the first hearing, and see through all difficulties at the first consideration; little knowing how much lamentable ignorance doth yet remain in them; and how much more glorious a light is yet before them; and how little they know yet, in comparison of that which they do not know. So that it is the nature of the ignorant, especially half-witted men, that have some little knowledge which may puff them up, to think they have that which indeed they have not; and so to have this arrogance of understanding, and speak against the darkness of truth, when they should lament the darkness of their own understandings; and to think the candle is put out, or the sun is darkened, because this web is grown over their eyes.

12. Moreover, infidelity is a natural, deep-rooted, obstinate sin; and, therefore, no wonder if it be hardly overcome, and will be striving in us to the last. The first sin of man, in believing the serpent before God, hath left a vicious habit in our nature. Man is now so estranged from God, that he is the less acquainted with his voice, and the more distrustful of him. We are so much in the dark, that we are the more diffident. When a man knows not where he is, or who is near him, he is still fearful; when he knows not what ground he stands on, whether firm or quick-sands, he is naturally apt to distrust it; an unknown God will not be well believed.

Were it easy to cure infidelity, all other sins would be of much more easy cure. He is a conqueror indeed, that thoroughly conquers his unbelief; but the most are captivated by it to their perdition.

13. And it somewhat addeth to this disease, that man is conscious of deceitfulness in himself, and from thence is apt to suspect all others. Because he finds himself both fallible and fallacious, he is ready to think that God himself is so too; for corrupt man is prone to question whether there be any higher virtue than he hath experience of in himself.

14. Also, it is a great occasion of this sin of infidelity and arrogancy, and questioning all that men do not understand, that they know not the true nature of the christian state and life, and build not in the order that Christ hath prescribed them. Christ's method is this: that they should first understand and believe those essentials of christianity, without which there is no salvation, and then engage themselves to learn of him as his disciples; and so to set themselves to school to him, and live under his teaching, that they may know, by degrees, the rest of his will: and his teaching is jointly by his word, ministers, and Spirit. Men must lay the foundation in an explicit faith, and hold to those fundamentals as of infallible certainty, and not expect to know the rest in a moment, nor without much diligence and patience, but wait on Christ in the condition of disciples, to learn all the rest. All this is expressed in Christ's commission to his apostles, (Matt. xxviii. 19—21,) where he first bids them disciple the nations; which contains the convincing them, at age, of the fundamentals, and procuring their consent; and then to baptize them, that they may be solemnly engaged; and then teach them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them: and this must be the work of all their lives.

Now, here are two gross errors, contrary to this established order of Christ, which professors do oft run into, to their own perdition. The one is, when they do not first lay the fundamentals as certainties, but hold them loosely, and are ready, on all occasions, to reduce them to doubtful and uncertain points; or to question them, though their evidence be never so full, because of some defect of evidence in other points.

A most foolish and perverse course, which will hinder any man that useth it, from the true understanding of any science in the world; for in all sciences there are some undoubted principles, which must be first laid, and it must not be expected that all points else should be of equal necessity or evidence as they: but if we should meet with never so much doubtfulness in any of the superstructure, yet these principles must still be held fast; for he that will be still plucking up his foundation, upon every error in the building, is never like to perfect his work.

The second common error is, that as professors do not lay the foundation as certain, so they do not unfeignedly set themselves in the true posture of disciples or scholars, to learn the rest, but think themselves past scholars when they have gone to school, and engaged themselves to Christ, their teacher. This is the undoing of the greatest part of the visible church.

If they come to the congregation, it is not as scholars to school, but as judges to pass sentence of the doctrine of their teachers, before they understand it; and if they read the Scripture, it is in the same sort. When they are at a loss, through any occurrent difficulty, they do not go to their teachers as humble scholars, to learn the true sense of the word and the solution of their doubts, but they go

as confident censurers, and as boys that will go to school to dispute with their masters, and not to learn; and, therefore, no wonder if they turn self-conceited heretics or infidels; for Christ hath resolved that the most learned and worldly-wise, if they will come to school to him as his disciples, must come as little children, conscious of their ignorance, and humble enough to submit to his instructions, and not proudly conceited that they are wise enough already; and they must wait upon his teaching, year after year, and not think that they are capable of a present understanding of each revealed truth.

15. Lastly, besides all the former causes of this sin, some men are judiciously deserted, and left to the power of their arrogancy and infidelity. When God hath showed men the light of fundamental verities, and, instead of hearty entertaining and obeying them, they will imprison them in unrighteousness, and receive not the truth in the love of it, that they may be saved, God oft gives them over to believe a lie, and to reject that truth which would have saved them, if they had received it.

I have noted many professors that live in pride, flesh-pleasing, or secret filthiness, or unrighteousness, or worldliness, and would not see, nor forsake, their sin, but hold on in their profession and their lusts together, that these are most commonly given over to gross heresies or infidelity; for when they are once captivated to their fleshly lust and interest, and yet read and know the damnableness of such a state, they have no way left to quiet their conscience, but either to believe that Scripture is false, (and then they need not fear its threatenings,) or else to leave their sins with confession and contrition, which their carnal hearts and interest will not permit.

Use. From what hath been said already in the opening of this point, we may see what a corrupt and froward heart is in man, as to the matters of God and his own salvation: three notable corruptions are together comprehended in the distemper, which we have here described and expressed in the common, incredulous questioning, "How can these things be?"

First, you may hear in this question the voice of ignorance: men have lost the true knowledge of God, and of his works, especially in spirituals. "The natural man discerneth them not, for they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. We are as blind men groping in the dark, at a loss upon every difficulty that occurs; evidence of truth is no evidence to us, because our understandings are unprepared to receive it, and be shut against it. When we should love the truth, we cannot find it; when we should glorify the God of truth, we know him not, but in our hearts say as Pilate, "What is truth?" and as Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord?" We are grown strangers to the way that we should go home in; and strangers to the voice that should tell us the way, and to the hand that should guide us in it; and strangers to the everlasting home that we should go to; so that instead of a cheerful following of our guide, we are crying out at every turn, "How can these things be?"

2. And here is comprehended, and manifested also, the perverseness of man's understanding, that will needs begin at the wrong end of his book, and read backwards: and when he should be first inquiring, Whether these things be so, or not? he will needs be first resolved, How they can be so. And he will not believe that they can be so, till he knows how they can be so; whereas common reason would teach us, in other things, to know first whether it be so or not, before we come to the How can it be so? we may easily be certain of the being of a thousand things, when we cannot be certain how they be.

3. And, lastly, here is manifested, also, the unrev-erent arrogance of man, that will presume to call his Maker to account, and to know of him the reasons of his works, and how they can be, before he will believe them; and so he will needs question the very power of God; for to say, How can it be? is as much as to say, How can God do it? as if we were fit judges of his ways, and able to comprehend his infinite power, and the several paths of his unsearchable counsels. "He is great in counsel, and mighty in work," Jer. xxxii. 19. "He made the heaven and the earth by his great power, and nothing is too hard for him," ver. 17. The prophet Isaiah's answer should suffice to all such incredulous questions: "This cometh from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working," Isa. xxviii. 29.

Hence also we see what unteachable scholars Christ hath in his school, and, consequently, how patient and gracious a Master he is. When we should be submissively inquiring, we are incredulously disputing: and we will needs be wiser than our Master, and question whether he teach us right or wrong. It is a wonder of mercy, that he should pardon so great dulness and unprofitableness in us; and shall we after this be so insensible of that sin of ours, and of that grace of his, as to fall a questioning of him, and his truth, and lay the blame on him from ourselves?

Object. But we must not believe all things; and, therefore, we must inquire, and try the spirits, whether they be of God, or not, even the Spirit of Christ himself.

Ans. The Spirit of Christ fears not a just trial: had not Christ brought sufficient evidence of his truth, he would not have condemned the unbelieving world for not receiving it. I have showed you already how fully he hath sealed his testament, and with what attestations he hath delivered his doctrine to the world. But why do you not acquiesce in these confirmed verities? When once Christ hath given sufficient proof of his doctrine, must it be questioned again, because it is wonderful; and because that the manner of it is beyond your reach? Inquire, first, whether it be a revelation from God, or not: and if it had no divine attestation, or evidence that it is of God, then you might reject it without sin or danger, when you find it to contain things so far beyond your reach; but when God hath put his seal to it, and proved it to be his own, if after this you will be questioning it, because of the seeming contradictions or improbabilities, you do but question the wisdom and power of the Lord; as if he had no more wisdom than you can reach and fathom; yea, than you can censure and reprove; or, as if he could do no more than you can see the way and reason of, and are fit to take an account of.

I do, therefore, exhort all that fear the great name of God, and love their own souls, that they take special heed against this dangerous sin; think not the proved, sealed word of God is ever the more to be suspected, because that the matters in it do seem strange, and unlikely to your reason. And think not that you should comprehend the mysterious counsels and ways of God. Let your understandings meditate on Scripture difficulties, that you may learn to resolve them; but suffer not the apprehension of those difficulties to make you once question the truth of God; but abhor such a thought as soon as it ariseth, and cast it with detestation out of your hearts.

To persuade you the more effectually, I beseech you do but weigh impartially, besides what is said before, these following considerations:

1. Consider who that God is whose ways thou dost so presumptuously pass thy censure of, and whose word thou callest to the bar of thy judgment! Is infinite wisdom fit to be examined by thee? or the works of infinite power to be tried by thee? If there were nothing wonderful in his word or works, they would not be like the majesty of God; nor the Saviour of the world, whose "name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God," Isa. ix. 6. God's name must be written upon his word and works, and all must bear some part of his image; and therefore have somewhat in them that is incomprehensible. Shall the infinite God have no word or work, but what may be comprehended by such as we? I seriously profess, that it oft amazeth me, to think that we should know so much of God, his will, and ways, as we do. When I consider the infinite distance between him and us, I must admire that we are made so much acquainted with his mind, and that he hath told us so much of his mysteries as he hath done, and must say, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou so visitest and regardest him?" Psal. viii. 4; Job vii. 17. When I consider how little a poor worm, or bird, or beast, knows of me that am made of the same flesh with him; and how much man knows of the mind of God, who is infinitely distant from him; it makes me admire at the Providence that hath so ordered it. If a beast could so far consider, and discourse, would it not be folly in him to call my writings, words, and ways, to the bar, and to suspect those as false that are beyond his reach? and to say, "How can these things be?" Why, alas! they are ten thousand thousand times nearer to us, than we are unto God. O then let us thankfully open his books, and look upon his words and works, and bless him that hath condescended so far to man, and lifted up man so near to himself in knowledge, in comparison of other inferior creatures; and make much of that measure of knowledge which we have: but do not think to measure the creation of God, nor to comprehend his secrets; much less himself. Methinks the reading of those four chapters in Job, before cited, containing God's expostulation with him, might do much to humble an arrogant wit, and to make it submit to infinite wisdom. Alas! the very angels cannot comprehend God; and whether any creature can immediately see his essence, we cannot now affirm: admirations do better beseech the highest of his creatures than bold expostulations. The flaming mount might not be touched. You cannot endure to gaze upon the sun, which is God's creature; should you approach too near it, you would be consumed by its heat. And dare you be so bold with the highest Majesty? It were not greater folly to imagine that you can span the earth in your hand, or that you can reach the sun with your finger, than to imagine that you are meet to expostulate with God, and that all must be unreasonable in his word or works where your wit is not able to discern the reason. Surely, "his thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways; but as far as the heaven is above the earth, so far are his thoughts and ways above ours," Isa. lv. 7—9.

And as you cannot comprehend the thoughts and ways of God, so you are surely unfit to contradict them. The child will submit to the wisdom of his father, and the scholar of his master, and will believe them when they cannot reach the reason of their sayings: they will not set their wits against them, though they be reasonable creatures, as well as they. It was the humble expression of men of old, when they would condemn themselves, in comparison of their superiors, to call themselves a dead

dog, or a flea. 1 Sam. xxiv. 14, and xxvi. 20, David himself doth so to Saul. What may we then call ourselves, in comparison with the Lord, but even nothing, and less than nothing, and lighter than vanity? and should nothing contend with immensity and eternity? Should a flea dispute with a learned man, and say, "How can these things be?" How much less should we so dispute with God!

If a man do but look up to the height of the visible heaven, or look down into some exceeding depth, it will make him be ready to tremble. With what dread and submissive reverence, then, should our minds look to the height and depth of the counsels of the Lord! Dare not, therefore, any more to quarrel with his wisdom, but say, as Job, when God had nonplussed him, "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee, who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge. Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I know not," Job xlii. 3.

2. Consider, also, what we are ourselves, as well as what that God is with whom we do expostulate. The Lord knows we are silly creatures for such an undertaking. Can such breathing lumps of earth, such walking dust, such bags of filth, be fit to enter a dispute with God? And though they are noble souls that are thus meanly housed, yet never endowed or fitted for such a task. A spoon or shell may as well contain the whole ocean, as our narrow understandings comprehend the counsels of God. Are our understandings infinite, that we should think to comprehend the reasons of the words and ways of the Lord, any further than he hath condescended to reveal them? Our eyes may as well expect an unlimited vision, and think to see beyond the sun, as our understandings expect such a boundless intellection. It is a wonder that so much knowledge as we have should be found in a soul that is housed in clay; and shall we presume that we have so much more than we have? It was the sinful arrogance of our first parents to desire to be as gods in knowledge; and shall we go so far beyond them in our arrogance, as to presume that we are actually such indeed?

And it is observable what contradictions there be among sinful principles, and how proud infidelity doth condemn itself. These unbelievers have such low thoughts of man's soul, that they think it doth but gradually differ in its rational power from the soul of a brute, and therefore think it cannot be immortal; and yet the very same men that think not the soul so noble as to be immortal, do think it so capable of disputing with God, and comprehending the reasons of his truths and ways, that they are ready to deny the most confirmed truth, if they do not reach the manner, and ends, and reasons of it, and God shall not be believed, unless their reasons be satisfied in all these; and unless they are able to take so full a view of the whole body of truth, as to answer all gainsayers, and reconcile all seeming contradictions, they will not take God's word to be his word; yea, with the wretched atheist, God shall not be God, because he cannot comprehend him; he shall not be infinite, in immensity and eternity, because that he cannot comprehend this immensity and eternity. And so with the infidel, Christ shall be no Christ, and the Trinity no Trinity, because his shallow brain cannot comprehend the mysteries of the incarnation, the hypostatical union, and the Trinity. So that the same man will have his soul to be but as the soul of a dog for kind, and yet will have it more comprehensive than the very angels in heaven, and think it so competent a judge of God's

counsels, that he will presume to condemn them, if he see not the reasons of them.

3. Consider, doth not certain experience tell you that you are utterly unable fully to understand the nature and reasons of those works of God, that are daily visible before your eyes? I will not say, only of the greater and more distant, but even of the least, or of any one of them. I am confident that there is not the least fly, or worm, or pile of grass, (much more the sun and other planets,) but that which we know of them is much less than that which no man knows. And should such poor understandings, then, be so arrogant as to think to fathom the counsels of God, and reject his plain, revealed truths, because they see not how such things can be?

4. Consider, what a stream of experience do you sin against in this arrogance. Doth not every study that you fall upon, and every day's business that you are engaged in, most plainly discover the weakness of your understandings? Why else do you learn no faster, and know no more? Why are you not yet absolute masters in all sciences and arts? Yea, why are you so defective in all? And yet will you presume to dispute with God, and reject his truths as unreasonable, after all this experience of your own infirmity, and of your unfitness for works that are so much lower?

5. Consider, whether by this sinful arrogance you do not equal your understandings with God's? For if you must be able to see the reason of all his truths and ways, and will control them because you see not the reason of them, doth not this imply that you suppose yourself to equal him in understanding? And what greater madness can you be guilty of, than such a conceit? So, also, when you quarrel with the word as if it contained things that are unrighteous, and strengthen your unbelief by such conceits, what do you but say that you are more righteous than God? O, think not that the foolishness of man is wiser than God, or that our darkness is comparable to his incomprehensible light, or our unrighteousness to his perfect justice, or that we are fit judges of these his perfections. Hear that voice that Eliphaz heard from the Spirit that passed before him in the visions of the night: "Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? They are destroyed from morning to evening; they perish for ever without any regarding it. Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom," Job iv. 13—21.

6. Consider, further, that it is the very nature of faith to believe the thing revealed or testified, upon the mere credit of the testifier or revealer. If, therefore, you will have no such implicit belief in God, you will have no faith at all. To see a thing in its own evidence is not to believe. The formal object of faith is the veracity of God. Reason assures us, first, that God cannot lie, and next it discerneth by evidence that this is God's word, or a divine revelation; and then we may well build upon this foundation, that each particular of this revelation is true. So that it is no true belief, if the credit of the testifier be not the reason of your assent; if, therefore, you must see the reason of God's revealed truths, and the very manner and end of all his works, before you will believe, this is as much as openly to proclaim that you will be no believers at all. You will assent to the words of the falsest liar, as long as you see the evidence of truth in the things themselves

which they report. And will you give no more credit to God than to such a one? Will you believe God no further than you see a cogent evidence in the thing asserted, which shows that he cannot deceive you therein if he would? Why, thus far you will believe the worst of men; for, indeed, this is no believing at all. If you do not first believe that God cannot lie, and so that all that he saith is true, you have no belief in him at all.

7. If you are christians, you are Christ's disciples, and therefore must wait on him in the humblest posture of learners: and he that will no whit credit his teacher, is not like to learn. If you will not believe him, but assent only to that which is evident of itself without his word, then how are you his scholars?

8. Will you allow your own children or scholars to do so by you? If they should dispute with you instead of believing you, and so should reject all that you tell them as false, that is beyond their capacity as to the reasons and manner, you would not think that they did their duty. When a schoolmaster is teaching his scholars their lesson, shall they, instead of learning, dispute it with their master, and in every difficulty, or seeming contradiction, unbelievably say, "How can these things be?" Be not guilty of that towards God which you would not have a child to be guilty of to a man.

9. Consider, also, if this course be taken whether ever you be like to come to knowledge: for the knowledge of things, whose evidence is all in the revelation and the credit of the testifier, can be attained no other way but by believing. All things seem strange and difficult at first to those that have not learned them. If you understand all things already, what need you to learn any more? If you do not, then all that you understand will appear to you at first as darkness or contradiction. If, now, you will be so confident of your own understandings as to cast away all that you understand not already, because it seems contradictory or unlikely, how are you like to know any more? If you will conclude that all is false which you understand not already, you are like to make but unprofitable scholars. Well, therefore, saith Solomon, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him." Prov. xxvi. 12. For certainly it is a double degree of folly for a man not only to be ignorant of the things of God, but also to be so ignorant of his own ignorance. And we must be at more pains to make such proud men know that they do not know, than to make the humble to know the truths themselves, which they perceive that they yet know not: and, therefore, Paul doth not only bid us "Be not wise in your own conceits," Rom. xii. 16; but also intimates that ignorance is the cause of such conceits of wisdom: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits," Rom. xi. 25; as Solomon saith of the foolish sluggard, that "he is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason," Prov. xxvi. 26.

10. Consider, whether in this case you join not impudence and inhuman ingratitude to your arrogance, when Christ condescendeth to become your teacher, and you are loiterers and dillards, and will not learn, but have lost the most of your time in his school; is it not a great mercy now, that he will yet entertain you and instruct you, and doth not turn you out of his school? And will you, instead of being thankful for this mercy, fall a quarrelling with his truth, and take on you to be wiser than he, when you have so provoked him by your ignorance and unprofitableness? Will you fly in his face, with audacious, unbelieving questions, and say, "How can

these things be?" as if it were he that knew not what he said, and not you that did not understand him?

11. Consider, how easily can God evince the verity of those passages which you so confidently reject, and open your eyes to see that as plain as the highway, which now seems to you so contradictory or improbable; and then what will you have to say for your unbelief and arrogance, but to confess your folly and sit down in shame? You know when any difficult case is propounded to you in any other matter, which you can see no probable way to resolve, yet when another hath resolved it to your hands in a few words, it is presently all plain to you, and you wonder that you could not see it before. You are as one that wearied himself with studying to unfold a riddle, and when he hath given it over as impossible, another openeth it to him in a word; or, as I have seen boys at play, with a pair of tarrying irons, when one hath spent many hours in trying to undo them, and casts them away as if it could not be done, another presently and easily opens them before his face; so when you have puzzled your brains in searching out the reasons of God's ways, and seeking to reconcile the seeming contradictions of his word, and say, "How can these things be?" in a moment can God show you how they can be, and make all plain to you, and make you even wonder that you saw it not sooner, and ashamed that you opened your mouth in unbelief. How plain is that to a man of knowledge, which to the ignorant seems impossible! If the certain event did not convince them, you should never persuade the ignorant vulgar, that learned men know so much of the motions of the planets, and can so long before tell the eclipse of sun or moon to a minute; but when they see it come to pass, they are convinced: thus can God convince thee of the verity of his word, either by a merciful illumination, or by a terrible execution; for there is not a soul in hell but doth believe the truth of the threatenings of God, and the devils themselves believe, that would draw thee to unbelief.

12. Lastly, Take heed of the very beginnings of this sin; for it is the ordinary way to total apostasy: when men have once so far lost their humility and modesty, and forgot that they are men, or what a man is, as to make their shallow reason the censurer of God's word, because of certain seeming improbabilities; and when they will not rest satisfied in the bare word of God, that thus it is, but they must needs know why, and how it can be; this opens the flood-gate of temptations upon them: for the envious serpent will quickly show them more difficulties than their shallow brains can answer; and will cull out all those passages of Scripture, which are "hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable do wrest to their own destruction," 2 Pet. iii. 18. He will show them all the knots, but never show them how to untie them. Such arrogant questioners and censurers of God's word, do oft run on to utter infidelity; while they are incompetent judges, and do not know it, what can be expected from them but a false judgment: for though the light shineth in darkness, yet the darkness comprehendeth it not, John i. 9; and therefore presumeth to condemn the light.

O, therefore, let all young, raw students, and unsettled wits, take heed, in the fear of God, that they exalt not themselves, and that they think not their weak understandings to be capable of comprehending the counsels of God, and passing a censure upon his word, upon the nature of the matter as appearing unto them. Nay, let the sharpest wits and greatest scholars stoop down before the wisdom of God, and be-

have themselves as humble learners, and enter as little children into his school and kingdom, and submissively put their mouths in the dust, and take heed of setting their wits against heaven, or challenging the infinite wisdom to a disputation. If they love themselves, let them take this advice, and remember that God delighteth to scatter the proud in the imagination of their own hearts, Luke i. 51, and to pull down aspiring sinners to the dust. As they that would set their power against God, would soon be convinced of their madness by their ruin; so they that will set their wisdom against him, are like to escape no better. "Let no man deceive himself: if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise: for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain," 1 Cor. iii. 18—20.

Object. But would you not have men satisfied of the reasonableness of what they believe? Shall men believe that which is unreasonable? This were to make us mad, and not christians.

Answe. You must believe nothing but what you have sufficient reason to believe: but then you must know what is sufficient reason for belief. Prove but the thing to be the testimony of God, and then you have sufficient reason to believe it, whatsoever it be. For faith proceedeth by this augmentation, "Whatsoever God testifieth is true; but this God testifieth, therefore it is true." You have as good reason to believe the major, as that there is a God: and he that acknowledgeth not a God, is unworthy to be a man. All that you have to look after, therefore, is to prove the minor, that this or that is the word of God. And as concerning the Scripture, in general, it carrieth sufficient reason to warrant and oblige any man that readeth or heareth it, to believe it, in the forehead of it: it shineth by its own light, and it beareth the certain seal of heaven. So that we have good reason to believe the Scripture, or doctrine of Christ, to be the word of God; and then we have as good reason to believe it, and every part of it, to be true. And then what ground is there for any further exceptions or objections? When you have seen the seal of God affixed, and perceived sufficient evidence of the verity of the whole, what room is left for cavils against any part of it?

Object. But it is certain that God never spoke contradictions. Therefore, if I find contradictions in the Scriptures, may I not rationally argue that they are not the word of God?

Answe. Yes, if you could certainly and infallibly prove your minor, that Scripture hath such contradictions. But that is not a thing that a sober man can be confident of proving. Because all things that men understand not, may seem to them to have contradictions. And you have far more reason to suspect your own shallow understanding, than the word. For those things, as I have showed, may be easily reconcilable by others that understand, which seem most unreconcilable to you. Are you sure there can be no way of reconciliation, but you must know it? It is easy, therefore, to see that your minor cannot possibly be proved.

Yea, it may be easily and certainly disproved, even by him that cannot reconcile those seeming contradictions. For God attesteth no contradictions: but God attesteth the holy Scriptures; therefore the holy Scriptures have no contradictions.

The major is most evident to the light of nature, and granted by yourself. The minor is proved at large, before and elsewhere. God's attestation is discernible to reason.

It is, therefore, a preposterous course to begin at the quality of the word, and to argue thence, that God revealed it not, when you should begin at the attestation or seal of God, and argue thence that he did reveal it; and, indeed, the very quality beareth or containeth his image and seal, for you are more capable of discerning the seal of God attesting it, in the Spirit of miracles, holiness, &c. than you are of discerning presently the sense of all those passages that seem contradictory to you. You may easily be ignorant of the true interpretation, for want of acquaintance with some one of those many things that are necessary thereto; but I can be certain, that God hath attested the Scripture to be his word.

And, indeed, common reason tells us that we must first have a general proof that Scripture is God's word, and argue thence to the verity of the parts, and not begin with a particular proof of each part. It seems you would argue thus: This and that text of Scripture are true, therefore they are God's word: but reason telleth you, you should argue thus: This is God's word, therefore it is true. If you set a boy at school to learn his grammar, will you allow him to be so foolish as to stay till he can reconcile every seeming contradiction in it, before he believe it to be a grammar, or submit to learn, and use its rules? or will you not expect that he first know it to be a grammar, and then make it his business to learn to understand it, and therein to learn to reconcile all seeming contradictions? And should he not, in modesty and reason, think that his master can reconcile that which may seem unreconcilable to him, and such unlearned novices as he is?

For my part I am fully resolved, that if my reason could reach to none of the matters revealed in Scriptures, so as to see them in the evidence of the thing, yet if I once see the evidence of divine revelation, I may well be assured that it is wholly true, how far soever it may transcend my reason; for I have reason to believe all that God revealeth and asserteth; and I have reason to acknowledge the imbecility of my reason, and its incompetency to censure the wisdom of God.

And thus I abhor both the doctrine of them that say, We have no reason to be christians, and that the truth of Scripture is an indemonstrable principle that must be believed without reasons, and not proved by them; and also the arrogant infidelity of them that will believe nothing to be a divine revelation, unless their reason can comprehend the thing itself, or, at least, if there be any thing in it that seems contradictory to their reason; and so will begin at the wrong end, and examine the particular matters by the test of their blind reason, when they should first examine the attestations of the whole, where the evidences are more fitted for the reason, even of the younger christians, to discern.

I easily confess that no man should groundlessly believe any thing to be a divine testimony, or believe any man, that saith he speaks from God: but when God hath given them sufficient reason to believe that the testimony and revelation is indeed from himself; if, after that, men will still be doubting, because their reason is stalled about the manner, and the causes, and the ends, and will believe no more than is within the reach of their reason in these respects; nor confess that it is God's word, unless they can vindicate it from all objections, and know why and how it is, as well as that it is; this is a mere unreasonable unbelief. It is ordinary with princes and other lawgivers, in wisdom, to conceal the reason of their laws: shall subjects, therefore, presume to censure them as defective in wisdom or justice, because that they know not the reason of

them? I say again, if there were nothing in Scripture but what the reason of man could comprehend, it were not so like to be the product of the infinite wisdom of God. Let reason, therefore, stoop to the wisdom of our Maker; and when he hath let us know that it is he that speaketh, let us humbly learn, and not proudly expostulate with him about the rest.

Though I shall not undertake to set upon the resolution of all the questions of incredulous men, which they commonly raise against the word of God, (for that would take up many large volumes of itself,) yet as I have dissuaded them from this arrogance of wit, so I shall make trial of a few of their commonest and greatest objections, to show them that their infidelity is capable of a confutation, as well as of a deboration.

Object. 1. You tell us out of Scripture, that there are devils, most wicked, malicious spirits, addicted to do evil: who made these devils, or how came they to be so bad? Certainly, God is good, and therefore made nothing but what was good; and every thing must have a first cause. If they made themselves evil, then they were the first cause of their own evil; and then you deify the will of the devil, in making it to be absolutely a first cause. If you say, as some, That sin is but a privation, and therefore hath no efficient cause, but a deficient, then either that deficiency must be first from God (and then he should be the first cause of all sin) or from the will of the devil; and then either he was before bound *non-deficere*, or not; if not, it was no sin; if he were, then, first, he could *primo deficere*, though God did all that belonged to him to prevent it. Secondly, and he could have stood without any more help than he had when he fell, and so *quoad determinationem propriæ voluntatis*, should have been the first determining cause of his own perseverance, or non-deficiency; for if he could not stand, it was no sin to fall, being before innocent: moreover, their sin was not a mere privation, but materially an act, (whether *velle* or *nolle*,) and formally a relation of disconformity to the law.

Ans. 1. The devil himself was the first cause of his own pravity: God made him not evil, but he made himself so. God gave him free-will to be a self-determining principle; by this he was enabled to stand or fall, and left in the hands of his own counsel. By a sinful act he averted himself from the chiefest good, and became disposed to a further aversion, which might quickly habituate him to all evil; nor is it any deifying of the creature's will, to say it is such a self determining principle, and so far a first cause, while it had the power of self-determination from God, and so absolutely is no first cause. It was the excellency of the creature, as being to be governed, to have free-will, or a self-determining power to good or evil. Though it be a higher perfection to be determined or determinable only to good, which in *patria* may be enjoyed, yet in *via*, for one under government in the use of means in order to the end, it is most suitable to their condition to have a liberty of self-determination; and therefore this was part of the beauty of the frame of nature, and therefore not derogatory from the workman. As God intended, sapientially, or *per potentiam sapientie*, to govern the rational creature by laws and objects, so did he sapientially frame him in a capacity for such a sapiential government; and that was by giving him a free, that is, a self-determining will.

Indeed, the angelical nature, and soul of man, is so exquisite, and subtle, and sublime a thing, that no man can exactly perceive and comprehend the manner of its self-determination; but the thing itself

is not to be doubted of, though the manner of it be yet past our reach. We may certainly conclude, therefore, that God made angels and men good; but some of those angels and men, by their inducement, made themselves evil: for God made them free agents to determine themselves to good or evil; and the ignorance of the nature of free-will, doth cause such infidels to rise up against God, with their impious quarrels.

2. And see whether these blind wretches do not wilfully put out their own eyes, and reason against most certain sense and experience; for I would ask any of them, Whether there be, indeed, any sin or bad men in the world, or not? If they say no, then I would wish them not to blame any man as an evil-doer, that shall rob them, or slander them, or beat them. The likeliest cure for this error, is to beat them black and blue till they believe that he that doth it doth ill; and why should not any man do it daily, if there be no ill in it? Is not he mad with infidelity, that thinks there is no bad man in all the world, when there are so many, and so desperately wicked, and when he is so bad himself; or is he fit to be tolerated in any society, that thinks there is no evil? Surely, he will think that he may do any thing, and not do evil. But if he confess that any man is evil, or doth evil, let him ask himself who made him evil? Did God, that is good, or did he himself? And if he can find out how man came to be evil, he may find a satisfactory answer to his question, how angels came to be evil? But what if we could not tell how this evil did first come, shall we therefore say, that there is no such thing? Shall we deny that which we see, and hear, and feel, because we know not how or whence it came? What folly is this! Then let every murderer, thief, or other offender, at the assizes, come off with this argument, and say that he hath done no evil; for all things are of God, and God doth no evil. As mad as this reasoning is, yet have I known them that have openly professed that they longed to see the devil, and would ride a hundred miles to see him, in mere confidence that there is no devil, and that upon such vain imaginations as these.

Object. 2. The Scripture saith, that God made all things of nothing; when of nothing, nothing can be made. How then can these things be?

Ans. Cannot God do it, unless such worms can tell how he should do it? Doth the infant know how he is formed in the womb? But why should it seem improbable that the first infinite Being should create a finite being? He that gave all creatures their forms, can as well cause the first matter. What if it were granted, that earth, or water, or air, were from eternity? Is it not as hard to make the sun and heavens of one of these, as to make one of these of nothing?

But, methinks, these infidels should consider, that either God made all things of nothing, or else that something of which he made them must be eternal, and without any cause. If so, then it is God; and if God, then either the one true God himself, or some other god. If God himself, then all creatures should be his substance, and so be God; and so they would make every stone to be God. If any other god, then they will incur the same inconveniences; besides the feigning of many gods, because they will not confess the omnipotency of one. Is it not more reasonable to believe, that God made a stone or earth of nothing, than to believe that it made itself? But thus will mortals insnare and bewilder themselves, while they will go about to comprehend and question omnipotency, and ask their Maker, how he can so make them.

Object. 3. Moses saith, that God made the light and day, and darkness, and night, before the sun: when the light is the effect, and the sun the cause; and the darkness is but a privation of the light of the sun. How then can these things be?

Ans. 1. Whatsoever God can produce mediately by the sun, or other instruments, that he can produce as easily, immediately himself without an instrument. Is it not as easy for him to cause light without a sun, as to make the sun itself, with its light?

2. Are not philosophers yet unresolved, whether light be not a substance? and then why might it not be first created alone?

3. However, it might be the effect of the element of fire, disposed of by God for differing day and night, without a sun, till the sun was made. And is it not agreeable to the rest of his works, that he should first make the elements, and general matter, before he form particular creatures thereof? As he made the water, before he confined it in its banks, and made it a sea, so might he make the light or fire, before he contracted so much of it into a sun; and if he can distinguish day and night by the sun afterwards, he might as easily do it by the element of fire, or light, before. You may see a pretence of further satisfaction to reason in this point, in Thomas White's Appendix, Theol. ad Institut. Peripat. (cap. iii. iv.) which I intend not to recite.

Object. 4. Moses saith, Gen. i. 16, "That God made two great lights, the sun and moon;" whereas, it is certain that many other planets are greater than the moon, therefore he speaketh ignorantly.

Ans. 1. But though they are greater than the moon, they are not greater lights to the earth than the moon, which is the thing that Moses affirmeth.

Object. 5. Moses makes the garden of Eden to have a river arising in it, which divideth itself into four parts; but there is no such place now known in the world, where four such rivers as he describeth are so near.

Ans. 1. Moses saith not that this river had its rise in Eden, much less in the garden; nor that the four divisions or branches of it were in the garden, but in Eden. It was not all Eden that was this garden, nor the garden called Eden: but Eden was the name of the country (at that time when Moses wrote) in which the garden was. And this land of Eden was in Telassar, that is, in the upper part of Chaldea, where Babylon is situate; and there the river Euphrates divideth itself into those four streams which Moses here describeth, which river goeth through and out of Eden, though the spring or head be elsewhere: the four particular branches you may see described by Junius on the text at large; and the most probable conjecture of the situation of the garden is, that it was in or very near the place where Babylon now stands, and from whence came the Jews' suffering, as well as our first sin.

Object. 6. Is it a likely thing that a serpent should speak to Eve? or the subtlety of the serpent be a reason of the temptation? or that Eve, who was then perfect, should not know that serpents cannot speak of themselves? and if she knew that it was the devil that spake by the serpent, it would have affrighted and astonished her, rather than have been such a temptation to her.

Ans. 1. Though Eve was perfect as to her natural powers and capacity, yet not as to her actual knowledge. She that was newly then created, might be ignorant of the serpent's nature.

2. But suppose that she knew that it was the devil that spake by the serpent, (which seems to me most likely,) yet doth it not follow that she should then dread or abhor him; for how know you that Eve was

acquainted with the diabolical pravity or malice? How know you when the angels fell to be devils? whether long before, or whether they were but newly fallen? (as Zanchy conceiveth by their unbelief.) But most certain it is, that they were then no such hateful or dreadful creatures in the apprehension of man, as now they are: for it was upon man's fall, that God put that enmity between them and us, from which our hatred and dread of them doth proceed. When the devil had showed his malice to us so far, then did God put that fixed enmity in our natures, which we all since perceive. This was not in Eve, and therefore it is no wonder if she had no more dread of this evil spirit than we have of one another, especially when it is most likely that she well knew that there were good angels, but knew not of their fall and of their malice unto herself. And for the subtlety of the instrumental serpent, it was the likelier to be the instrument of the subtle deceiver: and it is most likely that God would not suffer Satan to use any other instrument, that so the quality of the instrument might be fitter to excite a due cautiousness in the woman. Satan himself, being a spirit, is invisible to us, and therefore, when he will appear, it must be in some borrowed shape, and he usually fitteth that shape to the ends of his apparition. If it be to terrify, it is commonly in a dreadful shape; and for the most part, God will not suffer him to appear in any other, that man may the better know that it is the enemy that he hath to deal with. And so before our fall, when he would deceive, he speaketh by a subtle creature, and is permitted to do it by no other, that man might have the more reason to suspect that he came in way of deceit. We are incompetent judges of the full of these things, unless we better knew the acquaintance that man then had with the angelical nature, and what familiarity was between them, or what alteration is since made in the nature of the instrumental serpent by the curse. Why, then, should we unbelievably ask, how these things can be which God revealeth, when we may easily know that we are such incompetent judges?

Many more of these objections might be mentioned, and easily confuted, that are raised by infidels about the creation and fall; but because Junius hath confuted twenty-two of them already, after his Prollections on Gen. iii. p. 99, against an antinomian that then urged them from Simplicius, the heathen philosopher, I shall refer them that need it, thither for satisfaction.

Object. 7. How could Cain fly into the land of Nod, or build a city, (Gen. iv. 16, 17,) when there was no more men on earth?

Ans. 1. At least, it is called the land of Nod, not because it was so called in Cain's time, but in the time when Moses wrote. *2.* It is supposed to be between the hundredth and two hundredth year of his age, that Cain built this city, and by some, the three or four hundredth, for it is not said that he did it presently after his curse, though these things are laid close together in the concise narration. And why might not Cain's posterity be easily multiplied, in all that time, to such a number as might build and replenish a city, yea, many cities.

Object. 8. Is it a likely thing that the Red sea should be divided for the Israelites to pass through? or that the sun should stand still in Joshua's time, and not all the creation be overturned by it? or that Jonas should live without air in the belly of a whale; or not be digested in his belly as other food is? How can these things be?

Ans. 1. And what, must God do none but likely things? Is it not as easy with him to do all this, as for you to move a finger and much more? Is it not as

easy to make the water stand still as move; or to gather it on heaps in the sea, as to gather it into the sea from all the parts of the earth, and to keep its course in ebbing and flowing? And is it not as easy to cause the sun to stand still as to move; and so to move as it is supposed to do? If the sun had used to stand still, would you not have taken it for as incredible a matter that it should move? and have said as unbelievably, "How can this be?" And for the disordering of nature, it was sun, and moon, with all the movable frame, that stood still together, and not the sun alone; and so made no such alteration as is imagined it must have done.

And for Jonas, that God that made him and all the world, and sustaineth it by his power, could easily do this. Perhaps these infidels will next say, that an infant cannot live in the mother's womb for want of air or breath.

2. Are they not as great works which we every day see, in the being and course of sun, moon, and other creatures, as any of these?

3. Is it likely that Moses would have wrote of such a thing as the standing and opening of the Red sea, and the Israelites passing through it, to those same Israelites, and that he would so oft have used that as an argument to move them to obedience, and deliver them his law to be kept upon such an obligation or motive, if no such thing at all had been done? Would so many thousand people have believed such a man that told them they were led through the Red sea as on dry land? And would they have followed him forty years through a wilderness, and so zealously have maintained his law, which was backed with such motives, if they had all known these things to be false? Or was it possible they should be false, and they not know them?

But I will stand no more in confuting these cavils against the Old Testament, but speak to two or three, which they bring against the gospel of Christ.

Object. 9. Is it a likely thing that a virgin should conceive and have a child? How can this be?

Ans. Is it not as easy for God to cause conception by the Holy Ghost immediately, as mediately by man? Doth God enable a creature to do that which he cannot do himself, without that creature? What madness were it to dream that this exceeds the power of God!

Object. 10. Is it a likely thing that God should become a man, or that God and man should be one person, which is more condescension than for a prince to become a fly to save flies from being killed?

Ans. It is one thing to ask whether this be possible, and another, whether it were done. It is, indeed, the greatest wonder of all the works of God; but there is no contradiction in it to prove it impossible. The Godhead was no whit really abased or changed by this union, but, at the utmost, relatively and reputatively only. God did not become man, by ceasing to be God, or commixing the human nature with the divine; but only assumed a human nature to the divine. It is not, therefore, as if a prince should become an inferior creature, but only as if he should assume such a creature into so near a relation to him.

2. And that God hath indeed done this, his evident testimonies have proved to the world: is it likely or possible that one should assert such a thing, and seal it in the face of the world with miracles, and rise

himself from the dead, and send forth a Spirit of miracles and of holiness on his church, to confirm his affirmation, if all this were not true which he affirmeth?

3. Is this the thanks that God shall have for his wonderful condescension, that though he prove it to be true, yet we will not believe the mercy that he shows us, unless it seem likely to us in the way of its accomplishment?

Object. 11. Is it not a contradiction to say, that there are three persons, and but one God?

Ans. No; because to be a person or substance in the Godhead, and to be a God, is not all one. It is no contradiction that the vegetative, sensitive, and rational in man should be three, and distinct one from another, and yet not be three souls, but one: and that power, understanding, and will, should be three, and distinct; and yet not three souls, but one: and that power, light, and heat, should be distinct in the sun; and yet not be three suns but one. Why, then, should the divine Trinity of subsistences seem a contradiction.

Object. 12. There are many contradictions in the Scripture; and, therefore, it is incredible. For example, "Before the cock crow twice," Mark xiv. 30. Matthew and Luke say, "Before the cock crow." And many the like.

Ans. 1. It is mere ignorance of the sense of Scripture, that causeth this conceit of contradiction. Expositors themselves are imperfect in the understanding of them; yet if you will well read them, you shall see how easily and clearly they reconcile many things that seem unreconcilable to the ignorant. Read among others, Scharpius's Symphonia, to that end.

2. As to the text instanced, the second cock's crowing was then specially and eminently called "the cock's crowing;" and, therefore, Matthew and Luke do name no more but "the crowing of the cock," meaning that second cock, which was specially so called; (of which see Grotius on the text;); whereas, Mark doth more precisely express the same in fuller words: what a vain mind is it that will pick quarrels with such expressions!

I give but a brief touch of these few common exceptions, leaving them to seek the resolution of such doubts, from commentators that have performed it, or from their judicious teachers who are at hand, and ready to doubt it.

The Lord acquaint unbelieving sinners with the greatness of their ignorance, and the shallowness of their capacities, that they may know how unfit they are to expostulate with their Maker, and what need they have to wait upon him as humble learners! For "the meek he will teach his way," Psal. xxv. 9; and unto babes doth he reveal the mysteries of his will. For "though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off," Psal. cxxxviii. 6. And the mysteries of the gospel, which now seem incredible, he will one day open to the comfort of his saints, and the confusion of unbelievers; even at "the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

TREATISE OF CONVERSION,

PREACHED AND NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE USE OF THOSE THAT ARE STRANGERS TO A
TRUE CONVERSION, ESPECIALLY THE GROSSLY IGNORANT AND UNGODLY.

"IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE: OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD,
ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW."—2 COR. v. 17.

TO THE INHABITANTS

OF THE

BOROUGH AND FOREIGN OF KIDDERMINSTER,

BOTH MAGISTRATES AND PEOPLE.

DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS IN THE LORD,

As it was the unfeigned love of your souls, that hath hitherto moved me much to print what I have done, that you might have the help of those truths, which God hath acquainted me with, when I am dead and gone, so is it the same affection that hath persuaded me here to send you this familiar discourse. It is the same that you heard preached: and the reasons that moved me to preach it, do move me now to publish it; that if any of you have forgot it, it may be brought to your remembrance; or if it worked not upon you in the hearing, yet in the deliberate perusal it may work. I bless the Lord that there are so many among you that know by experience the nature of conversion, which is the cause of my abundant affection towards you, above any other people that I know (especially in that you also walk in so much humility, unity, and peace, when pride and divisions have caused so many ruins abroad). But I see that there is no place or people on earth that will answer our desires, or free us from those troubles that constantly attend our earthly state. I have exceeding cause to rejoice in very many of you; but in many also I have cause of sorrow. Long have I travailed (as Paul speaks, Gal. iv. 19) as in birth, till Christ be formed in you. For this have I studied, and prayed, and preached; for this have I dealt with you in private exhortation; for this have I sent you all such books as I conceived suitable to your needs; and yet to the grief of my soul I must speak it, the lives of many of you declare that this great work is yet undone. I believe God, and therefore I know that you must every soul of you be converted, or condemned to everlasting punishment. And knowing this, I have told it you over and over again: I have showed you the proof and reasons of it, and the certain misery of an unconverted state: I have earnestly besought you, and begged of you to return; and if I had tears at command, I should have mixed all these exhortations with my tears; and if I had but time and strength, (as I have not,) I should have made bold to have come more to you, and sit with you in your houses, and entreated you on the behalf of your souls, even twenty times, for once that I have entreated you. The God that sent me to you, knows that my soul is grieved for your blindness, and stubbornness, and wickedness, and misery, more than for all the losses or crosses in the world, and that my heart's desire and prayer for you to God, is, that you may yet be converted and saved. But, alas! I see not the answer of my desires; some few of you (and I thank God they be but few) will not so much as come to me, nor be willing that I should come to you, to be catechised or instructed. Some of you still quarrel with the holy way in which you must walk if ever you will be saved. Some of you give up yourselves to the world, and thrust God out of your hearts and houses, and have not so much as a chapter read, or an earnest prayer put up to God, nor once a savoury word of heaven, from morning to night. I would there were none of you that secretly hate the diligent strictness that God hath commanded us, and think this daily care for our salvation to be more ado than needs; as if you had found out something else, that better deserved your care and diligence, and would better pay you for it. Too many among you are carping and cavilling against those humble, godly Christians whom you should carefully imitate; you are hearkening after and aggravating all their infirmities, and charging them as hypocrites,

because they will not be as careless as yourselves; but you consider not that in so doing you censure yourselves, and speak the greatest terror to your souls, that you can imagine; for if they that go so far be hypocrites, what will become of you that come not near them? If they that set their minds on the life to come, and think nothing too much that they can do to be saved, be yet but hypocrites; if they that dare not swear, or curse, or drink, or whore, or deceive, or wilfully live in any sin, are yet but hypocrites; what then shall become of such as you, that so much neglect a holy life, and live so much to the world and flesh, and never did a quarter so much as they for the saving of your souls? If the righteous themselves are scarcely saved, (that is, with much striving and suffering, and with much ado,) and if hypocrites cannot be saved at all; where then shall the ungodly and the sinners appear? 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18; Matt. xxiii. 33. Your Judge hath told you that "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 20. If these men then be no better than Pharisees, you must exceed them, or there is no possibility of your salvation. Go beyond them first, and then you may the better condemn them. Till then, you doubly condemn yourselves that come so short of them. If malice did not blind you, you would have seen that this stone which you cast at others, would fly back in your faces.

But above all, it is the odious, swinish sin of tippling and drunkenness, and such like sensuality, that declareth too many of you to be yet strangers to conversion. I have told you the danger of it; I have showed you the word of God against it, resolving that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, and commanding us not to keep company with you, or to eat with you, 1 Cor. v. 11—13. I have told you, and told you a hundred times, with what a face these sins will look upon you in the end. And yet all will not do: for aught I yet see, as I found you I must leave you; and after all my pains and prayers, instead of rejoicing in the hopes of your salvation, I must part with you in sorrow, and appear against you before the Lord, as a witness of your wilfulness, and negligence, and impenitency. Ah Lord! is there no remedy, but I must leave so many of my poor neighbours in the power of Satan, and in a slavery to their flesh, and a contempt of heaven, and a wilful neglect of a holy life? Is there no persuading them to cast away their known and wilful sin; and to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? Must I see them condemned by Christ that would have saved them? Must my preaching and persuasions be brought in against them, that were intended by me for their conversion and salvation? Oh, what is the matter, that we cannot prevail with reasonable men in so plain a case? Can they imagine that sin is better than holiness or that it is better to obey their flesh than God? Do they think that this life will last always? or that the pleasures of sin will never have an end? or that they shall never be called to a reckoning for all this? Can they imagine that heaven is not worthy to be sought, and eternal things to be preferred, before those that are transitory? or that a careless, loose, and fleshly life will be better at last than a life of diligence, obedience, and holiness? Oh that we did but know what to say to these men that would go to their hearts, and bring them to their wits, or what to do for them that might turn them from their sin, and fetch them home to God, and save them! Is there no hope to prevail with them before they find themselves in hell? Poor miserable souls! oh that I knew but what to do for you, that might do you good, and save you before it be too late! But, alas! what should we do more? If my life lay on it, I cannot persuade a drunkard from his filthy drunkenness, nor a covetous man from his worldly mind and life: how much less to a thorough conversion, and a heavenly conversation! The example of their godly neighbours at the next doors will not allure them, but they will go on towards hell with the voice of prayers and exhortations in their ears! The reproofs of their neighbours do but anger them, and they cry out, that all is said in malice: as if it were a malicious thing to go about to save them from sin and hell. Ministers cannot prevail with them in public nor in private. Many of them will speak me fair; but they will not be persuaded to turn and live a holy life. And if neither neighbours, nor friends, nor ministers can be heard; if conscience itself cannot be heard; if the God that made them, if Christ that bought them, cannot be heard; if the plainest scripture cannot be regarded; if mercies and afflictions, if heaven and hell, cannot prevail to draw a sinner to be willing to be saved, and for so reasonable a matter, as to let go his filthy vice and vanity, and to be ruled by his Maker rather than by his flesh; then what remedy, and who shall pity them that sees them in damnation?

Neighbours, my request to you is now but this much; and as your friend, as your teacher, I beseech you deny me not so small a matter; even that you will be but at so much labour, as to read over this book to yourselves, and with your families; and that you will consider of it as you go, between God and your own hearts, whether it be not a matter that concerneth you to the quick; and that you will daily beg of God upon your knees to give you this necessary mercy of conversion. Away with your known sins, and with the unnecessary company and occasions that would draw you to them. You were baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier; and will you hate sanctification, or refuse it, or neglect it? You say, you believe the communion of saints, and will you abhor their communion, and choose the company of ignorant, ungodly men? Well! if after all this you will be still the same, and any of you shall appear before the Lord in an unconverted state, this book, besides the rest of my labours, shall witness to your faces, that you were told of the danger, and told of the necessity of a thorough conversion. And you that now are always telling us, that all are sinners, and quiet yourselves with this, that all men have their faults, shall then be convinced to your everlasting confusion, that there is so great a difference between sinners and sinners, the converted sinners and the unconverted, that the former shall enter into the joy of their Lord, when you with the rest must be cast into perdition, Matt. xxv. and xiii. That you were forewarned of this, is here witnessed against you, under the hand of

Your faithful monitor,

RICHARD BAXTER.

Kidderminster, June 1, 1657.

TO THE READER.

AN ACCOUNT OF THIS SLENDER WORK.

You have here presented to you a common subject, handled in a mean and vulgar style, not only without those subtleties and citations, which might suit it to the palates of learned men, but also without that conciseness, sententiousness, and quickness, which might make it acceptable to the ingenious and acute. If you wonder why I should trouble the world with such an ordinary, dull discourse, as I owe you an account of it, so I shall faithfully give it you. Besides my defect of leisure and acuteness to satisfy the expectations of these sharper wits, I did here purposely avoid that little which I could have done. I was to preach not only to a popular auditory, but to the most ignorant, sottish part of that auditory; for it is they that are principally concerned in the matter. And knowing that the whole nation abounds with such, I was easily persuaded to permit the press to offer it to their view, and that as it was preached, without alteration. For the subject, I know it is the needfullest that can be offered them. The reason why they must be condemned is, because they are not converted; and were they but truly converted they would escape. To convert a sinner from the error of his way, is to save a soul from death, and to cover a multitude of sins, James v. 19, 20; to convert them, is to pull them out of the fire, Jude 23; it is to recover them out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will, 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. Conversion is the most blessed work, and the day of conversion the most blessed day, that this world is acquainted with. It takes a slave from Satan, and a hand from his service; it addeth a subject, a son, a member to the Lord Jesus; it rescueth a soul from everlasting torments, and maketh him an heir of everlasting joys. And for such a work, we can never do too much. And alas, the most are little sensible of the nature or necessity of this change. Many that say, they believe in God as their Creator, and in Christ as their Redeemer, do declare that they are deluded by their deceitful hearts, in that they believe not in the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier; for they know not what sanctification is, nor ever much looked after it in themselves. The commonness and the greatness of men's necessity, commanded me to do any thing that I could for their relief, and to bring forth some water to cast upon this fire, though I had not at hand a silver vessel to carry it in, nor thought it the most fit. The plainest words are the profitabest oratory in the weightiest matters. Fineness is for ornament, and delicacy for delight; but they answer not necessity, though sometimes they may modestly attend that which answers it. Yea, when they are conjunct, it is hard for the necessitous hearer or reader to observe the matter of ornament and delicacy, and not to be carried from the matter of necessity; and to hear or read a neat, concise, sententious discourse, and not to be hurt by it; for it usually hindereth the due operation of the matter, and keeps it from the heart, and stops it in the fancy, and makes it seem as light as the style. We use not to stand upon compliment or precedence, when we run to quench a common fire, nor to call men out to it by an eloquent speech. If we see a man fall into fire or water, we stand not upon mannerliness in plucking him out, but lay hands on him as we can without delay. I shall never forget the relish of my soul, when God first warmed my heart with these matters, and when I was newly entered into a seriousness in religion: when I read such a book as Bishop Andrews' Sermons, or heard such kind of preaching, I felt no life in it: methought they did but play with holy things. Yea, when I read such as Bishop Hall, or Henshaw's Meditations, or other such Essays, resolves, and witty things, I tasted little sweetness in them; though now I can find much. But it was the plain and pressing downright preacher, that only seemed to me to be in good sadness, and to make somewhat of it, and to speak with life, and light, and weight: and it was such kind of writings that were wonderfully pleasant and savoury to my soul. And I am apt to think that it is thus now with my hearers; and that I should measure them by what I was, and not by what I am. And yet I must confess, that though I can better digest exactness and brevity, than I could so long ago, yet I as much value seriousness and plainness: and I feel in myself in reading or hearing, a despising of that wittiness as proud foolery, which savoureth of levity, and tendeth to evaporate weighty truths, and turn them all into very fancies, and keep them from the heart. As a stage-player, or morris-dancer, differs from a soldier or a king, so do these preachers from the true and faithful ministers of Christ: and as they deal liker to players than preachers in the pulpit, so usually their hearers do rather come to play with a sermon, than to attend a message from the God of heaven about the life or death of their souls.

Indeed, the more I have to do with the ignorant sort of people, the more I find that we cannot possibly speak too plainly to them. If we do not speak in their own vulgar dialect, they understand us not. Nay, if we do so, yet if we compose those very words into a handsomeness of sentence, or if we speak any thing briefly, they feel not what we say: nay, I find, if we do not purposely draw out the matter into such a length of words, and use some repetition of it, that they may hear it inculcated on them again, we do but overrun their understandings, and they presently lose us: that very style and way, that is apt to be a little offensive to the exact, and that is tedious and loathsome to the curious ear, whose religion is most in air and fancy, must be it that must do good upon the ignorant, and is usually most savoury and acceptable to them. Upon such considerations, I purposely chose so coarse a style in the handling of this subject: for I preached and wrote it, not for the judicious, but for the special use of the most senseless, ignorant sort. And, indeed, I am very sensible that herein I have not reached the thing that I desired; and yet have not spoke half so plainly as I should: especially, that there wanteth that life and piercing quickness, which may concur with plainness, and a subject of such necessity doth require. The true causes of this were, the dulness and badness of my own heart, and a continual decay of the quickness of my spirits, through the increase of pituitous scotomatical distempers, together with that exceeding scarcity of leisure, which

weakness and oppressing business have caused. But if God will give help and leisure, I shall seek a little to amend it, in something more which on the same subject I have begun.

One other reason that moved me to consent to this publication, is the scarcity of books that are wrote purposely on this subject: though, on the by and by parts, I know that nothing is more common in English, yet on this subject purposely and alone I remember scarce any besides Mr. Whateley's "New Birth" (and some Sermons of Repentance): and indeed I have long persuaded all that I had opportunity to persuade, to buy that book of Mr. Whateley's, and to give them abroad among the ignorant, ungodly people. And if I had seen any such fruit of my persuasions as I desired, I think I should never have published this. But when I could not prevail with the one sort to buy them, nor with the other sort to give them, I resolved to print somewhat on so necessary a point, were it never so meanly done, if it were but that I might have some books to give myself to some that need, and also that the newness and other advantages might entice this book into the hands of some, that are never like to read those which heretofore I have commended to them.

One thing more I observe is like to be offensive in this writing, and that is, that the same things do here and there fall in, which formerly have been spoken. I confess my memory oft lets slip the passages that I have before written, and in that forgetfulness I write them again: but I make no great matter of it. The writing of the same things is safe to the reader, and why then should it be grievous to me? Phil. iii. 1. Not because it is displeasing to the curious, till I set more by their applause, and take the approbation of men for my reward. I like to hear a man dwell much on the same essentials of christianity. For we have but one God, and one Christ, and one faith to preach; and I will not preach another gospel to please men with variety, as if our Saviour and our gospel were grown stale. This speaking the same things is a sign that a man hath considered what he speaks, and that he hath made it his own, and utters not that which accidentally falls in. And it is a sign that he is still of the same belief, and doth not change, and that he loves the truth, which he so much dwells upon; and that he looketh more at the feeding of men's souls, and strengthening their graces, than at the feeding of their itching fancies, and multiplying their opinions. For it is the essentials and common truths (as I have often said) that we daily live upon as our bread and drink. And we have incomparably more work before us, to know these better, and use them better, than to know more. The sea will afford us more water after we have taken out a thousand tuns, than a hundred of those wells and pits from whence we never yet fetched any. I speak not against the need of clothing the same truths with a grateful variety in representing it to the world, nor against a necessary compliance with the diseases of some itching novelists in order to the cure; but only give you an account of this publication, by him that had rather be charged with the greatest rudeness of style, than with the guilt of neglecting what he might have done for the saving of one soul.

RICHARD BAXTER.

MATTHEW XVIII. 3.

"VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, EXCEPT YE BE CONVERTED, AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN, YE SHALL NOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

CHAPTER I.

Sect. I.

BELOVED HEARERS,

Though the gospel doth not presuppose grace in men, but bringeth it to them, yet doth it suppose them to be men, and therefore endued with natural principles. And though there is not enough in nature to convert men, yet doth grace find some advantage in nature for its reception, and somewhat which it may improve for a further good: otherwise we might as well plead with beasts as men. Supernatural light supposeth natural; the doctrine of faith supposeth reason; and he that would draw you to be everlastingly happy, doth suppose you so much to love yourselves as to be willing to be happy, and loth to be absolutely miserable. I come not therefore to persuade any of you to these things, which are supposed: we are not sent to entreat men to be men, or reasonable creatures, or to love themselves, or to be willing to be happy; I will not be beholden to any of you for this, for you cannot do otherwise: but we are sent to tell you where your happiness lieth, and where not, and to advise you to exercise your reason aright, and to know the way to happiness, and take that course by which it may be obtained.

I must confess to you, that ever since I knew what

it was to be a minister of the gospel, what labour it must cost, and how cold a reward is to be expected from our hearers, and what a troublous errand we come upon, in the judgment of the most, I never could think any thing below the pleasing of God, and the saving of the souls of our people and ourselves, to be a motive sufficient to draw a man to this employment. Nor do I think it meet to come once into the pulpit, with any lower ultimate ends than these. He that is a minister for lower ends than these, in heart and deed is no minister of Christ; but as he seeks himself, so will he serve himself, and must reward himself as he can; and no wonder if he be unfaithful in all his course. And he that preacheth one sermon for lower ultimate ends than these, will seek himself, and not Christ, and so be unfaithful in that sermon: and if such study smooth words and fine sentences, which tend more to please, than to save men's souls, it is no wonder. Considering these things, when I had purposed this day's work in this place, I remembered in whose name I must speak, and on whose errand I must go, and therefore that from him I must receive my message: and I remembered also to whom I was to speak, even to men that must be everlastingly happy or miserable, and that are now in the way, and have that to do in a little time, which this their everlasting state doth

depend upon: I remembered also, that Christ hath assured me that of the many that are called, few are chosen; and that most men perish for all the mercy that is in God, and for all that Christ hath done and suffered, and for all the grace that is offered them in the gospel; and I considered the reason, even because they will not receive this grace, nor entertain Christ and the mercy of God, as it is offered to them. I therefore resolved to preach to you, as one that hath but one sermon to preach to you, and knows not whether he shall ever speak to you more; and therefore to choose no lower subject than that which your life or death depends upon, and to handle it as far as I am able accordingly, with that plainness as a matter of such concernment should be handled with. If my business hither were to be thought a learned man, or to procure your applause, or to please your ears, I should then have prepared some pleasing matter, and tried to have adorned it with some flourishes of wit, and presented it to you in a mixture of languages, which you do not understand, and with such pretty jingles and gaudy allusions as carnal fancies are used to be tickled with; but knowing that this is not the way to please God, but to please the devil, nor to save myself, or those that hear me, but to hinder the salvation of me and you, I soon resolved not only to avoid the study of such unprofitable, carnal ostentation, but even to study to avoid it: for I should be loth to please Satan any way by the doing his work, but doubly loth to please him in preaching the gospel, and to be serving him in the choicest service of my Lord.

Will the Lord but bless the word that I shall speak to the conversion of any souls here present, I have the ends I come for; and shall believe that I have cause to bless his name that sent me hither to-day; and in hope of this success, which I have begged of the Lord, I shall cheerfully address myself to the work.

SECT. II.

The occasion of these words of Christ, was the carnal thoughts of his disciples concerning the state of his kingdom, as if it had been of earthly pomp and glory, like the great monarchs of the world; and also their carnal, aspiring desires and contrivances to get the highest place in his kingdom. They found these conceits among the Jews, and nature easily entertained and cherished them, which is so dark and so disaffected to higher things. Christ thought it not yet seasonable to give them the full discovery of his kingdom, it being reserved for the Holy Ghost, who was miraculously to possess them, and teach them all things in Christ's bodily absence, that the world might see that his doctrine was not of his devising, but from above; but yet he presently falls upon that sin which these inquiries did discover in them; and before he fully telleth them the nature of his kingdom, he plainly telleth them what they must be if they will have a part in that kingdom. It may seem a great doubt, whether the disciples were at this time unconverted, that Christ telleth them of the necessity of a conversion, or whether it be but a particular conversion from some particular sins that he here speaks of; as there is a general conversion or repentance necessary to the unregenerate, and a particular conversion or repentance necessary to the godly upon their particular falls. To this I answer, 1. Judas was undoubtedly unconverted, and so did continue. 2. The apostles were then ignorant of many truths which afterwards became of absolute necessity to salvation; as Christ's death, resurrection, ascension, the nature of his kingdom, &c. Yet I dare not say, that they were not in a state of sal-

vation when they were thus ignorant of them, because they were not then fundamentals, or of absolute necessity, as afterwards they were; but yet Christ might well tell them that these truths must be believed hereafter, and they could not have that eminent measure of faith which was proper to his more illuminated church after his ascension, without believing of them. Yea, if they had not believed then when they were made fundamentals of absolute necessity to be believed, they had ceased to be true disciples of Christ. And whether there be not some noble effects of this gospel doctrine upon the heart, which are also proper to the church after Christ's ascension, as well as these articles of belief were proper to them, and so that this text may speak of both, I leave to further consideration.

3. Many think that it is but a particular conversion and repentance that is here spoken of; that is, from this sin of ambition which the disciples did now manifest; but then they observe not that it will hence be concluded, that a true disciple may by a particular sin be in such a state, that if he should die in he should not be saved. But others that are learned and godly think that no hard conclusion, as long as God will not suffer them to die in it. 4. I purposely forbear to trouble you with the names of expositors, but I make no doubt but they are in the right, that suppose that Christ doth here reprehend their ambition, by describing the contrary temper of his true followers, showing them the absolute necessity of conversion, without any determination whether they were or were not converted at present: he telleth them that except they be converted, humble persons, they cannot be saved, but doth not determine that now they are otherwise. And indeed it seemeth not likely that the disciples of Christ had not then that conversion and humility of mind that was of absolute necessity to salvation; these words may well be used to converted men, to show them the necessity of that conversion which they have. As if a christian begin to grow covetous, you may say, except you be a man converted from earthly-mindedness to heavenliness, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; which doth not deny him to be already converted. Though, as to our present purpose, the matter is not great which of these be taken for the sense, because they all afford us that doctrine that we shall gather; for if there be no salvation without a particular conversion from a particular sin, much less without a conversion from a state of sin. But the plain sense of the text I doubt not is this; as if he should say, You strive for pre-eminency and worldly greatness in my kingdom; why I tell you my kingdom is a kingdom of babes; it containeth none but the humble that are small in their own eyes, and look not after great matters in this world; and though nature be proud, yet except you be (now or hereafter) converted men, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. By the kingdom of heaven is here meant, both the estate of true grace, and so of glory. Not as if conversion were a preparation to their entering into this kingdom as begun on earth, but it is their very entrance itself, and so the beginning of it. The doctrine we shall hence handle, shall be given you in no other but the words of the text, lest I seem to force them.

Doct. It is a most certain truth, protested by Jesus Christ, that except men be converted and become as little children, they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The order which we shall observe in handling this is, I. To show you what this kingdom of heaven is. II. What it is to be converted, and particularly

what to become as little children. III. Confirm the doctrine from other Scriptures. IV. I shall give you the reasons why no man can enter into the kingdom of heaven that is not converted. V. We shall make use of all, and therein show you the hinderances of conversion, the marks of it, the motives to it, and the directions for attaining it; as the Lord shall enable me.

I. The kingdom of heaven is taken in Scripture both for the state of grace and glory. As all men are by nature in the kingdom of Satan here, by a willing obeying of him, and hereafter to be tormented by him; so all the converted are by grace in the kingdom of Christ, by a willing submission and obedience here, and hereafter to be glorified by him for ever. This is all one kingdom, because there is the same King and the same subjects; yet they are diversified in this, that one is the way or means to the other, and that the laws and duties which belong to us in the way, are not all the same as those that shall continue at the end. It is called the kingdom of heaven, both because the King is from above, and not a mere man as earthly kings are, and reigneth in heaven invisibly, and not as earthly monarchs whom you may see; and because it is heaven which all grace, and means, and duties do tend to, and it is heaven where is the end and full felicity, and the most glorious part of the kingdom. The Guide and Sanctifier of the church also is from heaven, even the Holy Ghost: the law is from heaven by the inspiration of the Spirit: the hearts of the subjects are heavenly, and their lives must be heavenly: it is here in the seed, it will be hereafter in the full tree. The difference between the egg and the bird, the acorn and the oak, is not near so great as the difference between the kingdom of grace and of glory. And yet a man that had never seen or known the production of such creatures would little believe, if you should show him an acorn, that that would come to be an oak. And it is no marvel if a carnal heart will not believe that the weak, despised graces of the saints, do tend to such an inconceivable glory. When a poor christian that is dead to this world lieth praying and panting after God, and looking and longing after glory, little doth the unbelieving world think, what a blessed harbour it is that by these gales he is moving and hasting to; they now see him praying, and shall then see him possessing and praising; they now see his labour and suffering, but they will not believe his blessedness, and perfection, till they see it to their own sorrow who have lost it.

Sect. III.

Before I proceed to open the nature of conversion, I shall say somewhat more of the word: and I shall show you the difference between conversion, repentance, regeneration, sanctification, vocation.

1. The truth is, all these five words are used in Scripture to express the same work upon the soul; only they have some respective and other smaller differences, which I shall now manifest to you. And the first word, vocation, is taken often for God's act of calling when it hath no success, and this is called uneffectual calling. So it is used Prov. i. 24, "Because I called and ye refused, I have stretched forth my hands and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof." So Isa. lxx. 12; Jer. vii. 13, "I called, but ye answered not;" and many other places. 1. Sometimes it is taken for the act of God when it is successful; as 1 Thess. ii. 12, and many more places. 2. This success itself is termed our calling in a passive sense: and it is twofold. (1.) Common; when

men are brought but to outward profession and common gifts; and so the word is used often. (2.) Special; when men are savingly converted to Christ: the former is common effectual calling; the latter is special effectual calling. And this last is the same with conversion: only these two differences are observable. 1. As to the name, it is metaphorically taken from the outward call of the gospel, and so applied to the effect on the soul. 2. It hath usually in Scripture a principal respect to the first effect on the soul, even the act of faith itself above all other graces, and following obedience; yet not excluding the latter, but sometimes plainly comprehending them. So that some divines conceive that vocation is a work different from sanctification, because they conceive that it is only the Spirit's causing the first act of faith in the soul, and by that act a habit is effected, and therewith the seed of all graces, which they call the work of sanctification. And indeed the word vocation hath special respect to the gospel call, to the act of believing in Christ, and the proper effect of that call, even our actual belief. But sometimes it comprehendeth the whole christian relation and state, as Heb. iii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 10, &c.

2. Repentance is the same thing as special effectual calling; so we take not calling in the most narrow sense of all, for the bare act of faith; only this difference there is: 1. The word repentance doth especially denote our motion from the *terminus a quo*, even that sinful state from which we turn, and which we repent of; yet including essentially also the state to which we turn; whereas the word vocation doth principally express the state to which we are called. 2. Also the word repentance doth principally respect our turning to God from whom we fell; but the word vocation doth as much or more respect our coming to Christ the Mediator as the way to the Father. There is a twofold repentance; (1.) One is our turning from a state of sin and misery, such as the unconverted are in, and this is it that we mean now, as the same with conversion from the same state. (2.) There is also a particular repentance, which is a turning from a particular sin, and this must be daily renewed while we live. Repentance signifieth and containeth two things. The first is a hearty sorrow that ever we sinned; the second is a change of the mind from that sin to God. Indeed the former is but part of the latter: the changed mind is changed in this part, and manifesteth its change in a special manner, by remorse for former sins; though all remorse is not from such a change.

3. The word regeneration also signifieth the same thing with conversion, but with this small difference: 1. The term is metaphorical, taken from our natural generation; because there is so great a change, that a man is as it were another man. 2. The word is, in Scripture sense, I think more comprehensive than conversion, repentance, or vocation; for it signifieth not only the newness of our qualities, but also of our relations, even our whole new state. This is not ordinarily acknowledged, but if we view the places where the word is used, it will prove so: for as Paul describing the thing though he useth not the word, 2 Cor. v. 11, saith, "He that is in Christ is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new:" where relations must needs be a part of that all, as the context will show. So, Tit. iii. 5, it is called "the laver or washing of regeneration;" and is distinguished from renewing of the Holy Ghost; at least as the general, comprehending that as a part. 1. Most expositors think that the word hath reference to baptism, and expresseth its effects or consequents: and no doubt baptism is for remission of sins, and therefore the

laver of regeneration is for remission of sins. 2. The very text maintaineth plainly that grace by which we are saved; by free grace, and that is our free justification as well as free sanctification: and our divines commonly cite that text against the papists upon that account, as pleading for free justification. "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Is not saving from the guilt of sin a part of our salvation? What reason to restrain saving here to sanctification only? Doubtless if there were reason to restrain the word regeneration to either, it would be to justification only; because the giving of the Holy Ghost is next mentioned by itself, but justification is not mentioned at all, if regeneration comprehends it not. And it is certain, that the apostle intendeth not only to tell us, that we are freely sanctified without works, but also that we are freely justified by grace without works. So John iii. 3, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" where he at least hath some respect to baptism, as most suppose, and baptism is for the remission of sins: to be born of water therefore must needs include remission of sin. And this regeneration maketh a man a new creature, and as Paul saith, "in the new creature all things are become new," and not the qualities only. But in the main, regeneration is the same with conversion.

4. The word sanctification also signifieth the same thing for the main, as conversion doth, only with these small differences following: 1. The word is more comprehensive, for it signifieth our whole state of dedication or devotedness to God, which comprehendeth in it these four things: 1. The change of a man's qualities, whereby he is made fit for the service of God, having his heart bent towards him, and set upon him. 2. The actual dedication or devoting of a man's self to God by faith and a holy covenant; especially in baptism, by solemn vow or engagement. 3. The relation of a person so dedicated or devoted to God, as he is one set apart to him for holy uses; and it is from this relation especially that the word sanctification is used. 4. The holiness of life that followeth hereupon, in the actual living to God, to whom we are devoted. Sanctification comprehendeth all this, and so comprehends in it vocation, and somewhat more.

But then perhaps it may be found, that the word is sometimes, if not often, used in Scripture for holiness of the life alone, as presupposing all the rest. Indeed there are more words than one, which we translate sanctification, which yet are not all of one sense. As *δικαιοσύνη*, *δικαίωμα*, and *δικαιοσύνη* differ; so doth *ἀγιασμός*, *ἀγιώτης*, and *ἀγιασθήναι* differ: but I shall purposely forbear to trouble you with such matters. So that having opened before to you the word conversion, and now these four, vocation, repentance, regeneration, and sanctification, you may see how far they are the same, or differ. The like may be said of the word changing, renewing or making new, and the like, which all signify the same work of God upon the soul.

Those therefore that inquire whether vocation, regeneration, repentance, sanctification, &c. are the same thing, or divers, and which of them goeth first, &c. must first be resolved of the sense of the term, before they proceed to the matter; for most of these words are used in several senses, and that ambiguity must first be removed.

Sect. IV.

II. I am next to show you what it is to be con-

verted and become as little children; which cannot be so well done till I have first given some brief description of the state of a man unconverted. To which end you must know, that God made man perfect, and gave him a perfect law to keep, which commanded perfect obedience upon pain of everlasting death: by the temptation of Satan, man broke this law, and cast himself out of the favour of God, and made himself the slave of Satan, and the child of death; this he did by a wilful adhering to the creature, and departing from God, so that the nature of man was thus become corrupt; and such as the first man Adam was, such must his posterity needs be: for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Job xiv. 4. And how can Adam convey to his posterity that image of God, which he had lost himself, or that right to the favour of God, and further happiness? So that we are all born with corrupted natures, inclined to earth and earthly things, and strange and averse to heaven and heavenly things; prone to evil and backward to good; estranged from God, and making our carnal selves our god: pride, self-love, covetousness, voluptuousness, unbelief, ignorance, error, hypocrisy, ungodliness, strife, contention, cruelty, and all wickedness, have their roots at once in us, and if temptation serve, we shall bring forth the fruit.

This being the state of every man by nature, by practice and custom in sinning men become worse, and the longer they delay before they are converted, the worse usually do they grow, and the further do they go from God, and from their happiness. By all which methinks you may easily see, both what conversion is, and why there is such a necessity of it.

The word conversion is sometimes taken actively, for that act or work that doth convert us; and sometimes passively, for that change that is thereby wrought: as man is the subject or patient, so is he also an agent in the actual turning of his own soul; so that God and man are both agents in this work. The word here in my text is active, and maketh it the act of man, "except ye convert yourselves;" but we translate it, "be converted;" because the word is used reciprocally, as some speak in Scripture: in a word, God, as the most laudable, principal cause, doth cause man's will to turn itself. So that conversion actively taken, as it is the work of the Holy Ghost, is a work of the Spirit of Christ, by the doctrine of Christ, by which he effectually changeth men's minds, and heart, and life from the creature to God in Christ: conversion, as it is our work, is the work of man, wherein by the effectual grace of the Holy Ghost, he turneth his mind, and heart, and life from the creature to God in Christ. And conversion as taken passively, is the sincere change of a man's mind, heart, and life from the creature to God in Christ, which is wrought by the Holy Ghost, through the doctrine of Christ, and by himself thus moved by the Holy Ghost. Here you may see, 1. Who is the cause of this conversion, and what is the means. 2. What is the change wrought. 3. On whom. 4. From what, and to what. 1. The most laudable, principal cause is the Holy Ghost, who is the Sanctifier of the elect. 2. The instrumental cause is the doctrine of Christ, either read, or heard, or some way known, and brought by the Spirit to men's understandings and consideration. 3. Man himself is the subject of the Spirit's operation, and the proper agent of those holy actions of believing, repenting, &c. which the Holy Ghost doth cause him to perform. It is not the Holy Ghost that believeth, but he causeth man to believe. 4. That which we are turned from, is, as to the object, the creature, which sinful man doth adhere to above

God; and as to the act, it is sin, that is, he ceaseth this vicious adhering to the creature. 5. That which man turneth to, is God in and by Christ the Mediator. God hath again the heart of a sinner, when he is converted, and God will be his happiness; his reformation, recovery, reward, and felicity consisteth in this.

The parts of this conversion are these three: 1. It is a change of the mind. 2. Of the heart. 3. Of the life.

Sect. V.

1. Conversion changeth the mind: 1. From ignorance. 2. From inconsiderateness. 3. From unbelief. 4. From error.

1. Every unconverted man is ignorant of the saving truths of the gospel, either by a total ignorance of the thing, or by an insufficient, superficial, uneffectual apprehension of it: the most of the world do not know what man is by nature and actual sin; how hateful sin and sinners are to God; how it deserveth his everlasting wrath, and maketh it our portion; how Christ hath satisfied and redeemed us from this misery; and on what terms, and in what order, he offereth to man that pardon and life which he hath purchased; how he will judge them that believe, repent, and obey him at last to everlasting glory, and the rest to everlasting misery. Many poor souls are utterly ignorant of these very principles of the christian religion, in the midst of gospel light, and under all our most diligent instructions; and of those that have some knowledge of them, many know them but superficially and uneffectually.

Now the first thing that the Spirit of God doth either in or to the work of conversion, is to open men's eyes to understand these mysteries: so that the man that was wont to hear them as a strange thing, as if we spoke Greek or Hebrew to him, is now like a man that is brought out of a dungeon into the open light; or that hath his eye-sight recovered; and doth not only know these things, but knows them with a somewhat clear and affecting knowledge; and is much taken with the light, and rejoiceth in it, and marvelleth at his former ignorance. I shall prove all this to you by Scripture. In 1 Cor. ii. 14, the apostle tells us, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." In 2 Cor. iv. 3, the apostle saith, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." And then the cure you may see, Acts xxvi. 18, "I send thee to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Many poor people think that utter ignorance may stand with grace, and that they may be saved without knowledge because they are not book-learning; but you hear God telleth you otherwise. Many have much brain-knowledge that have no grace, but no man can have grace without solid knowledge: for who can hate sin till he knoweth it, and the evil of it? And who can love God till he know him to be lovely? And who can do the duty that he understandeth not, or go the way to heaven that he is ignorant of? So that this is the first part of the change of the mind, from ignorance to knowledge.

Sect. VI.

2. The second part of the change of the mind, is, from careless inconsiderateness to sober consideration; and this is a great help to all that followeth.

The main reason why we cannot bring men out of love with this vain world, nor to yield to the call of God, and make out after Christ and their everlasting salvation, is, because we cannot bring them to consideration. Men are heady and rash, and drown their own reason with wilfulness, or passion, or worldly businesses, and will not give reason leave to work. Their vicious wills command their understandings to other objects, and will not let them dwell long enough on those that should do them good. All wicked men are inconsiderate men, and therefore inconsiderate, because wicked; and therefore wicked, because inconsiderate. If they hear of the greatest truths in the congregation, they go home and talk of other matters, and all runs out, and they are never the better: we cannot get them to go alone one hour, and seriously consider of what they heard: ignorance doth much to men's perdition, but inconsiderateness much more. Oh! if that little which our common people know, were but frequently and earnestly considered of, it would not suffer them to be such as they are! Well, but when the Spirit of God comes effectually to convert the soul, he maketh them consider: he awakeneth the sleepy soul, and sheweth them that the matter so nearly concerns them, that if they love themselves, it is time to consider of it: he setteth these truths still before their eyes, which formerly they cast behind their backs; he holdeth their thoughts upon them so, that they must needs consider them. They had heard perhaps a hundred times before of sin, and Christ, and the necessity of conversion, of judgment, and heaven, and hell, but they never thoroughly considered it till now. Oh, this is a great part of the renewing work of the Spirit, to fix a man's thoughts upon the truths of God till they work, and to bring a man's reason to do its office. I will show you this but in two or three texts of Scripture. In Acts xvii. 11, it is said, that the Jews of Berea had more ingenuity than the rest, "for they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so, therefore many of them believed:" when they came home they did not turn their thoughts presently to other matters, and think no more of what they had heard, but they took their Bibles, and considered and examined the sermons which they had heard, that they might be resolved whether it were so indeed or not; that if it were so, they might obey it accordingly; and therefore they believed. In Psal. cxix. 59, 60, David saith, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies; I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments:" when he thought of his ways, he turned without delay. And God complaineth of the disobedient Israelites in Isaiah i. 2, 3, that he had nourished and brought up children, and they rebelled against him; and what was the cause? why, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." So that you may see the second part of the conversion of the mind is from inconsiderateness to consideration.

Sect. VII.

3. The third part of the change of the mind, is, from unbelief to true believing. A customary belief upon the bare credit of their forefathers, and the common vote of the country they dwell in, most among us may have of the gospel; but this faith is like the ground of it, and will not serve to establish and renew the soul. Men are not soundly persuaded of the infallible truth of all the word of God till converting grace doth bring them to believe it: they think it may be true, and it may be false for aught they know, they cannot tell: and therefore it is that

when we come to those particulars that displease them, they will not believe them. When they do confess in general that the Scripture is true, yet when we tell them particularly of those passages that speak of the necessity of conversion, the difficulty of salvation, the fewness of the saved, and the multitude that shall perish, with many the like truths, they will plainly show that they do not believe them. A word of such matters of heaven and hell, if it were well believed, would doubtless prevail against sensual allurements, and make them see that they have something else than this deceitful world to look after. Certainly all unconverted sinners are at best but such half believers as in Scripture are called rightly unbelievers. But when the Spirit by the word doth illuminate their understanding, they see then that all this is most certainly true; that the talk of sin, and misery, and Christ, and grace, and glory, and of everlasting torments to the impenitent, are no dreams or doubtful suppositions. God telleth them then to the very heart, that these are matters not to be questioned, but presently and seriously to be regarded; for God will prove true when all men prove liars: heaven and earth shall pass away, but a jot or tittle of his word shall not pass away till all be fulfilled, Matt. v. 18. Whatever unbelievers think of it now, nothing is more certain than that all men on earth shall shortly find themselves in heaven or hell. Now the soul perceiveth that this is true, as the God of heaven is true; and that it is madness to question the truth of his word, who is truth itself; and to think that word will shake or fail which beareth up heaven and earth, and is the best security that is possible to be had; and that he should deceive them who never deceived any, and doth so much to save them from being deceived by Satan, and their own deceitful hearts. Before conversion you might have heard by his cold prayers, and carnal conference, and seen by his careless, sinful life, that he did not heartily believe the word of God; but now you may hear and see by him that he doth believe it. If you tell a man that a bear or a cut-throat thief is following after him, if you see him not stir any faster, nor mend his pace, you will say, sure he doth not believe it; but if you see him run as for his life, it is a sign that he believes it. When once a man is truly converted, you may see by his affection, and diligence, and self-denial, that he owneth and believeth the word of God indeed: if you overheard him in his prayers, his tears, or at least his hearty groans, will tell you that he believeth; if he talk with you of his former life, his sobs and sighs, and his deep self-accusings, will tell you that he believeth it: his careful endeavours for the saving his soul, his earnest inquiries what he shall do to be saved, will tell you that he believeth. The change of his company, his talk, his life, his casting away those sins with hatred which were his delight, and taking up that holy life with delight which before he had no heart to; all this will show that he is now a true believer. Because "Noah believed, he was moved with fear, and prepared the ark," Heb. xi. 7. He that had seen him at work might perceive that he believed: he would never else have so laboured to escape the danger.

Sect. VIII.

4. The fourth point wherein the change of the understanding doth consist, is, in the healing of men's errors, and turning them from those false conceits which they had about God and his ways, and the matters of salvation. While they were unconverted, Satan had taught them, and the world had taught them, and the flesh had taught them, many

things against God and their own safety: they were persuaded that either there was no heaven and hell, or that God would save them though they did not much look after it themselves. They thought sin was better than holiness, and it was a more desirable life to please the flesh, and to be honourable, and eat and drink, and be merry, than to live in the thoughts of another world, and deny the flesh that pleasure it desireth, and to spend so much time in reading, hearing, praying, and meditating. They thought this was a tedious, unnecessary life, and that all this was more ado than needs: and that the wisest way was to follow their business in the world, and take their pleasure while they might have it, and only come to church, and forbear some heinous sins, and then believe that God will be merciful to them, and they shall do well enough without all this stir; and that they may take what they can get of the pleasure of the world, and when they have done, if there be any heaven, they may have it with a short repentance when they can keep the world no longer. Abundance more such errors as these are in the minds of unconverted sinners, through the seducements of the deceiver: indeed they live a life of error. Some heretics err in one particular, and some in another, but wicked men err in the very drift of their lives. But when God converteth, he changeth all these opinions. The man is then of another mind. He that thought sin so pleasant, would now fain spit it out; he that desired so to glut himself with the world and sinful delights, would now be rid of them: like a foolish person that will needs take poison, because it is sweet, and will not believe him that tells him it is deadly; but when he feeleth it begin to gripe him in the bowels, and to burn him at the heart, then he crieth out, Oh now I believe you that it is poison! Oh give me a vomit that I may cast it up quickly, or else I die! Then, if you see him retching and straining himself to get it up again, and groaning, and crying out, Oh my heart, it burns me, it tears me; oh that I could get it up! you may see then that the man's opinion is changed. Sinners, believe it, if ever God will save you, it will be thus with you. You thought there was no great harm in taking now and then a cup with good fellows; in neglecting God and your souls, while you provide for your bodies; in dropping a curse or a small oath in the heat of your passion: you could ask, What harm is it to spend the Lord's day in idleness, or vain talking, or recreations, when you had a God, and a soul, and an everlasting state to look after, which should have been the business of that day. Perhaps you let down now and then some sharper poison of covetousness, malice, fornication, &c. Oh, but if ever God convert you, all this must up again; you will groan and strain at it by the vomit of repentance, and cry out, Oh that I had never known it! oh that I had never seen the faces of such ungodly companions! oh that I could get up the very roots of this sin, I would never return to it again! You that now think it so grievous a life to be godly, and that there needs not so much ado for your salvation; if ever God convert you, he will make you see that it is both necessary and delightful: you will then say, What, shall I sit still when my everlasting salvation is at stake? I have but a little time to make sure of escaping eternal misery: I must very shortly be in heaven or hell; and now is the time that must turn the scales, for then I must be judged according to my works; and is this a time to loiter in? or is this a matter to be forgotten or made light of? Oh sinners, if God open your eyes, you will marvel, I tell you, you will a thousand times marvel, that ever you should

be so sottish, and in a manner beside yourselves, as to follow your business in the vain world, and eat and drink, and sleep so quietly, while you knew not what should become of you for ever. You will cry out of yourselves, Oh where was my wit, that I should make so light of that which was my only business? and that I should sleep out that short time of my life which was given me of purpose to work out my salvation in? and that I should forget that judgment that I was told again and again was at the door? Sinners, if God do once truly convert your souls, you will see, that if wife, children, friend, estate, life require your labour and care, your salvation requirereth a hundred times more. You will then say, What! can I make too much haste to heaven? or be at too much care or pains to make sure of it? Can any labour be too much to obtain such a glory, or to escape the flames of everlasting misery? If I lose the world and my life, I may be a saver and a gainer in the life eternal; but if I lose that life, how shall I be a saver? Or which way shall I hope for a reparation of my loss? And what good will it then do me that I had pleasure, or credit, or riches in the world? Is it worth the labour of all my life to rake in this earth, and to live in more plenty of worldly vanity than other men a little while, till I drop into my grave? And is it not worth ten thousand times more care and pains to make sure that I live among the angels, and see the face of God in endless glory? O Lord, where is that man's brains that thinks he can pay too dear for heaven, and yet that all the stir of his life is not too dear a price for earth? to get him a pleasant passage to his grave, when he might have as much pleasure upon other terms? Where is that man's reason, that will be at all this trouble for nothing, and yet will cry out to God, or to his minister, What need all this ado to be saved? Ask a gasping man on his death-bed, whether this labour had not been better laid out for heaven? And whether heaven or earth will pay a man better for his care and pains? What! doth the Lord himself cry out to sinners, "Lay not up for yourselves a treasure on earth, where rust and moth doth corrupt, but lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven," &c. Matt. vi. 19, 20. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," &c. ver. 33. "Labour not for the food which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life," John vi. 27. And shall men that call themselves christians say, that this is more ado than needs?

Thus, sinners, will your minds be changed, if ever you be converted: you will then be quite of another mind concerning the world, and God, and the wicked, and the godly, than now you are. I tell you, God will unteach you again all these false opinions about these matters, which the devil, the world, and the flesh have been so long teaching you. It is his work to unteach you first, and then to teach you better things: this will be so. You that now say you will never believe that a man may be saved without so much ado; you will never believe that none shall be saved but those that are thus changed; you will never believe that God maketh so great a matter of sin as preachers talk of: if God will convert and save you, he will make you believe it. Even the most confident of these conceits will be changed. Be not too peremptory, man, God can yet show thee so much mercy as to change thy mind; he hath changed as self-conceited men's minds as thine, and hath shaken as confident opinions as these: Paul thought himself as wise as you, before his conversion, and telleth us, "I verily thought myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus," Acts xxvi. 9. But when God had struck him down, and amazed him with his glory, and then illuminated

him with his saving light, he cried out, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6; and this with trembling and astonishment. And, Tit. iii. 3, he telleth you what he thought then of his former courses: "We ourselves were sometime foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures;" but how he was healed? ver. 4, 5, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." You say you will never be of another mind; aye, but God can make you of another mind: his light cannot be overcome by your darkness, if he mean you so much mercy as to shine in upon your souls. This is the fourth part of the change of men's understandings from error to saving truth in the matters of salvation.

Sect. IX.

2. The second part of the work of conversion is upon the heart or will, to which this change of the mind or understanding is preparative: and in this change of the heart, there are these several parts observable. 1. The will is brought to like what it disliked, and to dislike what it liked before. 2. It is brought to choose what it refused, and to consent to that which it would not consent to. 3. It is brought to resolve, where it was either resolved on the contrary, or unresolved. 4. The several affections are changed, of love and hatred, desire and aversion, delight and sorrow, hope and despair, courage and fear, and anger, and content, and discontent. In all these respects the converted is changed, which we must therefore speak of in their order.

1. The first change that God maketh on the heart or will in the work of conversion (after the preparatory works which we now pass over) is, in the complacency or displacency of it: he causeth that to savour or relish as sweet to the will, which before was as bitter: the soul receiveth a new inclination; it liketh that which before it disliked, not only by a mere approbation, but by a willing closure of the heart therewith. So that, these two things, a new inclination, and a new complacency, do go to make up this first part of the work. Before conversion the very bent of man's mind is towards the things below, and his heart is against the things of God: he relisheth the things below as sweet; and it pleaseth him to possess them, or to think of possessing them; but he hath no pleasure in God, nor in thinking or hearing of the life to come: all things please or displease a man, according as they agree or disagree to his inclination; and as they seem to him either suitable or unsuitable. Things do not please or displease according to their own goodness or badness, but according to the qualification of him that apprehendeth or entertaineth them. To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet, but the full soul loatheth the honey-comb, Prov. xxvii. 7. What pleasanter life to a glutton or drunkard, than to pour in and stuff their paunch? And to any sharp stomach, how good is their meat! But when a man is sick, there is scarce a greater torment than to eat or drink, when the stomach goeth against it. Oh how they loathe it, and cannot get it down! They had rather cast the daintiest fare into the channel, than take it into their stomachs. So it is with the sick, unrenewed soul: he hath no pleasure in God, nor any holy things; it goeth against his heart to think of them, or seriously to speak or hear much of them. He marvelleth how other men can find so much delight in reading, and hearing, and praying, and the like; for his part he is weary to bear it;

though for fashion, or fear of God's wrath, he comes to church, or saith over a few words of hypocritical, heartless prayer, yet he usually makes no long matter of it; but he longeth till it be done, and he is glad when it is over: therefore the Scripture calleth those enemies to God, and haters of him; for their hearts are not with him, though with their tongues they may draw near him, Isa. xxix. 13; Matt. xv. 8. I know it is a very common thing with almost all men to profess that God hath more of their hearts than their pleasures, profits, or any thing else; but sin hath blinded them so, that they know not themselves: otherwise it would be a very easy matter for them to perceive that their very hearts are turned away from God. Many poor sinners are even willing to cheat their souls with a lie, when they might know that their hearts have no delight in God; but that the very thoughts of him and of his word, and service, and everlasting life, are rather grievous to them; and, as the psalmist saith, "God is not in all their thoughts," Psal. x. 4. "The Lord knoweth their thoughts, that they are vain," Psal. xciv. 11. Well, this is then the first change that God by his renewing grace doth make upon the heart; he turneth it to himself, he giveth it a new inclination and bias: he first openeth men's eyes to see God's excellency, and the excellency of those glorious things which he hath promised; and thereby draweth their hearts unto them. It is a great and difficult matter to set the heart of man upon heaven; but God can do it, and doth it in this great change. I know the best are still earthly in part, and too much in the dark, and too backward to the things of God, and God hath not near that room in their hearts as he deserves, and as they could wish he had; yet a wonderful change is made on them: they that had no savour of God and glory before, do now savour nothing else so much; they can truly say as David, though perhaps not so feelingly as he, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee," Psal. lxxiii. 25. He that scarce thought of God before, now his mind runs upon him; now his thoughts are, whether God be reconciled to him, or not: and how God approveth of him, and his ways: were he sure of his favour he would think himself happy: could he but know him, and enjoy him more, he had the very desire of his heart. It is his greatest trouble that he is no nearer him, and no more fit to please and honour him, and God hath no more room in his heart. Unfeignedly he grudgeth at the remnants of sin, that they should so weary and grieve the Spirit of God, and hinder his more sensible enjoyment of his love; it grieveth him that any of that room in his heart should be taken up by fleshly and worldly vanities, which he knoweth doth of right belong to Christ. It is his care to give him yet better entertainment, and to get out those remnants of sin and vanity, that God at last may have it all to himself. It is his daily business to sweep out this dung, and dress up his disordered heart for Christ; and glad he is when he can but find any signs of his presence, and feeleth any stirring of his grace; and when he can but move towards him more swiftly by a stronger love: this is the true condition and temper of a converted soul; all other men do but talk of God, but it is only these that give him their heart. Sirs, I would fain make this as plain as I can to you, and I would fain have you try as we go along, whether this change has been made in your own hearts or not. You know that there is something or other that every man is most pleased in, and his mind is most towards; and this complacency and bent of the mind, is the very spring of almost all his conversation. But if he have no plea-

sure in it, nor mind to it, he will neglect it, whatsoever you can say or do. Here is the true root of the difference between the hearts of the carnal and of the spiritual: before a man is converted, his mind is not towards God, but upon other things; but afterwards nothing is so near and dear to him. Mark the discovery of both these states, Rom. viii. 5-9, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Here you see in the very words of the Holy Ghost a plain description of these two different conditions of men: till a man be converted, his mind is more on his fleshly pleasure or commodity, or credit in the world, than in God, or the happiness of the world to come; whatsoever he may say or pretend to the love of God, yet God knoweth that his mind is another way: but when converting grace comes, it taketh off the old bias, and setteth on a new one; and now the man that was carnally minded is become spiritually minded. Sinners, if you would but enter into your own hearts, and ask them what it is that seemeth best to you in all the world; what it is that most pleaseth you; what you would have if you might have your choice; by this you might know the bent of your mind; and so know whether you are indeed converted, or not. You think, it may be, that you may have worldly and fleshly minds, and yet have grace too; and that you may set your hearts most upon your fleshly and worldly pleasures, and yet be the children of God: but deceive not yourselves, it cannot be; believe it, it cannot be. Oh that those men did think of this, that drown their hearts in the cares of this life; or wilfully run on in gluttony, drunkenness, or other fleshly delights. If ever you escape the torments you have deserved, if ever you will see the face of God in peace, those hearts must be turned quite another way; those delights must grow bitter to you: you must be ashamed of your present pleasures, Rom. vi. 21; and your souls must abhor them in comparison of Christ, and even abhor yourselves for all your abominations, Ezek. xxxvi. 21; and cast them all away as dross and dung, and account all as loss for the winning of Christ, which now you think your greatest gain, Phil. iii. 8, 9. O sinners, how low will all these things be then in your hearts! When you look upon all the glory of this world, it will be no more lovely than a dead carcass in your eyes; for you will be crucified to the world, and the world to you, Gal. vi. 14. If a man then offer you all the kingdoms and glory of the earth, it would be but as a chip to you, it would stink in your thoughts if it tended to deprive you of everlasting glory. Many infirmities may stand with grace, but a carnal or worldly mind in a prevailing sense cannot. "Love not the world nor the things of the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15. I know there are few men so foolish and ungodly, but will say with their tongues, that God is better than the creature, and heaven than earth, and would give it as their judgment under their hand, and confirm it with an oath, that they do not dissemble: yea, but the question is of the inclination and complacency of their hearts; which do these men love better, and which do they mind as the most suitable good? Never tell me

that their estimation of God is sincere, unless it affect the heart with an answerable complacency and inclination to him: they may apprehend it as truth that God is the chief good, but they do not truly, that is, thoroughly, apprehend it.

But when converting grace comes, it doth this work. I know when the best christians have reached to the greatest knowledge of God, and sense of his love, which in this life they may expect, they will still be looking higher after more. And the apprehension of that which they yet come short of, will much darken the apprehension of their present attainment: infiniteness will quite overmatch both our apprehensions and our affections: but though we are ready to call our present glimpse and taste of God a very nothing, when we compare our knowledge of him with our ignorance, and our enjoyments with our wants; yet when we compare these small things with all the pleasures or profits of this world, we see that we have chosen the better part. Alas, the poor converted soul hath quickly a taste of the vanity of this world in the very first heart-breaking and humbling that he was brought into! when his sin is set in order before him, and the voice of the law doth make his heart to tremble, and an angry God doth look him into terrors, what then can all the world do for his relief? How sensibly then doth he say, Oh, silly comforters! what should I do if I had no better hopes? Oh, what contemptuous thoughts and speeches then hath he of all these things that he once so much valued; He thinketh he can scarce find words that are base enough for them. If he could find worse than Paul's losses, and dross, and dung, and dog's-meat, he would do it. Oh that men would now in the day of their prosperity bethink themselves of this which all shall know at last! It is a most doleful sight to any man of wisdom and compassion, to see men that have wounded and loaden consciences, to run up and down after pleasure and profit, as if these would heal them, which have made their wounds; men that are even undone for want of healing, and are within a step of hell, and will certainly and very speedily be there, if Christ, by saving, renewing grace, do not recover them, do quite forget the nature of their distress, and the thing they want, and mind the toys of worldly things, as if they would save them. What! still is sin sweet to you, when it hath made such work against your souls? Still is this world so lovely in your eyes, when it hath enticed you already to the very brink of hell? O poor bewitched souls, that will drink upon that which you confess deceiveth you! that will dig your own graves with such excessive pains, and purchase a room in everlasting torments at so dear a rate! Well, if ever God will have mercy on your souls, he will show you another kind of pleasure and felicity; he will acquaint you with that which shall be worth your labour; he will bring those sick, distempered souls to another relish than now they have. He will make you spit out this dirt and dung, and thirst for the living water that shall spring up in you to everlasting life, John iv. 14. And instead of your over-eager seeking the food that perisheth, he will make you hunger after the bread of life, John vi. 17. What the unsanctified man doth most love, we may see by experience; we see what he seeks after partly by his life: and will you see out of Scripture yet more fully which way the heart of the sanctified is inclined? "The love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost," Rom. v. 5. They "are confident that nothing can separate them from this love, neither height nor breadth," &c. Rom. viii. 39. They can sometimes appeal to Christ himself with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," John

xxi. 15. "Oh how I love thy law!" said David, "it is my meditation day and night; yea, I love them exceedingly," saith he, Psal. cxix. 167; "above gold," ver. 127; "above their appointed or necessary food," saith Job, chap. xxiii. 12. "Thy word was the joy and rejoicing of my heart," saith Jeremiah, chap. xv. 16. So vehement was Paul against those men that could not love the Lord of love, that he pronounceth them accursed with the greatest curse, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "Thy law," saith David, "is within my heart," Psal. xl. 8; and lxxxiv. 1, 2. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them." "My soul breaketh for the longing it hath to thy judgments at all times," Psal. cxix. 20; and lxxiii. 1-6, "Thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee; to see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live, I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night season."

Sect. X.

2. The second part of the change of the heart is in its intents. Conversion setteth a man upon right ends. All the work of a man's life lieth in intending certain ends, and using certain means to obtain them. And all the work of christianity lieth in intending right ends, and in using right means to obtain them. The chief part of man's corruption in his depraved natural state, doth consist in this, that he intendeth wrong ends: that is a man's end, which he accounteth his felicity, his treasure, his chiefest good, and which he useth all things else to obtain. Whatsoever you think the best thing in the world for you, and had rather have it than any thing else; and whatsoever you principally seek after in your life, and think yourself most happy if you could obtain it, and think yourself most miserable if you miss of it, and therefore had rather lose all than that, and make it your main business to be sure that you may enjoy it; that, and nothing else but that, is your end. In general every man's happiness is his end; and this nature itself, as nature, doth so far adhere to, and intend, that no man can do otherwise, and there is no note of man's not intending this. But generals are nothing, but as they are found in particular things: when it comes to the particular object of fruition, and what it is wherein men's happiness doth consist, there it is that the depraved nature doth most damnably err. For every carnal man doth apprehend it the best condition for him to enjoy his carnal pleasure, and profit, and vain-glory in this world; or if he look for a life to come, he would have it consist of such kind of pleasures as he here enjoyed in this life; and therefore, his very heart is most set upon these sensual, worldly things: he hath a nature so suitable to them, that he savoureth these as the sweetest delights, and things fittest for him; and, therefore, his very business, and daily care and work in the world, is to get, or increase, or keep, or enjoy and draw out the sweetness of these sensual things. So that an earthly man hath an earthly mind, and earthly ends; as Christ said to Nicodemus, John iii. 6, that which is born of the earth is earthly: and a fleshly man hath a fleshly mind, and

fleshly ends; as I before showed, from Rom. viii. 7, they cannot see in the love of God, or the enjoyment of him, so certain, so suitable a good for them, as may be their felicity, and better to them than these earthly things. Either they doubt whether the happiness which they see not be true, or a mere delusion; or else they think that it is too far off, and a place too strange to them to be their felicity. They think that God and man are at too great a distance to be so mutually loved, and that he is so strange to us, as to be an unsuitable object for our highest love. Nay, because of his holiness, justice, and the other blessed perfections of his nature, and because he will judge the ungodly world unto perdition; therefore their hearts are even against him, and they that call him their God, have a secret enmity to him. So that, before conversion, it is the sinful, miserable state of all men, that God is not their end; he hath not their hearts. It is not he that they most seek after in their lives, nor in whom their souls apprehend the chiefest delight and felicity to consist; but it is in the fleshly pleasures, or profits, or honour of this world. It is some creature, and not God, that hath men's hearts, their care, and earnest diligence. Hence it is, that they are said to "have their portion in this life," Psal. xvii. 14, and are there called "the men of the world." They are such as "lay up a treasure on earth," Matt. vi. 18, 19. They think none can show them any greater good, and apprehend not the joy of the light of God's countenance, Psal. iv. 6, 7. They seek only "what they shall eat or drink, or wherewith they shall be clothed," for this is the custom of the "nations of the world," Luke xii. 29—31. "They make light of Christ," and the kingdom that he promiseth, in comparison of their farms, their oxen, their worldly wealth and pleasure, Luke xii. 21; Matt. xxii. 5. "They lay up treasures for themselves here, but are not rich towards God," Luke xii. 21. If they have abundance, they cheer their souls, as having "enough for many years," and so resolve to "eat, drink, and be merry," Luke xii. 19. If they are called by a trial to part with all for Christ, and the hope of everlasting glory, "they go away sorrowful because of their riches," or the dearth of that which they are called to forsake. In a word, they are such as a compassionate man should mention with tears, "they are enemies to the cross of Christ," though not always to his name. "Their end is destruction, their God is their belly, their glory is in their shame, they mind earthly things," Phil. iii. 19. They "make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof," Rom. xiii. 13, 14. They have their "good things in this life," when the godly have their "evil things," and therefore when others "are comforted they shall be tormented," Luke xvi. 25. All these scriptures declare to you what are the ends of unconverted men, and where are their hearts. "For where their treasure is, there will their hearts be," Matt. vi. 21.

But when the Spirit comes with converting grace, the very ends and intents of a man are changed: as he findeth the greatest excellency in God, and the things of the life to come; so hath he there laid up his treasure, Matt. vi. 20, and fixed his hopes: he hath reckoned what the world is worth, and how much it can afford him, and how long it will last him, and what it will do for him in the greatest need; and upon certain knowledge of its vanity and insufficiency he hath resolved that this cannot make him happy. If ever you be converted, you will know all this to be true by experience that I say; that it is the work of converting grace to make a man consider whether all that he can hope for in

this world will make him indeed a happy man, and upon consideration he findeth it will not serve his turn. God bringeth it now close to his thoughts and affections, so that the mere splendour, and sugared taste, and glozing appearances of worldly things, cannot deceive him as formerly they did; but he understandeth now the utmost they can do for him; he considereth how that they do but flatter him into the grave and hell, and leave him when he is in the depth of his distress; before he was as the prodigal, that thought it hard keeping to live in his father's house, but abroad and among his companions and pleasures he would go; but when he comes to himself, he finds that he must home again, or perish with hunger: the poor soul then layeth these things to heart. Alas! thinks he, I may be merry a few days more if I hold on in this company and course, but will this life last for ever? I may be somebody in the world for a while, if I can be rich or honourable; but how long can I keep it when I have got it? I may please my mind among my friends and worldly businesses, my corn and cattle, my pleasures and prosperity; but what shall I do shortly when these things are gone? I may think now that I can live without the favour of God, but can I do so when I have nothing else to live on? Alas! is that fit to be instead of God and heaven to me, that will not keep me out of the grave, nor keep my strongest or most beautiful parts from rotting in the dust; no, nor keep my soul from everlasting torments? Oh, what shall I do if I have not a better portion than this? Woe to me that ever I was born, if I be not better provided for before I die! Thus doth God take off the soul in conversion from its former ends, and makes it say, Lord, these will not serve my turn; O put me not off with such things as these. When the soul is thus loosened from its former delight, and seeth that it must be something else that must be his happiness; then doth the Spirit by the word of God reveal to him the certainty and the fulness of that glory that is to be had by Christ in the everlasting love and fruition of God; and then he sees that though it be not here to be had, yet it is to be had hereafter; and that man was made to higher things than he hath hitherto minded. Now he begins to bethink himself in good sadness, that heaven may be had, and that for him as well as others; the impossibility is taken away by Christ, and the door is set open; the glory is inconceivable, and if he can but once get it he is made for ever. These thoughts now work in the heart of the man that never had such lively working thoughts of it before. So that now he feeleth his heart burn within him, when he hath once found where his happiness is to be had; presently, the Spirit having touched his heart with an effectual inclination thereto, he is bent upon it, and sets his heart and face to seek it. And now this is his business; comparatively he hath nothing else to do. Now it must be God or none, heaven or nothing, that will serve his turn. Now if God should offer him, I will give thee mirth and riches for a thousand years without interruption, I will give thee the good word of all about thee, I will make thee the greatest man on earth, and thou shalt have the world at will; but not my love and grace in Christ, nor the hope of everlasting glory; this would be the saddest news that ever came to his soul. It is not now the same thing that would please him as before. Tell not him now of profit and pleasure; it is everlasting pleasure that he must have. He hath another journey to go, another home to regard, another kind of trade to drive on in the world than before he had. Now he "looketh for a city that hath foundations, whose

builder and maker is God;" and therefore doth take himself but as a stranger on earth, and one that sojourneth in a foreign country, Heb. xi. 9, 10, 13. Now the best of worldly things will no longer satisfy them; but they "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city," Heb. xi. 16. Now they are soundly persuaded that "there is a God, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" and that this reward is beyond the grave: and therefore they have respect to the recompence of reward, and are content to submit to the sufferings of this life, that so they may obtain a better resurrection, Heb. xi. 6, 26, 35. He now is to this world as a dead man in comparison; "crucified to the world, and the world to him," Gal. vi. 14. "And his life is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ, who is his life, shall appear, then shall he appear also with him in glory," Col. iii. 3, 4.

Beloved hearers, you may easily conceive that it is a very great change that causeth a man to have other ends than ever he had before, and that quite turneth the very bent of his heart and life, and maketh him have a quite contrary business in the world, than before he had; that setteth a man's face another way, so that he that before went one way, doth now go the clean contrary. Alas! it is not the restraint of a wicked work or two, or the outward civilizing of your lives, that is true conversion. It is such a change as I am now describing to you, that turneth you quite another way. If you are true christians that hear me, you know it, or may know it, to be thus with yourselves. For certainly you have had experience of this in your souls. It were no impossible thing for you now, if you were but willing, to know certainly whether you be converted, yea or no. One would think that a man's end might be discerned above all things. Cannot you know what you like and love best? and what you would fain have? and what you cannot be content without? and what you drive at in the course of your lives? and what you place your hopes and happiness in, which you will have, though you part with all to get it? and what it is that beareth down all things else in your hearts and lives? Why something or other doth this, whatsoever it be, and this is your end. And one would think, that this which so much takes one up, and so much sways, and is the business of his life, might be well discerned. Sirs, deal truly between God and your souls. What hath your hearts? what game do you follow? what do you mind above all? I ask not whether you set not a foot now and then out of the way; but which way are you travelling? for earth or for heaven? Oh that you would but be faithful to your souls in this trial! I have often told you, and will tell you yet again, and desire you to remember it as long as you live, that this is the true difference between every true converted soul, and all hypocrites and carnal men in the world; that to the true christian indeed, God and everlasting glory is his main end, and religion is his business, and all worldly things come in but upon the by, and therefore he can have them, or be without them; whereas with all hypocrites and carnal men, the pleasing of their flesh in this world is their main end, and therefore worldliness, voluptuousness, or ambition is their business, and the matters of God and religion come in but upon the by, and therefore they can taste of them, or they can be without them. I would you would keep this one mark by you while you live; by which you may judge yourselves without deceit; and so the true christian need not deny his sincerity, nor the

hypocrite imagine that he is what he is not, but might certainly know that he is yet in the flesh. And thus I have shown you what is the second part of the work of conversion of the will or heart, even the change of a man's ends and intentions.

Sect. XI.

3. The third part of the work of conversion on the will, is this. The same Spirit in the word, which changeth a man's ends, doth also change him as to the choice of means, and causes him to choose what before he refused, and to consent to that which before he did reject. Heaven is not obtained in every way, but in God's own way; and if a man should never so much intend God as his end, and yet not seek him in the means of his appointment, (though I think there is none that doth so, or that ever these indeed are separated, yet I say, if such a thing were,) it would not save him. It is not enough to know where we must be happy, but we must also know how to come thither. There is but one right way to salvation in the main, and he that will be saved must be sure to hit it.

(1.) There are two sorts of means or ways to salvation; not contrary, but one subordinate to the other: but one is the chief and principal way, and that is Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost; the other is the subservient way, and that is the means that Christ hath appointed under himself. When man was lost, there was no remedy for him in heaven or earth, but the ever-living Son of God to come down from heaven, and take our nature, and perfectly obey the law, and suffer for our disobedience; this he did in compassion to mankind. He was born of a virgin, without man, and without sin, by the power of the Holy Ghost. He lived on earth without sin also, and proved his Godhead and doctrine by his works; he raised the dead, healed the lame, the blind, the sick, and at last offered himself on the cross a sacrifice for our sins, in suffering that which we must else have suffered; and being buried, he rose again the third day, and after forty days, in the sight of his disciples, ascended into heaven, where he is now in our nature interceding for us, and preparing us a place. And before he departed from earth, he ordained this law, and sent his disciples to preach it to all the world; that all they that would renounce their own works, and trust their souls upon his redemption and ransom, and forsake the world, the flesh, and the devil, and take him for their only Lord and Saviour, and so return to God himself, shall receive the pardon of all their sin, and be made the heirs of everlasting glory. And he hath promised also to send his sanctifying Spirit to dwell and work in those that believe. Thus you see what is the principal means of salvation; it is the Lord Jesus Christ, who having suffered for us, is offered to us in the gospel, to be our Head and Husband, our Saviour and our Lord.

Two things are here of absolute necessity to our salvation; the one is, to believe unfeignedly that Christ is the Messiah and Redeemer of the world; and the second is, to accept him as he is offered to us in the gospel. Now the heart of an unconverted sinner is against both these. 1. It doth not soundly believe the truth of Christ's incarnation, resurrection, and ascension, but only by a common, customary, superficial belief: but of this I spoke before. 2. He doth not welcome Christ to his soul, as he is offered to him; partly because men are unhumiliated and feel not the need of Christ; for "the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick;" and partly, because that Christ would reclaim them from the way that they take pleasure in; and would

bring them into a way that is against their hearts; and many other causes there are. So that, even where Christ seemeth to be much honoured, and men will bow, and do the greatest reverence to his name, and profess themselves his faithful servants, and that they trust their salvation on him alone; yet for all this they do not savingly or sincerely believe in him. They have learned to speak well of Christ, and they are willing to be forgiven by him; but they never laid hold on him, as a drowning man would do on that which might save him: nor did they ever feel at their hearts, what a glorious work of mercy he hath wrought in their redemption; and how much he hath done for them, and how much he hath engaged their souls unto himself. They never had any of the saints' admiration at the height, and breadth, and length, and depth, Eph. iii. 18, nor had they been taken up with this astonishing project of love, as men thus redeemed at such a rate must be: nor would they ever consent that Christ should rule over them, and mortify their lusts, and bring them back from the flesh to God; and therefore they are unbelievers, even while they profess the faith of Christ. But when converting grace comes, as it raiseth the soul's estimation of Christ, as I have said before, so doth it open the heart to his entertainment. Oh what glad news is it to desolate, self-condemned souls to hear that the Son of God hath bought them with his blood! It is life to them to hear the glad tidings of their redemption. It is the very work of the Spirit in conversion, to bring the soul into this admiration of redemption; and to show it the riches of grace in Christ, and the mystery of this blessed work, when his eyes are opened to see how God designed here the magnifying of his love; and how glorious God is in his mercy in the work of redemption, even as glorious as in his power in the work of creation. And when his wounded soul hath well understood how Christ hath made him a plaster of his blood, this makes him have other thoughts of Christ and redemption than before he had. Oh how much sweeter to him are the hearing, and reading, and thinking of this Christ, than before they were! He that before did shut the door, and let Christ knock and knock again, and could so often churlishly resist him; oh how the case is now altered with him! Now Christ is to him as cordial waters to a man in a swoon; as a hand to a drowning man; as drink to a man in a burning fever; as a pardon to a man condemned to die: the name of Christ doth even revive him, when withal he can but have some hope that he is his. O could you now assure him that Christ is willing to pass over all his unkind resistance, and to be friends with him, and wash his soul in his blood, how glad a man would he be! When sin stares him in the face, oh then for a Christ to make his peace! When conscience is up in arms against him, now how doth Christ befriend him, to step in and bear the stroke! He saith not as Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord that I should serve him?" nor as they in Job xxi. 14, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways:" nor as the common rebels of the world, Luke xix. 27, "We will not have this man to reign over us:" but as Laban to Abraham's servants, Gen. xxiv. 31, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without? For the house and room is prepared for thee." Too long have I made my soul a sink, a sty, a dungeon, when it might and should have been thy dwelling, and the temple of thy Holy Spirit. Come in, Lord, and let sin possess thy room no longer. Hath here been room for the world, and room for fleshly lusts and pleasures, and is there no room for thee? Let thy

graces dwell where sin hath dwelt; here is room for them all; or if there be not room, O cast out sin, and make thee room. Thou that madest all things ready for me, before thou callest me by the voice of the gospel, make all within me ready for thyself, and cast out him that is stronger than I, and hath held my heart so long in a peaceable captivity. Only thy presence now will do me good: I die if thou revive me not: I am devoured by the jaws of the devouring lion, if thou do not rescue me. I am tormented by my own conscience, and nothing but thine applied blood can mollify it. I am accused and condemned by the law, which I have broken, and what shall I say or do, if thou come not in, and plead thy blood, and answer for me? I have many thousand sins that will be brought in against me; and how shall I come off, but by the virtue of thy sacrifice? Hell is ready to devour me everlastingly, if thou do not save me. Save me, save me, Lord, or I perish! I am lost, undone, a damned man if thou do not save me. The devils that have deceived me, do but stay to torment me if thou do not save me. A just and angry God will be to me everlastingly a consuming fire, if his indignation be not quenched by thy blood and intercession. There is no other name under heaven by which I can be saved, Acts iv. 12. No, no, it must be Christ alone, it must be Christ or none, Christ, or I am lost. Now doth the poor soul look upon Christ as on the fire or air, that he cannot live without; he sees an absolute necessity of him for the main, and an absolute necessity for every particular. Every sin that he remembereth, telleth him that he hath need of Christ. Every corruption that he feeleth stirring within him, telleth him of the absolute need of Christ. Every temptation that assauleth him, telleth him of the need of Christ. He never falleth into any known sin again, (which alas! is too often,) but it maketh him see the need of Christ. He findeth he could not live a day or an hour safely without him: he cannot wash away one spot, nor master one corruption, without him. When he goes to God in prayer for his soul, he then findeth the need of Christ; he dare not draw near if Christ take him not by the hand; he knows there is no admittance in any other name. He durst not look God in the face, nor name him, nor worship him, nor hope for any mercy from him, but through Christ. In a word, without Christ he dares neither live nor die. You see then where another part of conversion lieth in this true belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. You may know and say all this of Christ before conversion; but you never rightly apprehend it and feel it, till then.

And as the merit, so the Spirit of Christ is here comprehended; for I join both together for brevity. It is by his Spirit that Christ takes down the strong contradiction of the flesh, and bringeth all in subjection to himself; as light prevaileth against darkness, and strength against weakness, and life against death, so doth the Spirit prevail for Christ in the souls of the elect. Before conversion, there is nothing but grieving, and striving against, and quenching the Spirit, and using it like an enemy. But now how glad is the soul of his presence! how loth to grieve him! how fearful of quenching it! And if by some unkindness the Spirit seem to be withdrawn, what moan doth he make! And how sadly doth he cry out as David did! Psal. li. 12, "Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit:" and if he feel the Spirit, as it were, departing from him, he calls aloud with David, ver. 11, "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." As a man living is loth to die, and knoweth that when his spirit is gone

from his body, he will be a carcass, and therefore will use all possible means to keep the soul and body from parting; even so the true believer knows that if the Spirit of God were gone from his soul, the soul were dead, or worse than dead, and therefore it is his daily care to keep the Spirit and his soul from parting. He apprehendeth it now to be a blessed privilege indeed, to have the Spirit of Jesus still within him, to be his temple, and by him to be preserved from temptation, excited to duties, and animated in them, and sanctified to the service of him that did redeem him.

And now, sirs, I must needs say to those of you that are unconverted, that all these matters are strange to you; you hear me, but you have felt no such things as these within yourselves. Oh what a difference is there between this living faith in Christ, and the name of faith, and the image of christianity, which you boast of and presume upon! What a difference is there between these warm, heart-reviving closures with Christ, and your cold belief and dull profession! It is one thing for Christ to dwell in the heart by faith, Eph. iii. 17, and another thing for him to have the custom of the country, and the law of the land, on his side, to make way for him. It is one thing for a man that is well to honour a physician, and another thing for a sick man to seek out to him, and beg his help, and take him for his physician, and willingly take down any thing that he giveth him. I pray you mark what I say, because it is the most common delusion of unconverted men among us, that they verily think that they truly believe in Christ already: and there is a common belief that will never save them, and that they take up with, and look not after the saving faith. I cannot better open the difference to ordinary capacities, than by the aforesaid comparison. You know a man in health may truly believe that such a man is an able physician, and he may speak well of him, and honour him: now suppose a man were deadly sick of a consumption, and did not know it; if this man honoureth the physician as much as any other healthful man, will this cure him, or save his life? No, but the patient that prayeth him to come to him, and will trust his life in his hands, and will take the bitterest medicine that he gives him, and will forbear any hurtful meat or drink, be it never so pleasant to him, this is he that is like to be healed by him. Christ is known among us to be the able Physician of souls; we all confess and praise his skill, and know that he can save us. We all hear of the freeness of his cure, that he takes nothing, but doth it as soon for the poorest beggar as the greatest prince: but knowing all this, and speaking well of him, will cure no man; no, but you must go to him believingly, and beg his help, and take him for your physician, and trust your souls upon his blood and Spirit, and apply his means, and take the bitterest cup that he shall reach you, and forsake the morsels of fleshly pleasure that have been sweet to you heretofore. Do not say, this is to be justified by works; for this is no other kind of works than what standeth in a necessary subserviency to Christ, even the work of grace itself. This is but the work that Christ calls thee to; John vi. 29, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom the Father hath sent:" this is but "coming to Christ that ye may have life," John v. 40; and "taking his yoke and burden on you, that you may find rest to your souls," Matt. xi. 29. When the poor people followed him on earth from place to place, and hearkened to his words, and took up his cross that they might be his disciples, and be justified and saved by him; he did not tell them, this is sinful working for justification. To conclude, if ever

you be converted, thus must you follow Christ, and thus must you yield to the Spirit which you now resist.

Thus I have showed you how the converted soul doth accept of Christ and the Spirit, on the terms and to the ends that are mentioned in the gospel. Christ Jesus is accepted as the Redeemer of their souls, that hath satisfied justice by being a ransom for their sins, and hath merited everlasting glory for them; and as the Lord that, by the title of his redemption, must rule them; as their Head, that must provide for them and supply all their wants; and as the fountain and treasure of all that grace that must save them: the Holy Ghost is entertained as he that must sanctify and guide them in the way to life everlasting, having already sealed the truth of the doctrine.

Sect. XII.

2. We are next to consider how the work of conversion doth turn the heart or will of man to these means that stand in a subordination to Christ: and indeed a natural man is disaffected not only to Christ but to all his ordinances; he that mindeth not the end nor the chief means, cannot heartily mind the subordinate means.

(1.) One means that God hath appointed to salvation, is, confession of sin, with a broken heart for the sin confessed. A man unconverted doth neither see any such evil in sin as to drive him to this confession, nor to break his heart in godly sorrow; nor will his heart be brought to consent to the faithful performance of that. A heart unhumiled and unchanged doth think it but a piece of childish folly to weep and mourn for sin, and lament it before the world: they are too stout to stoop to a disgraceful acknowledgment: they scorn to be so base as to make an open confession of their sins, or to lament their misery. They feel no such burden upon their consciences as should drive them into such repentance to seek to God and man for ease; and if they confess to God in secret, it is without a broken heart: they will not endure so much pain as to feel their own condition, and have their sores so faithfully searched as is necessary to a cure: this afflicting of the soul, their souls abhor.

But when converting grace hath changed their hearts, oh how the case is altered with them! Then godly sorrow is even, as it were, natural to them; and they that could not endure it, do now even cherish and indulge it. It is a voluntary sorrow; they mourn and would mourn, like him that cried out, "Labour not to comfort me," Isa. xxii. 4; that is, till God will comfort me. As a sore that is not ripe will not break nor run, and that which is not suppurable is oft incurable, but when it is brought to supuration and ripeness, then it will even break of itself, and run without any more ado: so is it with the impenitent soul and the penitent; till repentance comes, the soul is not ripe; ministers are every day applying to it all the mollifying, dissolving remedies they can devise, to bring it to supuration, but all will not do; their hearts will not break, not a tear of unfeigned repentance will come forth; they hide their sin, and scorn to make a penitent confession. But oh! when grace hath done the work, and softened the heart, and ripened the sore, then it will come out of its own accord. I would not have you take this upon my bare word, but see whether the Scripture say not so before me, Acts ii. 37. They were once a stubborn generation of sinners that the apostles had there to deal withal, that durst have their hands in the blood of Christ himself; but when they were once converted, "they were pricked at the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

This did imply a confession of their sin: q. d. We confess ourselves guilty, and we find our souls in a miserable case under the wrath and curse of God: O give us your advice what we shall do. These were three thousand people at once that were brought to this conviction and confession. See how freely all comes out, when the heart is once pricked by the word and Spirit! The like you know was the case of Saul at his conversion, Acts ix. 5, 6, as stout a hearted sinner before as another; but when God overpowered him by converting grace, then he calls out with trembling and astonishment, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And when he relateth his own life and manner of conversion, Acts xxii. 4, 5, how freely doth he confess his former persecution! And again, in Acts xxvi. 10, 11, confessing that he was a persecutor, "yea, and punished Christians in the synagogue, and compelled them to blasphemy; yea, was mad, yea exceedingly mad against them." The like doth he confess, Tit. iii. 3. Acts xvi. the apostles met with a sturdy jailor that put them in the inner prison, and their feet fast in the stocks; but when an earthquake opened the doors and set them free, and a heart-quake brought him in, and laid him at their feet, and grace took the opportunity to do its work, then he crieth out with trembling, ver. 30, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" David tells you his own experience, Psal. xxxii. 5, 6, "I acknowledged my sins unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found." And after his grievous fall, the fifty-first Psalm will show you his confession. So Acts xix. 18, "Many confessed and showed their deeds, and brought their books and burned them before all men." These were such as were reputed wise and learned before; but when grace had changed them, they openly confess that all was folly. Many more such examples we have, and precepts where God requireth it; Ezra x. 1; Neh. ix. 2, 3; Lev. v. 5; xvi. 21; xxvi. 40; Numb. v. 7. And indeed, pardon itself is offered on these terms, 1 John i. 9, "If we confess, he is faithful and just to forgive." Prov. xxviii. 13, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." James v. 16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another." And indeed in the first times, no man was baptized that did not confess his sins openly before, and renounce them; even John himself caused the Jews to confess their sins before he would baptize them, Matt. iii. 6; Mark i. 5. So in Jer. iii. 12, 13, "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord; and I will not keep mine anger for ever; only confess thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord, &c. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married to you," &c. You see here that conversion hath ever confession accompanying it. He that turneth, must and will confess, as the repenting church, Jer. xiv. 20, "We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers; for we have sinned against thee: do not abhor us, for thy name's sake." And Hos. v. 15, it was the Lord's threatening against them, "I will go and return unto my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their afflictions they will seek me early." So that it is most evident that conversion openeth the heart and mouth to confess, even to God or man, or both, according as the case requireth: not but that a Judas will do it at last in

horror, and cry out, "I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood;" but this is forced by horror, and not by a gracious change. Many a thief will confess their sin at the gallows, that are not converted; but when conversion comes, the very mind being changed, is set against the sin, and therefore they long to cast it up. Hiding tethend to keeping, confession tethend to parting with sin: therefore he that is penitent doth not hide it, so far as he hath any call to confess it. Oh, sirs, that the Lord would bring this to the hearts of some of you that most need it! One may hear by your speeches that conversion is far from your hearts. How many among us are there that have little cause to justify themselves, and yet we cannot bring them to any confession, but what is general and common with all, that we are sinners! But for any hateful and disgraceful sin, they excuse it, and hide it; and have nothing but good almost to say of themselves. You shall not hear one sad complaint almost that they will make against themselves. If you have a froward wife, you will complain of that; if disobedient children, if careless or stubborn servants, you will complain of them; if you have unkind friends or neighbours, you will complain of them; but of yourselves, where you have greatest reason to complain, we can scarce hear a word. If any do you wrong, you are still harping upon it, and making the worst of it; but for all the wrong that you have done to God and your own souls, you can lightly pass it over, and make little of it: and who heareth you half so oft complain of yourselves as others? What say you, is it not thus with many among us? You know not how sad a mark this is. I tell you, if ever converting grace come to your hearts, it will make you pour out complaints against yourselves; it will make you cry with David, "I have done foolishly," 2 Sam. xxiv. 10; and with Paul, "I was foolish, disobedient, I was mad, yea, exceedingly mad," Acts xxvi. 11; Tit. iii. 3; and, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" Rom. vii. 24. Mark the unconverted man in his talk, and you shall hear him, if not as the Pharisee, saying, "I am not like other men;" yet at least saying nothing against himself, but nibbling at the good names of others, and making the devil more servants than indeed he hath, and God fewer, by their venturous censures; they have the hypocrite's eye, that was not made to see itself, that is good for little but to spy motes in others' eyes; but the beam in their own they cannot see. The infirmities of those that fear God they can talk of; but a graceless heart and a worldly, fleshly life of their own doth little trouble them. But when converting grace comes, you may hear by their very talk, that the case is changed; they have nobody then to talk against, so much as themselves; their censures against themselves do seem the most uncharitable; their talk is most of the sins of their own hearts and lives: and blame them not, for these are nearest them, and most concern them: the mote in their own eye doth most grieve them, and till they have wiped out that, they have less mind to look into the eyes of others. In a word, whosoever is justified of God, and freed from condemnation, is a judger and condemner of himself, 1 Cor. xi. 31. But they that lie under the condemnation of God, are commonly self-justifiers, Luke xvi. 15.

SECT. XIII.

(2.) Another means that converting grace doth turn the heart to, is, earnest prayer to God. A man unconverted is a stranger to true prayer; either he doth nothing in his duty, or that which is next to nothing: commonly they will not be brought so much

as to the outside and form of the duty; but if they be, that is all; till some affliction or conviction come and awaken them to a little more for a time: but they never fall to this work to the purpose, till saving grace do truly change them: a carnal heart feeleth no such need of God or mercy, as to drive him to beg for it from day to day. He feels himself well enough, and therefore saith with them in Job xxi. 15, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" as Mal. iii. 14, they scarce think it worth their labour. It may be for fear of perishing with the ungodly, and from some general conviction of conscience, they may use some formal, cold expressions, or perhaps take up the outside of this duty: but it is not prayer, without the desires of the soul which carry out a man to seek for mercy and relief to God: unconverted men are either dumb to this holy duty, or their hearts are dumb while their tongues are speaking: either they have nothing to say to God, or nothing but some words that they get by rote, and utter without the feeling of their souls; or else they have little else but words. Their consciences witness, and God himself is a witness, that they do not in secret beg earnestly for his mercy: they do not heartily call to him for pardoning grace and sanctifying grace: with their families they do not earnestly beg of God the same mercy, as a people that desire that he should dwell among them. For where there is no true feeling of sin and misery, and desire after grace, there can be no hearty prayers to God: what need you any further mark of a graceless soul, than that they are prayerless.

But converting grace doth open the heart, and let in the Holy Ghost, which is a Spirit of supplication, Zech. xii. 10; and this Spirit doth help their infirmities; and whereas, of themselves, "they know not what to pray for as they ought, he maketh request for them with groans that are unutterable," Rom. viii. 26, 27. As the new-born infant, or any living creature, will quickly show whether it be alive, by making towards the parent or dam for its nourishment; so will the new-born christian. It is not unlikely that the apostle referreth to this: "We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father." As the child doth first learn to cry dad or mam; so doth the christian first learn to make out to God as a Father, and by prayer to seek to him for relief; and for certain, as the Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of prayer, so if any man "have not this Spirit, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 15, 9. The evidence that God giveth Ananias of Saul's conversion, was this, "Behold, he prayeth," Acts ix. 11. It was the proof of Cornelius's grace, that "he prayed to God always," Acts x. 2. And the angel takes the time of his prayer, to appear to him; and Peter, that must be sent unto him, is found at prayer, Acts x. 9; xi. 5. The new-converted disciples "continued in prayer," Acts ii. 42. It is no small part of a christian's life to "continue instant in prayer, and watch in the same," Rom. xii. 12; Col. iv. 2; Eph. vi. 18. It were easy to prove this by multitudes of Scripture texts: he that hath not this breath of prayer, is either a dead man, or in a dangerous swoon. As the poor child when any thing hurteth it, or affrighteth it, runs to the mother or father for help; so doth the poor christian to Christ. He may go to ministers, and go to other christians (as Cornelius to Peter, because Christ sendeth him, and so under Christ); but it is Christ that he goeth directly to, and that he is most with. He hath a very praying spirit within him, contrary to that dumb spirit that possesseth the ungodly: so that he must needs go to God when any thing aileth him, and he will not

be held back. His soul would be disconsolate, and as David in the wilderness, Psal. xlii. if he were kept from God: he would be overwhelmed with his troubles if he might not go ease his mind with God: some ease he may get from ministers and friends, but oh! if he had not more from God, his case were very sad. He is in prayer as Jeremiah in preaching; Jer. xx. 8, 9, "The word was a consuming fire shut up in his bones, he was weary of forbearing and could not stay." So are his sins and his necessities like a consuming fire shut up in his heart; he is weary with forbearing, he cannot hold them: to God he must go, as David, Psal. xxxix. 2, 3, whiles he held his tongue, his sorrow was stirred, his heart was hot within him, the fire burned till he spake to God: and Psal. xxxii. 3, "While I kept silence my bones waxed old." You may better keep the converted christians from food, or raiment, or home, or friends, than keep them from God: they had rather be without a shop to work in, a house to dwell in, a bed to lie in, than a place to pray in. But the best is, that God hath sanctified every place to him, and commanded him every where to lift up pure hands, 1 Tim. ii. 8. His Lord and Saviour hath left him his example, who was sometimes in a wilderness, and sometimes in a garden, and sometimes in other solitary places, purposely for prayer, and so accustomed to one, that Judas knew of it, Mark xiv. 23; xxvi. 36; vi. 46; xiv. 32; Luke xxii. 41, 44. He that was perfect would show us his dependence on the infinite Godhead, by giving us an example of constancy in this duty; so that we find him even all night in prayer to God, Luke vi. 12. And all his disciples do learn this lesson of him, and imitate him in their measure, in this holy work. If we ask for other examples, we may find Cornelius and Daniel at it in their families, Acts x.; Dan. vi. Peter at it in the housetop, Acts x. 9. Paul and Silas at midnight are at it in the inner prison in the stocks, Acts xvi. 25. From every place can the prayers of the godly have access to heaven. For God is every where present, and therefore though the places of public assemblies be in a special sort the house of prayer, Matt. xxi. 13; yet doth he not confine his prayer to that house. The very soul of a christian is habituated to prayer, and therefore he doth it as it were continually, 1 Thess. v. 17; and in every thing he maketh known his wants by it to God, Phil. iv. 6. So that he is seldom so deep asleep in any lapse through security, but that more or less he breathes this breath of grace in holy prayer. If he want wisdom, he asketh it of God, for he knoweth that he giveth liberally, and unbraideth not, James i. 5. If he want the Spirit itself in a further measure, he goes to God that hath promised to give it to them that ask it, Luke xi. 13. If he want forgiveness of sin, deliverance from any evil or temptation, it is the matter of his daily prayer; yea, so is his very daily bread, his health and life, and all the comforts of it; for he knoweth that all things are sanctified by the word and prayer, 1 Tim. iv. 5. If he be afflicted, he prayeth; and if in sickness, he desireth the elders of the church to pray with him, James v. 13, 14, 16; for he knoweth that the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much, James v. 15, 17. If the servants of Christ be in troubles, it is prayers without ceasing that is the means of their relief. Even besides secret prayers and church prayers upon any such occasion of their own and others; if a few christians can get together to prayer, it is pleasanter to them, than to the drunkard or voluptuous, when they can get together for sports or wickedness. When Peter was in prison, many were got together in a house to prayer, when

he came and knocked at the door, when the angel had set him free, Acts xii. 12. In a word, the true convert beginneth his new life in prayer; he continueth it in prayer habitual or actual; sometimes by the secret motions of the heart, and sometimes by the expression also of his mouth: and he endeth it, as to this world, most commonly in prayers; as the Lord Jesus himself, as his blessed martyr Stephen did, committing their spirits to God at the closing of their eyes; and the saints do commonly follow them in that course: so by the help of these blessed gales we are carried through the waves and troubles of this world, and by this we land at the last in glory. Never think therefore to find a prayerless convert, any more than to find a breathless living man. Oh! the poor christian feeleth that he cannot live without prayer, because he cannot live without God. He cannot be without it one day; he cannot be at home without it, or abroad without it; he cannot travel or return home without it; he cannot labour without it in the shop or in the field; but when he wants a place to bow his knee in, he hath yet an opportunity to bow his soul; and if company or business do shut his mouth, yet it must be business indeed that quite taketh off his heart; for his eyes are on God, as the eye of the servant on the hand of his master, saith David, Psal. cxxiii. 2. Why may I not say, as the eye of our dogs, when they wait on us at our tables, is towards us for every bit they have; so the eye and dependence of the christian for soul and for body, is upon God; and many a secret ejaculation doth he send up, and many a groan doth pass his heart, that those that even stand by him are unacquainted with. As a beggar is known by his needy begging tone, so is he known by his begging of God; "The poor useth entreaties," Prov. xviii. 23, or speaketh supplication; you may know them by it; they make a trade of it; they live by begging; they will have no nay: such a one is the christian, that even liveth by begging as his very trade; as one that must always pray, and not be weary or wax faint, Luke xviii. 1. So that this is the second means that converting grace doth turn men's hearts to.

Sect. XIV.

(3.) The third means, subordinate to Christ and the Spirit, which converting grace doth turn the heart to, is, the word of God, whether heard, or read, or preached, or any way fitly made known. The word is the very seed that doth beget him to this life, the immortal seed of God, which always must remain in him, Luke viii. 11; 1 John iii. 9. Of this incorruptible seed is he new born, 1 Pet. i. 23. And therefore it cannot be but he must love it, and desire it. The Scripture to a carnal man is as a common book; many things in it seem to be unlikely, and many things even next to foolishness, because he hath not the Spirit to discern them. To all the ungodly it is as a sealed book; though some of them know the grammatical and logical sense, none of them taste the spiritual sweetness, nor partake of the life that it begets in the soul. Therefore we find the learned papists so many of them making a jest of Scripture, even while they confess it to be the word of God; some of them daring to accuse the matter, and some the style, and many the words and manner of expression, as if it were obscure, or unfit, or insufficient to its proper use. A carnal man can easily spare it; a chapter in the Bible to him is but as a common story. Many a one of them can delight to read a romance, or a book of fables and fictions, like "The Knight of the Sun," "The Seven Champions," or "Palmarine," or "Guy of Warwick," or such like wicked devices of men's brains

that are made to rob God of men's hearts, and to rob themselves of their time and wit; than to read over the sacred story, and the holy precepts of Christ, and the spiritual doctrine of faith and salvation. We may see the difference between men's dispositions towards God's word in the papists and poor protestants, in the time and place of persecution. The protestants would make much of one leaf of the Bible; they would get together to hear a chapter read, as to a feast, when they knew their lives were endangered by it. The papists used all their power to suppress it, to hinder the promulgation of it, and keep the people from the knowledge of it, and burned them at a stake for the using of it. Their Inquisition in Spain and Italy inquire after it, as if it were some book of treason or witchcraft; when the poor christians whose hearts are touched with it, do hide it and keep it, as the chiefest jewel in the world. Luther would not take a world for one leaf of the Bible; his adversaries would have been glad if they could have banished it out of the world. In the primitive church the heathen persecutors did first seek after the christian Bibles and other good books, that they might burn them; and if the ministers would deliver them all the books, sometimes they would spare their lives; but the poor christians would be torn in pieces, and suffer any kind of death, before they would deliver them one of those books to be burnt. And if any through fear had yielded to deliver them, they were ever after looked upon by the other christians, as if they were apostates and deniers of Christ, and were commonly called by the name of traitors, and the very posterity of such was in disgrace after them. Inasmuch that the schism of the Donatists sprung from an excessive zeal on this occasion: because a bishop was but ordained by one that had been a son of a traitor of the Bible, they separated from him, and from all the church that held communion with him, for his sake. So that you may see what thoughts the servants of Christ have ever had of the holy Scriptures, and how contrary to these are the men of the world.

And we cannot blame them, for they know that it was by this word that God did first quicken them; by this he convinced them of sin and misery; by this he revealed to them Christ and glory. In this is contained the covenant of grace, the charter for salvation, and that title to all the mercies of this life and that which is to come. Here are the laws of heaven by which they must live, and by which they must all be judged. Here are those promises which first revived their distressed souls; the first cordials that did refresh their fainting spirits: the first news of pardon and glad tidings of salvation that ever they had was from hence. They know it is a book inspired from heaven by the Spirit of God, containing the discovery of the will of God; and the highest mysteries, which flesh and blood cannot reveal; and that they are matters also of everlasting consequence, to which all the matters in this world are as nothing, and not worthy the naming or once remembering. And do you blame a poor christian for being in love with this blessed book? especially when he knoweth these things not by bare hear-say only, but by many a sweet experience in his soul: many a sweet draught hath he here drank in his extremity; and many a feast hath his soul here had, if he be a christian of long standing and experience. But, however, this was the means of his conversion, and the very instrument of the Spirit for raising him from the dead. And as the christian is so in love with the book of God, so is he with the doctrine of it, wherever he finds it. Any other book that is written to explain

and apply this, is savoury to him; especially the public preaching of this word, which is most eminently the standing ordinance of God for man's conversion and edification. The same sermons that would have made him sleep, or made his head ache, before his conversion, do now awaken him, and make his heart ache for his former folly; and yet he loveth them, though they trouble and grieve him, for he loveth that kind of trouble and grief which they beget. Oh how sweet is that word to his soul, which heretofore he was wont to loathe or quarrel at! He could live with David in the temple, even day and night: other men can scarce be drawn to it, but for custom or by-respects, but it would be a death to him to be kept away. If there were a famine in the land of the word of God, he would wander from sea to sea before he would be without it, Amos viii. 12. It is as natural, according to this new nature, for a true convert to seek after the word of God, as for the infant to make to the breast, 1 Pet. i. 2. As new-born babes, they desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may live and grow thereby; they receive with meekness the engrafted word: *τὸν λόγον ἐμψυγον*, the word which is innaturalized to them, and connatural with them: for it is it that is able to save their souls, James i. 21; able to do its own part thereto. Never did you know that christian that could live without this word, any more than a man can live without meat. I told you the language of Job, David, and Jeremiah before. Oh how certainly do the careless neglecters and despisers of this word discover, that yet they are unconverted souls, that taste no more sweetness in it than in a chip; that will rather make it a matter of derision, when they see people read and hear so diligently, and talk so much of the word of God: and do in their hearts almost as one of the papist rebels in Ireland did with his feet, even stamp the Bible in the dirt, and curse it, and said, "This is it that hath bred all this, and set us together by the ears." Little better thoughts have many secret infidels of it in their hearts. But here the christian hath grounded his hopes; here hath he built and bottomed his soul; and here will he live and die. This then is another part of the work of conversion, it turneth men's hearts to the word of God, and maketh them value it as their necessary food.

Sect. XV.

(4.) The fourth means of salvation which conversion turneth the heart of a man to, is the communion of the saints. Before conversion, the nature, and sometimes the very name of a saint is loathsome to them, though God hath told us, that without holiness none shall see him, Heb. xii. 14. And all his people are called and sanctified; and that none but they shall be glorified; yet how commonly do we hear men make a mock at the very name of saints. These are the saints, say they, these are the holy brethren. When the blood of Christ is shed to sanctify men, when the Spirit of grace is sent from heaven to sanctify men, and hath made it his office, when all that God doth by his word and ordinances is to sanctify men; when all true christians are sanctified men, or saints, and the church itself is a company of saints; and when sanctification is nothing else but our devotedness to God that made and redeemed us; yet dare these impious wretches open their mouths against sanctity, coming near to the scorning of God himself, and to reproaching the word and the will of God! yea, and to some kind of blaspheming the Holy Ghost. It is natural to a wicked man to hate a saint, Gen. iii. 15. An enmity is put between them. And the first two men that were

born into the world did manifest that enmity, for Cain killed his brother Abel, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous, 1 John iii. 12; Heb. xi. 4. And Christ himself telleth his disciples, that because they are not of the world, but he hath chosen them out of the world, therefore the world hateth them; but if they were of the world, the world would love his own, John xv. 19. Yea, on this very account, it first hated Christ himself, John xv. 8. And therefore no wonder if the communion of the saints be abhorred, or not delighted in, by the ungodly, even while they make it an article of their creed. But when once the soul is truly converted, there is a likeness to God and his saints put upon them, and a natural love to them implanted in their hearts, and thereupon a strong inclination to have communion with them in the worship of God, and the way to heaven; as many drops of water will gather into one, or many streams will run into one river, or many small flames, if you bring them near, will make all into one, and every thing is inclined as it were to incorporate with its like, so is it with the truly sanctified soul. The same means will not serve their turns, if they have it not in communion: Acts iv. 32, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul," and they distributed to one another, as every one had need, and charity made that common which law had made proper. Acts ii. 42—46, they continued stedfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread and prayer; and they that believed were together, and had all things common, (that is, by charity, as I said before,) and they continued daily with one accord in the temple, breaking bread from house to house. Certainly, there is in all the children of God such a love to their brethren, that they love their company, especially in the holy worship of him that redeemed them. False-hearted christians, that have but the name, may have the hearts of heathens, and do as they did, who were unacquainted with christian love, but so will not the true. Hence it is that the christians in all ages have so valued the sacrament, which hath been still called the communion of the church, or of saints; because there they all join together to feed upon one Christ, and taste of the supper of the Lord, as the fellow-heirs of his glory. And as many corns made one loaf of bread, so are they, as the apostle speaks, one bread and one body. For the bread which they break, it is the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup which they drink, is the communion of his blood, 1 Cor. x. 16. And hence it is, that it hath ever been so heavy a punishment in the eyes of all christians to be excommunicate, and shut out of the fellowship of the church (though there are also other reasons greater than this). So that the poor christians, if they had fallen into any sin that deserved excommunication, they would have stood with tears at the church doors, month after month, entreating the prayers of the church that they might be pardoned, and be fit to be taken in again; and this even when christianity was so persecuted, that it was matter of danger to a man's life to be a christian, so precious then was the communion of saints. Every Lord's day did they administer the Lord's supper, that they might be frequent in that part of communion. And, therefore, they highly esteemed the Lord's days, because they were the days of the churches' holy communion. Do not marvel, then, if any true converted soul have a closing, uniting, combining disposition; and if they love to be together in the holy worship and service of God; and if they are glad when they can get together in the public meeting place, or any other convenient place, to join together, and help

each other in the work that is common to all. I know there may be some upright souls live among such as hinder them from that communion which they would have; but their hearts are towards it, and they will have it if they can. I know also, that the heathens and papists, and all enemies of the church, have still defamed the communion of christians, and such as join to seek the Lord. And if any evil fall out among them, they would lay it all on their meeting and communion. But yet this malice of the devil could never break the assembly and communion of the saints. I know also, that many heretics are much addicted to secret combination, and to tie together in their way; but that is natural for men to love their like in evil; so drunkards can flock together to an ale-house; but it is not so natural to delight in good: other men's communion in evil, doth not disgrace, but commend our communion in the fear of God. Satan hath his legions that can agree in one man; but they are not such as the legions that attended upon Christ. What! must Christ have no school or army, because Satan hath one? Must we dissipate, because the wicked always associate? There are means sufficient left us to discern the communion of the church of Christ from all ungodly and heretical combinations whatsoever. Though there be some stings in the church of Christ among the bees, yet there is more honey. The meetings of heretics are like the nests of wasps, they are all sting and no honey. Saith Tertullian, *Vespæ habent favos, et Marcionatæ ecclesias*:—Wasps have combs too, and heretics make churches. The combs of the bees and of the wasps may be very like to look upon, but the honey is not like, nor the sting altogether. It is not to feed on the doctrine of Christ, and live to him, that heretics do combine; but it is to divide the church, and to show their error and pride, and to sting and despise others. So that their meetings are nothing like the meeting of the church in many regards. I beseech you now, beloved hearers, try how your hearts are affected to the matter in hand. If you are true converts, your very hearts are among the saints; it doth you good especially to join with them in public, and especially in the two duties of praising God and receiving the sacraments, which are the most proper to the church. And also it will do you good to have communion with them in private, in prayer, in conference, in any holy work. You are where you would be, when you are thus employed. You do not do like the hypocritical world, to say, "I believe the communion of saints," and at the same time either hate and scorn, or at least neglect and set light by the communion of saints. It is not to every wicked man that the promise is made, "Where two or three are met together in Christ's name, there is he in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 20. And it is not for nothing, that the saints delight in this communion. For as here is most of God's blessing, and most help from one another, so when they are nearest to one another, they are all nearest to Christ. And their closure and communion is a foretaste of their communion in glory; for their happiness lieth in their being one with Christ and among themselves, John xvii. 21; and Christ died of purpose to "gather into one the children of God, that are scattered throughout the world," John xi. 52; and it is God's design in the work of redemption to "gather together in one all things in Christ," Ephes. i. 10. And as he therefore "gives his prophets, apostles, and ministers to the church, for the perfection of the saints, and edifying the body, till it be all come in the unity of the faith to a perfect man, that we may grow up in him, who is the Head, in all things; from whom the body

fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love," Eph. iv. 11–16. So also at the day of judgment shall the "angels gather the elect together from the four winds," Matt. xxiv. 31, and they shall be one in Christ for ever, John xvii. 21. Great reason therefore have the saints to make out after more of that, which their perfection doth so much consist in. Other men may have some delight in the company and assembly of christians for by-respects; but to love the communion of the saints, as such, and delight in them as the body of Christ employed in his praises, this is the proper disposition of a saint. And this is another thing that conversion doth turn their hearts unto.

Sect. XVI.

4. Having spoken of the third part of the conversion of the heart, which consisteth in the right choice of the means to salvation; I proceed to the fourth, which consisteth in the thorough resolving of the yet wavering and unsettled soul. I make not this a part in itself different from all that are before-mentioned, but the very life and perfection of them, especially of the two last. Some kind of willingness and unsound consent there may be in the half-converted, and many times it is long after the beginning of this change before it reach to a sound resolution; but it is never a saving work of special grace indeed, and proper to the saints, till then. Men may have many convictions; and be brought to engage themselves in covenant to God, and yet for want of this true resolution, their hearts may not be right with God, nor they be stedfast in his covenant, Psal. lxxviii. 37. We are suitors for Christ to a backward and obstinate generation of men; we are long persuading them before they will yield, and when they seem to yield, they are long in the beginning, deliberating and wavering before they will resolve. Sometimes God turneth the heart more suddenly at a sermon; but ordinarily, for aught I can find, men stick long under conviction and half purposes, before they are thus converted. When they see that all is not well with them, and that they are not in a safe condition to appear before God at judgment, in that they have not taken the right course that christian wisdom required them to take, they feel then within them many persuadings of the Spirit of God, and their conscience reasoning the case with them, and saying, This life will not serve thy turn long; if death find thee in this condition, thou art an undone man: away then with thy negligence and idle company and courses, and set thyself to seek after Christ before it be too late: and under these persuasions the mind is sometimes purposed to do it. But these purposes are either for the time to come, that hereafter they will be new men; or else they are but half purposes, that reach not to a resolution: and, therefore, if at present they make some kind of change, it is but by the halves; and they usually turn back again: this is the case of the best men ordinarily before conversion.

But when conversion comes, it turns over the mind unfeignedly to God; it brings the soul beyond its former waverings; it shows men that there is no other remedy, the thing is of necessity, and that all is but vanity that can be said against it, and no good reason can be given to take any wise man off from the work of repentance and a heavenly life, and therefore he is resolved, that this shall be his way. He hath considered and found for certain that there is no true felicity but in the favour of God; and that

his love and promised glory is everlasting, and all things else are vain and transitory; and therefore he is resolved, that God should be his portion, and nothing but God; heaven shall be the end of his desire and labour, and nothing but heaven. He hath also considered that there is no pardon of sin, but by the blood of Christ; and no hope of salvation, but by cleaving to him, and yielding to his renewing Spirit; and therefore he is now resolved that Christ shall have his heart, and his Spirit shall do its work, and that the word of God hereafter shall be his rule. He is now determined to know nothing but Christ crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Before he was like a man that was weighing somewhat in the scales, and the other end was the heavier, or the scales stood as it were even: but now the Holy Ghost hath brought in those arguments, and set them home on the conscience, with that life that hath turned the scales. Before he was like a man that had lost his way, and standeth still, considering whether he shall turn back or not, or whether he shall go this way or that; but now he is resolved, and he stands no longer considering, but turns without any more ado. And this resolution is not rash or ungrounded; but having considered what can be said for God and for the world, for sin and for repentance, and considering what he may meet with in the way to heaven, he resolveth, whatever it cost him, repent he will, return he will, for saved he must be. Though he meet with hard dealing from the world, there is no remedy, he will go through it; though he may suffer much in the flesh, yet that shall not take him off; though he knows he must leave his former pleasure and wicked company, and live that life that the flesh doth abhor, yet all this shall not take him off. Oh what a pleading and reasoning there is commonly between the flesh and the Spirit, before the heart will be thus resolved. As it was with Caracilius, the Marquis of Vicum, when his conscience bid him leave his land, and friends, and all for Christ, to forsake popery, and betake himself to these countries, where he might enjoy the gospel; his house and lands then came in his eyes; What! must I leave all these for mere conscience, and live I know not how? His wife hangs upon him, his children with tears do cry after him, O father, leave us not! and many a sob and sigh it costs his heart before he could resolve to get away. And as it was with many of the martyrs when they were to die for Christ and for his truth; wife, and children, and friends follow them to the fire, crying out, O turn, turn, and do not undo yourselves and us; so that they had almost as much ado to overcome that temptation, as to bear the flames. So is it with a sinner in the work of conversion; when he looks to Christ and everlasting glory, and considereth withal that these cannot be obtained without the loss of earthly, sinful pleasure; and when he thinketh of his old merry company and course, his ease and fleshly pleasure that he must leave; when he thinks of the strangeness of the way that he must now turn to, and how unacquainted he is with it, and how many bitter scorns, and worse, he is like to meet with, and how much care and pains it must cost him to be saved; this keepeth him sometimes at a stand, and breedeth in him many troublous thoughts, so that he scarce knows which way to turn him, or what to do. If he repent and return to God, he must deny his flesh, and forsake all this world, and for aught he knows, have scarce any more of that kind of pleasure that he lived upon before; and if he do not do this, he must forsake God, and all hope of everlasting glory, and give up himself to eternal misery. This seemeth a very sad strait to one at the first; because he yet hath had

no experience of the joy of the Holy Ghost, and the higher comforts of a christian life, nor of the help which God will afford him in his way: and therefore we cannot marvel if many a poor soul do here stick in the birth; and if it be long before they resolve for God; and if others turn back and perish for ever; and grace, and only grace will resolve them. When Christ opens their eyes effectually and to the purpose, he lets them see, that between heaven and earth, God and the world, grace and sin, there is no comparison. They see then, it is not a matter to doubt of, or to stick at: God must be pleased, but there is no necessity that the world or the flesh be pleased. God's favour must be had, but we may live without the favour of the world. Death and judgment must be provided for, but it is needless to provide for the desires of the flesh: a hundred considerations come in upon his soul, which make him say, Away with all these worldly vanities, and welcome Christ and a holy life. Now he "casteth off that weight that hangeth on him, and that sin that did so easily beset him, that he may run with patience the race that is before him, looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of his faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," Heb. xii. 1, 2. In a word, he is now thoroughly convinced that one thing is necessary, and therefore he hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from him, Luke x. 42. O sirs, you are never truly converted till this resolution of the soul; whatever good purposes you may have for the time to come, if you be not resolved presently to return, I say, presently without delay, you are not yet truly converted to Christ, though you may verily think that the life of faith and holiness is the best life, and may have some mind to it, and purpose one of these days to return; nay, though you may have some present purposes that are cold and faint, and come not up to the height of resolution; and though you make some half trial hereafter, and change some of your company and your courses, all this is well, but it will not serve the turn without this resolution. Many a man that is lost for ever, hath had many a good wish and purpose, and made some essay to mend his life, and made some half reformation, and yet, being not resolved for Christ, they have perished. The very principal part of the work of saving grace in the soul doth lie in this resolution. Oh that the wavering, and the loitering, and the delaying soul would lay this well to heart! Oh that they understood this, who are convinced that they must return and be new men, and yet cannot be brought to present resolution, but linger in their sins, as being loth to come away; as Lot did in Sodom, till God being merciful to him, caused the angel to carry him out. Well this is the next work of converting grace. If ever you be converted, you will be resolved for Christ.

SECT. XVII.

5. The fifth part of the work of conversion in the heart, consisteth in the change that is made upon the affections. Though these are not so evident and certain always to try a man's state by, and therefore I would have christians try especially by the former, yet it is certain that conversion changeth these also; and because they are many, and I have been long in the description of this work already, I will the more briefly run them over.

(1.) The first of the affections that appeareth in this change, are, love and hatred. Before conversion, the heart loveth not spiritual things and ways; there

is an opposition to them, and enmity against them, Rom. viii. 5, 7. It loveth not inward holiness, nor a holy life; it loveth not the people that are holy; nay, it loveth not God himself as he is just and holy; yea, it hath an inward loathing of him, and of his image and way; though yet it be so deceitful as perhaps not to know thus much by itself. But on the contrary, it loveth fleshly pleasure, and earthly profit, and vain-glory, and ease, and honour of the world; for it only savoureth these kind of things, Rom. viii. 7. But conversion turneth a man's love and hatred, and maketh him love the holy God, and those holy people and ways that he could not heartily love before, and it maketh him loathe those sins that he before loved: that this is so in all that are converted, is evident from many texts of Scripture. Matt. x. 37, "He that loveth father or mother, &c." Psal. i. 2, 3, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Psal. xv. 4, "In his eyes a vile person is condemned: but he honoureth them that fear the Lord." 1 John iii. 14, "By this we may know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren; he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." They hated the light before, because it was against their deeds, but now they love it, and come to it, John iii. 19, 20. The very evil actions that they do, they now hate, Rom. vii. 15. Yea, they hate even the garments spotted of the flesh, all that beareth the mark of a fleshly, sensual course, Jude 23. Sirs, if you be truly converted, this change will be upon your affections.

Sec. XVIII.

(2.) The second pair of affections that show themselves in this change, are, desire and aversion. These are so near akin to love and hatred, that I need to say the less of them. The unconverted man's desires are after the fleshly pleasures which he loveth; of these they think they can never have enough, but cry as the horse-leech, Give, give. When do you hear the covetous man say he hath enough? or the ambitious man say, I would be no higher? or the sensual man say, My appetite and lust are now satisfied, I would have no more? Their very life is a thirsting after provision for the flesh, Rom. xiii. 12, 13; and the fulfilling its desires, Eph. ii. 3. And sometimes God giveth much of that they do desire for a time, but it is in judgment, and a curse to them through their sin, Psal. lxxviii. 29. But as for God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and holiness, to these they have no appetite, but naturally loathe them, and at the best have but cold and heartless wishes after them. Hence it is, that they refuse so many motions for their own good. Move them to spiritual things, and there is somewhat within them that is against the motion, so that they will not hear us, or be persuaded by us. Oh how backward is an unconverted soul to spiritual good! They will go no further than they are drawn, and they will not be drawn to give up themselves to it. Hence it is, that our ministerial labours are so much lost. We persuade sick men to their meat, that have no appetite to it; nay, whose stomachs rise against it and loathe it. It goeth against their carnal natures, against their former customs, against their ease, and profit, and pleasure, and therefore it will not down with them, they cannot away with it, Job xxi. 14. We heave a stone that will stir no further than main force doth move it. Oh had they but desire after Christ and grace, as they have after worldly, fleshly vanity, how happy might they be!

But when converting grace comes, it changeth their desire. God calls to them then effectually by his word and Spirit; "Ho, every one that thirsteth,

come and drink of the water of life freely," Isa. lv. 1—3. As if he should say, What mean you to desire that which will do so little good, and to lay out your labour for that which will not profit you, or save you? Come to me, and take the grace that I freely offer you, and follow my direction, and I will give you that which is worthy your desire. When God hath once effectually touched the heart with converting grace, it leaves a secret thirsting after him in the soul. As when he called Peter and the other apostles, and said unto them, Follow me, they presently left all and followed him. Then they cry out with David, "My soul thirsteth after thee as the thirsty land," Psal. cxliii. 6; xlii. 2; lxiii. 1. "The desire of their soul is to his name, and to the remembrance of him," Isa. xxvi. 8. Now they see that excellency in God's word, and ways, and graces, that all things that may be desired are not to be compared with it, Prov. viii. 11. "They are more to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold," Psal. xix. 10. Before they desired many things, and nothing would satisfy them; now give them but one thing, and they will be satisfied to the full, Psal. cxvii. 4; lxxiii. 25. Before their desires were only after vanity; but now, so far as they are renewed, they are only after good, Prov. xi. 23. And that God that gave them these desires, will fulfil them, Psal. cxlv. 19. He that caused them to hunger and thirst after righteousness, will satisfy them, Matt. v. 6. And he that turned their minds from this world, and gave them to desire after a better country, Heb. xi. 16, will give them that promised land which they desire.

Sec. XIX.

(3.) The next affections, whose change is discovered in the work of conversion, are, their delight and sorrow. This is the next pair. An unconverted man doth naturally find no pleasure in God or spiritual things: for a fool hath no delight in understanding, Prov. xviii. 2. It is fleshly lust and pleasure that they desire, Tit. iii. 3. And the "pleasure of sin for a season," for which they part with the highest delight, Heb. xi. 25. "They live in pleasures on earth, and fat themselves as for a day of slaughter," James v. 5. They account it pleasure to riot in the daylight of the gospel, in that day that is given for other kinds of works, 2 Pet. ii. 13. They not only do evil, but have "pleasure in them that do it," Rom. i. 32. These "fools hate knowledge, and scornors delight in scorning," Prov. i. 22. And if they have any delight in better things through a common word of grace, it is but a superficial, fading delight, Isa. lviii. 2; "A rejoicing in the light for a season," John v. 35; but no sound, well-grounded delight. But when converting grace comes, it giveth a man those new delights which he knew not of before. Then the things that he before saw not, nor well believed, the things which he distasted and loathed, are in his delight. God himself is his delight, Psal. xxxvii. 4. The doing of his will is their delight, Psal. xl. 8. His law, his word, his statutes, are their delight, Psal. i. 2; cxix. 24, 77, 16, 35, 47, 70. On the Lord's day they delight in him, Isa. lviii. 14. In the multitude of troubling, perplexing thoughts, his comforts delight their souls, Psal. xciv. 19. Their delight is in the saints on earth, and those that excel in virtue, Psal. xvi. 3. It is their meat and drink to draw nigh to God. It doth them good at the heart, when they can be enlarged towards him, and have more light and life than before they had. These are the new delights of a converted soul. He doth not part with all delight at his conversion; he doth but change a brutish and sensual delight, for such as are fit for a man and a christian.

The wicked think they shall never have a merry day again, if they should be thus changed; but he meets with more truly comfortable days than ever he did before: nay, he never knew what true comfort was till now. I know every poor christian hath not that measure of these delights as some have. Some are clouded with darkness, and infirmities, and live much more sadly than others do; but yet the delight which they have in these things, is more than in the things which they before delighted in. It glads them when they can but see a beam of heavenly light from the face of God. They have so much as sheweth the change that is made upon their souls.

The like we may say also of the sorrow of the unconverted. It is not the same that it was before. Before it went nearer their hearts to lose any pleasure or commodity in the world, or to be wronged, or suffer any disgrace from men, or to suffer any want in their estates, or any pain in their bodies, than it did to lie under the wrath of God, and live as without him and his favour in the world. They were truly such as Satan falsely reported Job to be; had you but touched them in their estates or bodies, they would have quickly showed you what was next their hearts. But all the misery of their soul was no great trouble to them. A man would marvel, that knoweth what a miserable state that of sinful nature is, that so many thousands in the world can be void of God's image, strangers to the Spirit, and know no more of Christ but the very name, and yet be no more troubled at it; that they can bear such a weight of unpardoned sin as they do every day, and feel it no more; that they can live under the curse of God's righteous law, and remain in daily danger of damnation, so that if they should die before conversion, they are lost for ever, and yet be no more troubled at it. But alas, they are blind, and see not the case that they are in; they are dead and stupid, and therefore feel it not. It is the nature of their miserable condition to make them so; they are more troubled for a worldly trifle, than for all these things of everlasting consequence. But it is far otherwise with the converted soul; one doubt of the love of God is more grievous to them, than to doubt of their worldly happiness; the remnant of their mortified sins is heavier on their soul, than the mountains of unmortified sin was to them before; they send out more groans and cries to God, because of their daily failings and infirmities, than they did before for all their iniquity: the utter gracelessness of their hearts was then not so grievous to them as the weakness of their graces now. He never before knew what it was to have the least spiritual communion with God, and yet he bare it lightly; now the miss of it one day and in one duty, is more grievous to him. What need we prove this to you, when every gracious soul doth feel it, and the world about them may see it, that their sorrows are of another nature than they were before? Were they wont to lie in tears for sin, and mourn for God's absence as now they do? Before they were sorrowful, that they might not come to heaven without such a course as would impoverish them in the world, Matt. xix. 22; Luke xviii. 23; but now they are sorrowful that they can shake off the world and sin no better, and get ground of their corruptions no faster than they do. *Object.* Perhaps you will say, if conversion bring so much sorrow, is it not better to be without it? *Answer.* No, for it is a willing sorrow, a necessary healing sorrow, that worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; and not the sorrow of the world that causeth death, 2 Cor. vii. 10. See there the blessed effects of it at large, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10. It is a sorrow mixed with greater joy; for we

are as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, 2 Cor. vi. 10. It is a very short sorrow, that will quickly be forgotten; for God hath promised himself to wipe away all tears from our eyes, Rev. vii. 17; xxi. 4. It is a sorrow of God's own giving, and therefore it cannot choose but be good, for God giveth not evil: it is a sorrow preparing for everlasting joy; and he that hath called us to it, hath foretold us, John xvi. 20, that we "shall be sorrowful, but our sorrow shall be turned into joy, which none shall take from us. We shall weep and lament, and the world shall rejoice;" but mark the end, who it is that will be sorrowful or joyful then. "Mark the upright man, and behold the just, for the end of that man is peace," Psal. xxxvii. 37. What wise man will refuse so short a sorrow for so long a joy? Who that is well in his wits, will choose rather to die of his sore, than to endure the smart of the lancet to open it? Nay, there is an ingenuity in a converted soul, which makes it in a kind of holy revenge even be willing to taste somewhat of the smart of his own folly. He sees that it was himself that caused it, and brought all this upon himself, and the desert of a thousand times more, and therefore he even chooseth in some measure to afflict his soul, and doth not thrust away sorrow from him, as before he was wont to do.

Sect. XX.

(4.) The next pair of affections that show their change, are, hope and despair. Before conversion, the soul of sinners is either borne up on false, ungrounded hopes, which is the common case, or else they drop into desperation. The hopes of an unconverted man are foolish and contrary to the word of God, and do but show the delusion of his soul, and tend to his destruction: they are like the hopes of a man that thinketh he is travelling to London, when he is in the way to York, and yet goes on, and hopes he shall come to London for all that, as well as they that go the right way: so do these men commonly hope to come to heaven, while they go in the way to hell. And though God have told them, and passed his word on it, that he that goes in these ways shall not see peace, Isa. lix. 8, and hath assured the world, that there is no peace to the wicked, Isa. lvi. 21; xlviii. 22: yet still they will hope to find peace in evil ways: these deceiving hopes are the common cause of the damnation of the world, as the Scripture frequently acquainteth us. But when converting grace comes, oh! what work it maketh on the soul in this particular! How it battereth down all the false hopes of sinners; and maketh them see that they are all this while deceived! Oh! it maketh the poor soul even undone in its own apprehension, and shows then that all his hopes were vain that before he trusted in. Then he cries out, I had hope to come to heaven without conversion, but now I see it will not be: I had hoped I was well enough before, and that God would have mercy on me in that condition without any more ado, but now I see I did but deceive myself. I had hoped that I had a saving part in Christ, though I loved the world and followed my sins; but now I see it is not so. I had hoped I might have been saved if I had died in that condition; but now I see that I had certainly been damned. Now the soul is brought to a kind of despair; not an absolute despair that God will have no mercy on him; no, he never escaped that till now; but a conditional despair, that ever he should come to heaven without conversion; he despaireth of ever being saved in the old condition that he was in: and then comes in another kind of hope than ever he knew before: then the Spirit of grace doth bring him to hope upon grounds that will not deceive him:

now he hath a hope that quickeneth him, and that comforteth him: before he had a dull and dead hope to escape damnation; but now he hath a living hope of seeing the face of God for ever. He hath now that hope toward God by which we are saved, even the hope of the resurrection of the dead, and the hope of things not seen, Acts xxiv. 15; xxiii. 6; Rom. viii. 24; now he hath a hope which is built on the Scripture, and bred by experience, and which will not make him ashamed, Rom. xv. 4; v. 4, 5: before, as he was without God, so was he without hope, Eph. ii. 12; but now he hath that hope which is an anchor of the soul, Heb. vi. 19; a hope that he can give a reason of, 1 Pet. iii. 15; a hope that purifieth him, 1 John iii. 3; even the hope of eternal life, which none have but those that are heirs by faith, and are brought to it by this regeneration, Tit. iii. 5—7. And for this blessed hope at the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour, doth his faith and patience expect and wait, Tit. ii. 13. So that now he hath some reason for his hopes, for he hath the promise of the faithful God to support them. The least hope that a poor troubled soul hath after conversion in the midst of all his fears and doubts, is of more value than all the most confident boastings of the unconverted; for there can be no hope of being saved out of the way that God hath appointed to salvation: and the bolder men are, and the more they hope and boast in a wrong way, the blinder they show themselves, and the more is their misery; but the godly are safe in an objective hope, even when they want much of the subjective. There is hope, yea, and assurance in itself, when they know it not; and they are safe in that which they do not perceive.

Sect. XXI.

(5.) The next pair of affections that manifest their conversion, are, courage and fear. An unconverted man is bold in sin, but feareth not much the wrath of God, and the sorest evil that he threateneth in his word; but when he should encounter with any of the enemies of his salvation, there he hath no courage. It is a marvel to see the strange distemper of a graceless soul. These poor wretches are so valiant in their wickedness, that they dare sin when the converted dare not; they dare break the Lord's day, and dare drink, and revel, and take their pleasure, and neglect their souls, and slight God and all his mercy; they dare run upon his sorest wrath, and upon hell itself. Tell them of these things, and you cannot much daunt them. It is their mad valour that they dare damn their own souls: like a distracted man, that dares leap into water and drown himself; or a blind man, that dares run into a coal-pit, because he knows not what he doth: such a kind of valour have unconverted men, when as in the way of their duty, they are the most notorious cowards in the world: they dare not venture upon a little suffering to prevent eternal sufferings; or upon the frowns of men, or the danger of being undone in their worldly estates, though it be for a hope of everlasting glory: nay, they dare not venture upon a very scorn; but when they have some mind to turn and set upon duty, a wicked man can mock them out of all. Are not these valiant men indeed, that dare not look the feeblest enemy of their souls in the face, and yet dare venture on the flames of hell? This is the common case of the unconverted.

But when grace hath made this change, then they are clean contrary affected; then they are the fear-fullest men in the world, of God and his displeasure, and the most courageous against all the opposition of the world. Alas! they find then that it is madness, not valour, to be fearless of the wrath of God:

there is no standing before his indignation, and no dealing with Almightyness, if it be set against us. Therefore doth the poor soul throw down all weapons of opposition, and lay himself at the feet of God, as Saul, Acts ix. 6, and say, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Therefore we find converts use to come in trembling to Christ, Acts xvi. 29; ix. 6. And Scripture tells us, "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom," Psal. cxi. 10; Prov. i. 6; ix. 10. Now he dare not for his life do that which before he did: he durst have let fall an oath or a curse in his passion before; but now he dares not: he durst have secretly deceived others, and have committed secret filthiness; because nobody saw him, he was out of fear; but now he dares not, for he feareth him that is greater than all. He durst have neglected duty, and have been indifferent for all company, and taken his fleshly pleasures, but now he dare not; for his life he dare not. Oh! thinketh he, what if I should die in the act of that sin? What if God should deny me repentance and forgiveness? Where were I then? He durst before lie in a state of death, and now he dares not live quietly, till he have laboured after assurance of his salvation; that he may know it shall go well with him when he must be here no more. Now if he be tempted to know sin, this is his answer, I dare not do it, because I fear God, Nehem. v. 15. Other rulers oppressed the people, and so did not he; because he feared God. It is the description of the ungodly, that "there is no fear of God before his eyes," Psal. xxxvi. 1. And the description of a wicked place, Gen. xx. 11, "There is no fear of God in this place." And the description of the godly, that "they fear God," Psal. lxxvi. 16; Eccles. viii. 12; xii. 13. By this "fear of the Lord it is that men depart from evil," Prov. xvi. 6. This "tendeth to life," Prov. xix. 23. In this "is strong consolation," Prov. xiv. 26. So that it is the work of conversion to bring the presumptuous, hardened sinner to this fear of the Lord: none do so much fear God as they.

But then for the threats of men, for worldly troubles, or crosses, or losses, or any such thing that may stand in the way to heaven, how little do they fear them all? Here where the wicked are most cowardly, the converted soul is most courageous. Alas! he knows the difference between the creature and the Creator. And therefore, when he hath once got God on his side, he seeth he is safe, and the danger is most over. Then, oh what light thoughts hath he of man, or of all that he can do! "In God have I put my trust," saith David, "I will not fear what flesh can do unto me," Psal. lvi. 9: q. d. What is flesh to be compared with God? Can flesh resist him, and cross his pleasure, and overcome him? as Psal. cxviii. 6, "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me;" and Psal. xlvii. 1—3, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar." So xxvi. 3. He knoweth what encouragement God hath given him, Isa. xli. 10, "Fear not, for I am with thee;" and vii. 4, 35; xiv. 13, 14; xlv. 2, 8; li. 7, "Fear ye not the reproach of man, neither be afraid of their revilings; for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool. But my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." These words of God are the instruments of that change that is made on the converted soul, and therefore will make an impression like themselves. When God doth change men, he maketh them soldiers under the banner of

Christ, and setteth them in fight against principalities and powers, even against a world of wicked enemies; and therefore he will certainly give them courage. This courage is an essential part of our change, and without some measure of it we cannot be christians. He that will come to heaven must forsake all, and tread down all, and despise all in comparison of Christ, that he may not be a forsaker and despiser of Christ. Therefore we find the apostle, in the name of himself and his fellow-soldiers, courageously triumphing over death, and the grave, and every enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And Rom viii. 18, 31, to the end, "The sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us. What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn? What shall separate us from the love of God?" Read these triumphant words at leisure. Certain, a true believer hath more valour than to be turned out of the way to heaven by any assault that a creature can make upon him.

Sec. XXII.

(6.) The next passion that sheweth the change, is anger. This is a single passion, and hath no contrary. Before conversion, men are angry with those that trouble them in their sins. If you would but teach the ignorant, or persuade the obstinate, or cross them in the way of their beloved sins, oh how angry will they be! as if you were their enemy, and did them some deadly hurt. You cannot speak to them so tenderly in a reproof, but they will think you do it to disgrace them, or in ill will to them, or at least that you make them worse than they are, and they think you make more ado than needs; as Amaziah did by the prophet, 2 Chron. xxv. 16. They would stop his mouth if they could, who would stop their course of sinning. You shall not see one of many of them that have so much ingenuity as to take a close reproof in good part; no not from a minister, whose calling doth specially bind him to it. Hence is the common indignation that we meet with from poor blind wretches, when we do but our duty. Nay, when we do not half, nor the tenth part of our duty, in persuading them to a greater care of their salvation, they are offended with us, as if we did too much. Oh what a difference is there between their judgment, and the judgment of God and our own conscience! And what a strait a poor minister, or private christian, must needs be in between both! I confess to you all here, to my shame, that I remember no one sin in the world, that my conscience doth so much accuse and judge me for, as for doing so little for the saving of men's souls, and dealing no more fervently and earnestly with them for their conversion, or reformation. And yet every body is not pleased with that little which I do. I confess to you, that when I am alone, and think of the case of poor, ignorant, worldly, earthly, unconverted sinners, that live not to God, nor set their hearts on the life to come, my conscience telleth me, that I should go to as many of them as I can, and tell them plainly and roundly what will become of them, if they do not turn; and to beseech them with all the earnestness that I can, to come in to Christ, and change their course, and make no delay. And though I have many excuses come in from other business, and from disability, and want of time, yet none of them all do satisfy my own conscience, when I consider what heaven and hell are, which will one of them be the end of every man's life; my conscience telleth me, that I should follow

them with all possible earnestness night and day, and take no nay of them till they return to God. But if a man should do thus, how would it be taken? Some of them would think of him as Christ's natural kindred did of him, Mark iii. 21, when they were about to lay hands on him, and thought that he was beside himself; some would think him a precise fellow, that thought nobody should be saved but a few that make more stir than needs; and most would be angry with a man, as if he did them wrong, when he doth but seek to save them with fear, pulling them or keeping them out of the fire of sin, Jude 23. Christ himself is an offence to the ungodly world, 1 Pet. ii. 8; Rom. ix. 33; and therefore no wonder if we offend them. They will even bear a secret grudge in their minds at those men that trouble them in their sins; and "anger resteth in the bosom of these fools," Eccl. vii. 9. If you should suddenly come in upon a thief or an adulterer with a light, who thought to have hidden his sin in the dark, he would be offended at it; and so are most wicked men with us.

But when converting grace hath changed the heart, the case is quite contrary. Then he will thank you for that which before he was angry at; he loveth no man so well as him that hath sought to save his soul. Oh, those reproofs and exhortations that God did bless to his conversion will stick by him for ever. He will bless God that ever he saw your face, and remember those words that helped to save him, as long as he liveth; he will take it for a greater benefit than if you had given him all your wealth. A special extraordinary love to those that were made the means of their conversion will stick for ever in their minds; the very words that you speak to them will be so remembered, that they would not for a world but they had heard these words. Oh what a change is here suddenly wrought! He that was wont to say, Look to yourselves, you shall not answer for me, and be angry with them that troubled him in the way to hell, now loveth their very names, and the remembrance of their kindness is pleasant to him. Even like a poor distracted man, that layeth about him, and abuseth the physician, and calls them all to naught that would cure him, as if they came to kill him; but when he is come to himself again, then he will give them hearty thanks. Somewhat like it is in a beast; if he have a thorn in his foot he will strive against you, and not let you pull it out; and if you cast him down to force him to it, he lieth as if you were about to kill him: but when it is out, and he perceiveth the ease, he will perceive you did not mean him any harm. So it is with a sinner before his conversion: he is angry with those that would do him good; but when once God hath turned his heart, he is quite of another mind. Then he saith, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head," Psal. cxli. 5. And he taketh open "rebuks better than secret love; and the wounds of a friend to be better than the kisses of an enemy," Prov. xxvii. 5, 6. I know, by sad experience, that too much heart-rising against reproof doth remain in many that I hope are converted, but that is from their unconverted part; and if it were predominant, it would prove them unconverted men. For so far as they are gracious, thus it will be.

Yea, not only so, but when a man is converted his anger is turned against himself. He was never so angry with others for reproving him, as he is now for sinning against God, and doing so much wrong to his own soul. Certainly there is in every converted soul a great indignation against them-

selves for their sin. They fall out with themselves, and think ill of themselves, and speak ill of themselves; yea, and could find in their hearts to be in part revenged upon themselves. You may see as much said by Paul, 2 Cor. vii. 11, where, among other effects of godly sorrow, he nameth indignation and revenge. A true repenting sinner could even find in his heart to execute some punishment upon himself. Oh, how he calls himself almost all that is naught! Oh, thinks he, what a fool, what a wretch, what a beast was I, to love the filth of sin better than the favour of God and the hopes of everlasting glory! What a madman was I, to be angry with those that would have kept me from damnation! Where was my wit and reason, when I so long forgot the work that I was born for, and made so light of the Lord that bought me, and thought so little of the place that I must live in for ever? Sirs, I do not speak this of mine own head. I have heard many and many a one, through God's great mercy, after conversion, calling themselves worse than all this comes to; and expressing greater anger against themselves, than the wicked now express against those that would convert them. And you read, that even the saints in Scripture did the like; and that not by a secret confession, but left it on record to all generations. David calls himself an "ignorant fool," and as "a beast," Psal. lxxiii. 22. He cries out, when his heart smote him by true repentance, "I have sinned greatly; I have done foolishly," 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. Paul himself saith, that he was "even mad, and exceedingly mad, against" the christians before his conversion, Acts xxvi. 11. And of himself and the rest, he confesseth, "We ourselves were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another," Tit. iii. 3. So that you see converted men are very angry with themselves for their sinful lives; you hear how they call themselves. If they used such language against another man, you would think it were railing; to call them fools and madmen, and all to naught. But, alas! they know by sad experience what they say, and yet by glad experience that it is now better with them. Therefore it is that they can easier bear the hard words of another, when they are forced to say as bad by themselves. Therefore is every converted sinner a man that loatheth himself for his iniquity, Ezek. xxxvi. 31; xx. 43. Yea, they could find in their hearts, as I said, to be partly revenged on themselves. For though they must not destroy their own bodies, because they are not their own but Christ's, nor must any way hurt them, so far as to make them the less serviceable unto God; yet, in any other case, they can find in their heart to punish this flesh, and to make it smart, that hath led them to so much evil. Therefore they are the easier brought to fasting, and denying the flesh its desires, though they put it to trouble and pain; for as this doth tend to master it, and subdue it for the time to come, so a vindictive penance for the time past voluntarily undertaken, is but a lawful fruit of repentance, so that it do no whit disable us from the service of God. Hence it is, that a thorough convert doth more easily forbear a carnal pleasure, than a hypocrite or half-convert will do. For when they are pleading the lawfulness of their pleasure, and saying, What harm is it, and why may I not do this or that? he is willing to avoid it, though it should be but indifferent, as long as there is any great danger of sin in it. For what careth he if the flesh do smart for it, if that be the worst; seeing it is the flesh that he is fallen out with, and hath done so much wrong to God and him? So that you see what

a change conversion makes on a man's anger as well as other passions.

Sect. XXIII.

(7.) The last change we shall mention on the affections, that is made by converting grace, is in regard of a man's content and discontent. Before conversion, a man is discontent if he had not the desires of his flesh. He hath no rest in his mind, if he be poor or afflicted, and see not some hope of coming out of it. But for the love of God, and the life of grace, and the joys of the godly, he can be well enough content without these. If he had but what he would have in the world, take you the rest, for he thinks he can live well enough without them. When Cain's sacrifice was not accepted as his brother's, he was discontented at his brother, and consequently at God himself. He "was very wroth and his countenance fell," Gen. iv. 5, because his brother was preferred before him, and was judged righteous when he was judged unrighteous. But he could be content without true righteousness itself, though he could not be content without the estimation of it. So can all ungodly men be content well enough to be ungodly, but not to be called ungodly; the name troubleth them, when the thing is so far from troubling them, that they will not be persuaded by any means to leave it. In a word, it is the things of this world that wicked men do seek content in, though they find it not. But as for spiritual and heavenly things, they can be better content in the case that they are now in, without them, than with them.

But conversion turneth the heart also in this regard. For when a man is once truly changed, he can be contented with any state, if he have but the favour of God, and the life of his grace, and communion with him; and without this he can be content with nothing. Nothing but Christ will serve his turn. If God will give him more upon the by, he will take it and be thankful; but without Christ he takes all things to be as nothing. What if he had lands and lordships, honour and dignity, what will this do for him without God in Christ? And blame him not, for he hath felt such a disease that these things could not heal, when Christ, and Christ alone, could do it. And therefore Christ he must have, whatsoever else he go without. A little of the world will serve with Christ, but nothing in the world will serve without him. As a wicked man is troubled and restless, because he hath not that which he would have, when every thing is not according to his mind. If friends, if estates, if his house, or his body, or any thing be out of order, he is in discontent, because it is here that he seeks content, and therefore is troubled when he misseth of it. So is it with a believer in respect of Christ. If God hide his face, if the Spirit seem to withdraw, if Christ seem strange to him, if doubts of salvation come in upon his soul, he is as a bone out of joint, pained and troubled, and nothing will quiet him till he be set in joint again. Like a child that will be quieted with nothing but that which he cries for. If you offer him any thing else, he throweth it away, for that is not it which he crieth for. So is it with this poor christian; if you tell him of riches, or honour, or pleasure, and not of Christ, and grace, and glory, you do but trouble him, for these are not the things that he looks after. There is but one thing in the world that can give him content; let him have that and he hath enough. Oh, did he but know that God is reconciled to him, and that he is united to Christ, and the Spirit is in him, and that he is in the safe way to the kingdom of glory, then if he have but food and raiment he can therewith be content, 1 Tim.

vi. 8; yea, or if he were without them, if God so dispose of it. For he hath learned by the teaching of converting grace, to abound and to want, and in what state soever he is, therewith to be content, Phil. iv. 11. And, therefore, his conversation is without covetousness, and he is content with such things as he hath, because God hath promised him that he will never leave him nor forsake him, Heb. xiii. 5. So this is another fruit of conversion, about men's content or discontent.

Sect. XXIV.

Having said thus much of the change of the affections, I might proceed to show you what particular reigning sins it is, that this work doth cast out of the heart, and what particular graces it there setteth up, and so go over all the chief sins and graces. But because this would hold me longer than I intend to stand upon this subject, and because these are comprehended in the change already mentioned, I shall pass these over; only that part which my text doth particularly express, I take it to be my duty particularly to handle.

"Except ye become as little children." You see here, that Christ placeth much of the work of conversion in the making of us to become "as little children." I shall here, therefore, stay awhile to tell you, 1. What it is not meant by this; and, 2. What is meant by it. 1. Christ doth not by this intend, that little children are altogether innocent, and that there is nothing in them that is hateful to God: for certainly they have all original sin; for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? or how can the parents beget holy children that are unholy themselves? and righteous children, that are themselves unrighteous? I mean, without sin, when they are not themselves without sin. I remember what an outcry was^a once against me in this town, for saying, that children by nature, considered as sinful and unsanctified, were as hateful in the eyes of God, as any toads or serpents are in ours; so that the people railed at me as I went along the streets; but doubtless the comparison is far too short: for every child by nature hath original sin, and sin is more hateful to God a thousand times than any toad or serpent is to us. And therefore it is not by nature that children are righteous, or come to heaven. But it is by grace, through the blood of Christ that washeth them; and the covenant that forgiveth them; and baptism that sealeth this unto them; and they are capable also of the Spirit to sanctify them. If there were not a willing nature in infants disposing them to evil, before they do it; as there is a stinging, venomous nature in a serpent before he stings, or in a wasp even in the comb; how should it come to pass, that children should be so forward to evil as soon as they can commit it? Why are they not as forward to good? If children be not by nature, through original sin, even hateful to God, what need have they of the blood of Christ, to wash them and cleanse them from it? and of the water of baptism, to seal this cleansing? Doubtless, there is not an infant in the world but would be for ever damned, if Christ's blood did not procure their pardon and reconciliation with God. It is not therefore in absolute innocence, that Christ here means that we must become as little children, before we can enter into the kingdom.

2. Nor yet is it in point of safety from the wrath of God, as if every child, or any by nature, were free from all danger of everlasting perdition. By grace many are, but by nature none at all. From the hour of their birth many may be sanctified; but it is the

^a Fifteen years ago.

covenant of grace, and the grace of the covenant, that sanctifieth them, 1 Cor. vii. 14, and not the parent or nature.

The things, therefore, that Christ intendeth in the words of my text, are these two: First, That as children are but new entered into the world, and beginning their lives, and all things are new to them, so he that will be saved, must by conversion, as it were, begin the world anew. I pray you mark it, sirs, for Christ hath not given you this doctrine and example for nothing. Therefore it is that we find so often in Scripture mention made, of laying by, or destroying, or putting off the old man. In Rom. vi. 6, "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." He that hath truly learned Christ, "hath put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and are renewed in the spirit of their mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. vi. 22. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked sometimes, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him," Col. iii. 5-10. Upon consideration of which great change, they are said also to be "dead, and risen again, and their life now hidden with Christ in God," Col. iii. 1-3. You see then that here is an old man to be put off, and destroyed, and a new man to be put on. That is, there must be such a change of the qualities of the soul, and the practice of the life, that a man must not, in his affection and conversation, be the same man that he was before. For though he be the same in substance and person, and the natural faculties of his soul, yet not the same in disposition and practice. In regard of his old corrupt disposition and conversation, he is called the old man, and in regard of his new disposition and conversation, he is called the new man. As a man that hath been an ill husband, and run out of all, and having nothing left, is cast into prison, and when he lieth there, he bethinks him of his folly, and at last a friend comes and payeth him his debts, and setteth him up again, and giveth him a stock to trade with; we say of this man, he begins the world anew. So when a poor sinner is in prison, under the wrath of God for his sin, and Christ comes in his gospel and telleth him, I have paid thy debt, and now I will set thee free, and give thee the help of my Spirit, and means; only see thou be faithful to me, and make better use of my mercy for the time to come. Now this converted sinner is to begin the world as it were anew. As a man that hath fallen into a fever, that hath consumed all his flesh to the very bones, when he is cured his natural parts do make him new blood and flesh again. So when Christ hath cured the diseased soul, the old flesh is as it were consumed, and we are made anew. As a man that hath missed his way at the first setting out, and gone the contrary way all day, and at last comes to know that he was all this while out of his way, he is then to begin his journey anew. So is it with the converted man. When the illumination of the Spirit by the word, doth acquaint him, that he hath all this while been out of the way to heaven, he turneth again and

saith, I am now to begin my life again. The building that he hath been setting up all this while, is blown down by the breath of God's displeasure, or consumed by the fire of his curse. And therefore he must begin again, and build all anew from the very ground. Not an earthly building like the old, but a spiritual house for himself, that may be fit for his Holy Spirit to dwell in, Rom. viii. 11; 2 Tim. i. 14. And may attain at last to the building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2.

I beseech you, beloved hearers, mark this as we go, and see whether this be so with your own souls. I must tell every carnal, worldly sinner of you all, in the name of God, that your old condition is a miserable condition, and will not serve the turn for heaven. If ever you will be saved, you must become as little children, and even begin the world anew. A new heart you must have, a new life you must lead, a new course you must take, and a new end you must aim at and intend. But of this I must speak more anon, under the further proof and application.

Secondly, Another thing that Christ here principally intendeth in the text, is, that we must become as little children, in regard of humility, and all our designs and contrivances of the world. Though this be not the whole that he intends, yet this is the very reason for which he mentioneth the whole work of conversion, as necessary to salvation; and therefore he particularly giveth instance in this part: though children have the seed of all these in their natures, yet are they not acquainted with the acts of all, even when they begin to be acquainted with some. Children will very young show their frowardness, and disobedience, and sensuality, and some pride, but not by aspiring after great things in the world, and seeking after dominions, and dignities, and honours. They are in no care for enlarging possessions, for heaping up riches, for buying lands and lordships; they envy not the princes and lords of the world, but are as well contented with their lower matters, as kings and emperors are with their crowns; if they have meat, and drink, and clothes, and play, they are pleased; you never hear them murmur that they are not preferred to this office or that, in church or commonwealth: they do not contrive how to undermine others; nor to get above them in worldly dignities; nor to blast the name of others, that they may magnify their own. They disdain not those of the lowest rank; but the children of a lord will play familiarly, if they be not dissuaded by others, with the children of beggars: in a word, though they have pride, and show it in lower things, yet do they not look after the great matters of the world, as ambitious and covetous persons do. And this is the thing that Christ intendeth to his disciples, and to all christians, that if ever they will enter into the kingdom of heaven, they must lay by their pride, and vain-glory, and covetousness, and become as little children to all these honours and riches of the world. So that it is plain, that Christ maketh humility an essential part of the work of conversion, and altogether inseparable from the heirs of his kingdom. As pride is thought to be the first sin of the devil, and was certainly the first, or one of the first, that tainted the nature of man, when he would needs be as God, knowing good and evil; so is it not the last or least of the works of Christ on the soul in its recovery, to take down this pride, and humble us, and make us little in our own eyes. Satan drew us to aspire after a kind of godhead, and to be more than men; and Christ brings us to be as little children, and almost less than men. Satan drew us to be like him in pride, and Christ draweth us by doctrine and example, to be like to him in meekness and lowliness. Satan would

lift us up, that he might cast us down, and our fall might be the greater by how much we attempted to mount the higher; and Christ casteth us down, that he may lift us up, and that our glory may be the greater by how much we are made the baser by humility. Satan did but unsettle us by taking us off our rock and foundation, when he pretended to exalt us; and Christ doth settle us again by laying us low; and by teaching us meekness, he causeth us to find that rest to our souls, which in pride and vain-glory could not be found, Matt. xi. 28, 29. Satan by sin did make us low and vile in God's eye, and high and excellent in his own; and Christ by converting grace doth make us low and vile in our own eyes, and high and excellent in God's. By corrupted nature, men are still inclined to rise higher, and lift up themselves; but by grace he is disposed to think meanly of himself, and to set light by the honours and greatness of this world. And why is this, think you? Is it because grace debaseth men's spirits? No, but because it raiseth and ennobleth them. The converted soul doth slight the glory and greatness of the world, not on the same reasons as children do, i. e. because they know it not, or because it is above them; but because he is now acquainted with far greater things, and because that all on earth is below them. It is not because he would fain have greater matters, and cannot get them, but because he hath got a sight of such things in the world to come, in comparison of which these things are as nothing, and therefore to be set light by, and even trodden under foot. He slighteth not crowns and kingdoms as things above him, but as things below him. The very humility of the saints hath a high design: when they lie in the dust, in self-abhorrence and self-condemnation, they are aspiring thence as high as heaven; their humble confession, and tears, and groans, have a tendency to that glory which is above the sun. As a child that casteth his ball to the ground, that it may rebound the higher; or as a man that means to make the highest building, will dig deepest to lay the foundation; in the depth of their debasement they are seeking to be as the angels of God. It is heaven that they mean in every duty, in every prayer, in every lamentation they make for their infirmities; yea, in all they do in the world, it is nothing lower than heaven that they intend.

Perhaps you will by this time turn your judgment of them, as much as the barbarians did of Paul, Acts xxviii. 3. And as before you thought them too base, now you will say, that grace doth make them proud: but it is no such matter. Pride is the undue estimation of a man's self, and a desire of undue estimation from others; and it provoketh a man to seek after an unnecessary seeming greatness in the world, which tendeth to lay him as low as hell. But these high desires, and attempts, and expectations of the saints, are accompanied with a deep sense of their own undeservings: they confess beforehand that they are worthy of nothing, when they live in hope of all things; they acknowledge that hell is their desert, when they aspire after heaven. And when they come thither, they will confess it was not from their merit, but will for everlastingly glorify that grace that did bestow it. They lean in all their endeavours upon Christ, and never think to rise so high by any strength that is properly their own. They will readily confess, that they have nothing but what they received, and that it was God, and not themselves, that made them to differ; and therefore they dare not glory as if they received it not. When they have most, they most honour the Giver: and when they do best, they magnify him that quick-

ened and strengthened them; and say, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give the glory," Psal. cxv. 1. The more they have, the better they know whence they had it. And as their light increaseth, so doth it lead them further from themselves, and show them their natural darkness, and the glory of that sun from whence all flows. It is not impossible for a low spirit to have high designs; and for a man to lie in deep self-accusations, with strongest hope of an angelical glory. A man may look toward heaven that lieth flat on the earth, so that his back be towards it, and not his face. It is no pride to desire that which God made for us; nor to seek after any greatness, that he hath promised and offered, and commanded us to seek for. The sin of pride lieth not in the elevation, and aspiring after things so great; but in the undueness and error of it, and in the falseness of the estimation; unless when it comes to desire to be even as God. It is not pride, but spiritual wisdom, to desire to be like to God in holiness, and to bear his image, for that is our perfection. It is not pride, to be unsatisfied with all the greatness and glory of this world; and restlessly to seek after a heavenly kingdom, and to hope to be like the Son in glory, and to be equal with the angels of God, Luke xx. 36; for God hath made us for this, and set it before us, as the prize we run for, and given us an infallible promise of it in his word: God would not have us base, when he forbids us to be proud. His service dignifieth us, if any thing be a dignity. He would not have us to be such earth-worms, so poor, so miserable, so blind, so naked, as to take up with the trifles and dirt of the world; but would have us live like men that have souls which are immortal. Pride is the tympany of the soul, which consumeth the substance, and is a mortal disease: he loveth not our barrenness, nor is he against our substantial growth and nourishment, because he would cure us of this tympany that would kill us. It is wind and water, and not flesh and substance, that is the matter of this disease. So that, when God takes you down, it is that he may lift you up; and he makes you lesser, that he may make you greater. And if you should yet imagine that humiliation is an unlikely way to exaltation, the Spirit of God and the life of grace have taught the true convert the contrary by experience: he knows it is God's ordinary way to bring life out of death, and light out of darkness, and all things out of nothing, and to be glorified by weak things. He knoweth that Christ went by the cross unto the crown, and was nearest his glory when he was lowest in his humiliation; and so must he. For he that will be conformed to him in his glory must be conformed to him in his sufferings, Phil. iii. 10. We must suffer with him, that we may reign with him, Rom. viii. 17. The prison, and the stocks, and scourging, and scorns, were the preparation for the throne, that Paul and many another must undergo. The lark that soareth highest, and singeth as it were in the face of the sun, was bred under a clod, as low as any other bird.

Beloved hearers, I beseech you hear not these things as matters that concern you not, but as the true description of the heirs of heaven. Thus must it be with you if you will be saved. While you are unconverted, oh what stoutness and stubbornness is in the heart! How fain would men be somebody in the world! How ill do you take it to be lightly esteemed! You would think it a gallant thing, if you could but be greatest, and have all things done as you would have them, and all men beholden to you, and depend upon you, and you to be beholden to none, and to have men's knees bow to you, and

your word to be the law, and all men give you the pre-eminency; to have your name to be great and famous, and to be honoured by all. Oh what an excellent life were this in the eyes of a carnal man! But converting grace will bring you down, if God in mercy please to give it you. 2. It will make you call yourselves less than the least of all his mercies, Gen. xxxii. 10: "A worm and no man," Psal. xxii. 6: a wretched man, Rom. vii. 24. It will make you think yourselves unworthy to live; unworthy to come among the saints; unworthy to mention the name of God, or taste of his favour; and this not feignedly, but from your very hearts. It will make you marvel, that God should do so much for such a wretch as you; and that he had not damned you long ago. It will make confession of sin even natural to you, and make you lay your mouth in the dust, Lam. iii. 29. You will say worse of yourselves to God and man, than most others will say of you, and will the more easily bear all slights and reproaches, and unworthy usage from the world, because you know how ill you deserve of God, as having used him and his grace so ill. Instead of snuffing at those that observe you not, and honour you not, you will think yourselves unworthy to be observed, and think the dishonour less than your due. Instead of snuffing that any should go before you, or be preferred above you, you will be ready to stoop to the feet of the meanest for their good. You will esteem others, as far as reason will bear it, better than yourselves; and in honour prefer others before yourselves, Rom. xii. 10. Instead of lording it over your brethren, you will think it your greatness to be the servants of all, Matt. xx. 27; xxiii. 11.

It may be you will say, this is a strange person whom I now describe, and if there be no true converts but such as these, God help us all! for they are but few. I answer, this is the description that I find in the word; and be they few or many, it is these, and only these, that are the disciples that Christ will own. Isa. lvii. 15, "For thus saith the Lord, the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. lxvi. 2, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Matt. v. 3-5, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." Read the text that Christ preached on, Luke iv. 18. Rom. xii. 1, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." And Job xxii. 29, "He shall save the humble person." Luke xiv. 11, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be brought low." James iv. 6, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." I shall but trouble you to recite one half of the scriptures that speak in this strain, and assure us that there is no true grace and christianity without true humility. I confess there are several degrees of it in the sanctified, according to the several degrees of their sanctification, but it is predominant in them all.

Oh that the ambitious great ones of the world would lay this to heart! Oh that even all the leaders of Christ's flock, the preachers of humility, would lay this to heart! Then we should not have had the church so torn in pieces, by contending after precedence and pre-eminency, who should be lords, bishops, and above the rest; especially after such a check from Christ, as this text and divers others do contain. When his disciples strove who should be

the greatest, this is Christ's decision of the controversy. Not by telling them that Rome shall be the ruler of all other churches, and the other four patriarchs shall be next to it; and the bishop of the metropolis or greatest cities, shall rule those of the lesser cities, and these shall rule those that dwell in a village. No, Christ takes another course to decide the controversy, by setting before them a child, by telling them that the "kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority are called benefactors: but ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve," Luke xxii. 25, 26. One would think that the very thoughts of Christ's washing his disciples' feet, and saying to them, that thus they should do by one another, should shame proud ambition from among the preachers of such a gospel. Oh that our stubborn people also would remember this! that are too good to obey the word of the Lord; and too stout to be admonished, or come for instruction to their ministers; yea, or patiently to bear a reproof. All these persons, and many more, may call themselves christians as long as they will, but Christ that knows his sheep will not own them. Believe it, sirs, it is as impossible to be a true christian without true humility, as for a house to be without a foundation.

I have showed now what it is to become as little children, so far as is beyond controversy. But there is somewhat more that might be worth our inquiry, whether they were not baptized and purified children, as such, that Christ here intendeth, in whom even the root of pride is mortified? But this I will not presume to meddle with, because on this subject I would deliver you nothing but what among the godly is commonly agreed on. But this I may well say in general; that this text in part, and others more fully do tell us, that Christ did not look upon infants as at so great a distance from him as the anabaptists now do.

Sect. XXV.

III. Having done with the work of conversion on the judgment, and on the heart, the next thing to be done, is to show you the change that it makes on men's lives: for this must be looked after as well as the former. The same God that ruleth the heart, doth rule the life; and he that requireth the cleansing of the heart, doth require also the cleansing of the hands, James iv. 8. The soul commandeth the body, and the heart will dispose of the course of the life; if therefore the heart be changed, the life must needs be changed too. The root is for the fruit; and the life within, is much to enable us to action without. When God giveth us the root and life of grace and holiness, it is that we may bring forth the fruit, and do the works of grace and holiness. He makes not the new creature for nothing, or to be idle, much less to go on serving the devil; but he makes him for a new work, even to serve the living God, 1 Thess. i. 9. "For we are his workmanship, created to good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk therein," Eph. ii. 10. The excellency of his peculiar people, is "to be zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. A good heart and a good life are inseparable, as to the main; but the life may further outgo the heart, than the heart can outgo the life; for there may be a reformed life that is in many respects good, while the heart is bad: but the life is never worse than the heart; for there can be no evil of sin in this life, but what the heart is the proper cause of. "For out of the heart come murders, adulteries, theft, false-witnessing, blasphemy, and such like sins, which defile the man," Matt. xv.

18—20. It is therefore a vain boast of those men, that take on them to be converted, when they live as they did before: neither God nor any wise man will believe them, though they may thus deceive themselves. Seeing then there must be a new life, with a new heart, or no salvation, let us a little particularly inquire, wherein that newness of life doth consist.

1. The first and principal change of the life, consisteth in the covenant which the converted soul doth make with Christ. As this is principally in the heart, and so containeth faith and holy resolution, we have spoken of it before; but now I mention it as expressed with the tongue; for as with the heart we believe to righteousness, so with the mouth is confession made to salvation, Rom. x. 10. A resolved heart will have a resolved tongue; it will carry a man to express his resolution, as there is convenient opportunity, both to God and man. This covenant might be verbally entered before in the face of the congregation, in our baptism, by our parents, who are authorized by God in Scripture and nature to enter their children into it for their good; but if the heart did never truly own that covenant, when you come to the use of reason, you cannot expect to be saved by it. Your own covenant with Christ, when you come to age, is then as necessary to your salvation, as your covenant by your parent in baptism was before, to put you into that right which infants have by virtue of the promise; this covenant is the very bond and foundation of all the following obedience of your lives, when God hath opened the eyes of a sinner to see his great necessity of Christ, and the glory and felicity that he hath procured, and withal to see the universality and freeness of the promise; and that God doth call to him to consent to his terms, and accept the mercy freely offered. Converting grace doth move the heart to acceptance, and the tongue and life to make expression of it. There might be half-covenant, and false, hypocritical promises before, which for want of sincerity were soon broken, and come to nought; but conversion entereth us into a true, and firm, and durable covenant. When the poor sinner doth once understand that it is not long of God if he be shut out, and that Christ hath put in no bar of exception against him more than any other in the promise of pardon and salvation; and when he understandeth that God doth but stay for his consent, and all the stop is at his own will; and when he understandeth thoroughly what reason he hath to be willing, and how little there is to be said against it; then he doth set up his resolution, and give up himself in covenant unto God. It may be before he misunderstood the covenant, and thought that Christ was unwilling to show mercy to such a one that had done him so much wrong, and he doubted whether God would bid him welcome, if he should come home; but when he is better informed, he manifesteth his consent. God saith to him in the gospel, Sinner, wilt thou be mine? And he answereth, Yea, Lord, with all my heart; and glad that thou wilt accept of such a wretch as I. God saith to him in his gospel and by his ministers, Sinner, thou hast undone thyself, and art under my wrath and curse, I have redeemed thee by the blood of my dear Son; he hath bought thee and will save thee, if thou wilt be his; what sayest thou? Wilt thou heartily give up thyself to him to be saved? Shall he be thy Saviour and thy Lord? And the sinner answereth, Yea, Lord, with all my heart; nothing more welcome to me than Christ. It is Christ that my wounded soul doth want. It is he, and only he, that can save me: I will be his, and take him to be mine, and gladly make with him an

everlasting covenant. Before, though Christ were offered a thousand times, the stupid sinner laid it not to heart, and would not come to him that he might have life, John v. 40: but when he is drawn by the Father, and secretly illuminated and converted by his grace, then is he heartily glad of the match; he takes this as the day of marriage between Christ and him. Christ giveth up himself to the sinner, and the sinner giveth up himself to Christ. I know that the mere covenant of the lips alone, will prove no man to be heartily converted; but this in connexion with that of the heart will prove it. Have you been brought to this, beloved hearers; to do that by yourselves at age, which you did by your parents in baptism? Have you gladly taken Christ, as he is offered to you? And have you delivered up yourselves to him? I tell you, converting grace will bring you into covenant: this covenant is the very sum of all your change; all is contained in this one word, The making up the match between Christ and you. Yea, and it will make you, upon fit opportunity, even manifest this to others; and even glory in your Saviour, and be willing openly to confess him before the world, and let them know that you are in covenant with him.

(1.) And I must tell you in a word, that if this covenant be sincere, it will have these qualifications following. 1. It will be done in some competent measure of understanding and judgment: you will know what Christ is, and what he hath done, and what need you have of him, and how he is offered, and upon what terms he is to be received and made yours. For there can be no true covenant, when you are utterly ignorant of the very substance of the covenant. 2. If it be a true covenant, it must be entire, you must take that is offered you, and not only a part: you must yield to the terms of the covenant, and give up yourselves wholly to Christ again. It is not to take Christ to some uses, and not to others, as to justify and save you from hell, and not to sanctify or save you from sin. 3. You must do it resolutely and habitually, from a rooted habit and resolution of the very heart; and not from a sudden fear, or flash of conviction under a moving sermon, and, as many will do, in sickness and extremity, and then forget all, or grow cold again, and return to their vomit, when the fit is over: like those, Psal. lxxviii. 34—37, "When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God, and they remembered that God was their Rock, and the High God their Redeemer: nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues, for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." And ver. 10, "They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law." 4. If you covenant sincerely, it must be for a present return, and not only for the time that is to come. It must be from that day forward, without any more delay. It is not a true covenant, which excepteth but a day. 5. And if you truly covenant with Christ, you will do it unreservedly; yea, and resolve against all reservation. You will not secretly make exceptions, and say in your hearts, I will be the servant of Christ, if he would use me as I would have him, and deal easily with my flesh, and not destroy my worldly interest; I will follow him as far as the way is fair, and no further. No, but you will unreservedly give up yourselves to his dispose, and say, I am sure I cannot have Christ and life upon terms too hard. I am sure that however he deal with me, I can have no better master, nor can I take a better course; and if he do as hardly by me as ever he did by any of his servants, I know I shall be no loser by

him, nor ever have cause to repent of the bargain. And therefore I am resolved I will give up myself to him. He is wise, and just, and merciful, let him do with me as he will. This is the principal effect of true conversion, to bring the soul thus to close with God in Christ.

(2.) And in the same covenant, as the converted soul doth close with Christ, so doth it renounce all other competitors. Before he served another master, but now he understandeth it must be so no more. There is no serving God and mammon, the Spirit and the flesh. Christ and Satan are as unrequitable as light and darkness. It is the purpose of Christ to bring men from the captivity of Satan and of sin, Acts xxvi. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. He letteth the sinner know, that there is no hopes of joining these together: either the devil or Christ must be forsaken; either sin or mercy must be renounced. The word, and Spirit, and minister say to him, Thou seest, sinner, how the case standeth, God is resolved, he will not change. Never think of any other way; either let sin go, or let heaven go; take which thou wilt, and leave which thou wilt; but never think of keeping both. Hereupon the sinner lets go his sins, and renounceth the world, the flesh, the devil; and engageth himself that Christ alone shall be his Saviour and his Lord, and God alone his chiefest good. He will take the promised glory for his portion: and this is the other part of the covenant. At this one blow the root of every sin is destroyed; but principally, that which is the centre and sum of all the rest, and that is, self-love, and self-seeking. Every unconverted sinner liveth to himself, and is addicted principally to his carnal interest; and the main work that Christ hath to do upon the soul, is, to take down this carnal self. This is the great enemy that he bendeth his force against. And the subduing of this is his chiefest victory. This is the great idol of every unregenerate man, that must be taken down, or there is no salvation. The very nature of conversion, is, a turning from carnal self to God by Christ. This therefore is to be inquired after by all that would find this change upon themselves. And I beseech you, brethren, be very careful in this particular. For as this part of the work is of absolute necessity, so the interest of carnal self is very strong and deep-rooted, and exceeding much befriended by our nature. So that here is the main difficulty of all your work. O, it is no easy matter for a man unfeignedly to deny himself: it is a subtle enemy, that will keep much secret life and strength, when it seemeth to be overcome. And though you may think in an affliction, or time of humiliation, that self is brought very low; yet, when prosperity comes again, or when its interest lieth at the stake, and you are called either to costly duties or sufferings, you will then see better what strength your carnal self yet retaineth. Many a man hath gone far, and done much, and shamefully fallen away at the last, because they were never brought thoroughly to self-denial. It is the remaining interest of carnal self that leatheth some to fleshly lusts, and some to proud, ambitious ways, and some to drown themselves in the cares of this world, and so prove wretched hypocrites at the last. I do therefore as earnestly advise every soul of you to all possible care in this point, as I would do to any thing in the world. Whatever you do, be jealous of this sin. Fight neither against small nor great, but against this enemy, carnal self; and do not too easily believe that it is overcome. Conquer this and conquer all. This is the life and soul of all sins. The very use and end of all sin is flesh-pleasing. As he that hath right ends, hath done more than half his work for

his salvation, so he that keepeth up his fleshly ends is still a servant of the flesh, whatever he may do that seemeth to be for God. He that hath got the victory of this self, hath broke the heart of every sin. And in this fall of carnal self, there are three great master sins go down; 1. Pride. 2. Covetousness. 3. Voluptuousness. He that before was set upon the exalting of himself, is now set upon the glorifying of God. And he that lived to the world, and was a drudge for earth, is now employed for higher things; and he that must have his sports and pleasures, and fleshly ease, hath now learned to use his body as a servant, and no longer to suffer it to be the ruler of his soul. But of these I have spoken elsewhere, so that I will say no more of them now. Only this, that the destroying of these three sins, pride, covetousness, and voluptuousness, and in them carnal self, is one half of the work of true conversion; as the other half is the setting up of God, and the turning of the soul by Christ to him, and an unreserved dedication and resignation of ourselves to him.

Sect. XXVI.

2. When the sinner is thus engaged in covenant to God, the next thing that he doth, is, actually to forsake that sin which he hath renounced, and make good the covenant that even now he made. For it is not a false dissembling promise, that converted sinners make to God. There is no hold to take of another man's word. Before conversion, all promises come from so low a principle that they quickly vanish, and the heart of such a man is as changeable as the moon; but when they are converted, you shall see that they are men of their word, and did mean as they said, and were in good sadness with God, and that they are indeed fallen out with sin. They do not now think to put off the righteous God with words, and keep that sin which in their covenant they did renounce: no, they know that that would but bring greater wrath upon them, and cause God to deal with them as perjured covenant breakers, besides all the rest of their sins; and therefore the same grace that caused them to promise, causeth them to perform. Oh what a sudden change doth appear in the lives of such as these, when God hath thoroughly done his work! I know the work on the heart is the greatest work, but that is not seen so much by men, and therefore not so much admired. But the life is seen by others, and therefore it is a wonder in the eyes of the world many times, to see the change of a converted sinner: when they see, that he that lived in fleshly pleasures, doth now despise them, and hath no such mind of his former sports and delights! They marvel what aileth the man that he is so changed, when they hear him that was wont to curse and swear, and deride those that feared God, to lament now his wickednesses, to reprove others that do as he was wont to do, and warn them to take heed of going that way. People will marvel what hath befallen the man that hath made this alteration. They do not see what he hath seen, nor know the workings of the Spirit of God upon his soul. They know not how God hath been hammering his hard heart, and melting it, and forming it to this. They were not witnesses of the strivings and conflict in his spirit, which was between Christ and the flesh; and therefore when they see not the cause within, the change without will seem the stranger to them. And indeed it is a kind of miracle to see the effects of the power of Christ, and how suddenly oftentimes the change is made, that would never have been made by any other means. Take a man that hath only some light convictions, and a half-

repentance, and how long is he in making a half-reformation. If he were wont to swear or curse, or frequent ale-houses and vain company, he cannot suddenly leave it, but sometimes he restrains it a little, as if he were reformed, and sometimes he falls to it again, because he is not truly changed. But when he is converted indeed, you shall see him ordinarily leave all these sins even on a sudden. He that was wont to swear or curse, you shall never hear him do it again. He will flee from the places that before he delighted in. He is moved by a more effectual principle, and therefore will not stand trifling in the business. Grace makes a man know, that sin, and Satan, and the flesh are his deadly enemies, that seek the everlasting damnation of his soul, and therefore it is the less marvel, if he use them as enemies. If friends have weapons in their hands they will but play with them, but deadly enemies will seek the blood of one another. There is difference between fencing and fighting for life. Though a man that knoweth nothing of their meaning, might think a fencer is fighting in good sadness, seeing he seemeth to make as great a stir as if it were so indeed; yet the issue will show you, that it is otherwise, because you see that there is no blood shed, nor men killed. So is it with a hypocrite in his seeming reformation; when he makes the greatest stir against his sin in confessing and prayer, and other means, yet he will not resolutely cast it away, but he secretly useth it as his friend, while he openly abuseth it as his enemy; and he puts it into his bosom, while he calls it all to naught. He will not be brought unfeignedly to renounce it, and give it a bill of divorce, and cast it out as a man doth his vomit, with resolution never to take it in more. Oh how sweetly doth he roll it in his thoughts in secret, when he frowneth upon it with the severest countenance! How easily is he drawn to it again and again, when he takes on him to repent of it and abhor it! But it is clean contrary with a man that is converted. Though the remnants of sin will remain in him while he liveth, yet as to the reign of it, he presently casteth it off, and biddeth defiance to it. He fighteth against it in good earnest, as knowing that either he or it must die. He casteth it up as a loathsome vomit which he will not take into his stomach again; you shall quickly see by the course of his life, that his heart is changed. Before true conversion comes, what a stir have we with wretched sinners to leave a base lust! to forsake their drunkenness, or covetousness, or uncleanness, to leave their swearing and cursed speaking! and yet we cannot prevail with them; sometimes they will, and then again they will not; sometimes a flash of conviction lieth in their faces, and they are a little affrighted, and then they will presently repent and mend: but when the fit is over, you shall see that it is not a change of his disposition or nature; it was but a little falling out with their sin, which leaveth them faster friends when they are reconciled. But conversion maketh an unreconcilable enmity. Away goes former sinful customs and courses; away goes covetous practices, and wicked speeches, and proud fashions, and courses. As Sarah thrust out Hagar and Ishmael out of her house, and would receive them no more. If you have deadly enemies in your house, you will thrust out them and all that they have. If a man should sit in a dark room among snakes and toads, and think verily that there were no such matter, but he were in his bed-chamber, you might persuade him long enough to come away, and tell him of the danger; but he will not stir, but laugh at you, because he doth not believe you. But if you come into the room with a light, and he see

them crawling all about him, and making at him, then you need not another word to bid him be gone; he is quickly up, and leaveth them with abhorrence. We tell unconverted sinners of the hateful-ness of sin, and the danger that they are in, and pray them to leave it, but they believe us not, and do but laugh at it; but when the Spirit of God bringeth in the light, and they see all this with their own eyes, that it is even worse than ever we made it, then away goes their sins without any more ado. Like a child that hath a fine yellow crab which he taketh for an apple, he will not part with it, nor let you take it from him; but when he hath set his teeth in it once, and tasted it, he will throw it away without any more ado. If such a foolish child be playing with a nettle, while he taketh it for a common herb, he is bold with it, but when he feels the sting, he throweth it away; or if he be playing about a nest of wasps or bees, while he takes them to be but harmless flies, you cannot call him away, but when once they have stung him, he cries and runs away of himself, without another word. Even so is it with a poor sinner about his sins before conversion. We pray him to come away, and tell him that sin hath a sting, and a deadly sting, and assure him from the word of God that it will be bitterness in the latter end, and he makes no great matter of our words, but can hear us as if we came into the pulpit to tell him a tale, and not to save his soul from hell. And therefore he can go on in his old way for all this, and take his cups, or follow the world and his fleshly lusts, and give the preacher leave to talk. But when converting grace comes, it makes them taste the bitterness and sourness of sin, and then they quickly spit it out. It makes them feel the sting and smart, and then they cry to God for help, and wish they had never known it, and run away from it with detestation. Grace bringeth in that light from God, which shows them that which they did not see before; how that all this while they have had a multitude of crawling serpents in their bosom, and they have been playing even at the brink of hell. And when they see this with their own eyes, it is time for them to take another course.

If you doubt of all this that I say, whether conversion doth make a man thus cast away his sin, while the hypocrite stands dallying with it, and cannot leave it, look into the example of all true converts. Or if that do not satisfy you, look into the infallible word of God. How eagerly was Saul going on in his persecution, till the light from heaven did stop his course, and the voice and grace of Christ did change his mind! Acts ix. But do you read ever Paul did persecute any more? or doth he delay and take time to consider of the matter before he would leave his former sin? No; but he presently forbears, and betakes himself to another course. And, Tit. iii. 3—5, when he confessed the former sinful course of himself and others, he telleth you now how the matter is mended. And no marvel; for the man that liveth in his former sinful way, can never be saved, whatever change of the heart he may pretend. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revellers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. Now you see that conversion makes an effectual change of the life. Ye were such; but now it

is not so, ye are washed, ye are sanctified by the Spirit of God. And Isa. xxx. 22, when God mentioneth the conversion of these people, he saith concerning their former sins, "Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say to it, Get thee hence." With what detestation will a converted sinner say to his former sin, Get thee hence! It is by thee that I have suffered, and had like to have been undone for ever. It is by thee that I have so much wronged God, and therefore, away with thee, get thee hence. So in Isa. xxxi. 6, 7, "Turn ye unto him, from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted; for in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made you for a sin." And the description of conversion runs thus, Ezek. xviii. 31, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed against me, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will you die, O ye house of Israel?" And Ezek. xx. 7, God commandeth them, "Cast ye away every man the abomination of his eyes;" and ver. 8, "They rebelled, and did not cast away every man the abomination of his eyes." Rom. xiii. 12, 13, "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light: let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying." Isa. i. 16, 17, "Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well." Isa. lv. 6, 7, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Jer. xxvi. 13, "Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God, and he will repent him of the evil." A hundred more such passages may be cited, wherein it is most evident, that there is no true conversion of the heart, if the sin of the life be not also cast away.

If any will here desire to be curious, and to know just how much conquest the least degree of grace doth make, and how much actual sins may stand with sincerity of grace? or if any will imagine, that because there is actual sin in the converted, that, therefore, there is no discernible difference between their reformation and other men's; I answer them as followeth. 1. A strong degree of grace is easily known by him that hath it, by the thorough reformation both of heart and life. 2. The weakest degree of grace is not ordinarily known, and therefore you cannot expect that I should make it known. For he that hath so little grace as to sin as much as will stand with true grace, shall scarce ever know that he hath any true grace at all in that condition. He is not fit for such a condition, nor would it do him good till he were fitter for it. 3. There is no change of the life that will discover sincerity certainly to others, nor to themselves considered alone, without the change of the heart; but there is a wickedness of the life that will prove a wickedness of the heart even unto others; much more to men themselves, who may know both immediately. 4. By this one mark you may know whether the sins of your lives, be they great or small, are certain proofs of an unconverted, graceless heart or not. In every true converted man, the main bent of his heart and life is against sin, and his chief desire and endeavour is to destroy it; but in others it is not so. Whatsoever kind of sinning therefore will not stand with such a bent of heart and life, with such a desire and endeavour, will prove that man to be grace-

less or unconverted that doth commit it. Now how far a man's sin is with or against the main predominant bent of his own heart and life, he may discern himself by diligent observation.

Sect. XXVII.

3. I have hitherto spoke only of sins of commission, which are cast away when the soul is changed. The next part of the reformation of the life is in point of duty. A converted soul hath presently another work to do. As he hath set his heart upon another end, and looketh after another portion and inheritance; so hath he other means to use, which are suitable to the nature of the end which is to be obtained. A heavenly felicity is not gotten by earthly means. "Learning to do well," therefore, is ever joined with "ceasing to do evil," Isa. i. 17. "Seeking the Lord while he may be found, and calling on him while he is near," is joined with "forsaking wicked ways," Isa. lv. 6. He that is "turned from the power of Satan, is turned to God," Acts xxvi. 18. Before conversion the wretched sinner had no pleasure in God, and therefore no pleasure in his service; and therefore was seldom, and cold, and careless in it; and gave God nothing but the leavings of the world and the flesh, and what he could spare; and put him off with some formal, superficial, cheap kind of service that would cost him but little. But when converting grace hath made a change, as God is his delight, so is his work and worship. He sees a world of work before him, which they made no conscience of before. As I told you of Paul, Acts ix. 11, he falls a praying as soon as he is converted; and from praying, he proceeds to the preaching of that gospel which he persecuted before. It made the people wonder to see him that had been persecuting all that called upon the name of Jesus, but a little before, to preach for them a little after, Acts ix. 20, 21. The text saith, "All that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name at Jerusalem, and came hither to that intent, to bring them bound to the chief priests?" So is it to this day; when a poor sinner that was wont to mock at a holy life, and never was used to call upon God, or at least but heartlessly, and with the lips; that made no conscience of praying in his family, or instructing them, or holy spending the Lord's day, shall now be as diligent in these as any; when the Bible is in his hands, or other good books, that had rather before have had a pack of cards, or dice, or worldly business; when a man that was wont to set light by these things, is now set upon them, and cannot live without them; this makes the world about him amazed, and say, Is not this he that scorned sermons, who now followeth after sermons? Is not this he that was against these things as much as any, that now is set so much upon them? I know a man that is unconverted, may be much in the use of means, but here is the difference; to a converted man, the obedience of God is his chiefest work and business, to which all other things are made to stoop; but to the unconverted, the work of the flesh and world is the chief, and the service of God must stoop to that. Sirs, if any of you dream that you are converted, and yet will not be brought to the works of obedience, both in holiness to God and righteousness to men, you do but wilfully deceive yourselves. Do you think a man can love God above all, as every true christian doth, and not seek him above all? or that a man can have a heavenly heart, and not have a heavenly life? It cannot be. If you had rather sit at home, when you should be attending upon God in the public assembly, or

enjoying private helps for your souls; or are cumbered about many things, when you should be looking after the one thing necessary; it is a sign that you have not chosen the better part: whenever the heart is changed to God, the main bent of the life will presently consist in the seeking of God.

Sect. XXVIII.

4. A new heart will have a new tongue. The fruit of it will appear in the scope of a man's discourse; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Matt. xii. 34. I know a man may force his words, and therefore I still say to you, that these proofs from the outward actions, are stronger for the negative than the affirmative. An evil tongue will prove an evil heart, but to prove a man sincere there must be both heart and tongue. But certain it is, that though words may be counterfeit, yet true conversion doth always change the speech, and make the tongue also serviceable to those higher ends, which the heart is newly set upon. He that before had no mind to speak of any thing but earthly and fleshly matters, is now inquiring after other matters. The first words that we read of the converted Jews, Acts ii. 37, and the converted jailor, Acts xvi. and Paul, when he was converted, Acts ix. were, what God would have them do that they might be saved. Before, the very discourse of sin, and grace, and Christ, and the life to come, were a trouble to them, but now it is otherwise. They know they have their tongues for no greater use, nor can they better employ them, than in seeking direction for their everlasting happiness. Now, if you mark them in the company that they come into, if they have any fit opportunity, they are lamenting their former sinful life, or warning others to avoid the way that they were led into, or telling men of the evil of sin, and the need of Christ and grace, or asking help of those that can help them; how to search their hearts; how to overcome the remnant of their sins; and how to carry on the work of God that they may be ready for death and judgment, and get safe to heaven. You that are carnal, do wonder that men speak so much of these things, and you are weary to hear them, but you know not the change that is made upon their hearts. Can you blame a man to talk of his everlasting condition, and of that which is of greater moment than all the matters of the world? Can you blame a man to talk most of that which he mindeth most, and which his very heart is set upon? If his tongue be of heaven, while his heart is on earth, then he is a hypocrite: but would you not have a man's tongue to follow his heart, when his heart is right? Yet some men are so perverse, and so against the things of God, that they are ready to say, Why cannot they keep their faith or religion to themselves? Cannot they be religious in secret, without talking of it so much to others? As if the heart only were made for God, and the tongue for the world, the flesh, or the devil. As if a man should talk of nothing but the childish toys and trifles of the world, for fear of seeming a hypocrite, or for fear of troubling these queazy souls. Shall the Holy Ghost make such a change on the heart of a sinner, and shall not the tongue partake of it, or express it? Can Christ and his Spirit dwell in the heart, and the tongue conceal so blessed an inhabitant? Can a man have a taste of heaven upon his heart, and the kingdom of God begun within him, and yet not express his life or joy? or is it meet for him that hath found the way to heaven, to hold his tongue, and let others quietly post to hell? Should a man that hath narrowly escaped damnation, himself be silent, when he seeth others go in the same way that he had like to

have perished in? Who will not call to another to take heed, that hath escaped a quicksand himself? or set up a bush, that those that follow may see the danger? Is it not a strange conceit of these men, that would have the converted so cruel to all that are yet unconverted; so unthankful to God that hath mercifully delivered them; so senseless of matters of the greatest weight, and so serviceable to Satan the great deceiver, as to say nothing of such unspeakable things as these? What! have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, and say nothing of it? have the pardon of sin in the blood of Christ, and say nothing of it? What! see many hundred souls in danger of damnation, and say nothing, but let them perish? It cannot be; it must not be; it is a most unreasonable thing to desire it. Our tongue is our glory, it is the principal instrument of manifesting our mind, by which man differeth from all other inferior creatures: and should we not use it for God and the greatest things? What sottish people are these to think their worldly matters fit for their discourse, and the matters of everlasting life unfit! To think it no harm to jest and talk foolishly and tell idle tales, and such a man they take for a pleasant companion, and never find fault with him; but for the things that may honour God, or tend to men's salvation, or to destroy sin and cross the devil, here we must be silent, and keep our religion to ourselves. Did ever these wretches believe Jesus Christ, "that by their words they shall be justified, and by their words they shall be condemned?" Matt. xii. 37. Did they ever believe or regard the words of the Holy Ghost? Eph. v. 3, 4. "But fornication, uncleanness or lasciviousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jestings, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks." And Eph. iv. 29, 30, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth; but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers; and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another," Col. iii. 16. "Exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," Heb. iii. 13. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God, that God in all things may be glorified," 1 Pet. iv. 11. Abundance of such passages are in Scripture, which may tell you what to think of the folly of such carnal men; and may assure you that a converted, heavenly heart, will always have a new and heavenly tongue.

Sect. XXIX.

5. A changed heart will have change of company, if it may be had. There is somewhat in nature that disposeth all men to delight in that company which is most suitable to their disposition. While their hearts are carnal, they love the company of such; a man that is of their mind and way, and will break a jest, and be merry with them, or talk with them about their worldly matters, is the best companion for them: for the company of mortified and heavenly men, they have no pleasure in it. They do but mar their mirth with putting in words about the evil of sin, and death, and judgment, and everlasting things; they do but trouble them, and cast them into dumps, and therefore they have no mind to their company. But when converting grace hath changed them, their minds in this are changed also. Oh how sapless and unsavoury then is it to them to sit or walk in the company of such that have never a word of God, or that may help them in the matters that their hearts are set upon! Their merry talk, and fine discourse, is

to him but as the crackling of thorns in the fire, Eccl. vii. 6. It doth but trouble him, and move him to compassionate such empty souls that have no God, no Christ, no heaven to talk of, but mere unprofitable trifles; but the company of those is sweet to him, that will discourse about the matters of his salvation; that will tell him how he may get more grace, and open to him more the mysteries of the gospel, and speak of the riches of God's love in Christ, or tell him of the dangers that are yet before him, or the duties that he must perform. These matters are now savoury to him, for these he knows do indeed concern him, and are worth the talking of. When a man is in a strange country a thousand miles off, it doth him good to meet with his own countrymen, and talk with them about his friends, and family, and his estate, and inheritance, and home, which he must return to; one hour of this discourse is sweeter to him, than a hundred with the strangers of the country, about matters that are little to him: so is it here; a christian that knoweth he is a stranger in this world, and that his God, his salvation, his home, his inheritance are all in the world to come; had rather far discourse with a heavenly-minded man about his Father, and everlasting works and blessedness, than with worldly men about this world. Who loveth not the company of his dearest friends and brethren more than of strangers or enemies? We know, those that fear God are like to be our companions for ever, and therefore we would have them our companions here. You may see by Scripture that it is thus with true christians. "In his eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear God," Psal. xv. 4. "They take sweet counsel together, and walk to the house of God in company," Psal. lv. 14. "They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another," &c. Mal. iii. 16, "I am a companion," saith David, "of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts," Psal. cxix. 63. And it is one of the Hebrews' commendations, that they "became companions of them that suffered for Christ," Heb. x. 33. And on the contrary side, it was feigned to be one of Job's iniquities, to go in company with the workers of iniquity, Job xxxiv. 8. For men are supposed to be such as their company is; and we are commanded, with such, no, not to eat, 1 Cor. v. 11; and "to have no company with them, that they may be ashamed," 2 Thess. iii. 14. And Solomon saith, "A companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 20.

Sect. XXX.

6. Another part of the change of the life is this, true conversion makes a man compassionate to those that are unconverted, and very desirous of their conversion, and therefore sets men upon such endeavours as they can use to bring it to pass; yea, it makes men zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 19, and very careful and studious to do what good they can. It is the disposition of wicked men to draw others with them into wickedness, and to make others as bad as themselves: "They not only do that which is evil, but have pleasure in them that do it," Rom. i. 32. They would have others as loose as they, and as careless of their own souls as they, and to make as light a matter of sin as they do. The drunkard would have companions, and the gamester would have companions; every one that hates and derides a godly life, would have all others do so too. Men are loth to go to hell alone; but, like men that are running violently down a hill, they draw one another with them. It somewhat comforts them to see most of the world as bad as themselves, because they think then God will not condemn so many: as if the num-

ber of sinners did extenuate the wrong. And those unconverted men that are not so bad as to wish others as bad as themselves, yet have little zeal for men's recovery: for how can they love other men better than themselves?

But when conversion hath given a man a sight and sense of the evil of sin, it makes him pity all that are misled, and earnestly desire their conversion and recovery. Oh how fain would the gracious soul have others to see the folly of sin, as he hath seen it! How fain would he have them see the need of Christ, that glory above, that felicity that lieth in the favour of God, as he hath seen them! It doth him good to have companions in good: he hath no mind to be happy alone. The number of partakers he knows will not at all diminish his joys. If he could tell how, he would have all the world to be as happy as himself, the more the better. And therefore he prayeth heartily for the conversion of other men: he pleadeth with them, and persuadeth them; and fain he would have their eyes to be opened, and their hearts to be softened and turned to God. He remembereth that their case was once his own, and how foolish and froward he was, even as they now are! He remembereth how miserable he then was, though he knew it not, and would not for all the world be in the same case again; and therefore he cannot choose but pity those that he hath left behind him; and long for their deliverance.

Truly, sinners, it is from hence that men fearing God do trouble you so much in your sins, and make such a stir with you about matters of your souls; and tell you of your danger, and persuade you to turn, and take another course: it is because they are loth to see you perish, if they could help it. You would have them let you alone, but they are loth to let you alone, in such a case and way as that. If some that are running to drown themselves, or do any mischief to themselves, should bid you let them alone, and meddle with yourselves, and take no care for them, you would not let them alone for all that, but would hinder them if you could from making away with themselves. So, if you are angry with men that would keep you out of hell, and bid them let you alone, and take no care for you, because you shall answer for yourselves, this will not satisfy them to stand still, and see you run into damnation, if they knew how to help it. Alas! it is not because they love to be meddling with other folks' matters, or take pleasure in reproving and controlling other men. If it were not for your sakes and the glory of God, it is easier for us to let you alone. We have work enough of our own to do, and dangers enough of our own to prevent. It is small pleasure to any man that is well in his wits to meddle needlessly with other men's matters, and to contradict wilful sinners, when he knows how little thanks he is like to have for it. What! do you think we long to have men hate us and fly in our faces? Is it a pleasure to us to vex men, and make them our enemies? No. Alas! it is so great a displeasure, that it becomes a strong temptation to us to be unfaithful or negligent in our duty. Many a minister is so loth to get the ill will of his people, that he lets them alone in their sins, or only telleth them of it in public, or at the most but in an easy, ineffectual way, and so falls in danger of perishing with them for company. Nothing makes more negligent, unconscionable ministers, (next to the unfaithfulness of their own hearts,) than people's hating their instructions and reproofs, and impatient bearing the means that should recover them. Carnal ministers will not cast themselves upon the people's displeasure, but rather let them alone and venture them. They that dare ven-

ture their own souls to escape the ill will of men, will venture other men's too. And so it is also with private christians. The reason why so few will be brought to deal plainly and faithfully for the saving of others, is because it is commonly so ill taken. Alas! sinners, what ease, what profit, what good is it, think you, to other men to trouble you in your sins, if it were not for your good, and for the command and glory of God? But what man that is not a tiger, or hath not a heart of stone within him, can see men within a little of damnation, let them alone? Who can be so cruel as to hold his tongue, while he seeth men in the highway to hell? If we were yet in our unbelief, and did not believe that the word of God is true, or that unconverted men shall certainly perish, then we might well be silent; for who would go to make men sad with melancholy fancies or fearful dreams that have no truth in them? But oh! do not blame a man that hath been in the same condition himself, and is mercifully delivered by converting grace, if he look back to those he hath left behind, and tell them of their danger! Do not blame a man that hath his eyes opened by faith, and seeth hell-fire a little before you, if he should call to you, and call again, and call with tears and greatest earnestness, to entreat you to stop and go no further. I dare say, if you did see what he seeth, you would be of the same mind, and would be as loth to go on in an unconverted condition, as any one would be to suffer you. When the eyes of sinners are shut that they see not their own condition, nor what a storm is rising in heaven against them, they are content and quiet at the gates of hell! But when either grace or torments have opened their eyes, the case will be quite changed with them. Well, this is certain, that whenever God converteth the soul, he maketh men very desirous of other men's conversion, and very compassionate to them that are yet in darkness and in bondage by their sins. Not only Paul and the preachers of the gospel say, "Necessity is laid upon me, and woe unto me if I preach not the gospel!" but every christian in his place doth find a necessity upon him to endeavour the good of others; and he findeth an earnest desire to it, and a delight in that which God hath made so necessary. And it is not in this matter of conversion only, but in all other things also, that a true christian hath a special inclination to do good. As he that is evil, delighteth to do evil; so he that is good, delighteth to do good. Though he be not perfectly good, for so is none till he come to heaven; much less primitively, and of himself good, for so there is none good but God, Matt. xix. 17: yet hath he a derived, an imperfect goodness, and in that measure as he is good, he must needs be prone to do good; for every thing will work according to its nature. It is a death to wicked men to do that which is a godly man's delight. A man or beast cannot fly in the air, but a bird can do it as easily as we can walk on the earth. A good man is never in his own element, but when he is doing some good. His mind runneth on it; he studieth how he may effect it; and he is not content to do good, unless he do much good. He knoweth what Christ hath said; "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit," John xv. 8. He findeth by experience that which others will not believe, that doing good is either a receiving of good, or inseparably conjunct with it. The more a man giveth to the poor or to other good uses, with right intents, the more he receiveth. Whatever others receive by his endeavours, he is sure that he shall not lose his labour or cost, as to himself. "He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord;" and look what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again. A

carnal man is ever selfish, and draws all to him, as if there were no one but himself that he cared for; but a gracious man is in his place and measure like God, a communicative good. As "God is good and doth good," Psal. cxix. 68, so is he. That which a man's nature inclineth him to, he cannot forget. A good man forgets not in the main to do good, for he knoweth that with such sacrifice God is well pleased, Heb. xiii. 16. Mark this, all you that profess more zeal for God than others; believe it, true conversion will appear in good works. The true servants of Christ do as much exceed the world in a contempt of earthly things, and in compassion to the miserable, and in readiness and bounty, according to their ability, to those that want, as they do exceed them in praying, or other duties. Other men part with the world as their treasure, and almost as their blood, but the heavenly christian parteth with it as his superfluity, or at least as that which he can spare. Faith teacheth men to do good; and good works are part of the riches of a saint, 1 Tim. vi. 18. Doing good is so excellent and necessary a thing, that even an enemy must be made partaker of it, Matt. v. 44. And want of thankfulness or requital from men, is no excuse to them that neglect it, Luke vi. 35. Some works of piety may be forborne for doing good to others, Mark iii. 4.

So much for that part of the change.

CHAPTER II.

SECT. I.

I HAVE spoken of the work of conversion, as it containeth the change of the judgment, and of the heart, and of the life, and so have finished the second particular promised; which was to show you what conversion is, and wherein it doth consist. By what is said, you may easily see that it is a great change that is made on the soul and in the life, by this renewing grace of Christ. Methinks now all those men that know, or may know, that never such a work was wrought upon their hearts, should see that it is time to look about them, and to lay to heart the sad conclusion, which Christ hath here protested in my text. What! have all the people of this congregation found all this change upon judgment, heart, and life, as I have here spoken of? Oh that it were so well. What a joy were that to us, to angels, to Christ himself! And what everlasting joy would that be to themselves! But, alas! their conversations and careless lives do tell us, that with too many of them it is far otherwise. And what keepeth such guilty souls in peace? Can so many men hear such a text as this, that except they be converted they cannot be saved, and yet not look about them, nor be awakened from their security? Yet it is too evident by sad experience, that they that read this, and know, or might know, that they are not converted, are yet as careless as if they could endure damnation well enough. And what is the matter? And how comes this to pass? Doubtless, because they do not thoroughly believe the truth of what is said.

III. I shall therefore come now to the next thing promised; briefly to show you from the word of God the certain truth of what we have in hand, that you may see it is a matter past all doubt and question.

I. And first, What need you any more than the very words of the text? Do you need further proof, where you have the words of Christ himself? But

you shall see yet more. John iii. 3, he telleth Nicodemus, "That except a man be regenerate and born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;" that is, as a child is as it were a new creature that lately received life, which had none before, and newly entereth into the world; so must every man that will be saved, as it were receive a new spiritual life, and enter into the world of grace, even into the church of God, and begin his life as it were again: 2 Cor. v. 17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." See here both the necessity and the nature of this change. It is not one or two, but every man that is in Christ, that is thus converted. And he that is not in Christ is not a christian, and he that is not a christian cannot be saved. Every true christian then is a new creature; not in substance, but in quality and in life; "old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new!" What are these all things, but those that I have before expressed to you? A true converted man hath not the same ends and intentions that he had before; he hath a new hope and happiness, new love, new desires, new sorrow, new delight, new resolution, and new conversation; all is become new. He entereth a new covenant with Christ, and so he hath a new Master, new Head, and Husband, and Lord; and is now a member of a new society, and entered into a new kingdom and family. He hath a new work to do, he hath new company to converse with, he hath new thoughts in his heart, and speaks a new language. He leadeth his life by a new law: and thus all things are become new. Even relations are here included, as well as physical qualifications. For he hath a new Father, a new inheritance, and so of the rest. It must needs be a great change indeed, where all things are become new. If it were but one or two of these, it would make a great alteration; much more when it is in all. So in 1 Pet. ii. 2, the apostle likeneth them to "new-born babes, who must therefore desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may live and grow by it." And in Gal. vi. 15, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." The world must be crucified to us, and we to the world, that we may live anew to God, ver. 14. And I told you before out of Eph. iv. 22—24, that in conversion we "put off the old man, which according to the deceitful lusts is corrupt; and are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And Tit. iii. 5, "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he sheddeth on us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." So Col. iii. 10, "We put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created us." Ezek. xviii. 31, he commandeth them to "make them a new heart, and a new spirit." And what he commandeth all, he declareth himself resolved to give to his elect. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put into you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." So in Ezek. xi. 19, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them, and they shall be

my people, and I will be their God." And as they are new creatures, so they have a new commandment or law to live by; and a new promise or covenant for their inheritance, John xiii. 34; Luke xxii. 20; 2 Cor. iii. 6; Heb. ix. 15. They have a "new name, that no man knoweth but he that hath it," Rev. ii. 17; or at least they shall have. They have "new employments, even serving God in newness of life, that as they were planted together in the likeness of Christ's death, they should be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that their old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, and henceforth they should not serve sin. For he that is dead is justified or freed from sin," Rom. vi. 4-7. And thus they "serve God in newness of spirit," Rom. vii. 6. And so the whole church is "one new man in Christ," Eph. ii. 15. And a "new lump that is purged from the old leaven," must all particular churches of christians be, 1 Cor. v. 7. But lest any doubt should be left, I will reduce the rest to some particular arguments.

1. It is the very office of Jesus Christ, which he came into the world to perform, to bring back ungodly sinners unto God. And shall we think that Christ came on a needless errand? Believe it, sirs, as his suffering was necessary for our ransom, so was his doctrine and Spirit as necessary for our conversion, and we can no more be saved without the one than without the other. Think with yourselves whether it be a likely thing, that God should send his Son on earth by a miracle, surpassing all miracles, and this on purpose to call home straying sinful souls, if they might be saved without conversion? If it had been possible for men to be happy without holiness, and to escape misery without escaping sin, what need Christ have come to sanctify them? The Lord Jesus is the great Physician of souls, and he comes not to heal any petty diseases, that might as well have been healed without him; but he comes to cure a killing plague, that no one else could have cured but himself. It was never the mind of Christ to come down from heaven to suffer for our sins, that we might be saved in them without a change. Never did it enter into his holy thoughts, to bring men to glory in their sins; but to destroy their sins that would keep them out of glory. He never meant to bring you and your disease to heaven together; but to heal your disease, that else would be your ruin. What shall we think, that Christ came to impute a righteousness to the impenitent and unconverted? and to make God believe that they are just in him, who are not in him at all? and to make men seem to be what they are not? Why, this were to fain the blessed Son of God to be the patron of iniquity, and to die for the upholding of sin, and not for the destroying of it. What greater blasphemy against Christ can there be, than to imagine that he befriendeth sin, which he doth so hate? and that he taketh part with Satan, and strengtheneth his kingdom, when it was his very business in the world to destroy it, and his works? 1 John iii. 8. What! must Christ come, and so miraculously condescend and do and suffer what he did, and all to heal diseased souls, and kill that sin that else would kill them, and after all this, shall he be made the patron of it? Take this home with thee to thy heart, unconverted sinner, whoever thou art. If men could have been saved without conversion, Christ would never have done so much to convert them as he hath done. You comfort yourselves in Christ, while you live in wilful sinning; and you think that though you be not renewed, yet you shall be pardoned and saved by his blood shed. Why, I tell you from the word of God, you may fetch much terror from the thoughts of

Christ; but hope of salvation without conversion he will afford you none. You may rather think with yourselves, that if the changing of a sinner had not been a work of great necessity, Christ would never have come down to do it. I know that we have free pardon of sin by his blood, or else we had no hope; but it is none but the converted that partake of that pardon, as you may see, Mark iv. 12, "Lest at any time they be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." So Acts xxvi. 18; iii. 19, "Repent ye therefore, that your sins may be blotted out." If you had but that one chapter, Luke xv. to tell you in what manner Christ doth save men, you might easily see, it is not by bringing them to heaven in their ungodliness. He likeneth himself to one that having lost a sheep in the wilderness, goeth and seeketh after it, till he find it. And when he hath found it, (what, doth he leave it? no, but) layeth it on his shoulders, and bringeth it home rejoicing, ver. 4, 5. Or like one that sweepeth the house to find a piece of silver that was lost, ver. 8. Or like the father that gladly receiveth the returning prodigal. But without returning, there had been no receiving him, nor any rejoicing over him.

Object. But doth not Christ tell us of some that needed no repentance? ver. 7. *Ans.* True; why is that? Because they had truly repented before. They needed no conversion, or such conversion as the new converts have, which consists in a change from a state of sin to God; but only a proceeding in obedience, and particular repentance for their particular slips. But if they had not been converted before, they would have needed such a conversion or repentance. For so the prophet saith, Isa. liii. 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way." And so 1 Pet. ii. 25, "For ye were as sheep going astray, but are returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." Or if there be any that were sanctified in their infancy, as no doubt there is, so that their actual going astray was prevented; yet as they went astray in Adam and their parents, so had they a straying disposition in their corrupted natures, which needeth a turn, as well as the sins which appear in the life. And thus it appeareth that Christ came of purpose to convert men, and not to pardon any soul without conversion. Luke xix. 10, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Tit. ii. 14, "Who gave himself for us (not to pardon us, and to save without converting us, but) to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." So that hence you may see the absolute necessity of conversion to salvation.

2. It is the very drift of the gospel, and main design of the whole word of God, to convert men from sin to God, and build them up when they are once converted. And do you think that God would have made it the scope of his word, if it had not been necessary? If a man could be saved without conversion, what need God to inspire prophets and apostles to deliver his word to the world, and to seal it with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, and all to convert men, and build up the converted? Would God make all this stir with us, as he doth in the Bible, for a needless thing? Alas! if he did not know that your disease will kill you except it be cured, he would never have prepared so many remedies against it. This is the very use and glory of the law of God. Psal. xix. 7, "The law of God is pure, converting the soul." What else doth Scripture call sinners to, but to repent and turn to God by Christ. Ezek. xxxiii. 11, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but

that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel." Ezek. xviii. 21, "But if the wicked shall turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die." Ver. 23, "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live?" Ver. 30—32, "Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." So Ezek. xiv. 6; iii. 18—21; Isa. xxxi. 6; lix. 20, 21; Jer. iii. 7, 14; xviii. 8; xxvi. 3. Prov. i. 23, "Turn ye at my reproofs, and I will pour out my Spirit unto you." Hos. v. 4; xii. 6. Joel ii. 12, 13, "Turn ye to me with all your hearts, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God." Jonah iii. 8. A hundred such places might be brought, in which it is apparent, that the turning of sinners to God, is the main scope of the holy Scriptures.

3. It is as certain, that it is the very business that the ministers of the gospel are appointed to, to convert men to God by the faith of Jesus Christ. And is it likely that God would send us to trouble the world with a needless work? For my part, if I did not know that repentance and conversion are absolutely necessary to the glory of God's grace and saving of the sinner, I should be loth to trouble myself and others so much about such matters as I do. Who could find in his heart to study, and preach, and weary himself, and vex the world, and call men to such unwelcome duties, and preach to them such unpleasant truths, and set them upon works that are so hard to flesh and blood, and put them upon so many sufferings in the world, if all this were for a needless thing? John Baptist began to preach repentance. Christ followed him in preaching repentance, and tells them, "except they repent, they shall all perish," Luke xiii. 3, 5. The apostles follow him in preaching the same repentance, as that without which there is no salvation, Acts ii. 38; viii. 22. They tell us, "God commandeth all men every where to repent," Acts xvii. 30. Paul's business was, "to show all men that they must repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance," Acts xxvi. 20: and "to open men's eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and the power of Satan to God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified by faith in Christ," ver. 18. As Christ himself came to "call sinners to repentance," Matt. ix. 13; so doth he send his ministers on the same errand: and after all his sufferings, he will give men pardon on no other terms; but "repentance and remission of sins must be preached in his name among all nations," Luke xxiv. 46, 47. Mark the way of gospel preaching and salvation. Acts v. 30, 31, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins:" repentance in order before forgiveness. When men turn from sin, God turneth from his punishing wrath; but not before. Acts xi. 18, God hath "granted to the gentiles repentance unto life." The sum of Paul's doctrine was, "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," Acts xx. 21. For this do God's minis-

ters "instruct in meekness them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26: and 2 Pet. iii. 9, it is said, that "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" which plainly implieth, that if they come not to repentance, they must perish for all that. And therefore repentance is one of the fundamentals, and preaching repentance is laying the foundation, as appeareth, Heb. vi. 1. And he that is grown incurable and remediless by apostasy, is said to be one that "cannot be renewed by repentance," Heb. vi. 6; which supposeth that there can be no other way of renewing. And a desperate man is one that findeth no place for repentance, Heb. xii. 17. And in the godly, all the fruits of holiness are made the "fruits of repentance," 2 Cor. vii. 9—11.

4. The very providence of God in mercy and affliction, are purposely to bring sinners to repentance. And therefore, certainly, repentance is necessary to salvation. Rom. ii. 4, 5, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Rev. ix. 20; xvi. 9, 11. If conversion were not necessary to salvation, God would not make so much ado by affliction and mercy to bring us to it.

5. God makes it the duty even of every man in his place, to do all that he can for the conversion of others: and this he would never do, if there were another way to salvation. Dan. xii. 3, "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." James saith, chap. v. 19, 20, "If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins." And David promiseth, if God would pardon and restore him, that he "will teach transgressors his way, that sinners may be converted to him," Psal. li. 13. So that, lay all this now together, and judge whether it be likely that God would have set all the world on work for the conversion of sinners, if there had been any other way to save them. Should Christ himself have come upon this errand; should the word of God be written to this end; should all the prophets, apostles, and ministers of the gospel be sent on this message; should all mercies and all afflictions be directed to this use; should it be made the duty of every christian to endeavour it; if men could be saved without conversion, by any other way? Doubtless the case is plain, it should not be.

I beseech you, therefore, let this be received by you as an unquestionable truth; make no halt or doubt in the business; shift it not off with foolish cavils; but ground it even in the bottom of your heart, that without true conversion, there is no hope of salvation.

You have as good proof of it as you can desire of any truth in the world. Yea, besides all that I have said, it is a thing that in general is confessed by heathens, and discerned even by the light of nature. They that will not believe in Christ, will confess the necessity of repentance and reformation, which yet cannot be wrought without faith in Christ. Though I know there is a great deal more necessary to this work, yet I should think I had done something today, if you would but all go home resolved without all doubt of the truth of my text; and would never

more think that there is any other way to salvation, besides conversion. For certainly, if you were once well resolved, that you must every man of you be converted, or condemned, you would look a little better about you than most do. At least this would destroy your deceiving hopes and presumption, and make you see what is yet to be done, and would much help to prepare you for a further work. And that none of you may say another day, that you never heard or knew the truth, I do here solemnly proclaim it to you all in the name of Christ, that there is no hope of salvation without true conversion. And I have fully proved it to you from the word of God. So that if ever a man or woman that is here before the Lord this day, shall yet dare to live in an unconverted state, you are left without a cloak for your sin. You shall not be able to tell the Lord at judgment, that you never heard or knew so much. If he ask any of you at that day, how it came to pass that you turned not to God, nor sought after converting grace, and how you could ever think to look God in the face without conversion? you shall not be able to say, We lived under a minister that never told us of it; we thought we might have done well enough without it, and some particular repentance might have served the turn. The truth hath shone this day in your eyes: you have heard what Christ saith, and what his apostles say, and what is the drift of all the Scripture. If yet you will believe that a man may be saved without conversion, it is your wilful obstinacy and unbelief that maketh you think it: you must wink hard, and draw the curtains of carnal security about your ears, if in the midst of this daylight you will sleep as in the night of former darkness.

Sect. II.

Quest. But are there not many in the world that need no conversion, even from their infancy? Doth not God regenerate men by baptism, or at least before, which baptism sealeth; or at least by christian education in their infancy? And what need have these of after-conversion?

Ans. To this I shall answer briefly, but plainly, in these propositions following: 1. No doubt but God doth pardon original sin to multitudes of infants by the blood of Christ, through the covenant of grace, which is made to the faithful, and their seed. And being thus pardoned, they may be truly said to be new creatures, or regenerate relatively. And this pardon bestowed by the covenant, is sealed by baptism, which solemnly conferreth it. 2. It is most probable that God doth also make some change on the hearts of infants, secretly giving them some seed of inward grace before or in their baptism. 3. It is certain, that sometimes before their death, he doth give this Spirit to elect infants, according to their capacity, and thereby fit them for glory. I mean those that die in infancy. 4. Holy education of parents may be a means through God's blessing, of actual converting those that were before but seminally changed, yea, and of those that were not. And if parents did their duty first in a believing dedication of their children to God by baptism, and then in a careful bringing them up in his fear; it is most certain, that this would be the most ordinary age and season of regeneration and sanctification to life. For God would not be wanting to his own ordinances used in faith by his own people. He did not appoint them in vain, neither hath he given them a precept without a promise. 5. If any one did receive the seed of true grace in their infancy, it will certainly appear in a holy life, even from their infancy upwards. And therefore there is the same work done in the hearts of such as were converted in infancy,

and after were brought up in the fear of God, as I have before described to you in the truly converted. If any man did but live one year, or month, or week of his childhood after he had the use of reason, in a state utterly graceless, that man hath no reason to take the least comfort now to himself, upon any conceit that he was regenerate in his infancy. If he have from his childhood unfeignedly loved God above all, and been heavenly-minded, and hated sin, and delighted in all holiness, and feared God, and repented of all known sin, and laboured to subdue it, and had the rest of the marks of grace in his heart, then he may be sure that he was sanctified betimes. But if any man have lived to the world or the flesh but one month, since his infant state, never minding the life to come, nor loving the holy ways of God, nor hating iniquity, he may be sure that he must have another conversion, than any he had in his infancy, or it will not serve his turn for heaven. An infant-conversion may serve for an infant state of salvation; but he that hath after that lived to sin, must have an actual conversion, as he was actually a sinner. And if he had grace in infancy, he must have the same working of it toward God and heaven, which in the work of conversion I described before. So that I do not call you to judge of your state by the time or manner of your change, so much as by the matter or thing itself. Find all that work upon your judgments, heart, and life, which I have before laid down, and be sure it is there, and then, whensoever you came by it, you are happy. But if it be not now there, it is a silly delusion, to glory in the conceits of an infant-baptismal change. Yet I doubt not but there is many a true christian, who hath received this grace so early, that they have the greater cause to be for ever thankful for it to God.

So much for the confirmation of the point, that certainly this work of conversion is necessary to all that will be saved. One time or other the image of God must be imprinted on the heart, and in those at age expressed in the life.

Sect. III.

IV. I am next, according to the method propounded, to give you the reasons of it, why a man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven except he be converted. The case is so clear, that we may easily see reason for it, if we be willing to see.

1. If there were no other reason apparent to us but the word of God, one would think it might satisfy such as we. Heaven is his own, and he may give it to whom he will, and he hath told us in his word, that he will give it to no other, and should not that suffice us? May not he do with his own as he list? It is his hand that must set on the crown; and may not he set it on what head he please? We are sure of these two things: 1. That God hath full power to dispose of it, and therefore can do no wrong to others by denying it. 2. And that he is infinitely wise, and good, and just, and therefore it must needs be the wisest and best way that he takes, though such dark sinners as we could not see the wisdom, or the goodness, or justice of it. Do you grudge at this doctrine, that none shall be saved but those who are converted? Why, then, you grudge at God. And do you think indeed that he knoweth not what he doth? Are you wiser than he? or are you more righteous than he? What! must the God of heaven come down to you to learn wisdom, or justice, or mercy? Will you question him at the bar of judgment, and ask him why he doth so? Will you charge him with injustice, or unmercifulness, and say, Lord, why art thou so unmerciful as to condemn all the unconverted? O

poor fools! (for so I dare call you that dare so far presume,) how easily will God answer you, and justify his wisdom, his justice, and his mercy. It is a fine world, when the Creator must be judged at the bar of a silly creature! What! if a fly or a flea could speak, should it expostulate the case with God, that he made him not a man? or should a toad, or a snake, reprove him of injustice for making him such, that never had sinned? or tell him that this is an act of unmercifulness? How much less should a wretched sinner, that hath done so much wrong to the Lord that made him, that hath refused his grace by which he would have saved him, presume to open his mouth against God, and tell him after all this, that if he condemn him, he is unmerciful! But more of this anon.

Sirs, I tell you my religion, and my resolution. I believe all that God saith to be true, though the matter were never so much beyond my reach. And of this I am so confident, that I will venture my soul upon it. I have looked up and down to see if there be any better and surer grounds for a wise man to venture his happiness upon, and I can find no better: nay, I am sure there is no better. If any man have found any better, let him take it, and make his boast of the gain when he hath it. For my part, I will take God's word, and I will trust my soul and hopes on this, and I will look for satisfaction of all my doubts and scruples when I come to possess the promised felicity. And I am sure I can lose nothing, or no great matter, by this resolution. For sure I am that all other happiness is a shadow and delusion; and all other foundations are sandy, and will deceive. If God tell me in his word, that "no man shall be saved except he be converted," I will take his word, and let them look well to their standing that do refuse it. I will set this word of God against all the reasons in the world that you can bring. Well, you say it is a hard saying, that so few should be saved: will you say you cannot believe that God will deal so hardly? Against all these vain cavils I set the word of God. God hath said it, and will he not do it?

SECT. IV.

2. Well, but if we must needs go further to reasoning the case with you, and God's word will not satisfy you, I will proceed to show you some nearer reasons from the nature of the thing. And the first of these reasons shall be from the nature of God's government, and the state of men in this present life. We are set here as in the way to a further end. God never intended that this should be our home, nor that we should have the victory without a combat, nor the crown without the victory. God never meant that we should have the wages of his glory, how free soever, without a faithful performing of our work; at least the work of unfeigned repentance and conversion. Would you have God reward men for serving the devil? or to say at the last day, Come, sinner, thou hast lived to the devil all thy life, and set thy heart on the world, and abused or despised me and my grace, enter now into the promised glory? Why, sinners, if self-love did not blind you, and make fools of you, you could tell that this were a sentence unfit for the most wise and righteous God. What! must he reward the devil's servants? Shall not the Judge of all the world do righteously? Gen. xviii. 25. And what is righteousness, but to give every man his due? And is not punishment naturally due to the disobedient? especially when they have refused or set light by a pardon? Sirs, the case is plain. A wise and righteous governor, let him be never so merciful, must

make a difference between the righteous and the wicked. And therefore God will so do, Mal. iii. 18. A righteous judge must pass sentence according to the law. Tell me, would you think well of that governor, that should let men rob you, or beat you, or violently take possession of your house or land, and never punish them? And will you think that God will put up infinitely greater injury at your hands? Would you like such a law, that shall bid all men steal, and kill, and spare not, for the judge will not be so cruel as to hang or punish them? I think you would say, this were but a foolish and unmerciful judge, that pretendeth thus to be merciful. Do not then for shame impute this folly and unrighteousness to God. If he should not have made righteous laws, which threaten punishment to sin, for the restraining of it, how should the world be governed? And if he should make laws, and never execute them, how should he be wise and righteous? He is not so weak as to be put to govern the world by mere deceit. It belongeth to a righteous governor, to see that it go well with the good, and ill with the bad; *ut bonis bene sit, et malis male*. And I think if God should deal so well with the worst as with the best, your own reason would be ready to question it. Why, what can he do more to the best, than to save them in his glory, for what more are they capable of? And should he do this also to the worst? And sure, if he must shut them out of glory, they must need be in misery. For if there were no more, but to look towards the happiness which they so lost, and see Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and the righteous, whom they derided, possessing that glory which they set light by, it must needs fill their minds with anguish and vexation; and their own consciences would torment them for ever. Well, you see then some reason why the unconverted should not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

SECT. V.

3. But further consider this. The holy nature of God will not permit the unclean and unholy soul in his presence. "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, or whatsoever worketh abomination," Rev. xxi. 27. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity," Hab. i. 13. "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight, thou hatest all the workers of iniquity. The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; but the wicked his soul hateth," Psal. v. 4; xi. 5. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous," Psal. i. 5. "For God shall judge the world in righteousness, and minister judgment to the people in uprightness. And he is known by the judgment which he executeth, when the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand. So that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," Psal. ix. 8, 16, 17. What reason would you have more? There is a contradiction between the nature of God and the unconverted. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Cor. vi. 14. Therefore it is that God also putteth an "enmity between the seed of the woman and of the serpent," Gen. iii. 15. And calleth his converted people to come out from the impenitent unbelieving world; not by a schismatical, but by a godly separation. "For what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will

dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing; and he will receive you, and be a Father to you," 2 Cor. vi. 14—18. If God himself could endure communion with the unholy, then he would allow his people to endure it. But because they are his, and must be like him, therefore must they withdraw from such. Sinners, I pray you judge as you would be judged of. Would you have communion yourselves with that which is against your nature? Would you be tied to feed upon toads or snakes, or to put them in your bosoms, or lay them in bed with you? or if a toad could speak, would it be a reasonable argument to say, Why art thou so unmerciful as to refuse my company, or thus to abhor me, and cast me away? Why, the holy nature of God is infinitely more against unholy sinners, as such, than your nature is against the most venomous toad. And therefore he cannot admit the unconverted into his kingdom. Therefore it is, that he will redeem and sanctify them, and cleanse them from their sin, that they may be presented spotless and unblamable to him by Christ, before they shall come to glory, Eph. v. 26, 27. Believe it, sinners, light and darkness, holiness and unholiness, God and sin, are utterly unreconcilable. If ever God and you must live together in glory, you must become holy as he is holy, that you may be such as he can dwell withal, and delight in. Either he must turn unholy like you, or you must turn holy like him. And which do you think is the more likely to be done? Can you expect that the Sun of righteousness should turn dark to comply with your darkness? or that the immutable God should lay by his excellency, to suit himself with your vileness? Why, this were for God to cease to be God. For to be an unholy God, is to be an evil God, and this is to be no God. For to be God, is to be the chiefest good. See then what a fair issue the carnal reasonings and confident hopes of wicked men have. They hope to be saved without conversion and holiness. And the issue is this, they hope that God will cease to be God, lest they should be damned and shut out of his kingdom. Do not say I make worse of your reasoning than it is. The case is plain, it is no better. And I appeal to thy own conscience, whether the brains of a man be capable of greater madness. O sirs, what a befooling thing is sin! Is it not more reasonable that thou shouldst cease to be ungodly, than that God should cease his blessed nature? There is some possibility yet that thou mayst cease to be a wilful impenitent sinner. But there is no possibility that God should cease to be God. Woe to thee, if thou cast thy soul upon such hopes! Should God cease his goodness and blessed perfection, all the world would be confounded, or turn to nothing. Turn, therefore, for be sure of it, he will not turn to thee. He hath commanded his servants, that they come not one jot nearer the wicked. "Let them return to thee, but return not thou to them," Jer. xv. 19. And will he then do that which he forbiddeth his servants? Many a sinner hath thought that God is like himself, even of his mind, and thought as lightly of sin as they, Psal. l. But they never found it so in the end. He did, by wonderful incomprehensible condescension, become man to save sinners, but he will never become a sinner to save sinners, nor unholy to save the unholy. He took our flesh, and he took our curse, and in that sense became sin for us, who knew no sin; but he will never take to him sin itself. He is yet reconcilable to sinners, but he will never be reconcilable to sin. Yet, if thou wilt turn to him,

thou mayst be welcome; but never look he should turn like thee.

SECT. VI.

4. And do you not yet see reason enough, why no unconverted sinner should be saved? Why, come along with me, and I will show you yet more. God offered them salvation in this life, for the very taking. I may well say upon easy and reasonable terms, when it was no more but accept it and have it; and they would not. It was propounded to their choice, and they refused it. They might have had Christ, and pardon, and holiness, and happiness, if they would, and they would not: and would you have God to save them, whether they will or no? He set life and death before them, and bids them choose life, that they might live, Deut. xxx. 19. He set before them blessing and cursing, and denounced to them, that they should certainly perish if their hearts turned away, and they would not hear. He called heaven and earth to record against them, Deut. xxx. 17—19; and he sent his Son, his apostles, his ministers to them, to entreat them, and in his name to beseech them to turn to him, and to be reconciled, 2 Cor. v. 20; he charged us to be "instant with them, in season and out of season," 2 Tim. iv. 2; and "to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine," as suitors that would take no nay. He bids us even "compel them to come in," Matt. xxii. 9; Luke xiv. 23; and yet they would not come, we could not prevail. Some would make excuses from one thing, and some from another: some had their farms, and some their trades, and some their wives, and all their sins to regard; they could not have while to be converted and fear God: and some set light by us and our message, Matt. xxii. 5; and some did openly oppose it, and contradicting the truth, and cavilling at it, as if they were wiser than to be converted and saved; as if they had more reason than to come in to God that called them, and accept of his salvation; and therefore even scorned the holy word and way of God, that should have saved them. Sirs, to our heart's grief we must witness it against the faces of thousands of our poor hearers, that this was the true case, and thus things were carried between God and them: Christ called out to them when he was on earth, even with tears, and bids us do the like with tears now in his stead. "Oh that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace!" but they would not, till they were hid from their eyes, and it was too late, Luke xix. 41, 42. "How often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not," Matt. xxiii. 37. Sinners, I beseech you, let not sin and flesh befoul you, to make you fly in the face of God, instead of returning to him at his call. Can you think that God is unjust or unmerciful, that would have given you heaven, and you would not accept of it? If he deny you that everlastingly, which you would not accept of, can you blame him or yourselves? I know what some hearts will be ready to imagine: you will say, I was willing to be saved, and therefore this is nothing to me. But were you willing to take salvation as it was offered? If not, you may as well say plainly, you will have none of it; for you shall have none of it upon any other terms. You would have had mercy by the halves, and not in whole. You would have picked out that part of salvation, which pleased you, and left the rest. God would have saved you from the guilt and power of sin, from hell, and from unholiness; and you would have but one of these, without the other: or would have been saved from hell and all other

punishments; but you would not be sanctified and brought near to God, and taken off from this world, and set your hearts on the world to come: and you knew, or might know, that God would not halve and part his salvation: you shall have all, or you shall have none. If you will keep sin, you shall keep the curse with it: if you will keep the serpent, you shall have the sting and venom with it. If you will not take Christ for your Master, as well as your Saviour, and be ruled by him, when his yoke is so easy, and his burden so light, never look to find rest to your souls, Matt. xi. 27—29. If you will not be converted, you may as well speak out, and say plainly you will not be saved: for it is all one. He that saith, he will not eat and drink, may as well say he will not live: and he that will not take the physic, may as well say, he will not be cured. Sirs, if Christ, and grace, and glory had never been offered to you, nor you had any means to have brought you to the knowledge of him, then you had had some excuse. As Christ saith, John xv. 22, “If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin.” If we had not in Christ’s name entreated you to return, and offered you salvation, you had some excuse. But now, what can you reasonably say? I dare challenge the reason of all the world, to answer this one reason, by which God will prove, that the unconverted should be condemned. It is reason, that he that would not have heaven upon such reasonable terms as Christ did tender it him, should for ever be shut out. What will you say to this, when God shall question thee, and say, What sayst thou, sinner, did not I freely offer thee my grace and salvation? Do you believe you shall have the face at the day of judgment, to tell Christ he is unmerciful if he damn you, when he shall tell you, that he would often have gathered you to him, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not? Will not that one word stop thy mouth for ever? What dost thou complain of, man? Is it for want of mercy? Why, what tenderer mercy wouldst thou have had? “I would have gathered thee as the hen,” &c. Sinners, I witness to you this day, that God, and angels, and men shall judge of you, that if you be thrust into hell, it is because you would not be saved; and it is not because God was cruel to you, but because you were cruel and unmerciful to yourselves. I tell you this will prove true at the last.

SECT. VII.

5. If all these reasons do not satisfy you, I will show you more, and such as methinks should satisfy any man on earth, that the unconverted cannot be saved. Even because it is an impossible thing. It is a flat contradiction. Why, conversion is part of salvation here, and the perfection of it is a higher part hereafter. Why, sir, sin is the soul’s sickness, and wound, and death; and grace and holiness is its health and life: and were not that man a fool, that expecteth you should make him well, and not remove his sickness? and cure his wounds, and never heal or close them? or make a dead man alive, and yet let him be dead still? Why, it is as great a contradiction and impossibility for a man to be saved and not converted. What is it that we must be saved from, but sin and hell? And there is no saving from hell but by saving from sin. “He shall save his people from their sins,” Matt. i. 21. Do you know what the salvation is that God hath promised us in glory? Why it is this: that we should be perfectly freed from all sin, and have the image of his holiness perfected on our souls; that we shall be perfectly in love with God, and perfectly beloved

of him, and live in the sight of his majesty, and fill ourselves with the view of his pleased face, and breathe out his praise with the heavenly host for ever. Doth such a heaven as this is like you? or doth it not? If it do not, you must have none; for there is no other, except you will call an ale-house, or a whore-house, or other sensual pleasures, your heaven. But if you will have this heaven which God doth offer you, you may easily see that it cannot be had without conversion. Can you be saved from sin, and yet keep it? Can you be perfected in holiness, and yet be unholy? Can you live in the everlasting love of God, and have no true love to him at all? Can you delight in him, and yet have no delight in him, but be weary of him, and delight in your worldly vanities more? Well, sinners, I think I need to say no more. The contradiction is so evident, that you may as well say, I will be saved, and I will not, as to say, I will be saved, but not converted.

But perhaps some vain caviller will say, It is true, we cannot be glorified without conversion and holiness, but God might have given us that in another world, though he change us not here.

Ans. But do you not know, that this life is the appointed time of working, and running, and fighting for the crown? The life to come is the time of reward, and of your receiving the prize that here you run for; would you have God help you in your race, when you are past it, and your time is gone? or, contrary to wisdom and governing justice, to confound the way and the end, this life and that to come? You may with far more wisdom expect, that when you have loitered till the sun be set, God should call it back again, at your desire, that you may have daylight to work by. He gave thee time, and gave thee warning to use it while thou hadst it; and told thee, “this was the accepted time; this was the day of salvation,” 2 Cor. vi. 2. And to trifle out this time, and then to think that God should give thee both grace and glory in that life, where he hath resolved only to perfect grace in glory; and crown those that have overcome on earth; this is such folly in so great a business, as I desire no friend of mine may be guilty of.

Object. But it is our ignorance of God that maketh us unholy; and therefore when death hath opened our eyes, as we shall know him better, so we shall the more love him according to that knowledge; and so we shall be sanctified. And God cannot but love those that love him; and therefore they will be saved.

Ans. It is not all knowledge of God, that will cause a love to him. If you know him as excellent, and yet as your enemy, and one that standeth resolved everlastingly to punish you, this will provoke no love to him, but hatred. The dignity and worth of an enemy may be some matter of admiration to us, and of reverence, but not of such love as may tend to fruition. It is inseparable from your natures to love yourselves; and therefore you will love that which you think is for your good, and hate that which you think is against you, and tends to your destruction. You will then find that your damnation was part of God’s righteous government of the world; and that the whole work of government was one inseparable frame, begun by legislation, and finished by judgment and execution; and that God will no more break the frame of government, than he will the frame of nature; nor so much. For that he may do when he please, though he will do it rarely, but this his own perfection is against. So that when you see God as it were obliged everlastingly to destroy you, you cannot close in love with him, as your friend or chiefest good, as those do that enjoy him in the promised glory.

CHAPTER III.

Sect. I.

V. HAVING thus cleared the way, by showing you the meaning and the truth of the point in hand, I shall next come to the application of it to ourselves.

Use 1. And first, by way of inference you see from hence, that there is a kingdom of heaven to be obtained. It were in vain to talk who shall come thither, and who shall not, if there were no such thing to be had. Doubt not, christian, thou hast the word of the God of heaven for it. Challenge the tempter, if he would draw thee to doubting, to prove that ever the God of this word deceived any. If he would tempt thee to question, whether it be his word or not; show him upon it his image and superscription, with the seal of his manifold uncontrolled miracles. And ask him what better evidence mortals can expect, unless they would have God, who cannot be seen, to walk among them, and speak to every particular man. Oh that thou wouldst be true to God and thyself, and then thou shalt find God will be true to thee! As sure as there is an earth for thee to tread on, and as sure as there is a sun whose light thou seest; so sure is there a heavenly everlasting glory, for every converted, persevering soul. There can be no better ground of assurance than the word of God. I know that man, whilst he is in this flesh, is strange to things beyond his sense, and hath a natural desire to have his senses themselves to be the inlets of his knowledge; and therefore he is apt to think that either he is uncertain of all that he seeth not, (unless he hath seen the like that may help him to understand it,) or else that his knowledge of it is as no knowledge; but this is a weakness unworthy of a man. What if you had never seen London, or any such city, and should hear the glory of it described by others; would you think it uncertain that there is such a place, because you have not seen it? Nay, further, you have not seen your souls; do you think it therefore uncertain whether you have a soul or no? A man that is born blind did never see the sun, and yet he will not doubt whether there be a sun, when all the world about him telleth him so: and shall not the word of God be taken as soon as the word of a man? You never saw God himself, and yet it is the grossest error in the world to think that there is no God, when we see every hour the works that he hath made; and which we know could none of them make themselves. You see that which assureth you of the things that are unseen. You see the word of God; you see his works, and daily providences; you see a divine testimony, the sufficient ground of your belief. Noah did not see the flood, when he laboured so many years in making the ark. But though the unbelieving world might deride him in the beginning, at the last the flood came and did convince them. Heb. xi. 7, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." O, if the devil could once make you stagger at the truth of the promise, and make you doubt whether there be a heaven and a hell, because you see them not; he might then delude you with the vanities which you do see. But when you believe it upon God's word, as verily as if you saw it, then you will be likely to be christians indeed. Therefore the apostle bringeth such proof of the doctrine of the resurrection, and when

he hath done, he buildeth this exhortation upon it: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be stedfast, unmoved, always abounding in the work of the Lord, inasmuch as you know your labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. ult.

Sect. II.

Use 2. Having gone thus far with you, and showed you that a kingdom of heaven there is; and that certainly none but the converted shall enter it; my next business is, to come nearer your hearts, and to inquire of, and beseech you to inquire of yourselves, whether you are the converted heirs of this kingdom, or not? Sirs, you hear from the mouth of Christ himself, how the case standeth. He that spoke this will be your Judge, and according to this word it is that he will judge you. Believe you not this? I hope you do believe it. Methinks now I should need to say no more to reasonable men, to warn them presently to enter into their own consciences, and try, and try again, whether they are converted. But because that this is so necessary a work, I will tell you some of those reasons that should move you presently to set upon this trial; and show you how desirable it is to be well resolved in this point. For I know that the devil will be such an enemy to it, and the heart so backward to it, that all we can say is likely to be too little to bring the most but to a faithful examination of their own souls.

1. The first reason that moveth me to entreat you to try yourselves, is, the weight of the business in hand. A wise man may put a small thing to a venture, but he will not venture all his estate, or liberty, or life, if he can help it. How much less should a wise man venture his soul! Great things and eternal things should be made as sure of as we can. For a man to be in endless happiness or misery, is a matter that should not have one cold, or dull and careless thought; much less should it be ordinarily or wholly made light of. I profess to you, brethren, I wonder how you can so little regard the assurance of your conversion and salvation, as most of the world doth! As if hell were grown sufferable; or heaven grown of smaller value, and the glory of it did begin to fade. For a man that is no heathen, but believeth that a departing soul goes some whither, either to heaven or hell; methinks he should be willing to know whither it should go before it is gone. For when it is once gone, it is past recalling. Methinks, as long as you are in much doubting of your salvation, this one thought should often be running in your mind: What if I should not be converted or saved? What a case were I then everlastingly in! Your hearts, it is like, do cherish some hopes that you are converted, and all shall be well enough with you when you die. Oh, but what if it should prove otherwise? Methinks this one thought should even amaze you, whilst you are in that estate: For all my hopes, what if I should perish? Oh, what wise man would put his everlasting salvation or damnation to the venture, if he could possibly get it out of doubt? Therefore, sir, I beseech you for the Lord's sake, get alone again and again, and put this question to your own consciences, How can I tell that I am truly converted? And if you are ready to say, I hope it is so, when you have nothing for these hopes, but because you would have it so; call to your consciences for the proof of what they say, and do not take your own bare words. It is proof that must carry it, and not mere saying that you are converted. Ask therefore conscience, How canst thou prove it? What canst thou show that will evidence a conversion, more than unsanctified persons may show?

And I pray you, see that you be not put off too easily, and take not every gloss for evidence; but in a matter of such consequence, see that you deal faithfully, and go to the very quick: alas! almost all the comfort of your lives lieth upon it; and your everlasting salvation lieth upon it, which is much more.

2. Another reason which makes me the more earnestly desire that you would try, whether you are truly converted or not, is, because all men by nature are children of wrath, and need conversion, and the greatest part of the world do live and die in their natural state, and never come to be truly converted. Seeing, therefore, that it is a thing that every one must have that will be saved, and yet most men go without it, and therefore are damned, should it not waken you to examine, whether you are of the number of those that are converted, yea or nay? If it were a needless thing, that might be spared without your undoing; or if it were a thing that every body hath, or that almost all or most have; you might be the more secure; but it is not so. What need we more proof than God's express word? "The gate is strait, and the way narrow, and few there be that find it," Matt. vii. 14; and common experience seconding this word of God. Do you see that most men are converted, and such as I before described to you? Oh that it were so! But we shall speak more of this towards the end. Will any man that hath not lost his senses, now stand cavilling, and quarrelling, that so few should be saved, instead of making sure of his own salvation? The reason that there are so few is, because they will not be saved upon God's terms. And if you will take their course, and quarrel with the gracious word and ways of God, instead of submitting to them, you will speed as they, and be carried down the stream for company. But those that care for their souls, will take warning by other men's miscarriages, and be awakened to make sure.

3. Another reason that should move you to examine, whether you be indeed converted or not, is, because the want of this is one of the greatest causes why so few come to be converted, and to be saved. Nothing doth more keep a man from turning back again when he has lost his way, than when he doth not know that he hath lost it: and how can he know, that wandereth in the night, and will not inquire and ask the way, or that is so wilful and self-conceited, that he will not believe any man that telleth him he hath lost his way? As long as he is of this mind, he will never turn again. So is it with most of the careless world: they are going in the way of worldliness or vain-glory, and live to the flesh, which is clean contrary to the way to heaven, and yet they will not once seriously ask a minister, or ask any one that can inform them, whether that be the way or not? or whether they shall ever come to heaven in that way? But they trudge on after their fleshly business, as if they had no tongue in their heads; or as if it were not worth the asking, to know whether they are in the way to heaven or hell. Surely, if men will not so much as inquire, or consider with themselves, and examine their way by the word of God, to see whether they are right or wrong, they are never like to be saved. If you, that never had this great cure done upon your souls, did but know so much, you would not rest, sure, till it were done. You could not lie down quietly, nor rise quietly; you could not eat, or drink, or sleep quietly. Tell me, ever a man or woman of you, could you be quiet, if you were sure that you were yet unconverted, and in a state that, if death should find you in, you must be damned? If you knew this by yourselves, how could you choose but get presently to God on your knees in secret, and cry out, Help, Lord, or I am everlast-

ingly undone! O forgive me, and change my heart and life, or else I am a lost man and woman for ever! How could you choose, if you knew yourselves unconverted, but follow God with your prayers day and night till he hath changed your hearts? You could not sit at home, but you would go to the ministers, and to experienced christians, and ask them for some help and advice for your salvation. But, when men think all is well with them, who can expect that they should put themselves to so much trouble? or seek much to God or man for cure, or make any great matter of the greatest misery? I do not fear any one thing more, to make me lose all this labour, and leave many of you after all this unconverted, than this conceit that you are already converted, when you are not. This is it that is most like to hinder our work, and to undo your souls. And therefore for the Lord's sake, sirs, deny me not this one request, to take a little pains to try whether you are converted. "For if any man think he is something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself," Gal. vi. 3.

4. Another reason that should make you never rest till you know that you are converted, is, because of the many exceeding benefits that the true knowledge of this one thing would afford you. For the truly converted, holding on to the death, shall certainly be saved. O sirs, if you had but this assurance once, you might live quietly, and abound with comforts! You might lie down, and nothing make you afraid: you might rejoice in the mercies of the Lord, as the tokens of his love; and bear his rod with greater peace, as being the chastisement of a Father. Had you but this assurance once, you might hear and read the word with comfort; and when you come to the promises, say, These are mine: you might secretly and publicly pray with comfort, "and have access with boldness to the throne of grace," Heb. x. 19; Eph. iii. 12: you might run to God when any thing aileth you, and call him your Father in confidence of his acceptance: you might gladly feast with the saints in the holy communion of the church: you might cheerfully sing God's praises, and glory in the thoughts of his great salvation. And when you are dying, you might look to heaven as your home, "and long to be dissolved and to be with Christ," Phil. i. 23; and might joyfully let go your departing souls, and say as Christ, "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit." O sirs, what a blessed life is this, when a man can look upon every thing with comfort! If he look on the godly, he can say, They are my brethren; if on the wicked, he can say, I am delivered from their sad estate. If he look on any of the mercies which he possesseth, he can say, They are the fruits of the blood of Christ, and the tokens of his Father's love. If on his poverty or want, he can say, My greater wants are supplied, and these prepare for the ever-during riches. If he look on the law, he can say, it hath nothing against him, because he hath pardon through him that hath borne the curse; if on the gospel, he can rejoice in it, as the glad tidings of his salvation. If he look on the threatening, he can say, It reacheth not a pardoned sinner; if on the promise, he can say, It is my charter for heaven. If he look upward to heaven, he can say, It is my own inheritance, thither I am going, and there I shall shortly be. If he look downward, toward the place of torments, he can say, From thence did grace deliver me. If there were any terror to a man's soul, it would be in sin, and Satan, and death, and hell; but none of these are matter of terror to him. Not sin, for it is pardoned, and mortified in part, and will be perfectly ere long. Not Satan, for he is conquered, and cast out of his posses-

sion. Not death, for it hath lost its sting, and is become the passage into everlasting life. Not hell, for it will be our perpetual joy, to see that we are delivered from such everlasting torments. In a word, because he can say, God is my Father, Christ is my Saviour and my Head, the Holy Ghost is my Sanctifier; therefore he can say, "All is mine, as I am Christ's, and Christ is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 21; 2 Cor. iv. 15. O sirs, what would you give; nay, what would you not give, to be presently put into such a condition? Had you not as lief as have all the world now, that you were sure that you are converted, and in this state of life? Sure, if you were well in your wits, you had. Who would care what becomes of the world, if he were once sure of heaven? or what become of his corruptible flesh, if he were sure it should go well with his soul, and that flesh itself should rise again to glory? Oh what a terrible thing it is, for a soul to go out of the body, and not know whither! And how much more to depart under the curse of God; from the damnation of the law, to the condemnation of the Judge! But how blessed is it, to remove from the state of a frail and sinful man, to live with Christ, to be "equal with the angels!" Luke xx. 36.

What say you now, beloved hearers? Is there not weight enough in these reasons to persuade you to try whether you are converted or not? Dare you say there is not? If you dare not, you are witness yourselves that you are convinced. You see it is your duty; or see it is necessary for your own good. Your labour will be small in comparison of the profit: the loss will be nothing; the commodity may be unspeakable. Shall I then, as your minister, beseech you presently to fall to this work? as a messenger of Christ, shall I entreat it of you? as a friend to your souls, shall I entreat it of you? It is for yourselves: it is no unreasonable matter, you see, that I ask of you. Conscience shall witness one day to the face of refusers, that it was not unreasonable. Neighbours, I pray you for the Lord's sake, and for your souls' sake, do not deny it me. I profess in the presence of the Lord, I had rather you would grant me this small request, than give me all you have in the world; even that you would but make it your business to try, and thoroughly try, whether you are yet converted, or no? But then, let me entreat you to do it seriously, and make somewhat of it, and leave not till you have done your best to be resolved whether it be so with you or not. You do not need to ask me what aileth me to be so earnest with you for such a thing. You have heard by the foregoing reasons what aileth me. You may see here in my text what aileth me; when Christ himself saith, "Except you be converted, and become as little children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." This is the thing then that I entreat you to do: that you would betake yourselves at your next opportunity without delay into some private place, and there bethink yourselves what you have heard; or at least what is said here in my text: and say thus with yourselves: I see there is no hope of salvation without conversion; my heart must be turned from the world, and flesh, and sin, to God by Christ, or else I cannot enter into heaven. I know I shall shortly leave this life; I doth it not concern me then to see betimes that I be converted? Was ever such a change as this wrought in my heart, or not? There is no dissembling with God, he will not be mocked. What sayest thou, conscience? Have I ever had such a change, or not? Thus follow on the inquiry, and leave it not till you can say, off or on, whether you have been converted, or not? or at least till you have some more light into the busi-

ness than you had before. And if you cannot do it at one time, as it is likely you cannot fully, go do it again and again: think on it as you lie in bed: think on it when you are alone, and say to yourselves, Seeing I must be converted or condemned, is it not time for me to know whether it be so with me, or not? And if you cannot get the case well resolved, let me entreat one thing more, which I have often entreated of you; that you would come to one of us that are your teachers, or go to some judicious, able christian, and ask advice to help you in trial: for in so great a business, it is dangerous to be mistaken. I do not speak all this to those christians that have lived long in the fear of God, and have doubts raised in their minds by the temptations of the enemy, or by their own great care of the matter of their salvation, and have asked help of ministers, and taken pains, and done what lieth in them to be resolved, and yet find some doubts remaining. It is not these that I now speak to. Though I would not grudge my labour to these whensoever I can have time for it, to do them any good I could; yet I would rather advise them to acknowledge the light of grace that shineth in their eyes, and not forget their own experiences, nor make light of the abundance of that mercy, which hath translated them from darkness into the kingdom of Christ, and feed upon that glory that is propounded to their faith. But I speak to those, that either never did yet set to the work of examination, or never followed it till they discerned their miserable estate; or at least not till they got out of it, but are still sticking in the world and flesh: and also to those young, unsettled christians that be not yet well resolved for a change; or at least those that never yet had the advice of any minister, or judicious person, for the right settling of their spiritual estate: for all these, but especially for those that never set upon examination before, I would entreat them, if they find themselves in the dark, and cannot well manage it themselves, or cannot find whether they are converted or not, that they would come to us, and seek advice. I pray you, neighbours, do not think that we are either so stout, or so careless of your souls, as to despise you, or to think it much to take this pains with you. The poorest beggar in town shall be welcome to us, that will come to us on this errand. Indeed, ministers are set in every church, as the physician is in the town, for all that are in distress to resort to for advice, that their diseases may not prove their death. It is not only to preach to you that we are made ministers, but especially to give advice and direction for their salvation to all that have special need, and come to us. Indeed for small matters you should no more trouble a minister, than you should trouble a physician for a cut finger, because you have others enough at hand to give you advice. If all the people of England would use their ministers to this kind of employment, it would be happier for their souls, and happy for the nation, and would make men know better the nature and need of the office of the ministry. We do not desire you to come to us, as the papist priests make all their people do, to confess every secret sin that they have committed in Lent, before they receive the sacrament at Easter. But when you hear out of the word of God, that no man can be saved except he be converted, and you set yourselves to try whether you are converted or not, and cannot find it out; here your salvation lieth much on the business, and therefore common reason telleth you, that you should take the best advice you can, and that presently, without delay. And so, you may be much better resolved, and your minds more quieted, and you may go upon surer grounds for

your salvation, than perhaps you would otherwise do. There is never an honest minister in England, but would be willing to forbear his meat, or sleep, as far as nature would bear, to help his people in such straits as these; when they come to us, and tell us, I have taken some pains to try whether I am converted truly, or not, and I am not able to discern; I know it is your office to help me; I pray you help to resolve my doubt, for I am resolved I will not venture my soul so carelessly as I have done till now. You do not know what good you might get, if you would but take this course to be resolved; for God will bless his own ordinances. I pray you, therefore, let no carelessness or bashfulness hinder you; for matters of salvation are not such things that you should either be careless or ashamed of. However, say not but we offered you our help.

But perhaps you will ask me, When I am examining my conscience, how shall you know whether I am converted or not? By what marks may it be discerned? To this I answer, I have so often given you divers marks already, in the sermons I have preached, and the books that I have written for your use, that I am loth to do the same thing over too oft. But for this time it may suffice, if you will but remember that description of the work of conversion, which I gave you before. For in that are all the marks that are necessary.

When you are examining your own hearts inquire then :

(1.) Whether you ever found that change upon your mind that I before mentioned. Are you soundly persuaded of the truth of the word of God, and the life to come? And do you know and believe how vile a thing sin is? and what need you have of Christ? and what he hath done for you, and offereth to do? And do you esteem of the love of God, and the hopes of salvation, above all things in this world, and account of all but as dung, that you may win Christ? Are you fully persuaded of the riches of free grace, and of the necessity of a holy life, how much soever you may have slighted them heretofore?

(2.) And have your hearts been so far changed hereupon, as that you have laid up your treasure and hopes in the life to come; and that is it that you take for your felicity; so that you can truly say that the main bent and drift of your life is, not for the pleasure or profits of the world, but how to please God, and be happy for ever? Though you may step out of the way by human infirmity, yet this is the bent and scope of your life; this is your chief care, and this hath your most serious thoughts and business. Can you truly say, you use the world for God and for heaven, and do not serve God for the world? and that you take all these outward things, but as necessities in your journey, but look at heaven as your home and happiness? and that God hath the highest room in your hearts, and the world and flesh stand under him; and that you do not prefer these things before him? and that you are resolved, whatsoever it cost you, to stick to God though you lose the world; and not stick to the world, when it loses you the favour of God? and that God shall be first served, and the world shall have his leavings; and not the world first served, and God have its leavings? Have you tasted of the infinite love, which he hath manifested for your salvation in the blood of his Son, and admired that free grace, that hath thus purchased your redemption? and fled to Christ, as the only refuge of a guilty soul, from the curse of the law, and the wrath of God; renouncing all conceits of any merits or legal righteousness of your own, taking Christ and his merits for your

righteousness? Do you find that you hate the former sins that you loved, and take pleasure in those holy ways that you had no pleasure in before? And are you resolved thus to hold on to the death?

(3.) Is all this to be seen in your life? Have you in good sadness changed your former courses, and resolved to turn to them no more? Have you left your old ungodly company further than your calling, or necessity, or charity requireth you to be with them? And have you betaken yourselves into the company of those that fear God, and take pleasure in their holy communion, and in their help and company in the way to heaven? Especially do you avoid those great transgressions, by which you were carried away in your ignorance? And are you willing to destroy the remnants of your sin, whatsoever it cost you, and not to spare, or cherish, or befriend it; so that there is no known sin that you wilfully live in, nor no known duty that you wilfully cast off; but you would fain be what God would have you be, and your greatest sorrow is, that you can be no better; and if you fall by any temptation, you rise again with shame and grief, and free confession, and renew your resolution, by the grace of God, to take better heed for the time to come?

This is the sum of the work of conversion, and this is the state of a gracious soul. I have left out divers particulars, lest I should be too long, because you may see them together before you; but the rest are implied in these.

When you go then to examine your hearts, set these few questions before you, and put them to your hearts, or else peruse those marks that I have given you in my "Directions of Peace of Conscience," or those in my "Treatise of Judgment," or those in my "Book of Rest." You do not need to be at a loss for marks to try by. Books will help you, or ministers will help you, or friends will help you. But all the difficulty is in two things: 1. To get your heart to the work. 2. To be able to know your own hearts. For they are so dark and deceitful, that without a special light and diligence, you may easily be mistaken in yourselves.

Well, brethren, I again renew my request to you, that seeing you must be converted or condemned, will you set yourselves to try whether you are converted or not? I hope you be not willing to be deceived; and I hope you do not think that salvation is not worth this much labour. I should hope that I might request as much as this from you, if it were for myself or a friend; how much more, when it is for your salvation. Tell me, therefore, will you do this much at my request, at Christ's request, yea, and at his command, or will you not? Will you bestow now and then a secret hour about it, and follow it on till you get resolution, and know whether you are converted or not? Truly, neighbours, I do not speak these words to you carelessly or customarily, as matters that I shall never look after when I am out of the pulpit; or as if I cared not whether you ever more minded them, or not. But it is the matter of practice that I regard; whether you will do the thing that I am desiring of you. I am loth you should spend another day in a state of condemnation, and not know it. I am loth you should spend another day in negligent uncertainty of your everlasting state. If you are converted, I would fain have you know it; if I could procure it, I would have you sure to go to heaven when you die, before you pass another week, or before you go this night to bed. And if you are not yet converted, I would fain have you know it, that you may lay to heart your condition, and without any more delay, may make out for the grace of Christ, that must recover

you. I pray you, do not think that it is utter despair that I am driving you to. If you should upon trial find that you are unconverted, you need not despair, and say, there is no hope. No, but you must know, that there is mercy before you. Christ hath prepared it for you, and offereth it to you, and is willing you should have part in it if you be willing. Only you must consent to be changed now at last, and resolve to go no further in the old way. It is conversion, and not desperation, that God requireth. And I hope a man may seek after his error to amend it, rather than to despair of the amendment. What if, upon examination, you should perceive that till this hour you have been in a state of death? It doth not follow, that you must live and die so; but that you must make haste to get out of it, which you will hardly ever do, till you find that you are in it. It were a foolish traveller that will say, I will not ask the way, lest I find that I have missed it, and then I have no hope of getting home. But rather he should ask the way, that if he have missed it, he may know it, and get in the right way before it be night. And because it is my present business, rather to convince the unconverted for their recovery, than the converted for their comfort, I shall here tell you for the negative, who they be that are yet unconverted, and must be changed, if ever they will be saved.

SECT. III.

(1.) That man or woman, that never yet perceived and felt that sin is a great and detestable evil, deserving the wrath of God, and that never felt what need they stand in of the pardon of sin, by the blood of the Lord Jesus, nor was ever humbled in the apprehension of his unworthy dealing with God, but can bear his sin as a tolerable burden, is yet unconverted; and without conversion cannot be saved, Matt. xi. 28; Luke xiii. 3, 51; Psal. li. 17; Isa. lvii. 15; Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14.

(2.) That man or woman that was never driven to Christ for deliverance, nor beaten out of the conceits of merit or sufficiency in himself; nor brought to admire the glorious design of God in the great work of redemption; nor savoured the sweetness of the glad tidings of salvation, which are brought to distressed sinners in the gospel; so that his heart was never warmed with the sense of the Redeemer's love and blood; but heareth and readeth the gospel as a common story, or as if it were not he that was thus redeemed; is yet unconverted, whatsoever he may seem, Phil. iii. 8, 9; Eph. iii. 18, 19; Luke vii. 47, 48; Rom. x. 15; Acts xiii. 32.

(3.) That person that hath not his heart and hopes in heaven, and looketh not at that as his only happiness, and doth not make it the business of his life to attain it, but setteth his heart more upon the things of this life, is certainly unconverted, whatever he may pretend, Phil. iii. 21; Matt. vi. 21; Rom. v. 2; Tit. i. 2; Heb. xi. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 19; Col. i. 5, 23.

(4.) That person that is not weary of all known sin, and hateth it not, and would not be rid of it with all his heart, and is not willing to be at the labour or cost of duty, in the use of those means which God hath required for the obtaining of a conquest; but will venture his soul upon a careless life, rather than he will be brought to diligent godliness; and taketh up godliness in part upon mere necessity, having rather let it alone if he durst, and taketh it for a grievous thing to be hindered from his sin: that person is not as yet converted, but must have a further change before he can be brought into a state of life, Luke xviii. 23, 24; Rom. vi. 14, 16, 17, 21; vii. 13, 22, 24; Psal. cxix. 5.

(5.) That person that doth not set himself to the duties of holiness to God and righteousness, and mercy toward man; that hath not the Spirit of Christ within him, and the image of God upon him, and doth not express it in his worship and obedience, and is not loving, compassionate, and merciful to others, nor humble and low in his own eyes, nor delighteth in doing good, nor is willing to do as he would be done by; I say, that person is not yet truly converted, whatsoever seemings of conversion he may have; but must yet be otherwise converted, or be condemned, Matt. v.; Heb. xii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16; ii. 5, 2; 2 Pet. iii. 11; Heb. iii. 1. Psal. i. 2.

(6.) That man or woman that hath any thing in this world, that is so dear to them that they cannot spare it, and part with it for Christ, and obedience to his command, but will rather venture their souls upon his threatenings, and will only take up so much of religion as may stand with their worldly prosperity or seeming felicity, and are not resolved by strength of grace rather to let go all than Christ; I say, that person is yet unconverted, and must have a further change, or be condemned, Matt. xvi. 24; x. 37, 38; Luke xiv. 33; Phil. iii. 19; Matt. xiii. 6, 20, 21.

Now, the Lord have mercy on poor sinners! What a world of them are yet in the state of death! And how little do they believe it, or lay it to heart! I wonder what men think of such words in Scripture, when they meet with them. Sure they cannot choose but consider that they concern them as well as others. And if no man can be saved without conversion, they must needs know they cannot. What then do these men think of themselves? Do they think that they are converted, or that they are not? If they think they are not, then surely they durst not rest till they are. For I do not think they are willing to be damned. It must needs be, therefore, that they think they are converted, when they are not; and that is the thing that deceiveth and quieteth them in their misery. But it is worth inquiry to find out what it is that so deceiveth men, that the grossest worldling, or the vilest sensualist, are yet persuaded that they are converted, gracious men: and I find among others these three things are the cause. 1. They do not know what conversion is, but take that to be true conversion, which is no such thing. 2. They do not know themselves, but take themselves to have what they have not, and do what they do not, and be what they be not. And, 3. They are resolved to believe what they would have to be true, be it never so false; and therefore will rather think they are well already, than they will be at the trouble to know that it is otherwise, and to use the means for a thorough discovery.

SECT. IV.

Use 3. By the foregoing inquiry, we have certainly found, that conversion is too strange a thing in the world; and that the greatest part of the world, yea, of those that are called by the preaching of the gospel, are yet unconverted. The consideration of this must needs be a grief to the heart of every faithful minister, that knoweth the misery of an unconverted man, and foreseeth his latter end. It will be a grief to any honest physician, if he have a whole hospital of sick persons under cure, to see that the most of their diseases are mortal, and to find but few recovered by the greatest skill and care that he can use; how much more must the everlasting danger of men's souls be grievous to those that are appointed to watch over them! Would the Lord but cause you to know your own misery as we know it, and to compassionate yourselves as we must compassionate you, we should have the more hope of your recovery.

Will you now join with us in lamenting your own condition, and lay to heart what a case it is to be unconverted? Truly humanity, and much more christianity, doth bind us to think on your condition with lamentation. Should we see an enemy, should we see a very dog in torment, and have no compassion? How much less, so many men and women that are so near us and so dear to us in the flesh! Alas, that there is such a glory, and most men will miss of it! that there is such a fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and the most will run themselves wilfully into it! Why, faith maketh things absent as if they were present. That which will be so one of these days, I look on it as if it were even so already. Oh! methinks I see the thousands of the unconverted, departing from the face of an angry Judge; who hath newly shut them up under his final sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," Matt. xxv. 41. If you ask me, why I tell you of such sad things? Truly, brethren, it is, because they are much sadder to suffer than to hear of; and because you are yet alive in a possibility of preventing them. If you marvel that I should believe such things, when no man seeth them; it is because I am a christian. And if you believe them not as well as I, you would do well to say so plainly, and do not dissemble any longer, and take on you to be christians, when you are not; and to believe God's word, when you do not. I profess to you, I should take it but for a paltry profession, to ride up and down to preach the gospel, and trouble the minds of men in vain, and get the ill will of most of our neighbours, and tire and spend ourselves in this work, if it were not certainly true, which we must tell them; and if the gospel were a fable or human device. If the word of God were not true, ministers have the most unworthy employment upon earth. But if it be true, (as nothing more certain,) O Lord, what hard hearts then have we, that we are no more affected with your condition! and what hearts have you, that are no more affected with your own! The Lord knows, if I were not confident that this word is true, that telleth us of the danger of all that are unconverted, I would not have been here to-day; nay, I would shut up my books, and take another trade in hand, and never preach more. But shall a man that knows the unconverted will be condemned, forbear to tell them of the misery that is near them? Then were our case more sinful than yours, for you know it not, and therefore love not to hear of it. I believe it, and know it, and yet should I silence it? I know it is unpleasant doctrine, but it is necessary, and it is most true! God never yet did prove a liar; if he were not true, he were not God. You will believe yourselves the things that you see not, upon common experience; and why should not I believe that which I see not, upon a better ground? You do not see the sun at midnight, and yet you believe that it will rise the next morning, because it useth to do so. You see no flowers or fruits on the earth in winter, and yet you believe that you shall see them the next year, because they use to come in their seasons. You are now all alive, and see not your graves digged, nor your friends about you, there laying you, and leaving you in darkness to the worms; and yet you know that such a day will come, though now you see it not: as truly do I know, that there is endless woe to every sinner that dieth unconverted. I see not the flames, nor do I hear the cries of damned souls, but yet I know that there they are, while we sit here, and there they will be to all eternity. It is like, the man in Luke xvi. was a gentleman of quality, that had so bountiful a table, and was clothed so gorgeously every day.

Alas, his poor brethren, it is like, did little think what was become of his soul, when they had laid his body in the earth. If a preacher should have told them he was afraid he was in hell, do you think they would not have been ready to fly in his face, or account him intolerably self-conceited, or precise; and yet the Lord Jesus brings us news that he was in hell-torment, wishing that one might be sent from the dead, to warn those his poor brethren that he had left behind him on the earth. No doubt he knew that they were all of the same mind as he was when he was alive, and as fleshly, and worldly, and careless of their salvation, and therefore were in the road-way to the same condemnation; or else if he had known them to be godly, heavenly-minded men, he would never have thought them in such danger, as it seems he did. But we read that they had any such fears of themselves as he had. If one had come to them from the dead, and told them that their late worshipful brother was in hell for his sin, and knowing them to be all in the way to the same misery, had sent to them to beseech them presently to be converted, lest they also come to that place of torment; what welcome do you think such a messenger would have had? I know not well what fear of a dead man appearing to them might have done; but I partly imagine what entertainment a minister should have had, that had said the like. Verily, sirs, the case of careless sinners is never the safer, because they see not and fear not the danger. A man in a consumption or dropsy, is never the further from death, though he be never so confident that he shall not die. If a thief at the gallows have a conceit that he shall escape, that will not save his life. What if you should have a hundred men that you had known on earth, sent to you from the dead one after another, and all of them should tell you this one sentence in my text, That there is none enter into heaven but converted souls; would you not begin to look about you, and say to yourselves, Am I converted or not? What a case am I in then, that am yet in the flesh! It may be if one appeared to you in your chamber in the night, and told you this news, it would only affright you a little, and you would forget it. Perhaps if two or three only should appear to you, and tell you it, you might forget it again; but if twenty should tell it you, methinks it should awaken you. Why, sirs, the words of the Lord are of more weight than the words of a thousand dead men are. "If you will not believe him, neither will you be persuaded though one rise from the dead," Luke xvi. 31. Seeing these things are so, I do not blame ministers, if they be plain and earnest with you, though some may think them precise, and beside themselves. Paul was put to make this answer; "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause," 2 Cor. v. 13. Truly, we are like a physician, that seeth a foolish man eating arsenic, or mercury, and telleth him, Oh what are you doing? it is deadly poison, you must presently take a vomit, or it will kill you. But because it is sweet, he derides the physician, and bids him look to himself, he hopes he shall do as well as he, till he feel the griping and burning at his heart, and then he will believe it. Oh! the gripes of a damned man's conscience, when he reflects on the day of grace which he lost on earth! We tell you not of this to drive you to despair, but to persuade you to take the vomit of repentance, and to cast up your sins before you are past hope. Do not think we wrong you, to foretell you what will come of it, if you die unconverted. If there were any wrong in it, it must be laid on

God that can do no wrong. If he have not bid us tell you of them, then take us for your enemies and spare not: call us liars, if we show you not his word for it. But alas, when God hath revealed your danger, must we hide it? and that when he hath foretold us, that if we tell you not of it, your blood shall be required at our hands, Ezek. iii. 18. Read that text well, and tell me then, whether you would have us such cruel enemies, I had almost said such devils, to you and to ourselves, as to hide a matter of such unconceivable moment from your eyes? What good would it do you to be thus flattered into hell? What good would it do you to have us to be damned with you, for being unfaithful for the preventing of your damnation? Who will laugh at this but Satan, the great enemy both of us and you? Alas, you may easily think with yourselves that it is no pleasure to a minister to tell you so sad a story of your misery. But if a Balaam must say, "If Balak would give me the house full of gold and silver, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, to do less or more," Numb. xxii. 18, must not Christ's ministers be as faithful? I say again, if this gospel were not true, I would be a sweeper of channels, rather than a preacher; and I would join in a petition to have all ministers banished the land: but seeing it is otherwise, I appeal to your consciences, who it is that wrongeth you; whether Christ and his ministers, to tell you of your danger, or yourselves, to make light of it, and to refuse the cure?

CHAPTER IV.

Sect. I.

THUS much I have spoken to you, to make you willing to hear and know the truth of your condition; my next desire is, that you will lay it well to heart. You will never make out aright for the remedy, till you feel your misery. Alas, what abundance of people are there in the world that never were converted, and yet live as carelessly as if all were well with them! Come among twenty that are as merry as the best, and ask them one by one, whether they are converted or not? And some will tell you, they hope so, they cannot tell; and some will deride you; and most of them perhaps know not what conversion is, nor ever much minded any such thing; and yet these very men do read or hear the word of God, that telleth them so plainly, that, "Except they be converted, they shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." What do you think, sirs, of such words, when you hear them, or read them? Are you never touched at the heart with them, and doth conscience never make you cry out, Alas, then, what will become of me? Well, because I would have you sensible of your condition, lest you should rest in it to your undoing, I will tell you a little further, what it is in some particulars: and the Lord awake you to lay them to heart!

I. As long as you are unconverted, you are no true children of God, nor members of Jesus Christ. And therefore you have no part in that fatherly, special love, but still stand before his eyes as enemies. For your hearts are not towards him, but towards the things below, as you know, or might know if you would. The world is divided into two sorts, the children of God, and the children of the devil: the converted, and they only, are the children

of God, as you may see, John i. 10, 11; Rom. viii. 9. All the unconverted are the children of the devil, as Christ himself calls some of them, John viii. 44. And so 1 John iii. 10, it is said of them all; and long ago they were called the seed of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. It is by faith in Christ Jesus that we are made the sons of God, Gal. iii. 26; Eph. iii. 17; and the unconverted have not true faith. When you go to God in prayer, if you cannot call him your Father, what comfort can you expect? If you look up for a blessing on your labours, and for supply of your wants, if it be not to a Father's hand that you look, how cold will the comfort of them be! Why, it is conversion that turneth the heart to God, and if he have not your hearts, you are not his children, and therefore none of the unconverted are his children. You are "all by nature the children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3; and therefore not the children of God. And by regeneration you are new-born children of God: and it is conversion that is this regeneration. You may call him Father as long as you will, but he will never call you children till you are converted. You may think you have as good right in him as another, but he will never own you, till you are converted. You may call him, Lord, Lord, even to the last, but he will tell you, "he knoweth you not," Matt. vii. 22. It is not nature, but renewing grace, that putteth upon you his image, and putteth within you his Spirit and holy nature, and if you have not that image, that Spirit, that holy nature, whatsoever you may think yourselves, he will never take you for his children, Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 9; 1 Pet. i. 14. All the children of God are somewhat like him; "they are holy, as he is holy," 1 Pet. i. 16. And it is conversion that maketh men in their places and measure like to God. It is plain, therefore, that the unconverted are none of his children; and then how can they expect his fatherly love, or his fatherly care of them in the time of their necessity? The goodness of God is the foundation of all the creature's hopes, but if you will keep out of the way of his goodness, and yet expect the benefit of it, you are like to be deceived; for an enemy or a stranger cannot look for the portion of a child.

And as you are no children of God, so you are no members of Christ without conversion; for we are adopted only in Christ; and therefore children of God, because members of Christ, who is his natural Son. It is conversion that makes us members of Christ. I suppose you will confess that if you were not christians, you were miserable: and if you be not converted, you are not true christians. You may have the name, but you have not the nature. You may keep a room among those that profess themselves christians; but God that knoweth the heart will ask you, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" Matt. xxiv. 12. And then you will be speechless. That man that hath no part in Christ, how sad and miserable a condition is he in! It was the terrible description of the case of Simon Magus, "Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter; thou art yet in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity," Acts viii. 23. And the proof was, "because his heart was not right in the sight of God," ver. 21. He was baptized, and had a kind of belief, but yet he was not converted, and therefore had no part in Christ. All the hopes and life of the world, is laid up in Jesus Christ, 1 John v. 11, 12. He therefore that hath no part in him, hath no hope, no life, no ground of peace, or comfort. Without a Saviour, how dare you draw near to God in prayer? how dare you think of death or judgment? What a sad appearance are you there like to make! Oh! woe, and ten

thousand woes to that man, that must stand at the bar of God, without a part in the blood of Christ, and must answer there without that Advocate! Nay, he will be Judge himself, and will justify none but those that are his members. You will sure confess yourselves, that if you have no part in Christ, you are in a most miserable case. Why, brethren, the case is as plain in Scripture as the highway, That if you are yet unconverted, you are no true christians, and have no part in Christ, as to any saving interest. You are by nature in another stock, and it is converting grace that must cut you out, and plant you into Christ, the living vine. This is the very nature of true conversion: therefore must men be humbled, and mortified, and broken off from themselves and all creatures, that they may be removed and planted into Jesus Christ; and may abide in him, and he in them, and that in him they may bring forth fruit: for out of him you are nothing, and can do nothing. And whatsoever you may profess, you are but withered branches, and must be gathered up, and cast away, and burnt in the fire, John xv. 1, 4—6. It is all one to be a man, and not to be born; as to be a true christian, and not to be new-born: for as our conception and birth is the passage into the life and world of nature, so our conversion or new birth is the passage into the life of grace. We that know not your hearts, do call you all christians that seem to be so; but if we certainly knew who they be that are yet unconverted, we should tell these men to their faces, they are no christians. Their souls are not yet washed with the blood of Christ, nor are they sanctified by his Spirit, and therefore having not his Spirit, they are none of his, Rom. viii. 9. O therefore, in the name of God, look about you, sirs, and you that have lived so long unconverted, remember you have lived so long without a part in Christ. And therefore lament that you have taken on you to be christians so long, when it is not so, and now be such as you have seemed to be. The union between Christ and true christians, is internal, in the heart: mere words and ceremonies unite not men to Christ.

SECT. II.

2. Consider further, I beseech you; there is no hope of the salvation of any unconverted man, that so liveth and dieth. This is true, whether you like it or not. If you are offended at this saying, you are offended with the saying of Christ that redeemed you: and it were better for you to be offended with your sins, than with Christ that condemneth them. If you say, it is a hard saying, I am sure it is a true saying, for God cannot lie. I gave you the proofs of it before at large: if you forget them, remember my text, and you need no more. What hypocrites then are those wretches, that say they will not believe it, and yet for all that, will take on them to be christians, and to believe the word of God. You read here that Christ protesteth, "Verily, that except ye be converted ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." And when you read it, yet you say, you will not believe it. And yet you will say, that you are christians and believe Christ. What contradictions are these! What! wilt thou worship a God whom thou takest to be a liar? This cannot be: no man can heartily trust him, especially in so great a matter as his salvation, whom he takes for a liar. Thou wouldst not give God the lie? If he be not perfectly good, he is not God: and wilt thou then feign a God that is like to liars, or wicked men? No marvel then if you be liars yourselves, if you think God be one; for no man is bound to be better than God. And therefore I will never marvel

to see any man do that evil which he conceits that God himself will do.

But what will sinners get by this unbelief? It is but the way of their own self-delusion and undoing. He that will not believe God, I cannot expect he should believe me, or any man; nor can he rationally expect to be believed himself. Yet I will ask him the question.

You that see what Christ saith, and yet say you will not believe it, but that unconverted men may be saved; what say you? Do you know any man in the world that you will believe, if he speak to you with such protestation as Christ here doth? If you do not, it seems you measure other men by yourselves. If you do, I would fain know of you, whether you think that any man is better than God? I had rather believe that God is true, and every man a liar, than that men are true, and God is a liar, Rom. iii. 4. And I would further ask you, would you have any man believe you, or take your words? If you say no, he is not wise that will have any thing to do with you, if he can choose; and then you openly proclaim what you are, even such liars that you would not wish men to believe you: but if you say aye, then I would further ask you, whether you dare take on you to be better than God? Why, thou sinful lump of clay, thou frail, imperfect, mutable wretch, wouldst thou be believed thyself, and wilt thou not believe God? Darest thou say that thou art truer and better than God, and that thy word is to be taken before his word? If thou dare, do not blame him if he shortly stop that presumptuous mouth of thine, with his confounding indignation; and if he make that blaspheming tongue to be speechless, when he shall say, "Take him, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into utter darkness," Matt. xxii. 12, 13. And then thou wilt have weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Well then, if God be not to be believed, no one is; and if God be to be believed, then no unconverted man shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. And is it not time for you then to consider of your condition, and look about, whether you be converted or not? I pray you be not so silly, as to take these words as mine, and so to think that it is I that make the matter so terrible. If I had not found them in the Bible, I had never preached them to you; and we have nothing to preach, but what we here find, and to open this to you, that you may understand it. It will be nevertheless true, if neither I, nor any preacher in England, should tell you of it; or if none of us did believe it. For our unbelief maketh not the word of God of none effect. I do therefore entreat you all, as you are men of reason, see that you be truly converted, because no unconverted man shall be saved: it is God that saith it, it is the devil that denieth it, and will you believe the devil before God? This was it that brought destruction first upon the world, when God told our first parents, that if they sinned they should die; and the devil told them, they should not die, and they believed the devil rather than God. And have you this warning, and will you do so too? Is that a christian, yea, is that a man, or worthy the name of a man, that will considerably believe the devil before God? and believe his own flesh and carnal reason before God? Whether is God or the devil, think you, the better, and more to be believed, and the better friend to your souls, and more to be trusted and regarded? O horrible wickedness! that ever men should put us on such a question, or make any comparison! And what are you, that you should presume to set your reason against Christ? God saith, Verily the unconverted shall not be saved,

and you say, for all this you hope they shall : and what are you, that you should be believed before God? What, do you know more than he? Why, where had you that knowledge? Is there any knowledge in the world, that comes not from God? and doth he give you more than he hath himself? Is a dungeon lighter than the sun? or is there any light here below, but what comes from the sun mediately or immediately? Why, a dungeon may better compare with the sun, and say, I have more light than thou; than thou canst compare with God, and say, I have more knowledge than thou. Oh! that ever dust and ashes should be so blind, as not to know this! and that ever they should prefer their blindness to the infinite knowledge of him that made them! If you do not, how dare you say, you hope that will prove false which God hath spoken? But do you think that this unbelief will make your danger ever the less? No, it is this that increaseth your danger. What if a man in the midst of evil, will wink, or put his eyes out, is he therefore safe, because he seeth not his danger? Again, therefore, I beseech you, if you be men of reason, if you be not resolved to be your own enemies, and to do the worst you can against yourselves, if you do not long for damnation; O, then, believe God, and take time while you have it, and make out for conversion without delay. And instead of hoping to be saved against the word of God, and as it were in despite of him, and whether he will or no; see that you presently yield to the word, by which he would convert you, if you do not resist it. Believe your present misery, and look out presently to Christ for the remedy, and thank God that you may, and that the day of his patience is not past. And if the devil and sin do still so harden your hearts, that you will not believe, nor take this counsel, remember that thou wast told, that the unconverted shall not enter into heaven. Remember that this was preached to thee from the word of God, and thou wouldst not believe it. Yea, thou shalt remember it whether thou wilt or no.

Sect. III.

3. I beseech you, consider further, that while a man is unconverted, he hath no sin pardoned; all the sin that ever he committed, is yet upon his own score, and he shall answer for it before God, and suffer for it for ever, if he thus continue. I do not speak this either of my own head: I will now give you but three texts of Scripture to prove it, which is as good as three hundred. Mark iv. 12, when Christ speaks of those that were judicially hardened, because they had wilfully resisted grace, he addeth, "Lest at any time they should be converted, and their sin should be forgiven them." By which you see, that till men are converted, their sin is not forgiven them. And Acts xxvi. 18, "I send thee to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance," &c. You see, then, that men receive not forgiveness of sins, till they are turned from the power of sin to God, Rom. viii. 30. This is the order of God's saving grace. "Whom he calleth, (that is, converteth,) them he justifieth; and whom he justifieth, them he glorifieth." So that no man is justified before he be called.

Consider, then, what a fearful case it is to have a load of unpardoned sin upon your souls. One unpardoned sin would as sure condemn a man for ever, as one stab at the heart would kill a man. What then will so many thousands do? Poor sinner, if christianity and humanity did not bind me to com-

passionate thy soul, I would not tell thee these things to trouble thee. But I cannot forbear, unless I would be cruel to thee. It seemeth an easy matter to a felon to think of his crime, while he is not apprehended, because he lives in hope to escape, and therefore he can laugh when he talks of the gallows; but when he comes to it, the case is altered: offenders may escape the justice of men, but no man can so escape the hand of God. It may now seem a small and easy matter to you, to think and talk of unpardoned sin; but the day is coming when you would give all the world if you had it for a pardon, as light as you do now make of it: all are sinners, but all are not unpardoned sinners; it is not all sinners that shall perish; for then we should all perish; but all unpardoned sinners shall perish; and all unconverted sinners are unpardoned. When sin is pardoned, the terror of it is gone; then a man hath a sure refuge against the accusation; he can say at judgment, if he be accused of his sin, that he hath a pardon of all through the blood of Christ, and then there is no more to be done against him: but so cannot the unpardoned. Oh, heavy case for a poor trembling sinner to hear, At such a time thou didst abuse God's creatures, and his name, and his word, and his ordinances; at such a time thou didst neglect duty, and mispend thy time, even the Lord's day; and to have nothing to say against the accusation. What a sight will it be for him, to have all his sins set in order before him! Psal. i. 21. All the sins of his youth, and his riper age, of ignorance, and of knowledge, and have no remedy against the justice and the wrath of God! Once there was a remedy offered them, but being finally neglected, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, "but a certain looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation that shall devour the adversary," Heb. x. 26. Tell me, I beseech you, sirs, what do you think to do by the sins that you are guilty of? Do you believe that you shall come to judgment for them, or not? If not, what do you here among christians? If you do, will you tell me what you mean to say, or how do you think to come off, and to escape? Either you must have a pardon, or not; if you have not pardon, what do you think will become of you? There is no question of it, but an unpardoned sinner must be damned, as sure as the devils themselves are damned; for Christ telleth you this will be the sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41. Oh, woe to that man that ever he was born, that shall stand at God's bar with unpardoned sin! It will be heavier upon thy soul, than a mountain upon thy body, and press thee down to everlasting misery. Unpardoned sin is the very fuel of hell. If angels and men should all join together to save an unpardoned sinner at judgment, they could not do it. What hope have you then to escape, or to see the face of God with comfort? I beseech you, bethink you what you mean to say, or how you think to come off? Should a wise man be going to such a judgment, and never once think what to say for himself, or how to escape when he comes thither? Will you then plead, that you hope you are pardoned by the blood of Christ? Why, alas! that will be utterly vain; for there is no hope that God will be false to his word; and God hath assured you, that the blood of Christ and the mercy of God shall never pardon any sinner, but he that repenteth and is converted from his sin. Will you say, Though I am not pardoned now, yet I hope I may beg pardon then? And do you think to cry aloud, and persuade the Judge? Oh! if that would do, what a cry would there then be! How many thousand and thousand souls would

cry, Mercy, mercy, Lord, on a poor miserable wretch! O pity a lost sinner! O do not condemn thy creature; do not deliver me up to the tormentor; do not send me away from thy presence into those flames! O, as ever thou hadst pity on a sinner, have pity on me. If crying and praying would then serve the turn, how would they ring in the ears of Christ! Oh! but it is then too late! too late, sinners! you should have done this sooner. The day of grace is now past, and there is no remedy. Now prayer might do good, (with forsaking sin through the blood of Christ,) and men will not use it, but then it will do no good at all.

Do not say that I make this terrible doctrine of myself; the Scripture is full of it. Christ hath told you over and over of it, that if you are then found without the oil of saving grace in your lamps, you shall in vain cry, Lord, Lord, open to us; and long enough may you knock, before you can have any hearing; but Christ will say, "Verily, I know you not," Matt. xxv. 11, 12. It is not they that will cry, "Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they that do the will of our Father which is in heaven." For many in that day will plead acquaintance with Christ, to whom he will profess, "I never knew you; depart from me, all ye that work iniquity." They are his own words in Matt. vii. 21—23. I tell you again, if all the angels in heaven should fall down before the Lord Jesus Christ, and beg for you, (which they will never do,) and beseech him to pardon your sins, he will not do it. For it is in this life that pardon must be gotten, or never. We have no hope to be wholly free from sin, but we may procure the pardon of it through Christ; and if it be not done now, it will never be done. Now must the pardon be procured, and sued out, and then it must be brought forth that you may not be condemned.

Now, as ever you would stand with boldness in judgment, sinners, repent and be converted, that you all may have the pardon of all your sins. As ever you would stand then at Christ's right hand, and not be sent into everlasting torment, look about you now for the pardon of your sins; for there was never man that got a pardon after he was dead, who died unpardoned. I give you but the same counsel which Peter gave the Jews: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," Acts iii. 19. I pray you, mark these words; you see there no man's sins will then be blotted out, but those that now repent and are converted.

Sect. IV.

4. The next thing that I would entreat you to consider, is this; that as long as you are unconverted, you are the servants and slaves of Satan, and under his power, and led about as his captives at his will. It may be you do not think so much, nor believe this, but perhaps would take it ill to be told so. But God hath told us that so it is. There are but two sorts of men in the world, the slaves of sin and the servants of Christ. All the world is in two armies; Satan is the general of one, and Christ of the other; and these two are in continual conflict with one another. In his first assault with Adam our first father, Satan overcame him by drawing him to sin, and thereby got him and his posterity into his power. The Lord Jesus comes of purpose to rescue us out of his hands, and this he doth by converting grace, and justification thereupon. So that, till a man be converted, he remaineth in the bondage and slavery of the devil; and when he is con-

verted, he is entered among the free-men and sons of God.

What think you of this? Is it not a miserable state to be the devil's bond-slaves? Why, if you will believe God, it is the case of all that are unconverted: nay, you may feel it in yourselves. Do you not feel that your wills are to do evil? That he leadeth you to worldliness, to drunkenness, or wickedness at his will? If he bid you rail or swear, you do it. If he bid you neglect everlasting life, you do it; and you have no heart to God and the life to come. Why, there are the marks of Satan's bondage. Hear whether the Scripture speaks it not plainly: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness," Rom. vi. 16. "He that committeth sin is of the devil. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God," 1 John iii. 8, 10. The meaning of both is, that he that hath the main bent of his heart and life for sin, that is, for the flesh and the world, is of the devil; and he that hath the main bent of his heart and life for God, that is, for righteousness, is a converted child of God. So 2 Pet. ii. 19, "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." And 2 Tim. ii. 26, they are said to be in the "snare of the devil, taken captive of him at his will." And in Acts xxvi. 18, it is expressly said, that conversion "turneth men from the power of Satan unto God." So that you see the case is plain in Scripture, that, till men are converted, they are in the power of Satan.

It may be you perceive not the misery of your condition; and no marvel, for Satan's servants are all volunteers, and he useth to keep his possession in peace, till a stronger than he shall come upon him, and cast him out, Luke xi. 21. Oh that the eyes of poor sinners were but opened to see who it is that leadeth them about! Poor soul! didst thou but see that the devil is thy ruler, that he standeth by thee, and puts thee on in all thy wickedness, it would sure make thee desire to change thy master. You are afraid of seeing him appear to you in any shape, and if you should but see him, it would make your joints to tremble. O! why are you not more afraid to be ruled by him, and to follow him to your destruction? Why are you not more afraid, lest you should dwell with him for ever? A man that is in the favour of God, were not much the worse if he should see all the devils in hell, no more than a soldier to see the enemies when they are conquered; but a man that is unconverted, whether he see them or not, should tremble to think that he is yet in their snares. Oh that you did but know, and well consider, that it is the devil himself within you that cavilleth against the word of God, and contradicteth the truth, and draweth you to doubt, and enticeth you to sin. If you did hear the devil say to you with a voice, Come, follow me to the ale-house, it would sure frighten you from going. Or if you heard him speak out, and say against the gospel, It is not true, do not believe it, how would this affect you! Why, it is he that speaks this in you, whenever you have these thoughts in your hearts. Your own corrupt hearts are the mother, but he is the father of them all. When you feel such thoughts as these within you, that sin is a small matter, and that God doth not hate it so much as preachers talk of, and that God will not condemn all the unconverted, that so live and die, and that men may be saved without a holy life, and that this is but preciseness, and more ado than needs, all this is as truly the very inward per-

suasions and motions of the devil, as if you heard him speak it openly in a voice. It is he that bids you go on in sin and fear not, and yet at least take a little more of your fleshly pleasure, and if you must turn, let it not be yet. It is he that bids you hate them that endeavour your conversion, and make a scorn of those that fear God. It is he that bids you lose your time, especially on the Lord's day, and talk of filthiness or vanity, and rail, or lie, or backbite, or hate your brother; as truly as if you saw and heard him, this is he. The Scripture telleth us so, that this is his work, which Christ did come into the world to destroy, 1 John iii. 8. We can certainly know the workman by his work. So had a work hath no better an author. I beseech you, therefore, in the name of God, bethink you where you are, and what a case you are in. Have you known all this while, that you were in the power and captivity of the devil? What, and yet be so merry or careless as you have been? What, sleep quietly, and live quietly, and yet be in such a case? Why, if a man be taken prisoner by the Turks, and laid in a dungeon, or put into their galleys, how sadly doth he take it! How many a sigh and groan comes from him, to think where he is, and what a case he is in, in comparison of other men! And many a time he cries, Oh that I were free! And yet all the servants of Satan are willing of their bondage. This is it that makes you deserve the less pity, because it is your own doing, and you will not be delivered. A Turkish slave would be delivered if he could, and would give a thousand thanks to him that would deliver him; but you might be delivered and will not. Christ hath provided a remedy in his blood, he offereth it to you, and entreatheth you to accept it, and yet you will not. He hath commanded us to entreat you, and you will not be entreated. "God would have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of his truth," and many will not be saved. Christ "would gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and they will not," 1 Tim. ii. 4; Matt. xxiii. 37. When God offers you help, and ministers offer you help, and godly friends offer you help, and faint they would have you delivered, and you will not; what pity do you deserve, if you perish everlastingly? It is a strange thing to see how people hate the devil, and yet love his service! how they speak ill of him and yet obey him! how they even then spit at his name, as men that abhor him, and yet will not be persuaded by any means that we can use, to come out of this captivity, when the doors are set open by Christ that bought them! Not that I suspect that any of you do really love him; for I know that God hath put an enmity in the beginning, even between the nature of Satan and of man, Gen. iii. 15. I know you hate him, even while you wilfully serve him. But the matter lieth here: though you hate him, you love the sin, because it is pleasant to flesh and blood, and you do not know, or will not consider, that it is he indeed that leadeth you to it; or else you durst not continue in that case. Well, sirs, lay this to heart, and believe that all men are slaves to Satan till they be converted; and if you are not willing to live and die his slaves, and to be used for ever as his slaves, delay not your conversion.

Sect. V.

5. Moreover, the misery of the unconverted doth further appear in this; that while men are unconverted, nothing that they do can truly please God. There are many works which, for the matter of them, are commanded, which such men may do; but yet there are so many defects, and so much of the venom of their corruption mixed in them, that God hath no

delight in them, but doth abhor them. I would not be misunderstood in this, as if I said or thought, that, therefore, all that the unconverted can do, is to no purpose, in order to their salvation; and that, therefore, it is as good for them to let all alone, and sit still and be careless till God shall convert them; or as if it were better, or as good, for them not to pray, as to pray, and not to hear or read, or ask advice, as to do it, because that all is displeasing to God. But I mean and say, that there is more in their best duties to displease God, than to please him, and that they are such as he hath made them no promise of accepting, so far as to give them any special grace, or reward thereupon. Or if this please not any, yet this much is out of controversy, that the duties of no unconverted man are pleasing to God, so as to prove their persons pleasing to him, as his own servants are; and that God takes no delight in their duties, as he doth in those that are performed by the righteous. And thus at least you may take it as beyond all question, that God is comparatively displeased with and abhors even the best works that are performed by the unconverted. The works of wicked men are of four sorts. (1.) Some are such as have no tendency to their conversion and recovery, nor to the good of any others, but are either plainly wicked for the substance, or but indifferent for the matter, and wicked in the ends and manner. These God abhors in the highest degree. (2.) And there are some that are common civil actions, in themselves neither good nor evil, nor yet designed to any special wicked end. But yet, because the common ends of such are wrong, and the manner sinful, these therefore are said to be abomination to the Lord. (3.) And then there are their best works which are done by them with evil intents, to settle them in their present state, without any thoughts of turning from it, as their alms-deeds which are done to merit, or to quiet their consciences in a sinful state, or the like. These also God abhorreth, for all the good that is in them. For these they do as wicked men, wickedly, for all the goodness that is in the action. (4.) But then there are some actions of the unconverted, that are in order to their conversion, and these God accepteth not, so as to accept their persons, as of one reconciled to him in Christ, nor as he accepteth the works of his people, nor so as to be engaged by promise for their reward. But yet he so far accepteth them, that they are ordinarily the way in which he will be found, and in which he will give them greater things. They are means of his appointing for the conversion of their souls, which he hath not appointed them to use in vain. So that by this time you may see my meaning here in this particular. The three first sorts of the works of wicked men, God doth plainly abhor, even their wicked works that are both such for matter and end; and their civil and natural works, that are wicked for the end; and their religious works, that are wicked for the end. But the fourth sort, which are works that are done in order to their conversion, though they please not God as the works of the regenerate do, yet he abhorreth them not as he doth the rest: for as they come from a common faith, though not from a special faith, so they may please God in a common manner, though not in a special. And as they have an end that is good in its place, that is, the saving of their souls by turning from their sins; though they have not the true ultimate end of the saints, that is, the glory and pleasing of God everlastingly and the enjoyment of him therein; so are they proportionably acceptable to God. So that it is the first three sorts of actions that I mean in this application. And in re-

gard of them, I say it is a matter of great terror to the unconverted, that God abhorreth all that they do.

I will first prove it to you, and then show you the terror of it. As for their wicked works, there is no question they are abominable to God, and he hateth them. See Jer. xlv. 4; Psal. liii. 1, 14; i. Ezek. xvi. 52; Tit. i. 16; Prov. viii. 16; xi. 1, 20; xii. 22. And the "very thoughts of the wicked are abominable to him," as Prov. xv. 26. But the question is of their better works. And we find in Scripture, that their very trades, and works of their callings, are sin. The "ploughing of the wicked is sin," Prov. xxi. 4; or if perhaps the sense of that text may be that their preparations and contrivances are sinful, which are metaphorically called ploughing, yet of their best works the Scripture is plain. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight," Prov. xv. 8. Note, that he saith not, the humiliation, or the repentance, or thoughts of conversion, that may be in a wicked man; but his sacrifice, which is somewhat that he thinketh God should accept, as a matter of worth. And therefore it was that Cain's sacrifice was abhorred, when Abel's was accepted. And that you may see that it is not only because of the wicked designs that they may have in it, the Spirit of God speaketh of both. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind," Prov. xxi. 27. Yea, the very prayer of wicked men is abominable. Yet do not say that God is a respecter of persons, and will take that well from one, which he hateth from another without any just cause. For there is just cause. If you will not do the main things that God requireth, he careth not for the rest. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination," Prov. xxviii. 9. The law of God commandeth you to take another course, and condemneth your wicked life, and if you will turn away your ear from this law, that would turn away your heart from sin, God will not accept your prayer. "If I regard iniquity in my heart God will not hear my prayer," Psal. lxxvi. 18. "He that calleth on the name of the Lord, must depart from iniquity," 2 Tim. ii. 19. Yea, the fasting and self-afflicting of the wicked is disregarded, Isa. lviii. 2, 3. Little doth a poor blind sinner think when he is boasting of his praying and religious duties, that God abhorreth them; but if they be unconverted, they will find it so. "Ye are they that justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts," Luke xvi. 15. For that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God. And one reason is, because that the person himself is such as God doth hate; and therefore no wonder if he hate his works. For a fig-tree beareth not thorns and thistles, nor the bramble grapes; but as the tree is, so is the fruit. "Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity. The wicked is made for the day of evil, and every one that is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord," Psal. v. 5; Prov. iv. 5. Though men bless, yet the Lord abhorreth them, Psal. x. 3. When he seeth their wickedness, he abhors even those that profess themselves his people, Deut. xxxii. 19; yea, and his own sanctuary, and the very place of his worship, Lam. ii. 7. Especially when they often deal falsely with him, Psal. lxxviii. 59. And no wonder, when wicked men do loathe the Lord and his service, if he do also loathe them. "My soul loatheth them, and their soul also abhorreth me," Zech. xi. 8. Sinners, the case in a word is this: God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and such worshippers only doth he choose; and wicked men can give him but the shell, and the

shadow of his service. God made all things for himself, and will accept of nothing but what is intended for himself. But wicked men are turned from God, and do all for their carnal selves, even when they pretend to do it for God. It is your hearts that God hath lost, and your hearts that he regardeth, and your hearts he will have again, or he will have nothing; but you may even keep all to yourselves if you will, except you will give him this. What need hath God of your prayers, or other services, or what good can you do him by all? It is yourselves that he desireth, and then he will accept your service, though he need it not, and will make it good to you, though it can do no good to him. Therefore this is his first demand, "My son, give me thine heart," Prov. xxiii. 26; and if you deny him this, you deny him all. He careth not for your lips, nor your religious duties, without it. If you will not first give him yourselves, he will not accept of any thing that you offer him. And, indeed, when it is not in a returning way, but in an offering way, that wicked men will serve him, he plainly telleth them it is in vain, and telleth them he hateth it, and bids them keep it with them; for he will have none of it till they leave their sins, and give up themselves to him. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? saith the Lord: I am full of your burnt-offerings. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread in my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meetings. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord," Isa. i. 11—18. If a prince have subjects that are in rebellion, he will not take any gift at their hands, till they come in themselves: no more will God at your hands. There is no true minister of the gospel, but feebleth some exposition of this in his own heart. If the people would send us any tokens of their love and expressions of kindness, if it were not for exasperating them, who would not return it them with contempt, as long as they refuse to be reformed, and will not yield to the word of the gospel? To let go their goods, if it were all they have, for us, is a matter that we regard not, if they will not let go their sins; because we seek not theirs, but them: and much more is it so with Jesus Christ. If you should be as punctual in his worship as any, and give him never so much of your knees or tongues, yea, or your goods, and all you have, he will not take it as a thing that pleaseth him, unless withal you give him yourselves. "If I suffer my body to be burnt," saith Paul, "and have not love, it availeth nothing," 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Many a poor unconverted wretch considereth not this, that comes constantly to church, and receiveth the sacrament, and useth some kind of praying every day, and thinks, that if God should not accept of such as them, there should almost nobody be saved; and therefore they make no question of his acceptance. O, but one thing is necessary, and that is yet wanting. If God had your hearts first, then he would take the rest in good part: but when the world hath your hearts, and though you sit and hear with some delight, as if you were his people, yet your "heart goeth after your covetousness," Ezek. xxxiii. 31. When your

fleshly pleasure and profit have your hearts, God will not regard your service, were it much more.

Now it is the work of conversion to bring the heart to God, that was never brought to him and set upon him before: therefore till this work be done, all is but abominable. "For without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 7. You think to live to the flesh, and then to please God by your good praying and meanings, or by being of the right religion, or by some good works; but remember what God himself hath told you, who best knoweth what it is that pleaseth him: Rom. viii. 8, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God;" and all that are unconverted, are said to be in the flesh, because they "mind the things of the flesh," and live according to their carnal inclinations, and for carnal ends. O what a sad consideration would this be to your hearts, if you did but understand and feel your own condition! You talk against this man and that man for being of a wrong religion, and you think you are better than this party or that, whereas you are miserable, whatsoever your religion be, because you are heartily of no religion. You think God will be pleased with your service, and it doth but add to the load of your sin. You read the word, and think you do God service by it, when you do but read your own condemnation, because you have your hearts against the doctrine that you read. You think you serve God by coming to church, but if you refuse to let the word convert you, how should God be pleased with such a service as this? It is as if you should tell your servant what you have for him to do, and because he hath given you the hearing, he thinks he should have his wages, though he do nothing of that which you set him to do. Were not this an unreasonable servant? or would you give according to his expectation? It is a strange thing that men should think that God will save them for dissembling with him, and save them for abusing his name and ordinances. Every time you hear, or pray, or praise God, or receive the sacrament, while you deny God your heart, and remain unconverted, you do but despise him, and show more of your rebellion than your obedience. Would you take him for a good tenant, that at every rent-day would duly wait on you, and put off his hat to you, but bring you never a penny of rent? Or would you take him for a good debtor, that brings you nothing but an empty purse, and expects you should take that for payment? God biddeth you come to church, and hear the word; and so you do, and so far you do well: but withal, he chargeth you to suffer the word to work upon your hearts, and to take it home and consider of it, and obey it, and cast away your former courses, and give up your hearts and lives to him; and this you will not do. And yet you think that he will accept of your service. Dare you plead such services with God for a reward, and say, Lord, though we shut thee out of our hearts, yet we gave thee the hearing?

Sirs, I beseech you lay this well to heart, What will you do in a day of affliction? What will you do at an hour of death? Will you not fall a praying? Will you not call to God for mercy, when you see that nothing but his mercy can relieve you? Why, if you be unconverted, God will not hear your prayers; he abhorreth them, because he hath not your hearts. Oh sad case, for a man in misery to look about him, and see no hope in heaven or earth but God alone, and when he begins to cry for help to him, he will loathe their prayers, and turn away his ears, and will not hear! Hear his own word, Prov. i. 27—29, "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched forth my hands, and no man re-

garded," &c. to the end of that chapter. For my part, I foresee the day is coming, when I would not take all the world to be without a God to pray to. O, then, to have a man's prayers themselves thought but iniquity, and charged on him as his sin, when he must have present help or perish, what sadder case can there be? For a man that is going into another world, and calls to God to receive his soul, to have prayers and soul cast out together, how sad a case is it! Sirs, do not mistake me, as if I took you off from prayers or other holy duties by this; but I tell you, that if you go on in any kind of duty, and remain unconverted, you cannot look that God should take any kind of pleasure in them or in you. If you say then, It is as good never a whit, as never the better: I answer, do your great duty first, and then all the rest will be accepted; yield to the word and Spirit, resist not the grace of God any longer; give him your hearts, and give them no longer to this deceitful world; and then come and welcome. And for the duties that tend to conversion, as, hearing the word, and begging true grace of God which may convert you, and considering of those truths that must be the instruments to do it; these are the very beginnings of the work, and therefore it is not these that we discourage you from: it is time for you to use these, that the rest may be accepted.

SECT. VI.

6. Another sad consideration, concerning the state of an unconverted man, is this, as long as they remain in that condition they live in continual danger of damnation. They are under the wrath of God; and though patience have long forborne them, to try whether they will repent, yet are they not sure whether it will stay for them one day longer: they are under the curse of the law, and when it will be executed they cannot tell. I have told you already from the word of God, that an unconverted man cannot be saved; and I need not tell you, sure, that he is uncertain how long he shall continue in this world. And methinks a man that is sure to go to hell if he dieth, and knoweth not whether it may not be this day, should have little comfort in his life till he were changed. Now the Lord have mercy on poor, hard-hearted sinners! What do they mean, then, that they look no more about them? Why will not the word of the living God awaken them, which telleth them how near they are to perdition? I do here make known to you from the word of truth, that if there be any unconverted souls in this assembly, they are not certain to be out of hell an hour. God knows, sirs, I would not tell you of this if it were needless. But, alas! what do you mean, to continue in such a case as this? As sure as the word of God is true, every soul that goeth unconverted out of the body, is shut out of all hope of mercy for ever, and entereth into a remediless misery. Remember, then, man, in the name of God, every morning thou arisest, and every night thou liest down, that thou art uncertain to be out of hell till the next day. Alas! it is enough to amaze a poor christian, that is indeed converted, when he doth but find himself in doubt of it; how much more should it awaken them that are yet in the flesh! Many a one that truly feared God, having wanted assurance at the time of death, oh how terrible hath it made death to them! To look before them and think they must be gone, and they know not whither; to think that it is but one day or two more, and my soul will be among angels or devils, and I know not which of the two it will be! Oh what a dreadful thought is this, even to many that are converted, for want of assurance at the time of death! But, alas! this is but a small matter in comparison of

the case of the unconverted; for as soon as the soul is out of the flesh, all the fears of the godly are at an end, and they shall never more have a doubting thought: but for the rest, if you should die with never so great confidence, death would dispel it all; and as soon as you were out of the body, your eyes would be opened to see that which would never let you have a thought of hope or comfort more. I speak none of this of myself. "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish; and the hope of the unjust man perisheth," Prov. xi. 7. "For what is the hope of the wicked, though he have gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry, when trouble cometh upon him?" Job xxvii. 8. "So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish; whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure," Job viii. 13-15. "The eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost," Job xi. 20. Take this home with you then, and let it cause you to have no rest till you are truly converted, that till then you are never certain to be one day or hour more in safety.

SECT. VII.

7. From all this you may see another sad consideration, which is, That as long as a man is unconverted, he hath no ground for one hour's true peace and comfort, but hath reason to live in continual terror, and to be the grief of all that know his misery. For should a man be merry that is in such a case as this? O no; if his eyes were opened, it would certainly affright him, either out of his sins, or out of his wits. Many worldly vanities and sensual delights such men may have, to delight their thoughts; but this is their weakness, and not their happiness. Some malefactors when they are to be hanged, will make themselves drunk beforehand, that death may not be terrible to them; but this is but a medicine against repentance, and not against hell. So do thousands of poor sinners make themselves drunk with merry company, and false conceits, and worldly businesses, and fleshly pleasures; but though this do ease their hearts awhile, and keep away the feeling of their misery, it will not do so long, but only till the hope of cure be past. Brethren, the desire of my soul is to advance the consolation of the saints, and to take from you no peace or hope, but what death will take from you, if it be not done before; and if I had any hopes that your merry days would last after death, and would not end in everlasting sorrow, I would not be one that should interrupt your mirth. Truly you should hold on in your careless, drowsy course for me, if I did not see the after-reckoning; but seeing the case is such as I have proved, with all that are unconverted, I must say to all in that condition, that mirth is very unsuitable to your state, and laughter doth ill become you. And if ever a man might say of it as Solomon, Thou art mad, it is when it appeareth in the face of such a man that stands all the while on the very brink of hell. What! be merry in the power of Satan, under the wrath of God, before you are pardoned, and before you know whether ever you shall be saved, or escape the everlasting pains of hell? Oh doleful mirth! What wise man would be partner with you in such pleasure? Now sirs, I beseech you that are in this case, for your poor souls' sake, when you are next among your merry companions, let this thought come into your mind, Oh, but I am not yet converted. When you are next in your worldly cares and businesses, or careless for your souls, bethink you then,

Oh, but I am not yet converted. And every day and night, wherever you are, whatever you do, oh think still, I am yet unconverted; that so you may look about you, and come to yourselves, and get into that condition, wherein you may have cause indeed to be merry. Methinks every time you hear the bell toll, it should frighten you; every time you go among the sick, or see any brought to the grave, it should frighten you; yea, every thing that you look on should be matter of terror to you till you are out of this condition. Sure there is no believing friend that you have that knows your case, but must needs pity you. They are bound to lament you. Only this comfort doth yet remain, that a sufficient remedy is provided in the blood of Christ, which will recover you, if you do not proceed to make light of it. This is all your comfort, that your case is not remediless, as long as you are under the calls of grace. Take heed, in the name of God take heed, of going on any longer in that condition, lest you make it remediless: there is yet a possibility of your salvation, but not without your conversion. You have to do with a merciful God, and that you find by experience, or else you had not been here now; but oh go not out of the reach of mercy: never did God's mercy save one unconverted soul, any other way than by converting them. And the greater are your possibilities now, and the freelier the blood of Christ is offered you, the greater will be your sorrow if you lose all this, and by neglecting it do make your case remediless.

SECT. VIII.

8. Consider further, The warnings that the unconverted have of their danger, are so many, and so great, that if they be neglected, they will multiply their misery. To be an unconverted man among the Turks or heathens, is no wonder, any more than to be in the dark at midnight. To be unconverted among papists, is not so much wonder, any more than to miss your way by moonshine: but to be unconverted in the midst of gospel light, this is a sin that hath no excuse, and a misery that liveth in despite of the remedy. All the preachers that have told you of your misery, and persuaded you to turn, shall be witnesses against you: yea, all the examples of the wicked that have gone before you, that were set forth for your bettering, shall be witnesses against you. The way to hell is a beaten road, and most of the world do tread it continually; and therefore you might have known and avoided it, when God had told you how to know it. God hath not left you in darkness, but you shut your eyes; the light shines round about you, and you will not see; you have Bibles, and you have other good books, and you have teachers, and you may have neighbours that are able and willing to help you, but you will not make use of them. O sirs, consider I beseech you, to get well to heaven, is a business and not a play. It is a matter to be inquired after, and prayed for, and learned with all diligence and care, and not to be put off with heartless shows. Hear, then, O hear the call of God that soundeth in thine ears, to bring thee to conversion: wilt thou run on when God is calling after thee? He calleth by his word; he calleth by his ministers; he calleth by his judgments, and by his mercies, by conscience, and by his Spirit; and will you stop your ears, and slight them all? Many a one hath come in at the first call that ever they had by the preaching of the gospel, and you have had a hundred and a hundred, and yet will you not return? Believe it, sirs, the calls of God will convert you, or confound you: his word will not return in vain: you cannot resist his grace

after all this warning, at such easy and cheap rates as many others in the world may do. Your impiten-
 cy and wilfulness hath the more obstinacy in it,
 by how much the greater light you do resist. If the
 gospel do not convert you, you will wish you had
 never heard or read it. Hear what Christ himself
 saith of those that were not converted by his word.
 "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your
 word, when you depart out of that house or city,
 shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto
 you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Go-
 morrah in the day of judgment than for that city,"
 Matt. x. 14, 15. Christ did upbraid the cities where
 his works were done, because they repented not:
 "Woe to thee, Chorazin! woe to thee, Bethsaida! for
 if the mighty works, which have been done in you,
 had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they had repented
 long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto
 you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at
 the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Caperna-
 um, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought
 down to hell; for if the mighty works which have
 been done in thee," &c. Matt. xi. 20—23. The Lord
 grant that I may never hear Christ upbraiding any
 of this congregation with the warnings that they did
 neglect. It is a heavy case, that when Christ send-
 eth to men the gospel of salvation, they must be up-
 braided with it, because they would not be saved by
 it. And that Sodom and Gomorrah, those places of
 abomination that bore the most remarkable plagues
 of God, being consumed with fire and brimstone
 from the Lord, should yet speed better in the day of
 judgment, than many of our poor people that sit
 under our teaching from day to day. In a word,
 sirs, remember this, all unconverted sinners that so
 lived and died, shall be condemned, but those that
 had the greatest means and warnings, shall have the
 greatest condemnation.

Sect. IX.

9. Consider further, That the further men go on
 in an unconverted state, the deeper is their sin, the
 harder is their cure, and the greater will be their
 punishment. It is not a state wherein you may
 safely abide, no, not a day, if you were sure to have
 time for repentance. Is it a small thing to go on in
 sin, and to add to that heap that is so great already,
 and to increase that mountain which is so insupport-
 able? As long as you are unconverted, you live in
 the continual abuse of God and all his mercies: you
 abuse him most unworthily, for you prefer the un-
 worthy creature before him, as if he and his glory
 were no better than this earth, nor so good neither:
 you abuse him by denying him that which is his
 own; you deny him your hearts; you deny him
 your service; that which he hath made and redeemed;
 you deny him that which none can lay claim to
 but himself. You abuse his word by rejecting it;
 you abuse his sabbaths by profaning them; you
 abuse his image in his servants by contemning it;
 you abuse his name by taking it in vain; you abuse
 his mercy, and all his creatures, by beholding them
 in vain; and by advancing them into the throne, and
 giving them that which is not their due: though
 you worship not sun and moon, yet you worship
 meat, and drink, and ease, and money: and thus you
 live in the abuse of all things; and besides the rest,
 you abuse your own souls. They were made for the
 high God, and fitted to love him and honour him,
 and live to him here, and to see his face in glory
 hereafter; and all unconverted men do abuse them
 to the basest drudgery of the devil: they make them
 sinks of sin, and dunghills to receive the excrements
 of the earth. God hath advanced you above the

beasts that perish, and made you for a life with
 angels in his glory, if you would but believe it, and
 set your hearts upon it: and you debase your own
 souls, and make them brutish, as if they had no bet-
 ter a happiness than a swine! or as if you were
 worms that live in the earth; or rather beetles that
 live in dung. Who can marvel, if a carnal man
 abuse God, and the godly, and all things else, when
 he wilfully and delightfully doth so abuse himself?
 It may turn the passion of those they abuse into
 compassion, when they consider, whatsoever they do
 against others, they do a hundred times more against
 themselves: they scorn us, and they wound them-
 selves: they tempt others to sin, but they cast them-
 selves into it: they wrong our names, or estates, or
 bodies, and they damn their own souls. Alas, poor
 wretches, who would have thoughts of revenge on
 such men that are the cruellest persecutors and
 destroyers of themselves? Oh, what a base indignity
 do they put upon a noble and immortal soul, to make
 it like the body, inclining unto earth, as if it had
 been taken hence as the body was, to take it down
 from living upon God, and engage it in a life of
 mere vanity!

Moreover consider, that all the while you continue
 unconverted, you grow hardened in your sin; and as
 you forsake God more, so doth his Spirit withdraw
 from you: and custom will make you still worse and
 worse. Your recovery will be harder the next week
 than this, and therefore it is not a state to be con-
 tinued in: but of this we shall speak, when we come
 to the particular exhortation.

Sect. X.

10. As long as you remain in an unconverted state,
 you deprive yourselves of a world of happiness, that
 God doth offer you, and you might possess. You
 might have God instead of the creature; and Christ
 instead of a carnal self; and the Spirit instead of the
 devil that doth deceive you: you might have holi-
 ness instead of the filth of wickedness; and justifica-
 tion for condemnation; and a blessing for the curse;
 and the state of reconciledness, instead of the enmity
 that you are in to God: you might have peace of
 conscience instead of terrors or groundless security;
 you might serve a better master now, and in better
 company, and have better wages both here and
 hereafter. You do not know what you lose every
 day that you remain unconverted, more than all the
 pleasures of sin can afford you. Ask any of them
 that have escaped out of that condition that you are
 in, whether they are willing to return? You see
 not perhaps that they have got any thing by the
 change, and therefore you think you lose nothing
 by continuing as you are; but their gains are out of
 sight: it is almost out of their own sight, and there-
 fore it may well be out of yours. But if themselves
 should deny it, it is not therefore an uncertain or
 contemptible thing; for the foundation of God stand-
 eth sure; he knoweth who are his. If it were but
 to be employed upon higher things, and to escape
 the deadly wounds of conscience which you give
 yourselves, or else prepare for, it is no small gain to
 be a true believer; and if they found themselves in
 no better a case than they were before, they would
 be tempted to return to their former state; but that
 they will not do for a world. I dare say, if you did
 know but the danger and horrible misery of the life
 that you now live, you would make as much haste
 out of it, as a man would do out of a house that was
 on fire over his head; or as a man that was at sea in
 a leaking vessel, that if he did not bestir himself as
 for his life to get to the shore, would sink and
 drown him. And if you knew but the case of a con-

verted soul, even of those that walk most heavily, and most bewail their own condition, you would not be out of it one day longer, if you could possibly help it. Well, I have showed you what it is to be unconverted : if any of you dare yet go on in such a case, and unbelievably cavil at the word of God, or carelessly trample it under your feet ; if God do forsake you and leave you to yourselves, and if death do find you in that sad estate, you may thank yourselves.

CHAPTER V.

Sect. I.

HAVING said thus much to you by way of terror, if it may be to drive you from an unconverted state, I shall not so leave you ; but shall next say somewhat also by way of allurements, to draw you to a better state. For as there is enough in your misery to drive a sober man from it, so is there enough in the hope that is set before you, to draw any believing heart to embrace it. The gospel is a joyful message, and bringeth glad tidings of salvation to all that entertain it ; if you will not shut your eyes by unbelief, or inconsiderateness, you shall see that God calls you not to your hurt or loss. If there be not more to be had in his service than in the service of the world, the flesh, or the devil, take your course, and never regard me more. If I do not give you sufficient reason to prove to you that you make a better bargain by speedy conversion, than by continuing in your carnal, unconverted state, I am contented that you never more give me the hearing : for my part, I would not persuade you to your hurt or loss, nor make such a stir about an uncertain gain ; nor about a small matter, were it never so certain : but my principal arguments are yet behind. Fear is not the principal affection of a true convert ; and therefore terrifying arguments are not the principal means ; yet these must be used, or else God had never put such an affection into man's heart, nor such terrifying passages into his word ; and we all feel the need and usefulness of it ; for in reason he that is in danger should know it. But yet, it is love that must be the predominant affection ; and therefore it is the discovery of the amiableness of God, and the wonderful gain that comes by godliness, that must be the principal argument that we must use with you. For we know that men will not be directly affrighted into love, though they must be affrighted from the contrary that hindereth it : do not think that God hath no better argument to use with you, than to take you by the throat, and say, Love me or I will damn thee. Thus he will use to wean you from the contrary love, and to let you know the fruit of your folly, that he may equally carry on his work upon all the affections of your souls together. But he that principally requireth your love, doth give you undeniable reason why you should love him : and he that calls for your hearts, doth show you that which might take with your hearts, and effectually win them, if your eyes were opened to see what he showeth you. He draweth them as a loadstone doth the iron, by the force of his attractive love. If there be not more in God that is worth your love than in all the world, if all were yours, then hold on your present course and spare not. But why make I any comparison in such a case ? It were a dangerous irreverence in me, but that your necessity re-

quireth it ; because wicked men do not only make a comparison first, but also prefer the world before God ; though not in their tongues, yet in their hearts and lives : if I were but able to make you thoroughly know what that condition is that I persuade you to, I would desire no better argument to prevail with you ; were it in my power but to open your eyes to make you know what conversion is, and what it doth for those that have it, I should make no doubt of your speedy conversion : for none withdraw their hearts from God, but for want of knowing him ; and none are against a holy life, but those that understand not sufficiently what it is : and none do prefer this world, and the pleasures and profits of it, before the glorious things that God doth offer them, but only they that are cheated and bewitched by it, and know not what it is that they dote upon. If I were but able to give you such a sight as Stephen had, Acts vii. 56, when he saw the heavens opened, and Christ standing at the right hand of God, I should have no need to call you from your fleshly vanities. Oh how contemptuously would you throw away your former pleasure, and run to see and be possessors of that glory ! If I could but bring you with Paul into the third heaven, to see the unutterable things that every true believer shall possess, I would give you no thanks to cast off this world, and presently to turn to God. Nay, if you had but the light about you that Paul had at his conversion, it would do much : but what talk I of these extraordinary things ? If you did but know by a sound belief, such as all the converted have, what a blessed life it is that we invite you to, away you would come without delay ; as the apostles when Christ called them from their trades and friends, and bid them follow him, they presently left all, though they saw nothing in the world to draw them on ; so would you, if you were but well illuminated. And because all that I can do in this work, is to propound to your understandings the excellency of that condition which I persuade you to, I shall next fall upon that, and leave the issue to God, desiring him to open your eyes to see what shall be propounded.

Sect. II.

1. When a sinner is converted, he is delivered from the power of Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. The bonds of your captivity will all be broken in your return to Christ : as Peter's chains fell off him, and the prison doors were set open, when the angel raised him up, Acts xii. 7 ; so will it be with thy soul when God converteth thee. Ignorance and wilfulness in fleshly pleasures, and the love of this world, these are the chains that Satan holds men in ; and conversion will bring thee "from darkness to light," Acts xxvi. 18 ; even from the "power of darkness into the kingdom of Christ," Col. i. 13. It will bring such a marvellous light into thy mind, as thou never hadst before, which will make thee marvel at the riches of grace and glory, and marvel at the wonderful love of God, and wonder at that thy former folly that couldst neglect it. Thus will God bring thee "out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Pet. ii. 9. Telling you what this light is, will not be sufficient to make you know it, till you see it yourselves. You shall then have other apprehensions of things than now you have, even of the same things which you see and seem to know. You will have another knowledge of the world, and of Christ, and grace, and duty, and all spiritual things, even of good and evil, than now you have. As the first sin did open Adam's eyes to know good and evil by sad experience, as having lost the good and felt the evil ; and also to know them in a separated sense, as distinct

and separated in his thoughts from God; so true conversion will open your eyes to know good and evil by a blessed experience, even to see God the chiefest good, as recovered to you for your felicity; and sin and hell the greatest evils from which you are delivered; and to see God in all the creatures, and the respect and tendency they have all to him. I cannot by bare telling you make you conceive what a marvellous change will be in your understanding, what an excellent and marvellous light you will see, when once conversion hath opened your eyes. Let me endeavour by a familiar comparison to acquaint you with somewhat of it in general, though I cannot give you the thing itself. You know that a dog that liveth in the house with you doth see the same things, and place, and persons in the house as you do, and he hath some kind of knowledge of them; he knoweth every room, and every person in the house: suppose now that God should turn this dog suddenly into a man; do you think there would not be a marvellous change in his apprehension? Would he not see something in every thing, and place, and person to marvel at? Would he not know all these things in another manner than before he did? I do not say, that the change which conversion makes is just of such a kind as this; but it is very marvellous, and we may by such a similitude help our apprehensions of it. When some of the poor naked Indians have been brought into this land, how strange did every thing seem to them! When they came into London, with what wondering would they gaze about them, as if they had been in another world! And will not a poor converted soul do so, when God hath newly opened his eyes, and made him see that which he never saw before? O then he sees that evil in sin that maketh him wonder! that ravishing love in Christ that maketh him wonder! that amiable glory in the face of God, and that truth in the promises of eternal blessedness, that make him wonder! when before he could see nothing to wonder at in any of them. O sirs, if you knew but the pleasure of this marvellous light that God by conversion would let into your souls, you would never rest till you found yourselves converted. Every man hath a natural desire of knowledge, and in a natural way they are seeking after it; and many do even in the use of these means, which should be spiritual, employ themselves but in natural seeking. One man thinks that common learning can help him to this light, and therefore he readeth and studieth day and night; and I deny not but in its place it is good. Another thinks that among this or that party it is to be found, and in the discovery of this or that low opinion it doth consist; but when all is done, it is the great and common truths that are most wonderful, and converting grace that must show men the glory of them. It is not in rarities of new discoveries, nor strange principles that were never heard of till now, that this light is to be found. But it is in the substance of christian verity. I tell you, sirs, you that now use to mutter over your creed for a prayer, and hear the catechism without understanding it, if your eyes were opened by converting grace, you would marvel at the very doctrine of the creed and catechism. You would see that excellency, and feel that weight in common truths, that would exceedingly take up your very hearts. You now know not what it is to believe in God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost; but then these three words would seem to you of greater glory than the sun at noon-day; they would find you both work and wonder, and yet delight, if you had no more than these to think of.

And do you love the darkness rather than such

light? Have you been so long in the dungeon, that you are fallen in love with it, and are loth to come out? Is all this light so small a matter in your eyes? Are you like an owl or bat that cannot endure the light of the sun? Or rather like a thief that hates the daylight, because he is afraid of being made known? O sinners, I beseech you come away and leave your dungeon state of darkness, and live in the light of the countenance of God. "It is a pleasant thing for the eyes to see the sun," Eccles. xi. 7. Deprive not yourselves of the pleasure which is offered you.

And it is not only your chains of darkness, but also your wilfulness and blind affections, that converting grace will turn you from: these bonds of worldly profits and pleasure that seem so strong to others that they cannot overcome them, you will shake them off as Samson did his bonds, and they will not be able to separate you from the love of God: the same tempter that so easily prevails with others, will not be able to prevail against you; "The God of peace will tread him under your feet," Rom. xvi. 20. In the work of conversion Christ layeth siege to the heart of a sinner, which naturally is Satan's garrison; and he battereth it, and starveth it, and forceth it to yield, "and bindeth that strong man that possesseth it in peace," Luke xi. 21. So he is cast out of his possession by converting grace; he hath not the same power there that he had before: once he could have commanded the man to swear, or be drunk, or neglect his soul, and he would have done it; but now he hath no such power: once he could have turned their thoughts against Christ, and their tongues to cavil against his word, but now he cannot; they are now under another government. They have now that repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, by which they are recovered out of the snares of the devil, who formerly led them captive at his will, 2 Tim. ii. 25. The very first day that you are converted, you are the free-men of Christ, who were the bond-slaves of the devil all your lives before. As ever then you would partake of this blessed privilege, resist no longer, but yield to the call of grace, that you may be converted.

Sect. III.

2. Another excellent privilege of a converted soul, is this; As soon as ever a man is converted, he is united or joined to Jesus Christ. This is the very root of all the rest. Conversion turneth men from Satan to God; it breaketh them off from their former lovers, and uniteth them to Christ as the Husband of their souls. He is "the vine, and we are the branches, and into him we must be grafted, if we will have life," John xv. He is the Head, and conversion is it that makes us his members; giving us that faith, by which we receive him to dwell in our hearts, Eph. iii. 17: so that as the sovereign and subject make one commonwealth, as the head and the body make one man, so Christ and his church are one. Whether or no the union be any more than relative, taking union in the strictest sense; yet it is wonderful and glorious, and a communication of holy qualifications doth follow it. We are one in relation, and one in judgment, as being of the same mind; and one in affection, and one in regard of the similitude of nature, and many ways one in a larger sense. Here is the root of the saints' felicity. If you were one with the prince, you would not fear the want of honour or riches; you would not fear any thing that he could save you from. When Jonathan loved David as his own soul, he ventured his life to save him from his father's indignation: when Lazarus, whom Christ loved, was sick, he raised him from the dead. If you be once so near

to Christ as to be one with him, what will he not do for you? Will he neglect his own members? Will he hurt himself? The apostle could use this argument with husbands to love their wives, because they are as their own body; and "who ever hated his own flesh? but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as Christ doth the church." From hence doth the apostle fetch the example of conjugal love; "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church:" yea, from this union; "for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 25, 28—30. "This is a mystery," saith the apostle, speaking of Christ and the church, ver. 32; and a mystery of unspeakable consolation to the saints. O therefore resist not that grace that should convert you. If you would be united to Christ, come to him, and yield to the drawings of his love that you may be one with him, who is one with the Father, according to your capacity, for that is his will, concerning all that are truly converted, John xvii. Judge now, whether it be not a most honourable and inconceivable felicity, that conversion doth advance the soul into. It was the greatest miracle of all God's works, that ever he revealed to the sons of men, to take the human nature into union with the divine; that Christ, who was God, should condescend to be made man: and the next is, that he will take his church into union with himself, and will magnify his love, in such a wonderful advancement of poor sinners, that without his grace they could not well believe it.

Sect. IV.

3. Another benefit that followeth conversion, is this; As soon as ever a man is truly converted, he is made a member of the true church of Christ: for he is at once united to the head and to the body. A man may be a member of the visible church, or rather, be visibly made a member of the church before conversion: but that is but as a wooden leg to the body; or, as Bellarmine himself acknowledgeth, they are not living but dead members: and as many of his friends whom he mentioneth confess, they are but as the hair, or the nails, which are not properly members of the body, though they are in the body: or, as Austin saith, like the chaff among the corn, which is so a part of the field, as to be an appurtenance of the corn. So that till conversion, even the baptized and the most understanding men, are but as the straw and chaff in God's barn, and as the tares in his field, as Christ himself compareth them. But conversion doth effectually ingraft them into the body, and make them living members; and so "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body," 1 Cor. xii. 13; and so "we are the body of Christ, and members in particular," ver. 27. "All are not Israel that are of Israel," saith the apostle to the Romans. And "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, and faith that worketh by love," Gal. vi. 5, 15; Col. iii. 11. "For circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter," Rom. ii. 29. "They are the circumcision that worship God in the spirit," Phil. iii. 3. And it is not the mere baptism of water, but the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is given in conversion, that maketh you living members of the body.

Sect. V.

4. As soon as ever a sinner is truly converted, he hath a pardon of all the sins that ever he committed, be they never so many and never so great. Though with Paul he have been a persecutor of the church of God; though he have, with Manasseh, been a

very sorcerer; though he have hated godliness, and made a mock at it; though his very heart hath been against Christ all his days; yet when he is once truly converted, he is pardoned. Though he have spent the flower of his youth in vanity; though he have been a drudge for this world, and forgotten his soul and the world to come; though he have hindered others from conversion and salvation; yet when he is once truly converted, he is forgiven. Though he have long resisted grace, and strove against his own salvation; though he have stifled many convictions of conscience, and broke many purposes and promises, and much abused the patience of God; yet, if the work of conversion be true, all this shall be pardoned and done away. For the Lord Jesus hath made satisfaction for all; and thereupon hath made a conditional promise, that all that truly repent and believe, shall be pardoned: and as soon as ever they perform the condition through his grace, the promise becomes effectual to them, and their iniquities are therein forgiven them.

Oh what news is this to a weary, heavy-laden sinner; to them that are bruised and broken under the sense of sin and wrath, that would give a world, if they had it, for a pardon! Why, come to Christ, sinner, and take it freely. He hath purchased it, and he freely offereth it; but only to them that take himself: for God hath made these benefits appurtenances to himself; take Christ himself, and all is thine. Oh what comfort is it to such a sinner as Mary, that lay wiping Christ's feet with the hairs of her head, and washed them with her tears, to hear him say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Those sins that do so terrify the conscience, and those that lie asleep till conscience be enlightened; thy secret sins, which the world knoweth not of, and thy open sins that have been thy shame, at the very hour of true conversion will be pardoned. All thy sinful thoughts, words, and actions; sins against knowledge, conscience, consideration; sins of ignorance, and presumptuous sins, all shall be done away, Acts xxvi. 18; Mark iv. 12. "Whom he calleth, them he justifieth," Rom. viii. 30. "Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 32. And thus doth "he bless them, in turning them from their iniquities," Acts iii. 26; and in turning away from them the punishment of that iniquity. He that sent John Baptist first to preach "repentance, for the remission of sins," Mark i. 4; Luke iii. 3; and hath shed "his own blood for the remission of sins," Matt. xxvi. 28; "and calleth men to repent for that end," Acts ii. 38; hath promised to give it to all that thus repent and believe in him, and are converted to him, Acts x. 43; and commanded his ministers to join these together, and that "repentance and remission of sin be preached in his name," Luke xxiv. 47. And may we not say with David, Psal. xxxiii. 1, and after him with Paul, Rom. iv. 7, that they "are blessed whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered, and to whom the Lord will not impute sin?" O therefore receive converting grace, that you may be made partakers of this blessedness. Take the counsel of Peter to Simon Magus, "Repent of thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee," Acts viii. 22. Or as the same Peter to the Jews, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," Acts iii. 19. O blessed hour that freeth the soul from such a load, that else would have sunk it as low as hell! A day and a mercy that must never be forgotten by us.

Sect. VI.

5. Another benefit is this; As soon as a sinner is converted, he is reconciled to God; the former enmity is done away; though this be in substance the same with the former, yet doth it show us our happiness in another consideration. A future reconciliation was purchased before by the blood of Christ, and a conditional reconciliation given out in the gospel; but the soul was never actually reconciled till the time of conversion. Before, a sinner did either presumptuously intrude into the presence of God to his own danger, or else fled back through the terrors of his conscience. Oh! the frowns of the face of God were enough to deter a guilty soul! What comfort could that man have to think of God, that lay under his continual curse and wrath? But when once they are converted, the face of God then smileth on them, and his arms are open to embrace them, as the father's were to the returning prodigal, Luke xv. God cannot show himself pleased with a graceless, carnal soul; nor can he choose but be reconciled to the soul that is once possessed of his image, and reconciled unto him. As you are, so will he be to you. He did but stay for the turning of your hearts, that you might be fit to receive that kindness from him, which you are not fit for in the bondage of your sins. This is the happiness of a converted soul, that he hath the love and favour of Almighty God. Therefore doth Christ call them his friends, John xv. 13—15; James ii. 23. And what is it that he will not do for his friends, that did so much for us while we were enemies, Rom. v. 10. O therefore yield to the calls of God. The word of conversion is a word of reconciliation; and this is it that he hath committed to us, that we might "beseech men in his name and stand to be reconciled to God," 2 Cor. v. 18—20; which is only by being converted to God. Did you know the worth of peace with God you would quickly yield to return unto him.

Sect. VII.

6. Another precious benefit to the converted, is, That they are the adopted sons of God; which is a step higher, than to be barely reconciled and his friends. When they are planted into Christ the natural Son, they become adopted sons. For "God sent his own Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; wherefore we are no more servants only but sons," Gal. iv. 4, 5, 7. This is a benefit not common to all. It is as "many as are led by the Spirit of God that are his sons," Rom. viii. 14. And they that are in their measure "blameless and harmless, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world," Phil. ii. 15. Christians, know your own felicity, that you may rejoice in it, and give glory to God. You may boldly draw near him, and call him your Father, and look for the love and bounty of a Father, at his hands. O wretched world, to despise so great a mercy as this is! Doth it seem a small thing to them to be the sons of God? It raised the blessed apostle into an admiration; "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," 1 John iii. 1. And as a father tendereth a son that he delights in, so doth the Lord the poorest of his people. The world, I told you, is divided into the children of God and the children of the devil, 1 John iii. 10. And it is by conversion from sin to God, that men are known to be the children of God. If, therefore, you

value this wonderful privilege, yield then to the grace of God, which would convert you.

Sect. VIII.

7. Another benefit of the converted, is, That they have the Spirit of Christ within them. By it doth Christ possess and govern them; by it doth he make them like to himself, and work out all that is contrary to his holiness. For it is a cleansing Spirit, and a Spirit of holiness, Rom. i. 4. By this he helpeth them against the flesh, and effectually mortifieth it, Gal. v. 16, 17; Rom. viii. 1, 2, 14. By this doth he quicken them to newness of life; for it is a "quickening spirit," Rom. viii. 11. By this it is that "he helpeth their infirmities, and teacheth them to pray," Rom. viii. 26; Eph. vi. 18. By this he "teacheth them his law, and writeth it in their hearts," 2 Cor. iii. 3. By this he possesseth them with filial affection, and causeth them to "cry to him, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6. By this one Spirit, all his people have access to him, Eph. ii. 18. And by this they are made his habitation, Eph. ii. 22. And in the unity of this Spirit, they are one with the Lord, and among themselves, 1 Cor. vi. 17; xii. 12, 13. This Spirit is the earnest of their future glory, 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5. And where this Spirit is, there is liberty from former slavery, 2 Cor. iii. 17. So that you see how great a mercy it is to have the Spirit of Jesus Christ within us; and this is the case of all that are converted, and none but them. "For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. If you did but know what it is to be possessed by the Holy Ghost, when ungodly men have the spirit of uncleanness, you would not rest without this blessedness.

Sect. IX.

8. Another part of the happiness of the converted, is, That all the promises of grace are theirs. They are the children of the promise, and God is as it were obliged to them, and hath engaged his word for their security, Gal. iv. 28; iii. 22; Eph. iii. 6. All the promises are in Christ, yea, and amen, 2 Cor. i. 20. They, therefore, that are in Christ, must needs have part in them. Oh how full is the book of God, of free and precious promises to his people! and all belong to thee that are converted. There hast thou promises for remission; and promises for assistance against temptation; and promises for acceptance of thy person, and duties; and promises for protection and deliverance from evil; and when thou readeest them, thou mayest say, all those are mine. He that knoweth that God is true, will not take a promise as an inconsiderable mercy. If men account it such a matter to have a lease, or deed of gift of land, and worldly riches, how should we value that covenant and testament of our Lord! In a word, "Godliness is profitable to all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. And what can any man desire more?

Yield therefore to the voice of grace that you may be converted, and all the promises of grace will be yours; and then it will be an unspeakable comfort to you, that whatsoever condition you are in, you have a promise of God that you shall be better. If you be in poverty, if in sickness, if at the hour of death, yet you have a promise, which is enough to support a believing soul. As one saith, "I had rather be at the bottom of the sea with a promise, than in paradise without it." For there is no misery so deep, but we shall certainly be delivered from it, if we have but a promise. But without it, Adam was not safe in innocency.

Sec. X.

9. Another benefit of the converted, is, That all their duties are pleasing to God. I mean not their sins, nor the failings of their duties; for God will never be reconciled to these, when he is reconciled to the sinner. But the failings of all their duties are forgiven them, through the blood of Christ; and the failing being forgiven, the duty is accepted and well-pleasing to God. "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts. By faith Enoch had this testimony, that he pleased God," Heb. xi. 4, 5. The "sacrifice of their good works is pleasing to him," Heb. xiii. 16. Their "prayers and alms-deeds come up before him; for in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him," Acts x. 4, 35. And it is their study and work to do those things that please him, and walking in all pleasingness is accepted of him, Heb. iii. 21; Phil. iv. 18; 1 John iii. 22; Col. i. 10. And all this is through Christ in whom the Father was first well pleased, Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. Oh how great a consolation is this to the saints! See that you be truly converted, and go to God, and fear not lest he reject you further than is necessary to reverence and caution. When he abhorreth the gilded sacrifice of the hypocrite, he will accept that which seemeth weaker from thee. He will hear thy very groans and tears, and broken expressions. Lament over thy weaknesses, and see that thou disown them, and then thou shalt find, that God will not disown thy services for them. Oh what a comfort is this in a time of extremity, in trouble of conscience, in sickness, and at death, to have God to be well pleased with all our duties, and to know that he will not abhor our prayers. The time is near, christian, when thou wilt find this privilege more worth to thee than a thousand worlds, that God will let thee come near him with acceptance, and bid thee welcome, and hear thy prayers; and the time is coming when unconverted sinners would give a world, if they had it, for such a privilege, and say, Oh that I could go to God, and have a gracious hearing as well as they! But it will not be, because they knew not the day of their visitation.

Sec. XI.

10. Another benefit of the converted, is this; The angels of God have a special order and commission to attend them. They are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14. Note here, that angels are servants, not to us, but to God for us; and that it is in a special manner for the heirs of salvation: and that it seems it is all the angels that are designed to this office. I say not, all the glorious spirits that are before the throne of God. For, I presume not to determine whether there be not other spirits besides the angels; for the word angel signifieth a messenger, and therefore it is only these that are employed as God's messengers, that are called by that name; and those that believe in Christ, are said to have their own angels always beholding the face of God, Matt. xviii. 10. These doth he send to deliver his servants in distress, as they did, Dan. iii. 28; vi. 22; and Peter, Acts xii. For, "he giveth his angels charge over them to keep them in all their ways; they shall bear them up in their hands, lest they dash their foot against a stone," Psal. xci. 11, 12. Yea, they have their office also for the good of souls. An angel appeared to Christ himself, and strengthened him in his agony, Luke xxii. 43. And as evil spirits can hurt the souls of the wicked, so no

doubt but the good can help the souls of the righteous; and, therefore, when Satan comes to deceive, he is said to be transformed into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. 14. Yea, when the soul goeth out of the body, these angels are the conductors of it into the presence of God, Luke xvi. 22, where we shall be made equal to the angels themselves, Luke xx. 36. Oh, if the eyes of true christians were but opened to see their glorious attendance, they would be more sensible of this privilege, and more thankful for it, than now they be. God could do all things for us without instruments if he pleased, but as he rather chooseth to work by instruments and second causes for our bodies, so also by these invisible instruments both for body and soul. When Saul had sinned against God, and was forsaken by him, the good spirit was taken from him, and an evil spirit given him. Some common benefits even common men may have by these angels while they forfeit not their helps, but not that special benefit as the saints. The world cannot distinguish the righteous from the wicked, but the angels of God can; for they must needs know their own charge, and who it is that Christ hath especially committed to their trust.

Sec. XII.

11. Another excellent benefit of the converted, is this; As they are true members of the catholic church, (whatsoever any schismatics may say to the contrary, that would confine the catholic church to their own party,) so have they communion with the whole church, and many spiritual advantages by that communion. Besides that external communion in church order and ordinances, which the ungodly may have as well as they, there is a spiritual internal communion and communication, which is proper to the living, converted members. All the saints have one Spirit of holiness, to animate them, Rom. viii. 9; 1 Cor. xii. And they all intend the same end, and conspire in the same way for the accomplishment. God is their common end, as he is their common original, Rom. xi. 36; 1 Cor. vii. 6, 11, 12. They have all "one God, one Christ, one faith," though they may differ in many smaller opinions; and to "every one of them is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ," Eph. iv. 5-7. And so they "are all one body and one Spirit," and must endeavour to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," ver. 3, 4. They are members of one heavenly city, "even Jerusalem, which is above, the mother of us all," where they shall be perfected, Heb. xii. 22, 23; and of the militant church, the city of God, while they are here on earth. It is the design of God in the fulness of time, to gather them all into one, in Christ, yea, to make them and the angels in heaven to be one body, Eph. i. 10. They have here the same officers and means, even apostles, and prophets, and their holy writings, pastors and teachers, and the use of ordinances, and this for the edifying and perfection of the body, "till they all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That speaking the truth in love, they may grow up into him in all things which is the head, Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love," Eph. iv. 12, 13, 15, 16.

Moreover, all the whole church doth constantly pray for every member; not only as for those that are yet unconverted, that they may have grace, be-

cause they have no absolute promise to be heard in that; and that they shall not be heard for all men in general, they are certain, and therefore may not so ask it. But when they pray for the godly, it is as for those for whom they have a promise. As they live in the constant love of one another, which is the mark by which the world must know them, and an effect of the Spirit which doth animate the whole body, 1 Pet. i. 22; 1 John iv. 7, 8; John xiii. 34, 35; so doth this love express itself in the breathings forth of constant desires for the prosperity of the whole and each part. O Christians, what an excellent privilege is this, that the poorest man or woman of you that is converted, hath thousands and thousands of the prayers of the saints going for you to God from day to day. Which way ever you are going, or whatsoever you are doing, this stock is improving for you, this work is going on. When you are about other matters and think not of it, there are thousands of holy people praying for you. When you grow cold and faint in prayer, there are thousands of fervent Christians at prayer for you. When you have caught a fall, and conscience is troubled, and you dare scarce go to God again, there are thousands of Christians that are at prayer for you, that have clearer consciences and boldness with God. Is not this a comfort when your graces are weak, when temptations are strong, and troubles, and fears, and doubts are many, to remember you have thousands of the people of God at prayer for you? Is not this a great comfort in the greatest dangers, when you are afraid of your salvation, to remember how many thousands are at prayer for your salvation? Nay, it is even all the whole church of God. And you may well think that God will not easily deny the prayer of his whole church. He that hath promised to hear two or three, yea, every single person, that asketh any thing in the name of Christ according to his will, is unlikely to deny his whole church, when they join together for any such thing. And this is a matter that is according to his will, that his truly converted people should persevere, and be preserved in his love, and safely brought on to his heavenly kingdom, 2 Tim. iv. 18. O remember this in your doubts and troubles, that all the church of Christ is daily at prayer with God for your salvation. And is not this a great comfort to you, in time of sickness, or at the hour of death, to remember, that now the whole church of God is at prayer for you? You send to this friend and that friend which you think have interest in God, and you are glad if you can but get them to pray for you. How glad then should you be, that all the church prayeth for you, who most certainly have so great an interest in him! The spirit of prayer, which teacheth the people of God to pray, will not forget you, nor suffer them to forget you, but will make them pray for all the body, and every member of it; as the very tenor of the Lord's prayer sheweth you; and Col. i. 3; Eph. vi. 18; Col. iv. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 1; Rom. i. 9; xv. 30. O then, sirs, if you be wise, yield to that grace of Christ that would convert you, that you may be members of this body, and live in the spiritual communion of it. For, alas! to join externally in the communion of the church, when you have not communion with them in the Spirit, will but increase your condemnation at the last. You are every day among the saints of God, but you know them not, nor the Spirit by which they live, nor the spiritual part of the work which they do. Such a communion as the dead corpses have together which you tread upon, (whose bones and dust lie mingled in the earth,) in comparison of our communion that are here together in the

presence of God among the living; even such a communion have the unconverted in the visible church, in comparison of that spiritual communion of the people that are converted.

Sect. XIII.

12. Another excellent benefit to the converted, is, That they have the constant intercession of Jesus Christ, God and man, in his heavenly priesthood, at his Father's right hand in the heavenly glory. Their Head is not insensible of their wants, nor doth he disregard them; the wrong that is done you, he takes as done to himself. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" said he to one that trod upon his foot, Acts ix. 4. And the good that is done to you or denied to you by others, he takes as done or denied to himself, as may be seen in Matt. xxv. 40, 45. Surely then he doth not forget us, though he be exalted to his glory. He is not like the poor silly creatures, that cannot bear exaltation without being puffed up, and forgetting themselves; yea, their friends and their God. No; his exaltation is spiritual and heavenly, perfecting his human nature to the greatest height that it is capable of; he liveth in the face of God who is love: nay, into the personal union with the Godhead which is love, hath he assumed our nature long ago: he was never more tender of Jerusalem, when he wept over them, Luke xix. 41; or of his people when he wept, and bled, and died for them, than he is now of them in his glory. Though he cannot weep or grieve now as he did on earth, yet he can love now as much as ever he loved; and therefore his eye is still upon our wants, his heart is set upon us for our good; he looks down from heaven upon every particular member; he seeth that this man wants this grace, and that man wants that, and the other is in danger of this or that corruption or temptation; and he is daily carrying on the cure. It is he that sends this minister and the other minister as his apothecaries, with his medicines, and persuadeth you to take them for your good; it is he that directeth this or that affliction to be a purge for some dangerous disease, when he seeth that easier means prevail not. You see not your chief Physician, he standeth out of your sight; but he seeth you, and it is he that doth all for you that is done: as he prepared a medicine of his own blood to cure sick souls, while he was here upon earth, so is he now continually applying it to them for their cure. Do not think that all his love was showed upon the cross, or that all that he doth for you by his blood was then done; no, he is still pleading as it were that blood on your behalf unto his Father, and offering the sacrifice for you again in the holiest, which he once offered for you on the cross; and is there a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, Heb. viii. 1—4; vii. 3, 11, 15. And "because he continueth ever, he hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 24, 25. "For as by his own blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption; so shall this blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God," Heb. ix. 11, 14. For Christ "is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which is the figure of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," Heb. ix. 24. For "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever, he is set down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his (and our) enemies be made his footstool; for by

one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 12—14. So that we have a perfect High Priest that perfectly loveth us, who is representing our case before his Father, and pleading a perfect sacrifice for us; and through him it is that we ourselves have "boldness to enter into the holiest, even by his blood, by the new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, even his flesh:" for, "having such an High Priest over the house of God, we may draw near in full assurance of faith," if we have a "true heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, as our bodies are washed with his baptismal water," Heb. x. 19—22. Oh what an unspeakable comfort is this to every truly converted soul! The Son of God is at prayer for thee, christian. If thou think that God will not hear thy own prayers; no, nor hear the whole church's prayers; dost thou think he will hear his Son's prayers, or not? The poor man that was born blind, John ix. 31, could tell that "God heareth not sinners," that is, unconverted sinners; but "if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth." How then can he choose but hear him that had no sin? and hear him that taketh away the sins of the world? He that said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him;" will sure hear him himself, because he is so. He telleth his Father, John xi. 42, "I know that thou hearest me always;" and it is not only his common intercession for his common salvation, which he giveth to the world; for so, when "he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered among the transgressors, and bare the sins of many, he made intercession for the transgressors," Isa. liii. 12. And said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And so he procureth them a conditional pardon and salvation, with the means and mercies that have a tendency thereto. But it is the special intercession for that special grace which he communicateth to none but his living members. Read that excellent prayer, John xvii. which he putteth up to the Father for his own, and remember that these requests are for you, and that it is for all that shall believe in him through the world that he thus intercedeth, verse 20. Oh what a comfort is it to a poor christian, that in his greatest infirmities, and deepest sense of unworthiness, he hath the Beloved of the Father to take his prayers and present them to God, and to plead his cause more effectually than he can do his own. What say you then to this, you that are yet in the flesh, and unacquainted with the life of grace; would you have a Saviour to speak for you to the Father? yea, one who hath all power in heaven and earth committed to him, and "is able to save to the uttermost all those that come to God by him?" O yield then speedily to converting grace, and rest not till this work be wrought upon your souls: this blessed state may be yours as well as other men's, if you do not now neglect it and refuse it.

SECT. XIV.

13. Another excellent benefit to the converted, is, That God hath assured them that all things are theirs, and shall work for their good. The promise is expressed, 2 Cor. iv. 15; 1 Cor. iii. 21; Rom. viii. 28. Not that they have a propriety in other men's possessions in civil respects; but finally, other men, and their possessions, and all the world, are for their good. As the world at first was made for Adam and his offspring, so is it redeemed from ruin for the second Adam and his offspring, in a special manner: the earthly proprietors shall have it in possession, and many of them not have a thousandth part of the benefit by it as others that possess it not. The physician hath his

skill in his own possession; but the patient that is recovered by it, may have more benefit by it than he that possesseth it. The whole frame of heaven and earth are in perpetual motion for the glory of the saints; are all conjoined by the overruling Providence, and are carrying on the same design of God, when they seem at the greatest odds among themselves. When the instruments themselves are unacquainted with their own employment, and know not what it is that they are doing, yet God knoweth, who seeth and ruleth them all. The business that God hath in hand is to build the heavenly Jerusalem, to gather to himself the whole number of his elect that are scattered through the world, Matt. xxiv. 31; John xi. 52; and to make them a city for his own habitation, and a people for his everlasting praise: and the very persecutors of the church are but now hewing them and squaring them, and fitting them for the building. When God seeth us sick of a pleurisy, he often useth the sword of an enemy to let us blood, which shall as certainly do the cure as the tenderest hand. The medicine knoweth not that it is healing a man's disease; the lancet knoweth not that it is saving a man's life by taking away his blood; but he that useth them knoweth what he is doing. Herod and Pilate, and the people of the Jews, thought they had been securing their own seats, and the liberty of their nation, by crucifying one that called himself King of the Jews: they little knew that they were shedding that blood that was to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and crucifying that flesh that was given for the life of the world, John vi. 51: but God knew what he was doing by them; for they did nothing but what his counsel had determined should come to pass, Acts iv. 28. Pharaoh thought he was securing his interest; but God knew he was getting himself glory, and his people a wonderful deliverance, by his obstinacy. And even Satan himself is as much overreached in his devices and enterprises against the saints as their earthly enemies are. He is but exercising their graces, and driving them to Christ, and honouring the power of his blood and Spirit eventually, when he seeketh to devour them: his temptations do but make them the more watchful: or if they fall, they rise with the greater hatred of sin, and love to Christ, and thankfulness for his blood and pardoning grace, and renewed resolution to walk more carefully for the time to come. O blessed state, where all the world, both good and bad, both friends and foes, both angels and devils, are all carrying on the work of our salvation, some with delight, and some unwillingly, some with understanding, and some not knowing what they do! What a state of comfort hath that man, that may be assured that whatsoever befalleth him, shall be for his good, and that all things do work together for the best! I confess I have had myself so much comfort from that one promise, Rom. viii. 28, that I would not have been without it for a world. When I have had no particular discovery of the tendency of a providence, and under affliction, and the appearance of death, have had nothing from below to support me, that one promise hath appeared so full, that I thought if there were no more, it might abundantly supply my soul with consolation. What fear should we have of want, or enemies, of sickness, or death, or any thing that may be terrible to the flesh, as long as we know that all things do but conspire to our salvation? And though none of the wheels in the chariot of providence should know which way or whether they are moving themselves, yet do they all serve to convey us to our glory: it is a matter that is past the belief of the carnal world, but it is a cer-

tain, sealed truth, that when the persecutor is treading down and tormenting the poor, despised saints, it is the saint that is the gainer, and all this is for his good; and his ignorant enemy is scouring off his rust, and preparing him for his Master's use, and for his glory, and is himself the loser, and the miserable wretch, when he is highest in his honour, and deepest in his cruelty, and proudest in his triumphs. Why, poor sinners, do not your hearts within you long to be partakers of this blessed state? Is it not worth all that you can do or suffer, yea, worth ten thousand worlds, to be such a one as I have now described to you? Why, you may be such if your own folly and neglect exclude you not. God hath not shut you out of the promise; O do not shut out yourselves by refusing his converting grace.

Sect. XV.

14. Another most excellent benefit to the converted, is, That they are past their greatest danger, and have done the greatest business of their lives, and now are ready for death and judgment, whensoever it shall come. Not that all danger is over, or all enemies yet overcome, or all their work done, nor that they are yet perfectly ready to die; but the main work is done, and the main conquest of the enemy is over, and the main danger is past, and in the main they are prepared for their change. What had we to do here but to prepare for glory, and in this short and troublesome life to get interest in a better, that shall never end? And with all that are truly converted this is done: at the very hour that God converted them, he made them his sons, he pardoned their sins, and gave them right to everlasting glory: when he gives you Christ, he gives you all things, or puts you into a condition wherein you may well think he will give you all things, Rom. viii. 32. O happy day! may that man or woman say, as long as they live, when God did translate them out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son! Many make their birth-days as a day of rejoicing or feasting while they live, when Solomon saith, "the day of death is better than the day of birth," Eccles. vii. 1. But they that know the day of their new birth may well make that a day of rejoicing while they live. O sirs, what a blessed change doth that one day or hour make, when God shall presently bring up the heart of a sinner to himself, and join them truly to Jesus Christ, and forgive all the sins that ever they did, and give them right to everlasting glory! You are like a man that is pursued by his enemies, and as soon as ever he can but get into such a castle or garrison, he is safe: so, when you first get into Christ by a living, effectual faith, that very hour were you out of the reach of the prevailing, commanding power of hell; then was the strong man cast out of your souls; then were you brought from under the curse of the law and the wrath of God. If death had found you one hour before that change, you had been damned wretches in hell for ever; and if death should come but one hour after that change, you will certainly be glorified saints with Christ. This is true, sirs, how strange soever it may seem to you: and the reason is at hand, because that the hour before your conversion, you were the members of Satan, you were in the flesh, and had no saving interest in Christ or in the promise: and the hour after true conversion, you are members of Christ and children of the promise, and have part in him who is Lord of all. I deny not but you must still "watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation;" and for all the "promise that is left you of entering into rest," you must "fear lest you should seem to come short of it," Heb. iv. 1. And you must

still stand on your guard in all the spiritual armour, and work and fight out your salvation, and quit yourselves like men to the end: but yet I may well say that the main brunt is over; the enemy is dispossessed of his chiefest hold; he that ruled you is now cast out, and though he be not quite under your feet, yet he shortly will be: and your greatest business now is to keep him out, and to stand on your defence, and "keep that you have, that none may take your crown from you;" and to follow on the conquered enemy, in the pursuit, till none remain; and to "grow in grace, and perfect your holiness in the fear of God," and cast out the remnants of your former filthiness, 2 Pet. iii. 18; 2 Cor. vii. 1; xiii. 9; Heb. vi. 1. Hearken, therefore, poor sinners, and as ever you are friends to your own souls, neglect not that grace that would bring you into this condition. Would you not think yourselves happy, if it were thus with you?

Sect. XVI.

15. Another most excellent benefit of the converted, is, That they are the rightful heirs of everlasting glory, and as soon as the soul is gone out of the body, they shall have possession of it: and at the day of judgment they shall have a blessed resurrection, and shall themselves be justified in judgment, and also with Christ shall judge the world; and so shall be fully possessed of that glory in soul and body, and shall live in the everlasting praise of their Redeemer. Here are many particular benefits, which for brevity I join together. (1.) They are now the heirs of glory; for being the sons of God, they are co-heirs with Christ, though they must follow him in sufferings, before they come to the possession of their inheritance. Rom. viii. 16, 17, "The Spirit witnesseth with our spirits that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." Though now in our minority we differ not from servants, yet "being sons we are heirs of all," Gal. iv. 1, 7. When moved with holy fear we prepare the ark, and hide ourselves in Christ by faith, and become the heirs of the righteousness of faith, even then also do we become heirs of the end of that righteousness, Heb. xi. 7. When we receive our interest in the promise, that promise makes us heirs, Gal. iii. 29. O brethren, that you could but conceive the greatness of this blessedness, which even the poorest beggar in the world may have that is rich in faith; for even they "are heirs of that kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him," James ii. 5. How certainly shall these be partakers of that glory, when they "have finished their course, and fought the good fight!" 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. For God hath "laid up a crown of salvation for all such as love his appearing." And it is conversion that bringeth us into this blessed state, and the unconverted have no part or fellowship in it. See Tit. iii. 4-7, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." So that it is conversion that bringeth us into this happy condition. O, therefore, bless God if you find he hath wrought this work upon your souls. Yet be not careless for the time to come, but "let every one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them that through faith and

patience inherit the promise," Heb. vi. 11, 12. And then doubt not, for God hath confirmed your salvation by his oath. "For God being willing abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath," saith the apostle, ver. 17, 18; "that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that which is within the veil; whither Jesus Christ the forerunner is for us entered," ver. 19, 20.

(2.) Hereupon it follows that whensoever the righteous die, their souls are conveyed by angels into that glory, Luke xvi. 22. And when they "depart, they are with Christ," Phil. i. 23. And when they are "absent from the body, they are present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 8. Of which they may "be confident as walking by faith, and not by sight, and knowing that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and therefore may "groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," 2 Cor. v. 1—3, 6, 7. And when we die, we may say with Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," Acts vii. 59. And were our death as ignominious as the thieves on the cross, yet that day should we be with Christ in paradise, Luke xxiii. 43. O blessed people that live in such a case, so near the door of a more blessed life! How can you endure to be out of this condition of hope and peace one day or hour? Oh that you did but know the blessedness that you neglect!

(3.) But yet this is not all, but the greatest part of the blessedness remains till the day of judgment, and then there are these four benefits to be received. 1. The righteous shall have a blessed resurrection; not the resurrection of damnation, which will be the lot of all the rest, but the resurrection of life, as Christ distinguisheth them, John v. 28, 29. The graves shall be no longer able to detain them, but he that conquered death by his own resurrection, will by the same divine power again overcome it by the resurrection of his people. And as his natural body hath already triumphed over it, so shall his mystical body at that day: he that made heaven and earth of nothing, will by the same almightiness accomplish this: read 1 Cor. xv. throughout. 2. And being raised and brought to judgment, the next benefit will be their final justification. They have now the justification and pardon of the gospel, and then they shall have the final justification of the Judge. For he will give to every man according to right, and his promise made this their right through the blood of Christ. For, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1. Whatsoever sin can then be charged on them, they can answer all by showing the gospel pardon in the blood of Christ, and if their title be questioned, they can prove it by their faith and sincere obedience. So all that repent and are converted, will then "have their sins blotted out, when that time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," Acts iii. 19. It is not possible that Christ should condemn his own body, and condemn those that have believed in him, and sincerely loved him: so dear a Friend, so tender-hearted a Saviour, that hath bought us so dearly, and sanctified us and cleansed us, and given us a right to that justification by his promise, cannot possibly condemn us after all this. As certainly as Christ himself is justified, and

his promise true, and his love unchangeable, so certainly shall all the converted be then absolved. 3. And not only so, but also with Christ they shall judge the world: for so is the plain word of promise, 1 Cor. vi. 2. Yea, they shall judge the angels themselves, ver. 3.

(4.) And lastly, they shall take possession of their glory, and enter into the joy of their Lord, Matt. xxv. 21, 23. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, when the wicked are cast into that furnace of fire, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xiii. 42, 43. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," saith Christ, when he had spoken these words: and he that will not hear such things as these, and regard them, will one day wish that he had never had ears, and never had a heart in his breast, or else that it had been better.

Oh! dear friends! that I were but able to make you know the difference between the righteous and the wicked at that day. Surely I should not need then to say any more to you to make you apprehensive of the necessity of conversion, and to make haste to entertain that grace that is offered you. If the crown of glory be worth seeking, then must converting grace be sought: if an everlasting blessedness with Christ and his holy angels be worth the having, renewing grace is worth the having. Lift up your heads then, christians, and rejoice in the hope that is set before you. O bless the Lord that ever he brought you into the kingdom of grace, which is but the beginning of the kingdom of glory. As sure as your natural birth was your entrance into this natural world, so sure was your new birth the entrance into a better world. For your life eternal was begun when you began to have the saving knowledge of God, and his Son Jesus Christ. He that hath given you the earnest of his Spirit, 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5, who "hath sealed us with the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, till the redemption of the purchased possession," will doubtless give us the inheritance itself. Fear not, christian, the Lord that hath promised will not deceive thee, for he never yet deceived any. But as sure as the sun doth shine in the firmament, so sure shalt thou live in the heavenly Jerusalem, and be joined with the holy angels of God in his everlasting praises, and then thou wilt better know than now thou canst do, what God did for thee that day that he did convert thee. I know it is the business of the enemy of thy salvation, if it might be, to draw thee back into thy former state of death and darkness; and when he cannot do that, to rob thee at least of the comfort of thy felicity, that thou mightest doubt, and fear, and live in perplexity, as if thou wert not the heir of glory. Because as he is loth to be tormented before the time, so is he loth that thou shouldst be comforted before the time; but do not thou believe him; suffer him not to hide thy blessedness from thine eyes; O, remember, it cannot be loved if it be not believed; thou wilt lose thy joy and God his praise, if the tempter prevail with thee to deny thy mercy. Believe, then, and give God the glory by believing.

SECT. XVII.

16. Another of the blessings of a converted man, is, That new life which he hath begun, is a life of health, and peace, and comfort, and the very beginning of his everlasting peace and life; and the more he hath of it, the more happy will his life be. It is not only our suffering that is the way to reigning, and our tribulation by which we must enter into the kingdom of God; but we have also peace the way to peace, and life the way to life, and joy the way to joy and glory. Our tribulation and sufferings are

but some accidental attendants of this our militant state; but the life itself consists of other kind of matter. How blessed a life it is to live in so near a relation to God, as is above mentioned! And how pleasant a thing is the believing exercise of his graces! Oh how sweet is it to live here in any lively beginnings of the love of God! How pleasant is it to know that we are beloved of him! How sweet is it to draw near to him, and plead our cause with him in faith, and to call him Father in confidence through Christ! How sweet is it to live under the power of his ordinances, when by his Spirit he blesteth them to our souls! What a joy is it believably to think beforehand of their eternal blessedness! And what comfortable communion have the people of God together, and what good doth it do them to hear and speak of the glory that they shall possess! O poor deceived sinners, that think the way of the Lord to be so grievous, and fly from it, as if it were an insufferable toil; did you but know the safety and the comfort which the life of godliness doth afford, you would be of another mind, and take another course than you do. I do profess to you all in the name of the Lord, that you will never have a safe, nor truly peaceable and comfortable life, till you are converted, and live a spiritual and heavenly life. The joy of the world is sorrow in comparison of that which you might have from Christ. The laughter of a fool doth not so much differ from the highest content of the greatest prince on earth, as your carnal mirth and peace doth differ from that which is fetched by true faith from the face of God, and the life to come. You fly from godliness for fear of sorrow and trouble, and I tell you it is joy and peace that you fly from, and sorrow and trouble that you continue in, and that you are preparing for. Believe the Lord Jesus himself, if you will not believe those that have tried. "Come unto me, all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light," Matt. xi. 27, 28. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous," 1 John v. 3. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith unto this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God: and not only so, but we glory in tribulation," Rom. v. 1—3. "Whom not having seen, ye love; though now you see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls," 1 Pet. i. 8, 9. "We are the circumcision, that worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. "Rejoice evermore," 1 Thess. v. 16. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice," Phil. iv. 4. "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright," Psal. xxxii. 1. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints, he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart," Psal. lxxix. 10—12.

What say you to all this now? Is it a life of trouble and misery that God hath prescribed for his people to live in? Is this a burdensome, grievous life? Will you not believe him, concerning his own way? I tell you again, and declare to you from the Lord, that you shall never have any true peace and comfort till you are converted, and lead a holy life.

And you that say you shall never have a merry day more, if you leave your sins, and give up yourselves to a life of holiness, I do profess and proclaim to you, that you shall never have a merry life indeed till you do it; I mean, you shall never have that solid and lasting joy, which besemeth a man of wisdom to regard. Believe the Lord himself that hath told you it twice over; Isa. xlvi. 22, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked;" Isa. lvii. 21, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." "The way of peace they know not, there is no judgment in their goings; they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein, shall not know peace," Isa. lix. 8. I confess, a carnal peace you may awhile maintain, and for a time may have a merry dream, but the day is near when you will have a terrible awakening. And you may think that the godly have no such joy, because you see it not, or because you see them sad and heavy; but their "joy is such as strangers meddle not with," Prov. xiv. 10. I know the righteous have many troubles, and are oftener in tears and groans than others; but that is from the remnants of their sins, which as it consisteth with prevailing grace, so doth that sorrow with prevailing joy, or may do at least. A dead man groaneth not, when a sick man doth: and yet that is no disparagement to life. What is sweeter than life? and yet sickness may make it grievous; but we do not therefore prefer death before life, because some are sick: so what is sweeter than the life of grace? and yet spiritual sickness may make us walk heavily, and yet we do not therefore prefer a death in sin before it. O come and try, sinners, the pleasures that be in the ways of God, and do not for shame speak against them, till you have thoroughly tried them. The Lord himself doth testify of them, Prov. iii. 13; xxi. 20, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her." You see then that conversion is the beginning of consolation.

Sect. XVIII.

17. Another of the privileges of the converted, is this; As he hath cause of continual joy, so no evil that can befall him is a sufficient reason to lay by these joys, as to the habit at least, and the prevailing degree. I know that so far as we have sin, we may, we shall, we must have sorrow; but then, so far as we have that sin pardoned and mortified, we may, we should have greater joy. And because a converted man hath no unmortified, unpardoned sin, therefore his cause of joy is greater than his cause of sorrow. Though yet I must say, that there are seasons when sorrow must be most expressed, as in days of humiliation, and in great falls, and in some afflictions; yet habitually then our joy should be the greater, though it be not the season to express it. But my special meaning here is about the evil of affliction, which is sanctified to the godly, and hath lost its sting, and is turned by a hand of grace to their advantage. Should not that man live in continual joy, that is the heir of heaven, and a friend of God, and a member of Christ, and doth but wait for the hour of death to be possessed of that unspeakable, endless glory? What should trouble the heart

of him that is escaped out of the power of Satan, and the greatest trouble, which is the wrath of God, and the danger of everlasting misery? That which may torment the heart of another day and night, even the thoughts of the endless flames of hell; this is not only taken out of his way, but turned into the matter of his joy and praise, to think but of the fearful misery that he hath escaped. O, what heart that hath received a pardon of all sins, and is saved thereby from the everlasting torments, can choose but daily rejoice in that salvation? Would not a Judas have been glad, while he was hanging himself in despair, if any one would have given him assurance, yea, or but hope of that salvation? Go to any despairing sinner, or any one under the terrors of the Lord, and ask them whether or no they would be glad if they could but be assured that they should escape that misery which they fear? You need not doubt what answer they would give you. They would be glad, and a thousand times glad; much more if you could assure them of an everlasting glory, instead of that deserved misery. O then, what a blessed state are all those in, that are truly converted! How many times doth the mouth of Christ pronounce them blessed! "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of God," Matt. v. 3, 6, 8, 10. What case soever that man be in that is the heir of heaven, he cannot choose but be a blessed man. If any thing might make him seem miserable, it would be to be persecuted and hated, and made the scorn of the world; and yet Christ saith, that even then he is blessed: and biddeth them even then "rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." That man that hath a reward in heaven, may be exceeding glad, whatsoever befall him here on earth. Will a prince be troubled for the loss of a farthing, or the barking of a dog? That man that hath not clothes to his back, nor a house to put his head in, nor a good word from any about him, and yet hath assurance of living in glory with God and his holy angels, as soon as ever he is gone out of the flesh, I think is a happy man in the eye of reason itself. And he that professeth to have assurance of such a glory, and yet liveth not comfortably in every condition, I will not believe him, whatsoever he profess. Sure I am, the great monarchs and princes of the world, when they are parting with their crowns, would be glad to have assurance of the everlasting crown, on condition they had lived as poor as the vilest beggar on the earth. There is not the stoutest gallant, and proudest sinner, but would be glad to change states with the poorest saint, when he seeth the end. Oh, but they must be wise in time, that will be ever the better for their wisdom. Balaam could say, "Oh that I may die the death of the righteous, and that my last end may be like his," Numb. xxiii. 10. All the world would say at last as the foolish virgins, if it would do any good, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are out," Matt. xxv. 8. Who would not be a saint, when he is past the pleasure of his sin, and cast off by the world, which deceived him in his prosperity?

Methinks the greatest men on earth should tremble in the midst of all their glory, to remember the everlasting misery that they are near, if they be not living members of Christ, as Belshazzar did in the midst of his jovialty, Dan. v. 6. And methinks the poorest true believer should have his heart about

with joy, to remember the things that God hath promised him, and he must certainly ere long possess. O, think not what you are, Christians, only, but what you shall be. Yet a little while, and you shall groan, and weep, and complain no more; you shall not know what poverty, or trouble, or any other sufferings do mean. You are almost past all your sorrow, as the unconverted are almost past their joy. O, what difference is between their part and yours; between the good things which they have here, and the portion which you have there! Is it not better go by the dunghill to the everlasting crown, than by a fading crown to everlasting torments? They will forget their honour and delicious fare, when they want a drop of water to cool their tongues; and you will forget your present sorrow, when you are in Abraham's bosom, or in the presence of the Lamb. If one day in the courts of God on earth seemed better to David than a thousand elsewhere, what will an endless life in glory seem to a believing soul? O sirs, we want nothing but soundness of faith, and spiritual life, and seriousness, to make our hearts to leap within us, and to make our lives a foretaste of heaven, and to make us pity poor worldlings in the height of their vain-glory. What should be a terror to that man that hath overcome the prince of terrors? that hath God on his side, that hath a promise of everlasting life, and that hath evidence to show for his interest in the promise, and a lively faith to improve it, and live upon it? Methinks if the devils should appear to him in his way, if they should walk before him in the ugliest shape, he should but look upon them as conquered miscreants. Methinks if he were passing by death from this world, it would be a joyful hour to him, that is presently to step into a world of glory. And now, dearly beloved neighbours and friends, I beseech you for the Lord's sake, hear these things, as men that believe the word of God. Is it not a thousand pities, that God should offer you such consolations as these, and you refuse them? Is it not a thousand follies, that you should neglect such a blessed state as this, when it is set before you? God hath made you for high and excellent things, even to live with angels in the heavens in glory. Yield but to the work of converting grace, and see that Christ be formed in you once, and all is yours. These things are far off you, and out of sight, and therefore seem strange to flesh and blood, and carnal hearts will not believe them; but they are true as the living God is true. The souls of all the converted that are dead in Christ from the beginning to this day, are now in the possession of that glory that I am speaking of. They see it, though we do not; and we shall see it, if unbelief and neglect do not hinder us. Believing is the only way to seeing and possessing. I told you before what a miserable case it is that every unconverted sinner is in, that he is not sure to be safe an hour; and would you not be out of that state? Would it not be a blessed state for you to be sure that you shall live with Christ an endless life? Then you may challenge death with Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Then you may challenge all the world, even earth and hell, as he did, Rom. viii. 31, 33, 38, "If God be for us, who shall be against us? It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn? Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall life, or death," &c. I do here proclaim to you, in the name of the Lord, that you may have this blessedness if you will be converted, and that without conversion it will never be had. Get once into this state, and you may have cause to joy as long as you live, and far greater cause when your present life is ended.

I tell you, a true converted man is never in so sad or low a case, but still he hath more matter for his joy than for his sorrow. O, therefore, do not set light by such a happiness, and choose not to yourselves a life of terror, when you may have better if you will.

Sect. XIX.

18. Another great benefit of the converted, is this; The longer they go on, and the further they proceed, the greater will be their felicity: the case of the wicked is, the longer the worse; but the case of the converted is, the longer the better: when a wicked man hath had the sweetness, it may kill his heart to think what a bitter cup is kept for the last; but when the godly have had the bitterness here, it may sweeten all to think of what remaineth. If a wicked man should have never so much trouble in the flesh, there is another kind of trouble to be endured hereafter: the worst of their condition is still behind; but the best is still behind with the converted: you shall have what is good for you here; you shall have pardon of sin, and peace with God through Jesus Christ, and access to him in peace, when other men are shut out; and help in your distress, and strength against temptation: but all this is as nothing in comparison of that which is yet to come. You know partly what you have, but you know not what you shall be, but only in general, that when Christ appeareth, you shall be like him, 1 John iii. 2. Your glory is not within the sight of flesh and blood. You walk here as other men in the same frail flesh, and compassed with infirmities, and as men of sorrows; and the world knoweth not that you are the children of the God of heaven, and that you shall reign with him in glory: for the heir in his minority differeth not to outward appearance from a servant, Gal. iv. 1; but yet by right he is lord of all. No wonder if it be thus with you, for so it was with your Head the Lord of all: he was found in shape as a man, and there appeared no worldly glory or comeliness in him, for which he should be desired, but was despised, and became a man of sorrows, bearing our iniquity, and the chastisement of our peace, Phil. ii. 7, 8; Isa. liii. 2—4. But he that was among men of no reputation, was worshipped by angels, and dearly beloved by the Father, and for his humiliation is highly exalted, and hath a name given him above every name, and hath seen of the travail of his soul, and been satisfied, Phil. ii. 7, 9, 10; Isa. liii. 11, 12. And so it is also in their measure with his members; for if you suffer with him, you shall also reign with him; and if you be made conformable to him in his death, so shall you also be in his resurrection and glorification, Rom. viii. 17; vi. 5; Phil. iii. 10, 11. Though your way to heaven may seem uneven and troublesome, yet still the further you go, the nearer you are to it; and though sometimes you must pass through the valley of the shadow of death, where the place of your happiness may seem out of sight, yet still you are going on towards it; and the foul way, as well as the fair, is the way to heaven, and the waves and storms shall help you to the harbour. Though you be delivered to death for Jesus' sake, it is that the life of Jesus might be manifested in you. And though you always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, it is that his life may be manifested in your bodies, 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11. "For we know that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, will also raise us up by Jesus. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceed-

ing and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 14, 16—18. Great cause therefore have we to "groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our house which is from heaven, that immortality may be swallowed up of life," 2 Cor. v. 2, 4, 7. As Christ was nearer his glory on the cross and in the grave than before, when no man laid hands on him; so are his members in the last of their afflictions: for though the last enemy, death, must yet be encountered with, yet he also shall be overcome through the strength of him that hath conquered him for us; and who through death destroyed him that had the power of death, Heb. ii. 14.

O sirs, if there were but this one thing to show you the difference between a converted and an unconverted state, methinks it should sink down into your hearts, that the last day of the ungodly is still the worst, because that all endeth in their eternal misery; and the last state of converted souls is still the best, because all will end in everlasting glory. Careless sinners do seem to have some merry days for a while; but oh, how will they answer that question of Peter's, "Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinners appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. "Their ways do now seem right in their own eyes, but the end thereof are the ways of death," Prov. xiv. 12; xvi. 25. "Oh that they were wise to consider this, and that they would remember their latter end," Deut. xxxii. 29. The not considering of their end, is the cause that it proveth so miserable, Isa. xlvii. 7; Lam. i. 9. But the end of a believing, holy life is another kind of end. "Mark the upright man, and behold the just, for the end of that man is peace. But transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off," Psal. vii. 37, 38. "For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9. And this end is not far off: we have but a little while to wait, and we shall see the Lord upon the throne of his glory, and see the accomplishment of his promise to his saints. "For yet a little while, and he that cometh will come, and will not tarry," Heb. x. 37. It is many ages since the apostle said, "the end of all things is at hand," 1 Pet. iv. 7. "Seeing therefore all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness," 2 Pet. iii. 11. O therefore yield to that grace that would convert you. Conversion is the first gate, and a holy life the way to heaven. Though this gate be strait and this way be narrow, and few find it, yet the end is it that will pay for all: as ever you would have this blessed end, see that you make this happy beginning.

Sect. XX.

19. Yet this is not all; but besides all these benefits to yourselves, conversion will make you useful to others: it will make you become a blessing to the place where you live. As a wicked man hath a curse upon him, so usually he is a curse to others; and judgments many times follow him, and those about him may fare the worse for his sake. And as a true christian hath a heart full of the blessing of God's right hand, and is himself a blessed man, so he is usually a blessing to others, and many fare the better for his sake. As you may see in the case of Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 3, 5. While you are ignorant and un-

godly, what are you but hinderers of other men's salvation, and temptations to those about you? But when God hath illuminated you, and changed your hearts, you will be forward to do good to others, and to help them to that life and hope which you have received. If they want instruction, you will be more able to instruct them; if they are ignorant or careless, you will have some words to say to them for the awakening of their souls; if they be in danger, you can tell them of it; and you can go to God, and pray for them in their distress: you have a spirit of prayer, which you had not before; and you have interest in God, which you had not before, and therefore you may speed better for others, though not so certainly as for yourselves. I tell you, sinners, the stoutest of you all may be glad of the fellowship of a godly man, if it be but for the benefit of his prayers. Jeroboam that did stretch forth his hand against the prophet, was glad to beg his prayers, for the restoring of that hand, 1 Kings xiii. 6. And Simon Magus was glad to crave the prayer of Peter, Acts viii. 24. A few more such as Lot was, might have saved Sodom from the flames, when his ungodly neighbours were the cause of that heavy judgment. You are made fitter for to do God's service when you are converted, for that is it that maketh you his servants; this is it that bendeth your hearts and thoughts to God, and causeth you to devote yourselves, and all that you have, to him, and therefore you can never do him acceptable service till this work be wrought. That is the most happy and honourable nation, that hath most of these converted people in it. Let the world think of them as basely as they please, it is these that are the honour and safety of your country, and of your towns and parishes, and of the families where they live. If England be any better than the nations of infidels, it is by the godly. If the Lord would make this town to abound more with true converts and godliness than any other, I dare say it would be a happier town than any other. I tell you, that is the best place where there is most of the fear of God; that is the best family in the town that hath most true converted persons in it; or where those that are, are the most eminent in holiness. Were there but such hearts within you, that you would all agree together to yield to the saving work of the gospel, and set yourselves in good earnest to the work of your salvation, this would make you the happiest, the most honourable place in the world. Every good man is a common good; their light shines abroad to others, and such light will not be hid; the heat of their graces doth help to warm others, and happy are they that live near them, and have but the opportunity of conversing with them, so they have but hearts to improve such opportunities.

Sect. XXI.

20. If all this be not enough to show you the blessedness of the truly converted, consider in the last place, That it is not only to themselves, nor only to the world about them, that the comfort doth redound, but the heavenly host of God do in some sort partake of it. For the Lord Jesus telleth us, "there is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner that repenteth," Luke xv. 10. Harken to this, all you that live a worldly, fleshly life; it would be the very joy of angels to see your true conversion; and would you rob them of their joy? They know what good this change would do you, when you do not know it; and therefore they have compassion of you in your misery, and it would rejoice them to see your recovery. Oh that you did believe this, and that you did consider it! Can you find in your hearts to

stand out any longer, when you consider how many would be glad of your conversion? Turn then, O turn to Christ, poor sinners, and make glad the very angels of God by your returning.

Yea, more than so. 2. The Son of God himself would rejoice at your conversion. For the recovery of sinners is the fruit of his blood; and when he "seeth the travail of his soul, he will be satisfied." He that came into the wilderness of this world to seek such lost and scattered sheep, doth bring them home with joy, when he findeth them, Luke xv. "He came to seek and save that which is lost," Luke xix. 10. "He came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved," John iii. 17; though he must and will condemn them, if they reject his salvation. Nothing pleaseth him better than the conversion and salvation of straying souls; or else he would never have done so much to accomplish it as he hath done. He would never have sent abroad the doctrine of salvation, and established a ministry in the church to that end, if a returning sinner were not his delight. O that you knew, sirs, how welcome you would be to Christ after all the wrong that you have done him, if you would but speedily and heartily return. Those arms that were nailed open upon the cross, are still ready to embrace a returning soul. He that had tears to weep over his enemies in their obstinacy, Luke xix. 41, hath joy for them that return from their impenitency. He that would have gathered Jerusalem, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, if they would have been gathered, Matt. xxiii. 37, doth show what kind and tender welcome repenting sinners should find with him. If you had but hearts to repent, you would find that Christ hath a heart to receive you. I have formerly told you how tenderly he would meet a poor sinner half way, and fall upon his neck, and comfort his broken heart, and forget his miscarriages, and never hit him in the teeth with his sin; as the father did by the returning prodigal, Luke xv. If you did but know the worth of Christ's embracements, and tender love that he hath to show toward you, you could not find in your heart to stand out so long. You would rather be in your Saviour's arms, than among the swine where you have nothing but the husks. Can you find in your hearts to delay your return, and to despise this love? In the name of God, take heed what you do; for I must tell you, if you are so barbarous, and will so abuse that grace that would save you, you will find that he hath wrath as well as grace; and the Lamb of God is a lion to his enemies, and will slay those without mercy, that would not have him rule over them, nor accept of his mercy, Luke xix. 27. Abuse not mercy too much, lest it turn to unavoidable indignation. For "our God is also a consuming fire," Heb. xii. 29. And "if his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, then blessed are they that put their trust in him." Then blessed are they that were converted by his grace, for only they shall be saved from his burning indignation, and be made partakers of the kingdom of his glory.

Sect. XXII.

By this time you may see, if you be not wilfully blinded, that when we persuade you to be converted, we are not drawing you into a miserable life; and that it is no ill bargain which we offer you from the Lord. If I had nothing to plead with you, but the danger of damnation, I might justly expect you should believe and tremble, and yield such obedience as fear alone can cause. But I could not expect that you should receive it with love, nor yield the delightful obedience of the saints. But now you

may see that we move you not to your loss. I dare say I have shown you enough to win the heart of any man that is not obstinately blind and wicked. If you would be rich, I have showed you the only riches; if you would be honourable, it is only conversion that can make you so; if you would have pleasure, I have showed you the way to pleasure, and how you may be possessed even of your Master's joy. In a word, if you would be happy, I have showed you the only way to happiness; a life of peace and safety hath been offered you; a life of honour and pleasure hath been offered you; and remember that it was offered you. If you refuse it, remember you might have been happy if you would. You might have lived with the image of God upon your souls, and the Holy Ghost within you, and the everlasting kingdom a little before you, and with the eye of faith upon the promise of it in the word, and the eye of hope upon the glory that is promised; with the love of God in your hearts, now breathing after him in holy desires, which, when you have reached him, and are come to him, will turn into those endless and inconceivable enjoyments. You might have lived here in the spiritual communion of the saints, in the spiritual and fruitful use of God's ordinances, the chariots to convey your souls to life, and that glass in which you may see the Lord; you might have been much freed from the terrible gripes of conscience which the guilty feel, or certainly shall feel; and secured from that sin that "lieth at the door," Gen. iv. 7, and from all the everlasting misery that now waiteth for you. In a word, instead of a life of brutish sensuality and folly, and slavery to Satan, and preparation to eternal torment, you were offered that life which consisteth in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17. Beloved hearers, I now beseech you, in the name of the Lord, that you would not wilfully refuse to be happy; and that you would not neglect so great salvation. Our office obligeth us to invite you, and to be earnest with you; and oh that we were able even to compel you to come in, Luke xiv. 23. The nature of christian charity obligeth us to desire that you might partake of that felicity that is offered you. We know that you may live everlastingly in glory, if you prefer not the world and your flesh before it. Through the great mercy of God, we have tasted somewhat of this felicity ourselves, and cannot choose but wish that you might be companions of our joy. Methinks I should be of so much credit with you myself, as that you should take my word in a matter that I have tried. Why, if you will take my word, sirs, I do profess to you before the Searcher of hearts, that the safety, and peace, and comfort of a converted state, is such, that I would not be without it for all the world. Shall I say, I would not change it for a life of drunkenness, or filthiness, or fleshly pleasure, or for all the gains of a covetous worldling? I am ashamed of the comparison. As bad as we know our own hearts to be, I will confidently say, through the grace of God, if the kingdoms of the world were offered us in exchange, we should scorn them, and tread them under foot. I give you my word and experience, but to persuade you to come near and try. But, alas! if you will not believe God, how can I expect my words should be believed? Oh that you would but come and try, and when you have tried the way of holiness but a quarter as much as you have done the ways of the world and the flesh, then if you like it not, take your course. If you find by experience that the way of sin is safer and better, when you have tried both, then turn back again and spare not. I would trouble you no more, would you but come

and try; it is all that I now desire of you. But to think hardly of a state that you never tried; to draw back from a life that you never tried; this is not equal dealing with God, nor impartial, faithful dealing for your souls. I know some that have forborne some outward sins awhile, and stepped into an outward profession, and into the company of the godly, have fallen back again. But if you will but try the inward nature and spiritual life of a saint; the love, the trust, the zeal, the joy, the endeavours, and the hopes of a saint; then judge and spare not, as experience shall direct you, and forsake God if you really find that the flesh and the world are better. Remember what I say to you. It will leave you unexcusable, and be the confusion of your faces, when you shall answer this another day, that when your everlasting joy or torment did lie upon it, you would not be persuaded by all that we could say, so much as to leave your sins awhile, and come and make trial of a godly life. O wretches! you will one day be ready to eat your own hearts, to think that you refused, and wilfully refused, and impatiently and obstinately refused, so fair, so necessary, so good a motion.

CHAPTER VI.

USE OF EXHORTATION.

Sect. I.

BELoved hearers, I am not come hither to-day of my own head, nor in my own name, nor on my own business; but in the name of Christ, and on the business of your salvation. I know this great assembly will be all very shortly in another world, and we shall meet ere long in a far greater assembly at the day of Christ's judgment, which will be upon us, for all the seeming delay, before the careless world is aware. That you may be ready for that day, and stand with boldness before the Judge, when the unconverted world stands trembling and amazed, as overwhelmed with the unexpected terrors of the Lord, this is the business that I come hither about to-day; no less, no lower business than this. That I have not trifled with you, and filled your ears with witty toys and strange matters, I hope you will easily pardon me, when you have considered your condition, and the business of our office. I hate that preaching that passeth over the one thing necessary, and only tickle the ears of miserable men, when it should endeavour their relief. If the town were on fire, it were no commendable matter to be fiddling and dancing, when you should quench it. If I saw you but sinking in a broken vessel, and ready to drown, if you had not help, it would seem no part of wisdom to me to make a learned oration to you, when I should be helping you out of present danger. I must tell you, therefore, that I came not hither only to talk to you, that you might go home and say, you had heard a fine or a learned sermon; but I come to help you out of the misery of an unconverted state. I see the gulf of remediless destruction is a little before you, and I come to require you in the name of the Lord to make a stand, and go no further in the way of wickedness; but look about you and consider your way, and presently return. Have you been ignorant, inconsiderate worldlings, and forgotten that God that should have had your hearts, and forgotten the life where you

must live for ever? Be awakened then, and look before you; lift up the eye of faith, and see that joy or torment that is even at hand. Have you lived to the flesh, as if you had nothing but it to care for? and thought it more ado than needs to provide for everlastingness? In a word, have your hearts been set more on this life, than on that to come? and on the things below, than on God above? If this be so, flatter not yourselves in vain hopes. Delay not a day longer, but presently return from that condition. Believe the word of God, it will else be thy undoing. "For if you live after the flesh, ye shall die," Rom. viii. 13. "For they that are far from thee shall perish; but it is good for me to draw nigh to God," Psal. lxxiii. 27. "Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also," Matt. vi. 21. What say you, sirs, will you return to God from the lusts of the flesh, and the love of this world, and a lazy, careless, ungodly life, or will you not? Will you justify yourselves no longer in a state of death, nor excuse nor befriending the sins that have endangered you, but yield to the converting work of the Spirit, and strive not against that grace that would recover you? I pray you, give me not the bare hearing, but let your hearts make answer, aye or no. Will you return and be converted, or will you not? Dare any of you say, no? I hope you dare not. But it is next to saying no, if your hearts say nothing. Tell me not of your cold wishes and purposes, and you hope you shall. A thousand such faint and heartless meanings have left souls to perish in endless misery. It is resolution, strong resolution, and present resolution that you must have, and that God expects. What say you? Are you resolved to return, or are you not? Take heed what you say, for God is here present and seeth your hearts. Do not halt between two opinions; but if Baal be God, follow him; if the flesh and the world be God, and will make you happy, follow them; but if the Lord be God, follow him, 1 Kings xviii. 21. Do not put me off with to-morrow, or some time hereafter, as if it were not yet time, or you could not spare your sin as yet. No resolution is sincere, but present resolution: he that would keep his sins a day longer, would keep them a year, and seven years, and for ever, if he might. He that would not close with Christ to-day, would never do it by his good will. No man loveth God, that longeth not presently to be such as God would have him be. Again, therefore, I ask you, are you resolved presently to return, or not? This is the business I come hither upon, and I do not mean to go away thus, till I have my errand, unless you say me shameful nay: I am resolved to leave you better or worse, either converted, or more inexcusable than you were before, and to say that which shall be a witness against you, if it convert you not. And here, first, if you be not yet resolved, I shall desire that you will soberly answer me to these few questions following:

SECT. II.

Quest. 1. What do you think had come of you, if God had cut you off by death all this while before you were converted? Where do you think you should have been this very hour, if death had found you in an unconverted state? Do you not know? Why, doth not my text tell you? Will not you believe Jesus Christ? I know, if you do not, you had been as sure in hell, as you are now on earth. O sirs, how many a fair advantage hath God had against you! He could have killed you with one frown; with a bit of bread, with a draught of drink, by the turning of a hand, by the slipping of a foot, by the stumbling of a horse; besides many hundred dis-

eases that would have opened the door, or rather have broken down your dusty cottages, and let out your guilty, unprepared souls into another world. Oh! you cannot now apprehend what a dreadful thing it is for an unchanged soul to appear before the holy God! Doth it not sometimes amaze the best to think what a change it is that death makes? and what it is for a man that hath lived among mortals on earth, to find himself in a moment among angels and other spirits? How much more should the thoughts of a more lamentable change amaze the unconverted! It is only, or chiefly, some doubts, and some strangeness to that heavenly state that amazeth the godly; which will all be dispelled at the twink of an eye, by that joy and glory that they shall find themselves possessed of. But it is another kind of matter, even the everlasting misery, that should amaze the wicked. O dear friends, what a case had you been in, if you had died before conversion! Your hearts are not able to conceive of the thousandth part of the misery that you would have been in. And have you lived all this while in so much danger, and will you live in it still? God forbid. Hath a wonder of mercy kept you out of hell so long, and will you loiter yet longer in the old condition? Methinks I look upon you as imitating Lot, when he was called out of Sodom, Gen. xix.; that after he had been warned by the angel to get away out of Sodom with all that he had, as he loved his life, yet sons and daughters, or one thing or other, so long detain him, that he lingereth away the time, till God being merciful unto him, the angels did even carry him forth, ver. 16, and said, "Escape now for thy life, look not behind thee, and make no stay," ver. 17. So God hath mercifully called you out of the Sodom of your sins, and you have lingered till now. Oh that the Lord would be so merciful to you as to lay hands as it were upon those hearts, and take them off the world and your lusts, and bring you away! This warning, however, I am bound to give you: Escape now for your lives, look not behind you, stay not any longer, lest you perish in your negligence. So much for my first question, What had become of you, if you had died before conversion?

SECT. III.

Quest. 2. My next question is this; Are you sure if you delay returning another day, that you shall be that day out of hell? If you refuse this offer that God maketh you now, are you sure you shall ever have another? Can you say, that your bodies shall not lie in the churchyard, and your souls past hope and help in misery, before the next meeting in this place, if you so long delay and harden your hearts? You are not sure of it: if you are, let us see your evidence of security. Hath God any where promised you another day's time? Why, can you live a day whether God will or not? You know you cannot; I dare say you know it. You know that many a one as strong as you, and that feared death as little, hath been quickly gone; and go you must, however, at the last. Well, brethren, do I need to ask you such a question now, whether it be wisdom, or madness rather, for any man wilfully or negligently to live one day or night longer in such a condition, as if you should die in it, you were undone for ever? Will you venture to live another day in such a case in which you cannot be sure that one day to be out of hell? O, methinks, while you are unconverted, this saying of Christ should be still ringing in your ears; "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." And

methinks every night when you lie down in bed, you should think with yourselves, What if I should die in an unconverted state before the next morning? Methinks the very dreams of this should awake you with terror. Methinks when you rise in the morning, you should think with yourselves, What if I should die in an unconverted state before night? Methinks the daily thoughts of this should mar your mirth, and sour to you all the sweetness of the world. How can you forbear in such a danger to think of it, in your shops, and at your plough, at home and abroad, which way soever you go, or whatsoever you are doing? If you say, Though I am not sure to live a day, yet I am likely, for I have lived many a one already, when I had no assurance of it. I answer, but who would leave such a matter as his everlasting salvation upon such hazard? I warn thee therefore from God, in the words of God, Prov. xxvii. 1, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for who knoweth what a day may bring forth?"

Sect. IV.

Quest. 3. My third question to you is this; Which dost thou really think is better, God or the creature, heaven or earth, a life in glory, or the present pleasure of sin? Is it indeed thy settled judgment, that it is better be drunk than sober, and better take the delight of thy flesh, and follow this world, than live to God here, and with God hereafter? Is this thy settled judgment, or is it not? If it be, thou art an infidel, or an atheist, and not a christian; nay, worse than most infidels or heathens in the world. If it be not thy judgment, how darest thou do it? Wilt thou go against thy own knowledge? Wilt thou not do that which thou knowest is both pleasing to God and best for thyself? Shall God show thee thy misery, and wilt thou wilfully run into it? And shall he show thee thy happiness, and wilt thou wilfully forsake it? Dost thou think that it is better to be converted, or not? if thou think it to be a better state, how darest thou neglect it, or refuse it as thou dost? Who can help thee, if thou know that thou dost evil, and yet wilt do it? if thou know that thy way is the way of death, and yet wilt go on in it? And who shall pity thee, if knowingly thou wilt damn thyself?

Sect. V.

Quest. 4. My fourth question to thee is this; Dost thou believe that man is made for this world only, or for a better? If heaven were never so desirable, if it be not attainable, it is in vain to seek it: but if it may be had, what hearts have they that will neglect it, or prefer any thing before it! Do you think that man was made only to take a life of pleasure on this earth, and go no further, and there is an end of him? If you think so, you are blinder than most heathens in the world. Three sorts of creatures did God create: one sort are pure spirits without flesh; and these were placed in their happiness at the first to be nearest to God, and employed by him in his noblest works; only being not at first confirmed, some of them fell away, and are become devils: another sort of creatures have flesh without immortal souls, having no other life than what is fitted to their earthly state; I mean beasts and birds, and all other unreasonable creatures; these are not capable of any higher felicity than they here enjoy; they were never intended for it, and therefore their natures are not fitted to it. But man is of a middle sort, partaking somewhat of both these: he hath flesh like the beasts, because he must live on earth as they, and so must eat, and drink, and sleep, and die, and his flesh must perish as well as theirs; but with this flesh he hath a soul that is akin to angels,

and therefore is capable of an endless life, and fitted for it: so that so far as he is fleshly, so far he is earthly, and is like the beasts that perish; but as he is a living soul, he is disposed to an endless life, and may there be like to the angels of God, Luke xx. 36. You may see this difference between brutes and men, in their very natures here. They know not that there is another life, and we do: they live not in hopes and fears of another life, but we do. Experience certainly discovers this; they fear but one death, and we fear two, in fearing a misery after death. We govern them only by present objects; but God ruleth us by promises and threatenings of unseen things, and by the hopes and fears of another life: it is our nature to be thus governed, and theirs to be ruled by sensual objects.

Well then, if man was made for higher things, should he not seek them, and live for them? Remember then, I beseech you, that the work of conversion is but to set your hearts on the things that you were made for: it is to make you know that you are men and not beasts, and to bring you to live the life of men. Sin doth unman us, and in a sort even brutify us; and conversion restoreth us, in our present measure, to the ends that we were created for, and to the image of God that we were created in, which disposeth us to those ends: if you believe then that man is not a beast, but made for an everlasting life with God, away with fleshly, worldly vanities, and live as strangers here, and as those that are heirs of that everlasting life.

Sect. VI.

Quest. 5. My next question to you is; Have you ever soberly and considerably compared the gain and the loss that conversion will bring you? Did you ever on the one side consider of all the present peace and safety, and that everlasting glory, which is the portion of them that cleave to God, and of the misery of all others, as I have before discovered it to you? And on the other side, have you considered how small a matter it is that you can lose, if you yield to that grace that would prepare you for this glory? Sure if you had ever considered both of the winning and the losing, and laid one in the one end of the scales, and the other in the other, the case might have been resolved with you long before now. Sinners, when God and his ministers make such a stir with you to persuade you to be converted, and all will not serve, but year after year you are still the same, there is somewhat, sure, that is the cause. If somewhat did not stick with you, you would have yielded before this time. Somewhat there is, sure, that you are afraid of losing by the change, or else what should be the matter that you refuse, or delay? Well, let us hear what it is that you are afraid it will deprive you of. Is it any thing that is better than God, than heaven, than the saving of your souls? This is the benefit that conversion bringeth, and if it would take from you any thing that is better, refuse it then, and spare not. I tell you, sinners, God hath no need of you; it is for your own good, and that honour and pleasure that he takes in doing good, that he is so earnest with you to come in. And if any of you dare charge the God of heaven with dissembling, as if he meant your hurt, while he thus pretendeth your good, and would take from you more than he offereth you, or would give you; make good thy charge if thou canst, or rather take heed, if thou love thyself, of such blasphemous imaginations. O poor soul, if God would do thee harm, who dost thou think will do thee good? If the chief good be not good, where wilt thou find good? Dost thou fear lest the sun should deprive

thee of thy light, when thou canst have none but what it affordeth thee? Dost thou run away from the fire, lest it should make thee cold? What! fear lest God should do thee harm, when there is no good but what doth stream from him? Who wilt thou go to for any good, if thou flee from him? Hath any creature the least relief for thee, except they receive it from God, and he send it thee by their hands? They have nothing but what he lendeth them, nor can they give thee any succour, but by his consent. What is it then that thou art afraid of losing, by being converted? Is it any thing that is worth the keeping? It is incredible that God should envy thee thy happiness; that is the work of the devil, which moved him to tempt us from it. And dare you make God like him, or father^{on} God his nature, or his works? It is incredible wrong that men do to God while they question his goodness, and dislike his holy laws and ways, and quarrel with him, as if he were their enemy: and when he would draw them out of the prison of the devil, and the power of sin, they draw back, as if he would draw them into bondage. O base, unthankful wretches! must salvation be so dearly bought, and so kindly offered you, and do you thus reject it? O foolish, self-destroying wretches, are you so far delivered from all your enemies, that your happiness is brought to your own choice, and you may freely have it if you will, and now will you not have it? And will you be the last and deadly enemy to yourselves? Why, what is it that you are so loth to leave? Is it your sins? Is it your fleshly pleasures? or your worldly profits, or your ease, or credit, or which of these? Is it not a sad case that reasonable men should come to such a pass, that they are afraid of returning to the favour of God, and of coming from the thralldom of the devil, into his service, lest they should lose their pleasure? As if there were less delight in the love of God, than in flesh-pleasing filthiness; or as if the joys of heaven were less than the mirth of an ale-house. Is it not a sad case that ever men should be afraid of being losers by God? or of missing their money, or their houses, or lands, when they come to heaven? As if there were any want there where all are glorious kings; and as if Lazarus had not changed his state. And is it not a shameful thing, that men should be ashamed to be the servants of the God of heaven, and think it a discredit to be the heirs of glory? Is it to any purpose to talk to such men as these? Will they ever hear reason that are so unreasonable? If preaching were not the ordinance of God, which he hath commanded us to use, and therefore may set in with his blessing, when he pleaseth, we should even throw by all, and look on such as these as madmen, and think, till God shall bring them to their wits there is no good to be done by speaking to them. If a man will fly from God to an ale-house or gaming-house for pleasure, or from God to the world for profit or honour, what shall we say to such a man, but even take him in this as beside himself? For who will think better of him that will run into a prison, or to his enemies, for his liberty? or that will tumble in the channel, or lie down in the sink, and will not come out for fear of being fouled? I would ask the drunkard, or fornicator, or worldling, or whosoever he be that hath the most that sin can do for him; dost thou think that thou hast a more comfortable life than those that are furthest from thy sin? Dost thou think that they that abhor thy drunkenness, whoredom, or worldly courses of life, have not a more comfortable life than thou? Besides that which they shall have in heaven, when sin hath brought

thee into torment, (if true conversion do not prevent it,) even in this life, which, think you, have the more peaceable and comfortable life? I am even ashamed to make the comparison. A wise and godly man doth abhor these things that are the felicity of ungodly men. Your filthy lives, which you are loth to leave, would make the heart of a sober man to rise to think of them. What wise man would not think it a misery, if he were condemned to live your lives but a few days? A swine takes pleasure to tumble in the mire, but a man in his wits will take no pleasure to bear him company. And is this all that you are like to lose by it, if you be converted, and yet will you stand off? Well, I say no more of it now but this: If, after all this, you take the world to be better than God, and the pleasures of sin to be greater than the pleasures of a holy life, and the joy that God would give you with himself; and if you are afraid of turning to God lest you be losers by him; you may take your course, and stay till the end shall make you wiser to your cost.

Sect. VII.

Quest. 6. My next question to you is this; Have you now any reason to give against your speedy effectual conversion, which you will undertake to stand to, and justify at the bar of God? Do you know any harm by that state and life that God by converting grace would bring you to? You have heard much that may be said for it; what now have you to say against it? I know that a great many of senseless words are poured out by foolish sinners against the holy ways of God. But they are such as show their folly and malice, and proceed from wilfulness and not from reason. Not one of all these that you hear in a corner scorning at godliness, or reasoning against it, dare stand to these reasons when God shall deal with him. For my part, sirs, I would persuade you to nothing unreasonable and unfit. I have told you my reasons for the necessity of conversion: if you are against it now, either you have reason to be against it, or you have not; if you have no reason for it, how dare you, how can you do it? What! will you renounce your reason in the greatest matters, where you have the greatest use for it? or will you be wilfully brutes? or will you set yourselves knowingly against God and your own souls? In the name of God, consider first what you do. It must be either deluded reason or mere wilfulness that cause you now to refuse, or delay to be converted. I beseech you, let me have the answer of your hearts here before the Lord. Deal truly, have you any reason why you should not be converted and turn to God before to-morrow? I pray you, do not pass it over carelessly, but give me your answer: Have you any reason for it, or have you not? If you have not, your conscience is then witness that you are wilful in your neglect. You turn not to God because you will not turn. You go on in sin because you will go on. You do then in your hearts, as it were, set God at defiance, and say, I confess I have no reason to sin, but yet I will do it; I have no reason to delay my return to God an hour, but yet I will do it: and I will do it, though reason as well as the word of God cry out against it. Who can you blame, then, if the plagues of God shall reach such a rebel, and if he deal with you as wilful sinners should be dealt with? If you had done it ignorantly, you had some excuse, or you might have been beaten with the fewer stripes; but wilful sin hath no excuse, and on such the Lord will pour out his wrath. If your own reason tell you, you should presently return to God, and you will not, how can you expect in reason to find mercy with the Lord?

Oh that you knew what a heinous thing it is to sin wilfully after the knowledge of the truth: it would make every joint of you to tremble, lest if you go a little further, there should be no more sacrifice for sin, "but a certain looking for of judgment, and fire which devoureth the adversary," Heb. x. 26. Well, sirs, let me again put the question to you: What say you? Will you presently return to God, or will you not? Halt not between both, but resolve off or on. Say plainly, you will, or you will not: if you will not, tell me then, why will you not? Have you any reason for it, or have you none? If none, how dare you be wilful? but if you have any reason, I pray you answer my next question. Is your reason such as you will undertake to stand to at the bar of God? It is an easy matter to deceive yourselves and others, and to daub over a cause that is apparently naught, and to bring fair pretences for the most foul actions. Something men will have to say, to stop the mouth of those that would convince them, be their course never so ungodly: but the question is, whether you have any reasons for your sin, and against your speedy and effectual return, which you will undertake to stand, before the Lord. I pray you to bethink yourselves soberly of an answer, before you hold on your course any longer; lest you be at the bar before you are aware. One man's reason is, his sin is sweet, and he hopes he may safely keep it a little longer, and then he means to let it go. It seemeth, then, you had rather sin than not; and that shows that at present thou art a graceless wretch. But is the sweetness of thy sin a sufficient reason for thee to refuse the sweetness of a pardon, and the sweetness of the reconciled face of God, and the sweetness of everlasting glory? Dare you stand to such a reason as this is before God? I know you dare not. How then dare you delay your conversion upon such reasons? Is sin sweet to thee, and is not holiness sweeter? is not pardon, and life, and grace, and Christ, and God, and glory sweeter? O what kind of reasons be these for a reasonable man to venture his salvation upon? I shall not stand to try the rest of them, because they will fall under a more particular consideration hereafter. Only in general I charge and require you, plead not such reasons as you dare not stand to at the bar of God.

SECT. VIII.

Quest. 7. My next question to you is this; Have you ever well considered who they be that are against your conversion, and who they be that are against it? You may easily conjecture by this, whether it be good or bad. You have heard already who they be that are for it: God is for it, Christ is for it, the Holy Ghost is for it, the angels of heaven are for it, the ministers of the gospel are for it, and every wise and godly man is for it. God is so much for it, that he sent his Son to purchase it, and his word to command and call you to it, and to give you directions how it must be done, and his ministers to persuade you to hear and submit. He is so much for it, that he followeth you with mercies and afflictions, and all to this end, to lead you to repentance. He is so much for it, that he hath sworn that he hath "no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he return and live;" and pleadeth the case with you, and asketh you, "Why you will die," Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Christ is so much for it, that he hath made it his office; he took the nature of man on him to that end, that he might seek and save that which was lost; and for that end he submitted to the cursed death of the cross, and for that end hath he made the promises of his gospel, and sent abroad his ministers to proclaim them. He is so much for it, that

he is purposely become the "Captain of our salvation;" and having first given us his own example, doth lead us on in all encounters, and calleth us to follow him, that we may conquer as he hath done. He is so much for it, that upon this very ground will he condemn at last the impenitent world, because they would not be converted by him. The Holy Ghost is so much for it, that he moveth and importuneth sinners thereunto, and effectually worketh it in all the elect. The angels of heaven, as you have heard, are so much for it, that it is their joy when a sinner is converted. The ministers of Christ are so much for it, that they make it their business and study, and preach, and pray, and suffer, and think nothing too much if they might but accomplish it. "They are willing to spend and be spent for this end," 2 Cor. xii. 15. "They account not their lives dear to them, so they may but finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they have received of the Lord, in preaching the gospel of the grace of God," Acts xx. 24. They are content to "instruct those in meekness that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that they may escape out of the snares of Satan," 2 Tim. ii. 25. All the godly are so much for it, that it is their daily prayer and earnest desire: and they would do any thing they could to accomplish it. Oh how heartily do they pray for your conversion, that the kingdom of God may come in your hearts! How glad are they when they hear of the conversion of a sinner! Well, sinners, methinks you should consider with yourselves, For what reason do all these desire my conversion? Who is it that shall be the gainer by it? What doth God get by it? What doth Christ the Redeemer get by it? What doth the Spirit that moveth me get by it? What profit is it to the ministers of the gospel? Might they not as easily let me alone, and please me in my sins, and tell me of no danger? What profit is it to all my godly friends, that they should so earnestly desire it, and pray for it? Is it not I that am like to have the gain? And should I set against all the friends I have that endeavour my own good, even my everlasting good?

You see who they be that are for your conversion: will you now consider who they be that are against it? Are they better than God? Are they truer friends to you than Christ and his ministers, and those that persuade you to repent and live? Are they such as love you better than all these do? Why, who are they? First, the chiefest enemy to your conversion is the devil himself. It is he that dissuadeth you; that raiseth doubts and temptations in your mind, and casteth so many rubs in your way. He would not have you converted if he could hinder it. If all his subtlety can hinder it, if all his power and malice can hinder it, if all the instruments that he can raise up against it can hinder it, you shall never be converted. He knows he shall lose servant and subject of his kingdom; he shall be cast out of that possession which he hath kept in peace. If he do not rule you, he shall not torment you, which is pleasant to his malice. No one in all the world is so much against your conversion as the devil. When you say, you will never be so pure, nor so godly, nor live so holy and heavenly a life, O how you please him! You could not have said a word that he more delighteth to hear; for it is as much as if you had said, I will never leave my master, the devil, to serve Christ. Nay, it is all one as if you said, I am resolved I will never be saved, seeing there is no salvation without conversion. When you say you will do as your forefathers have done; and you will take your pleasure and follow the world; and

not be so precise, nor trouble your minds so much about the case of your souls, or the matters of eternal life; O how you please the devil by this! This is that he would have. You speak even as he would have you speak; for indeed it is he that tempteth you to speak it. But for God's sake, and your soul's sake, sinners, will you consider whether God or the devil is your better friend? You are the cause that I am put upon such a strange question to you: whether that be liker to be for your good, which God would have, and Christ would have, and the Holy Ghost would have, and ministers would have, and all godly people would have; or that which the devil himself would have? Do I need to bid you consider of this? A little consideration sure may resolve it. Can you think that all these forementioned are against you, and Satan for you? that all these are your enemies, and Satan is your friend? If you will indeed take God, and Christ, and his Spirit, and people, and all for your enemies, and him that is your greatest enemy for your friend, and that after such warnings as you have had; you may reap those fruits of his friendship which you little think of.

But there are some other besides the devil against your conversion. True; but who be they? None but his agents, and those that are deceived by him themselves. Perhaps you will hardly think so; for one may be your father, another your mother, another a husband or wife, or those that profess themselves your friends, and some perhaps may be thought wise and learned in the world. But what doth God say of them, who is most to be believed? He telleth you, they are foolish, and wicked, and enemies to the cross of Christ. You call them friends, but God tells you they are your enemies. If you think I speak too hardly of them, in telling you that they are ignorant, blinded sinners, believe God that saith the same. I hope you will not accuse him of wronging them, or any one. Never man spake against conversion that knew what he said, and was converted himself. It is only those that never knew or tried the ways of God, that persuade you from them. Will you go to the blind for direction? or to the slaves of Satan for counsel whether you should return to God? If they were wise men they would return themselves; and if they be not wise they are unfit to give you counsel. And methinks your own reason might tell you, that that man cannot be wise that would draw the hearts of others from God, and would have them venture upon the drawn sword of his vengeance; and do that which he hath threatened everlasting destruction to. Can that be a wise man that doth himself prefer this dunghill world, and the swinish mirth of a sinner, before all the holy joy and glory of the saints, even before the present life of grace, and the future life of glory? Ask your reason whether this can be a wise man? I may boldly say, then, that there is none but the devil and wicked fools that are against your conversion. Tell them how I call them, and spare not; for God calls them more, and their own consciences will call them so for ever, if they do not do that themselves which they would dissuade you from doing. I say it again, there is not one in the world, but the devil and wicked fools, that are against your conversion. And if these shall be your counsellors, and ye will be ruled more by them than God, and all the truest friends you have in the world, let your own consciences judge whether you have dealt well with God, or with yourselves?

Sect. IX.

Quest. 8. Yet I have some more questions to ask you, and my next is this; Had you rather die in a

converted or an unconverted state? And in which of these had you rather appear before the Lord? I pray you put this question to your own hearts, and soberly answer it. I say, which of these two conditions had you rather be in at death and judgment? Had you rather die the death of the righteous, or of the wicked? And had you rather stand among the unconverted, or the converted, at the bar of God? Had you rather that death should find you with clean hands, an innocent life, and a heavenly mind, delighting in God, and hoping for Christ's appearing; or that it should find you either in your ignorance, or worldliness, or fornication, or drunkenness, or with the guilt of any of these upon your souls, and with a heart that is not unfeignedly turned from them unto God? I do not think there is the most blockish or stout-hearted sinners among you, no, not they that make a mock at godliness, and discourage others from it, but they had rather be among the godly, than the ungodly, at the last. And is it not a strange thing, that men should set against that course, which they would wish to be found in? and should live contrary to it, when yet at the same time they had rather die in it, than as they are? Sinners, should you not be now such as you would be found then? And should you not live in that state as you would die in? Will it be best then, and is it worst now? how can that be? Believe it, sirs, you have neither your lives nor the grace of God at your will. If you would be found among the converted at the last, become such quickly, lest the last should come before you are aware. If life forsake you not, you cannot tell whether the Spirit of God may forsake you. If grace must be had, or else you are undone, take it while you may have it, lest you be given over to the hardness of your hearts.

Sect. X.

Quest. 9. My next question is this; If God should send an angel from heaven to you, to plead against your sinful course, and to persuade you to be converted, would you hearken to him and obey him, or would you not? If he should appear to you in your careless and worldly course of life, or if he should come to you in the very act of your sin; and tell you how the Lord abhorreth your iniquity, and how his vengeance hangs over your head, and will fall upon you, if you speedily repent not; and should persuade and entreat you to lament your folly, and turn to God with all your heart, without delay; what would you do? and what answer would you give? Would you tell him to his face, I will not be converted; I will take my pleasure, and follow the world, and venture my soul rather than live so strict a life? Would you say thus to him? You would not, sure you durst not do it! Would you not tell him, I am sorry for my sins, and resolve to turn without delay; but if you should so tell him, if you did not do it, your promise would but prove you hypocrites, and rise up against you to your condemnation. O, you do not know how such a sight would amaze you, and awaken you from security. A hand that appeared writing upon a wall, did make the knees of a sensual king to tremble; it loosed his very loins, it changed his countenance, it troubled his thoughts, Dan. v. 6. The appearance of an angel, at the resurrection of Christ, did make the keepers of the grave to shake, and become as dead men, Matt. xxviii. 4. How an angel's appearance affected Cornelius, and an earthquake with the effects did move the jailer, may be seen in Acts x. and xvi.; and many the like examples we might give you. What if an angel of God should but come and speak over this text to you, that I am preaching, "Verily, except you be converted, you

shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," would you yield, or would you not? If you would not, you are hardened with a witness. If you would, let me follow my question a little further with you. Should not the written word of Christ himself, and the voice of his messengers that speak in his name, and all the judgments and mercies that second these; I say, should not all these prevail with you as much, and more than an angel's voice? You have here the protestation, or vehement asseveration of the Lord himself, and should not that be of greatest authority with us? Angels are but servants of Christ, and ministering spirits for the good of his elect: would you hear them, and will you not hear their Master? Would you hear an unusual messenger, and will you not learn in Christ's appointed way? If it be a doctrine to be received from angels, tell me, if you can, why it should not be received now from the word of God, and from his ministers?

Sect. XI.

Quest. 10. The last question that I shall now trouble you with, is this; Do you think that man who after all this shall refuse to turn to God, and after all this shall remain unconverted, will have any just excuse before the Lord? or will he not be left speechless, and under the condemnation of his own conscience for ever? Is it any pity to cast away that man, that will without all pity cast away himself, and no saying will serve him, and no reason will satisfy him? or when he is convinced and silenced, yet for all that will not be converted? When it is their own doing, and they were their own undoing; and when God did not spare for cost and persuasion to have done them good; and when he shall say after all, as in Isa. v. 4, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" what should I have said more to this sinner, than I have said? what plea is left for such a sinner? or what can he say why he should not be sentenced to perdition? Will you say you did it ignorantly, or you had no warning? You cannot say it. Indians may say it, and many barbarous nations of the world may say it; but England cannot say it, nor you that hear me cannot say it. You have warning after warning, and all said to you that we knew how to say, that was likely to move the heart of a sinner. Will you say that you were not able, because it was a work above your power? Why, you cannot thus excuse your sin: for if you had been but truly willing, you might have done it? Your disability lay in your obstinate unwillingness. Are you willing this day, unfeignedly willing, to turn to God, or are you not? If you be, you will return without delay. For if you are willing, who can hinder you? But if you be not truly willing, how can you say, that you would have done it if you could? or how can you excuse yourselves by your disability? Unwillingness is a disability which excuseth no men, but aggravateth their sin. If you could have said that you would have returned with all your hearts, but were not able for all that you were willing, then you had some excuse; but now you have nothing to say for yourselves.

Object. We know there is no pleading for ourselves, nor any excuse to be made with God, but yet we hope we may be saved for all that?

Ans. How can you have any hope, if you have no ground of hope to show? If you have no reason to give against the sentence of your condemnation, how can you think to escape it? God is just, and will judge in righteousness according to his word; and they that have not now a title in the word for their justification at judgment, shall never be there justified, whatsoever they may dream.

Sect. XII.

Beloved hearers, I have been all this while pleading with you by the reasons of the word of God, to see if it were possible for me to persuade you to yield to the light, and be converted, that you may live. I have meant you no harm, unless salvation be your harm. The threatening of the Scripture, and the miserable state of unconverted souls, were all this while before me, which moved me to use so many persuasions with you. Have I prevailed with you, or have I not? Are you resolved for conversion, fully resolved, or are you not? God hath all this while stood by and heard what I have said to you, and seeth now what answer is in your hearts, and what effect these words have had. Shall all this be lost? And when we have said all that we can, must we sit down in sorrow, and say, who hath believed our reports? Isa. liii. 1. Is there one man or woman of you that dare go on in an unconverted state, and draw back from God, and loiter out your time, and still return to your former sins after all that I have said? If you do so, do it at your peril; and when you find yourselves in hell, remember the sermons that have been preached to you on this text, and blame not me, but your wilful negligence. Think not much that I bid you remember these sermons when you find yourselves in hell, for you shall do it then, whether you will or not. There is not a soul of you that shall live or die in an unconverted state, but shall remember the warnings that I have now and formerly given you. Sermons will be remembered in hell, that are forgotten on earth; and they that were weary to hear them here, and would not be at the small labour to repeat them, or hear them repeated, or else ponder in secret of what they heard, shall there think of it, and think again to their sorrow. As Abraham said to the condemned worldling, "Remember that thou in thy life receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus his evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented," Luke xvi. 25. So shall you remember the time, and means, and warnings that you once had. If you ask me how I know that? Why because the word of God doth tell me, that the consciences of wicked men will be their accusers, Rom. ii. 15. And that they shall mourn at the last, and say, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!" Prov. v. 11—13. And many other scriptures assure me of the same. Oh how much better were it now to believe the Lord, and foresee this evil, and think of your way while you have opportunity to escape! How much safer were this for you! and how much more pleasing would it be to God and us! O do not cast away your souls, and displease God, and all the true friends you have, only to please the devil and your flesh! Let me urge you a little further in the words of your Maker, and I charge you to regard them, as you will answer the contempt of them at your peril. Did you never observe how God doth pity the stir that poor sinners make in the world for nothing, and the unprofitable trade of sinning that they drive on, and how he inviteth them to himself, as the true gain and felicity? "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live," Isa. lv. 1—3. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil; learn to do well. Come now,

and let us reason together, saith the Lord ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow," Isa. i. 16. "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity ? and ye scorers delight in scorning ? and fools hate knowledge ? Turn ye at my reproof : behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you," Prov. i. 22, 23. "Turn ye even to me with all your heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning : rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God : for he is gracious and merciful" to them that turn, but not to them that go in their iniquity, Joel ii. 12. "When a wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, which he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth : wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye," Ezek. xviii. 27, 30, 32. The like I recited to you from Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

These are the calls of the God of mercy, inviting you into the way wherein his saving mercy is only to be found. Oh how glad would many thousands be that are now past hope, if they had but the call of God to repent, as you have this day ! How glad should you be that you have such an offer, and that it is not yet too late ! And therefore how cheerfully should you yield to be converted ! I shall in conclusion say but this ; If ever a man or woman of you all shall appear before the Lord in judgment, in a carnal, unconverted state, after all the warnings you have received, I hope God will not charge it upon me, who faithfully, though weakly, endeavoured to prevent it.

CHAPTER VII.

Sect. I.

By this time I hope many of you are willing to be converted, and are ready to inquire what you should do to that end ? and whether there be any thing on your parts to be done that may further it ? And in hope that you are willing, I shall next proceed to give you my best advice herein. And if it were so that you could do nothing to further it, because I am sure you may do much to hinder it, and have done all this while, or else it had been better with you than it is ; therefore I shall show you what are the common hinderances of conversion, which you must carefully endeavour to remove or conquer ; and with them I shall adjoin the contrary directions, which concern your necessary duty to this end. And though some of their contraries are real parts of conversion, yet the reason that I mention them here is, because the not yielding to the initial acts in the understanding, is the hinderance of the complete acts on the heart and life.

Sect. II.

Hinderance 1. The first hinderance of conversion that I shall warn you of, is, The wilful neglect of those ordinary means which God hath appointed for the working of conversion. When God will give any man saving grace, ordinarily he will do it by the means of grace. He that hath appointed his ordinances to that end, will so far stand to his own appointment, and honour his own ordinances, as to work by them, and not ordinarily without them. If

men therefore will not use God's means, no wonder if they go without his grace. For, 1. Such are out of the way of grace, and when they avoid the causes, they cannot in reason look for the effects. 2. And moreover, they do provoke God to withhold and deny his grace when they set so light by it, as that they will not so much as use the means to get it. A man by the help of common grace may see the absence and the necessity of special grace, and may do something in the use of means to obtain it if he will ; and when men will not so far use their common grace, it is just with God to deny them special grace. For example :

(1.) One particular means of conversion, is, The hearing of the word preached by the ministers of Christ in the public assembly. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? And how shall they hear without a preacher ? So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. x. 14, 17. God sent Paul "to open men's eyes and convert them," Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Chap. x. 3, 5, God would so far favour Cornelius, as to send an angel to him, but not to preach the gospel, but only to bid him send for a preacher, because he would keep to his standing ordinance, and make use of his ministers and appointed means. So he would stop Paul by a vision in his way, and do more for him in acquainting him extraordinarily with his name, than he doth with others ; and yet he sendeth him to Ananias for instruction, Acts ix. 6, 10. It was by hearing Peter preach that the Jews were pricked at the heart, and converted, and three thousand added to the church at once, Acts ii. 37, 41. It was God that must open the heart of Lydia ; but what did he open it for, but to attend the things that were spoken by Paul, that thereby she might be converted ? Acts xvi. 14. God would vouchsafe an earthquake to prepare the heart of the jailer for conversion, but he would not convert him without the preaching of Paul and Silas, Acts xvi. 32. It was those that had ears and heard not, and hearts that were hardened against the word, that were not converted, healed, or forgiven, Mark iv. 12 ; John xii. 40 ; Acts xxviii. 27. By teaching sinners the way of God, David assured himself, they shall be converted to him, Psal. li. 13. The word of God is the seed of life, which is sown and takes root in the hearts of them that God will save, Matt. xiii. 8, 19, 23 ; Luke viii. 11. It is the word of God which "abideth for ever," which is "the incorruptible seed by which we are born again," 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. God hath made those promises of a blessing on his word, which should draw us to attend it : "Incline your ears, come unto me, hear, and your souls shall live," Prov. i. 23 ; Isa. lv. 3. And he hath threatened those that will not hear and obey, severely, Matt. x. 14, 15. If a people will not hear the ministers of Christ, they must "shake off the dust of their feet in witness against them." And Christ hath attested that it "shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that people." It is by his ministers that Christ doth teach his church, and every soul that heareth not him, shall be cut off from his people, Acts iii. 26. If you will be at home when the message of God is delivered to the congregation, you cannot expect the blessing and benefit of it. If you can find something else to do when you should hear the word of God, God will find something else to do when he should give you his saving grace.

Object. But the minister is but a weak man, and I cannot profit by him.

Answer. Doth he not deliver the profitable word of God ? Doth he not preach the doctrine of faith, and

repentance, and justification by Christ, and show you the way of life? If you can hear the doctrine of everlasting life, and not profit by it, because the minister is not so able as others, blame your own hearts, and give more attendance and regard to what you hear; and lament that ignorance or carelessness of your own that hindereth you from profiting.

Object. But I have more temptations in the congregation, than I have when I sit at home. Satan is troubling me with vain thoughts, and I cannot attend.

Ans. Is that a reason against duty, and so necessary a duty? Will you think to overcome the devil's temptations by yielding to them? That is it that he would have. If he could drive you from God's ordinances, he hath his will. Will you make your own sin a pretence against your necessary duty? That is to make one sin a pretence for another; yea, a lesser sin a pretence for a greater: it is your sin to hear with a careless, wandering mind, but it is a greater sin not to hear at all.

Object. I can profit as much by staying at home, and reading the Scripture, or some good book: it is the word of God which they preach, and it is that which I read at home. The books that are written by learned men, are better than the sermons that are preached by our ministers.

Ans. 1. What foolish pretences are these against the plain command of God, and our own necessary duty! When God hath appointed you your duty, will he allow you to forsake it upon your own reason, as if you were wiser than God, and knew what will profit you better than he? If your physician give you a medicine, and bid you take it for the cure of your disease, will you be wiser than he, and say, Why may not such and such a thing serve turn as well, or better? If you will needs be your own physician, and forsake God's direction, and cure yourselves, do it as well as you can, and see what will become of it. It is a strange thing that a sottish sinner should think himself wiser than God, and take upon him to mend his word, and find out a better way to heaven than he hath prescribed him.

2. Can you have grace, think you, without the gift of God? If you cannot, do you think God will give it you in a way of disobedience, when you run from his appointed means; or rather in a way of duty and obedience, when you wait on him in that which he hath promised to bless? Find you such promises to those that turn their back on God's public ordinances, as we can show you to them that diligently use them, if you can.

3. Is it not horrible pride in you to think that you are able to understand the word of God as well without a teacher, as with one? The eunuch said to Philip, when he asked him whether he understood what he read; "How can I except some man should guide me?" Acts viii. 30, 31. And yet you think you can read the word at home as profitably without a guide: as if your children that go to school should say, We have the same books at home, and therefore we will not go to school; our master doth but teach us our grammar, and other books, and these we can read at home. You are wise men that while, that know no more of your own ignorance; and humble men, that think you have no need of teaching; as if God had appointed his ministers and ordinances in vain.

4. It is a certain mark that you never heard or read as you should; or else your hearing or reading would have taught you, that both must go together, and not one shut out the other; and that the greatest, which is God's public work, must be preferred. It is a mark of a graceless heart, and worse, even of

one that hath much blinded common reason itself, when wretched sinners do know no more of their own necessity, but think they can live as well without God's public means as with it. If ever sermon or book had done you saving good, and you had the least spark of grace, and had felt the power of divine truth upon your soul, you would have been far from these conceits; you would feel the necessity of the preaching of the word, as a hungry man feeleth the need of his food. Your own necessity would drive you, and the good which you feel by the word would draw you, and your love to it would not suffer you to forbear. If you were necessarily kept away by any business, you would take it for your loss, when it is not your sin, and would lament that you were deprived of that which you find so sweet and profitable. To find no profit by the preaching of the word of God, nor any great need of it, is a mark of a dead and graceless soul.

5. Look through the Scripture, and see whether the common way of conversion were not by the hearing the word of God preached.

6. If you may thus forbear it, then why may not all others? And then all christian assemblies should be dissolved, and forborne; and then what churches should we have? And do you think that this is the will of God? All sorts of christians in the world would have assemblies. Papists have their meetings, and anabaptists have theirs; and even the separatists have theirs; and would you have none? Doth not God expressly charge you, that "you forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is," Heb. x. 25. And to what end else hath he appointed ministers in his church?

7. Do you think that there should be any ministers, or not? If not, then no church, no baptism, and then no Christ, and no salvation. If there should, what should they do, if not preach the gospel? Paul so far preferred it before other ordinances, that he thanketh God that he baptized not any himself save some few among them, because of an inconvenience that might have followed. "For God sent me not," saith he, "to baptize, but to preach the gospel," 1 Cor. i. 17. If you would have no preaching, you should have no ministers. And if you would have us preach, who should we preach to? to walls, or to men? If to men, why not to you as well as to others? Are others bound to hear any more than you? And how can we preach without hearers? Paul saith, and so must we, "Necessity is laid upon me, and woe to me if I preach not the gospel." And may we not then say, necessity is laid on you, and woe to you if you hear not the gospel? The Scripture saith, "How beautiful are the very feet of them that bring the glad tidings of peace!" And you can profit as well without them at home! Is not your spirit then contrary to God's Spirit, which thus speaks? Rom. x. 15: and what spirit is it that is contrary to God's Spirit but the devil's?

8. It was never God's end in writing the Scripture, nor the end of ministers in writing good books, to keep you from the public hearing of the word. Each duty must know its place. I had rather the books that I have written were all burnt, than that men should by them be kept from the public and greater ordinances. Do not these very books which you say you read, command you to hear, and condemn those that do not hear? Do they not show you that your words are the words of wickedness; and say as much for hearing as now I do? What a hypocritical trick of you is this, when the Bible and other good books do command you to be constant hearers, and condemn you if you will not, that you will say you can profit more by reading these books

than by hearing? What, can you profit more by reading your duty, when you refuse to do it, than by obedient doing it? Can you profit most by reading your own condemnation. You read in Scripture that "he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination," Prov. xxviii. 9. The truth is, you show by this, that you do but make reading a pretence against hearing, when indeed you never did either of them with understanding and grace in your hearts.

9. What do you by withdrawing from the public assemblies, but excommunicate yourselves? And is it not our duty then to excommunicate or avoid you, if you continue obstinate after admonition? Do you believe the communion of saints, and yet do you avoid it? Well, if you had any grace in your hearts, you would make the assembly and public worship of God, the delight of your souls; and it would do you so much good to call on God, and praise him with his people, and hear his instruction, that you could not be without it. You would do as David; when he was banished from the temple and worship of God, he crieth out, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say to me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God; with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy-day," Psal. xlii.

The sixth council at Constantinople decreed, that whosoever was absent from the congregation three Lord's days together without necessity, if he were a minister, should be put from the ministry, and if he were a private man, he should be cast from the communion of the church. If you cast out yourselves, blame not us if we cast you out.

Object. But, say some, (that the quakers have taught,) when a minister preacheth a month, or two, or three, or a year upon one text, how can he choose but add to the word of God, and therefore why should we hear them?

Ans. A foolish cavil. What! is expounding and applying the word of God, adding to it? Do we tell you that any thing is the word of God that is not? Why doth not one of these ignorant objectors come and tell us in any one particular, what it is that we have added to the word of God? I am now persuading you to hear the word of God; is this adding to it? Doth not the word do the like? And doth not God in the word bid us acquaint you with it, and make it plain to you, and press it upon you? What if a lawyer bestow a day, or twenty days, in pleading your cause before the judge, that he may save your estate or your life from the malice of an adversary? Will you say, that this lawyer doth add to the law of the land by his pleading? What if the judge pass sentence according to law, and give the reason of it; or what if he make a charge of many hours long wherever he comes; doth he add to or diminish from the law by so doing? I must crave pardon of the hearers that are but of common reason, that I have spent so much time in answering such senseless, sottish cavils as these. But they must consider that such people we have to deal with, and the more unreasonable and blockish they are, the greater need they have to be taught.

(2.) Another means that God hath appointed for conversion, is, The reading of his word, and of such good books as are written for the opening and applying of it. Though this must not thrust out hearing, yet it is an excellent means in its own time and

place, or else God would not have appointed it as he hath done, Exod. xxiv. 7; Josh. viii. 34, 35; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30; Neh. viii. 3, 8, 18; ix. 3; Matt. xii. 3, 5; xxi. 26; xxii. 31; Acts xiii. 27; xv. 21; Deut. xxxi. 11; Acts viii. 30; Col. iv. 16; Rev. i. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 13. Many a soul hath had happy experience of the success of reading. The word read is the word, and therefore may convert, for "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," Psal. xix. 7. It is a very great privilege to have the truths of God before our eyes, where we may view them over and over at our leisure, till they be fastened in our hearts.

(3.) Another means that God hath appointed us to use for the obtaining of his grace, is, A serious inquiry of those that should and can instruct us. In common, easy matters, you may go either to ministers or to private christians as you see fit; but in matters of great difficulty, where private men are in danger of mistaking, or are not able to do it as your case requires, there it is your duty especially to repair to your teachers, or the most able, faithful ministers that you can well get, and make known your case to them, and desire their direction for your effectual recovery. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night for counsel, because he perceived that he was a teacher sent from God; and Christ thereupon did give him advice in the matter of the new birth. So Matt. xix. 16, another inquireth what he shall do that he may have eternal life. The eunuch desires instruction of Philip, Acts viii.; and Paul of Ananias, and Cornelius of Peter, as was said before. The Jews that were pricked at the heart, ask Peter and the rest of the apostles what they shall do, Acts ii. 37. And the jailer asks Paul and Silas, what he shall do to be saved? See further, Mal. ii. 7, "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." Luke xii. 42; Col. i. 28. If poor unconverted sinners would but take this course, and go to their teachers for direction for their salvation, and resolve to practise it when it is given them, conversion would not be so rare, nor so many miscarry as now do. But most are so careless that they feel no need of it, and think it were but to trouble themselves and their teachers to no purpose; and others are so stout that they will not stoop to it; but if we send for them to come, and speak with us, that we may afford them the best advice we can, they ask us by what authority we do it? And think it too much to come near us, and speak to us. Others are so sinfully bashful, that they cannot open their mouths, when their salvation is concerned in the matter; and others are conceited beforehand, that ministers will but slight them, and are too stout to speak to them, at least with any seriousness and tenderness of their case. And thus Satan keeps men from grace, by keeping them from the means of grace.

(4.) Another means of conversion, is, The frequent company of those that fear God, and would afford us their help in the way to heaven, and conference with them about these things. Company hath a transforming power, and the speeches and examples of heavenly christians will do much to bring others to a consideration of their ways. Commonly men are, or seem to be, such as their familiar company is.

(5.) Another means for conversion, is, Frequent and earnest prayers to God. When we know we want grace, and that God is the giver of it, what should we do but betake ourselves to him, and ask saving grace and "wisdom of him, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not?" James i. 5. I know some would persuade us that we may not ex-

hort unconverted men to pray; because their prayer is an abomination to God, and without faith they cannot please God. To whom I answer briefly: 1. Nature itself teacheth a man in misery to cry to him, that is able to relieve him, and to beg pardon of him whom he hath offended, and especially when he knoweth that he is of a merciful nature: and may we not persuade men to that which the very light of nature doth direct them to, and the law of nature oblige them to? or will these men go against the light and law of nature? 2. Scripture commandeth these to pray, and seek God: "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts," &c. Isa. lv. 6, 7. So Hos. x. 12; iii. 5; Amos v. 6. Peter exhorts Simon Magus to "pray, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart may be forgiven him," when he pronounceth him "in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity," Acts viii. 22. 3. We do not exhort men to pray while they continue wicked, but to return with prayer in their mouths from their wickedness. Our exhortation is as those before mentioned, "Let the wicked forsake his way," and thus seek the Lord. "Repent of this thy wickedness," and so pray for pardon, as Peter exhorteth. When we bid them pray, we bid them desire, for desire is the soul of prayer, and words are but the body; and when we exhort them to desire grace, we exhort them to the beginning of grace. Prayer is a returning act, and when we exhort them to pray, we exhort them to return, and by prayer to begin the work, and so this beginning may be a means of the rest of the change that is yet behind.

Sect. III.

Direct. 1. Having showed you the first hinderance of conversion, I come to give you the first direction, which is contrary thereto; and that is, That you would presently fall upon the use of these means that God hath appointed you to use for your conversion. Are you sensible of the necessity of it? and are you truly willing to be converted, or are you not? If you would, let us see your willingness in the use of the means without delay. Particularly, let me entreat of you these following things:

(1.) See that you be constant hearers of the word preached, and take delight in the public assembly of the church, and let nothing but necessity keep you at home. Live under the ablest ministry that you can; and neglect not one such opportunity for your souls. If you be absent without necessity but from one sermon, God may justly deny you the blessing of the rest: and you know not which it is that is most suitable to your condition, and therefore miss not any. The devil is aware what a minister is studying about all the week, and when he seeth that we have provided that which is likeliest to do you good, he will do all that he can to keep you away that day. He will find one business or another, or tempt you to be negligent; because he is afraid lest, if you come, you should be converted. Miss not one sermon, therefore, lest you miss that one that should have done you good. And as you hear, so take heed how you hear, and attend to it as to a message sent from God, concerning your salvation; and "set your hearts to all the words that you hear, for it is not a vain thing, but it is for your life," Deut. xxxii. 46, 47. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," saith Christ often in cases of greatest moment. And he that will not hear, and diligently hear, a message of free grace for the saving of his soul, is unworthy to have ears.

(2.) If you would be converted by the word, do

not let it slip as soon as you have heard it; but call it to remembrance again, and bring it home to your hearts: ponder of what you have heard, and speak of it to those about you. And if you be not able to remember it, through the weakness of your memories, go to some of your neighbours' houses that do repeat it, that you may have the benefit of their assistance. Have not you as much need as they? and should not you be at as much pains as they? Make the word your own before you leave it.

(3.) Be much in reading the word of God, and such practical books as will help you to apply it. And lay to heart the truths you shall read.

(4.) Especially do all this on the Lord's day, which is purposely set apart for such holy works. Lose none of that precious season of grace: but when the public worship is over, betake yourselves with your families, and in secret, to the improvement of it; and take as much pains that day for your souls, as you do on the rest of the days of the week for your bodies. You cannot then pretend that you have no leisure, when it is at a time that is wholly to be employed in such things. O make the best of that day, and seek after the knowledge of God therein, if you would be partakers of his grace.

(5.) Will you go, in case you want direction, to those that are able to direct you? Especially to your teachers, and ask them what course you must take for conversion, and tell them your case, and the hinderances that you meet with, and resolve to obey the counsel that they shall give you?

(6.) Will you betake yourselves daily to God in hearty prayer, and beg of him that he would give you converting grace? Beseech him to open your eyes, and show you the greatness of your sin and misery, till you be unfeignedly humbled; and that he would show you the need of his grace in Christ, till you can thirst after him and his righteousness; and that he would show you the certainty and excellency of his glory, till your hearts be set upon it above all. O beg hard of God that he would not let you live unconverted any longer, lest death should find you in that miserable state. Beseech him to pardon all your former rebellions and resistance of his Spirit, and now at last to give you that grace that you have set so light by; and bring you into the hatred of those ways of sinful pleasure or profit, which had your hearts before.

These are the means that God hath appointed to bring you into a state of saving grace. What say you? Are you willing? Are you resolved to use these means, or are you not? If you think that this is too much ado, and that your salvation is not worth it, you may take your ease and go without it. But if God have not given you up to so much unreasonableness, but that you had rather be at the sweet and comfortable pains of duty, than endure the intolerable pains of hell; if you do not set more by the ease of your flesh for a few days, than the ease and peace of soul and body for ever, then take my counsel, and set upon these means without delay. Look who doth most for God, and their salvation, of all that you know, and strive to do as much as they. You have the same God, and the same law, and the same and greater necessity, than they; you are farther behind-hand; you have more work undone which must be done; your danger is greater, and your souls should be as precious to you, as theirs to them. O, therefore, take time while you have it, and set yourselves to the work.

Sect. IV.

Hinderance 2. The second hinderance of conversion, which I shall mention, is bad company. It is

a dangerous thing to be wilfully a companion of ignorant, careless, ungodly men. If they will say nothing directly against that which is good, yet will they do much to hinder your salvation by keeping your thoughts, and talk, and delight upon other things, and by giving you an evil example, as if these matters were not necessary. Vain talk, and vain practices, settle the minds of men in vanity, and in a forgetfulness and neglect of heavenly things. Besides, they will be enticing you to such kind of business and delight, as strengthen the flesh, and contradict the Spirit, and fasten you in sin, and are the common causes of the perdition of the world. The noise of their foolish laughter and giddy discourse, will drown the voice of conscience, and of the Spirit of God. It is hard keeping the heart in a sense of duty, or the evil of sin, in the midst of sin. As it is certainly a vain and graceless heart that delighteth most in vain company, so such will make the heart more vain. When men sit over their pots, cherishing their flesh, (which they once vowed to fight against as their enemy,) pouring out a deal of foolish, senseless discourse; the sense of the evil of sin, and of the love of Christ, and of the worth of glory, is then far from the heart: and if they do make any mention of God or holy things, it is commonly unreverently and most abusively, taking the name of God in vain, and sinning more by their Scripture discourse, than by any other. And it is a wonder if the devil and their fleshly reason do not lead them to plead against God, and to take part with the flesh, and perhaps to make a scorn of godliness. Oh what a dangerous thing it is to live among such company as will be still hindering, but never helping, in the way to heaven! Especially among those that are worldly or sensual, or that are enemies to godliness, and set themselves against it to their power. In a way that is up hill, and all against the interest and inclination of our flesh, and in which we are so weak and backward ourselves, we had need of all the help that we can get; and a little hindrance may be our undoing. But when poor sinners shall live among such, where they shall hear almost no discourse, but vain, and almost no talk of religion, but in distaste and contempt of it, despising the way to heaven, which is, in effect, to despise heaven itself; how can it be expected that such be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and the love of those ways that they hear so much reproached? I know God can do it, and sometimes doth, where people are unavoidably cast into such company; but if men will choose such, when they may avoid it, the case is dangerous indeed. "He that walketh with wise men shall be yet wiser, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 20. Some of these ungodly wretches are so cunning in their discourse, that weak, silly people be not able to discern their folly. Some of them also have some worldly interest in them, and therefore are the liker to do them hurt. When those that they dwell with, and those that they depend upon, and those that seem to love them are ungodly, and speak against the way of salvation, it commonly takes so much with the ignorant, that they either say as they say, and are of their minds, or at least it hindereth them from thorough conversion, and setting themselves diligently to the saving of their souls. Thousands have been everlastingly undone by evil company.

Sec. V.

Direct. 2. The second direction, therefore, that I shall give you, is this; Do all that you can to avoid the company of those that would hinder you, and to live in the company of those that would help you, in the matters of your salvation. I do not mean,

that a servant that is bound should go from his master before he hath served according to their agreement; nor that a child should forsake his parents that are ungodly; nor that a woman should forsake her husband, or a man his wife, on this account; for here they are not at their own choice, but are fixed to their relations, which tie them to duty and faithfulness in their places: but I mean, that no man should willingly cast himself into evil company, that can avoid it. Particularly, 1. If a master be to take a servant, take not such as are ungodly, if you can have better. If a servant be to choose a master, come not into an ungodly family, if you can help it. If young people be intended to marry, take heed of being yoked unequally, 2 Cor. vi. 14, and joining yourselves with the members of the devil, and the enemies of Christ, and those that are likely to be hinderers of your salvation, and to prove the damnation of your souls. You will be backward enough and bad enough in the best company that you can get; what then will you be in the worst? especially when it is so near you, and continually with you, and that of your own choice. I confess a minister or other christian when he hath a call to endeavour the good of such, and to reprove their sin, may go among them as a physician among the sick; and so did Christ himself when he was on earth: but to make them our companions willingly, we may not. Grace is hardly got, and hardly kept, and more hardly increased in such company as this.

On the other side, get into the company of such as will further you. "The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is little worth: the lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of wisdom. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked speaketh forthwardly," Prov. x. 20, 21, 32. "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge," Prov. xiv. 7. If you were children of God yourselves, you would delight in those that are such. For, "by this we know that we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren." And David saith, that "the saints on the earth, and the excellent, are all his delight," Psal. xvi. 3. Get therefore, if it be possible, into the company of such; with them you shall hear that which may humble you for sin, and you shall hear that of Christ which may tend to kindle the love of him in your breasts; and you shall hear that of the goodness of God, and his way, and the privilege of the saints, the precious promises of the gospel, the life of grace, and the hopes of everlasting glory which may make your hearts to burn within you. When you live with those that by their example disgrace sin to you, and draw you from it, and watch over you against it, and that will be still minding you of those truths that should sanctify your hearts, O what an advantage is this to your salvation! If you be ignorant, they will teach you; if you are unskilful in prayer, or other holy duties, they will help you by their instruction and example. Choose, therefore, the best company you can get, if you be free, and all little enough. Live among that company on earth, that you must live with in heaven, if ever you come thither.

Sec. VI.

Hindrance 3. The next hindrance of conversion to be mentioned is, A gross ignorance of those truths which should be the instruments of their conversion. He that turneth to God, must needs know God; and he that turneth from sin, must needs know the evil and danger of sin. No man will make so great a change, and not know why. No man will part with his pre-

sent contents, and set upon a course that his nature is against; nor forsake all the world, even that which is dearest to him; till he know that there is a flat necessity of so doing, or know of something better to be had by the change. When we find that even men of knowledge are too often ungodly, and they will not leave sin even when they know the evil of it, and know that everlasting damnation is threatened against it, how then can they forsake it that know not this? When many that can speak of the vanity of this world, and the glory of the saints in the life to come, and the amiableness of God, and his all-sufficiency to make them happy, do yet cleave to this world, and neglect God and the glory which they so extol, how then can we expect that they should turn to God, and set their minds to seek his kingdom that do not know him? All the wickedness in the world is cherished by ignorance, total or partial. Even those that say they know these things, and yet live ungodly, do not soundly know them, but hold them as an opinion, and not as a point of saving faith. Oh, if poor sinners, that set so light by the everlasting kingdom, did but thoroughly know what they slight, they would quickly change their minds and courses. If you knew heaven as well as you knew your own houses and lands, and if you saw what the souls do now enjoy that depart in the faith, as you see what is done in the houses where you dwell, I would not thank the worst of you all to become far more devout and diligent than the best in the town or country is now: I would not thank the vilest worldling to become heavenly; or the vilest drunkard to become sober; or the scorner of godliness to be the most godly in the country. If you knew heaven as well as you know earth, it were no thanks to you if every family of you were a society of saints: but this cannot be expected. God will not have us live by sight and sense, but by faith. But yet a knowledge of divine revelation we may and must have. No man loveth sin but for want of knowing what he loveth. No man doth upon this deceitful world, but for want of knowing the worthlessness of it; no man makes light of eternal glory, but for want of knowing what he makes light of; and no man is against a holy life, but he that knoweth not what it is, nor what will be the end of it. O sirs, if you knew God, your hearts would be inflamed in love to him. There are some of you now stand wondering at the diligence of the godly, and some of you are secretly reproaching them, and casting forth your ignorant scorns against them; but if you did but know what it is that they are doing, and who it is that setteth them on work, and what it is that they make all this ado for, you would wonder more at your own folly, and would be as forward as they, and would presently take that course which you now reproach. Alas! poor sinners durst not sport with sin if they knew what they did; they durst not run in crowds to damnation if they knew what they did. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of darkness; and his works are the works of darkness, and himself the ruler of the darkness of this world, and under chains of darkness is he reserved to the judgment of the great day; and the mist and blackness of darkness is reserved to him and his servants for ever, Luke xxii. 53: John i. 5; iii. 19; Rom. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. vi. 14; Eph. vi. 12; Col. i. 13; 2 Pet. ii. 4, 17; Jude 6, 13; Matt. xxii. 13; xxv. 20. "If the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them," 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he

goeth," John xii. 35. They that are converted can truly say, "We were sometimes in darkness, but now we are light in the Lord," Eph. v. 8. For they are "translated from the power of darkness."

Sect. VII.

Direct. 3. If ever you would be converted, labour for true knowledge: come into the light that your deeds may be manifested; and that your own hearts may be manifest to yourselves. Nothing but light will expel your darkness: the devil haunteth men in the night of ignorance, and seldom appeareth in the open daylight; bring in but the saving light of knowledge, and he will vanish and be gone: the first part of saving grace is illumination. The opening of the eye causeth the opening of the heart. O if you had but a little of the heavenly light of the saints, it would show you that which would turn your hearts; you could not be of the same mind as you are, if you had but saving light: now you think highly of the world, and meanly of the world to come; you now think nothing too much for your flesh, and all too much that is done for heaven; you could not be of this mind if you had the light of the Spirit: you labour now for that which profiteth not, and neglect that which would pay you for your labour; you vilify Christ, and grace, and holiness, while you magnify the dreams and dung of the world; you could not do thus if you were savingly illuminated. I beseech you, therefore, if ever you would be converted and saved, labour presently to know the Lord, and his will and ways; lament your former ignorance and negligence which did maintain it. It is not so great a shame for you to be ignorant how to do your work in the world; no, nor how to eat or drink, or how to dress yourselves; as it is to be ignorant of the kingdom of heaven, and the way thereto. You will never hit the way to heaven if you do not know it: he that knoweth most, knoweth too little; what then will they do that know almost nothing at all? O think not knowledge a needless thing, but make out after it, and rest not till you do obtain it; to which end you must use these means following.

(1.) Be much in hearing and reading the word of God, as was before directed; for that is it that "giveth light to the simple," Psal. cxix. 105, 130; this "will make you wise unto salvation," 2 Tim. iii. 15. (2.) Read good books that are written for the expounding and applying of the Scripture. Many have received much information by these. (3.) converse with wise and godly men. These are the means of knowledge that were before made mention of.

Object. We are not learned, and therefore God will not require much knowledge at our hands.

Ans. You may say, Therefore God will not require learning at your hands, further than you are without it through your own neglect. But first, every man that hath a reasonable soul should know God that made him; and know the end for which he should live; and know the way to his eternal happiness, as well as the learned: have not you souls to save or lose as well as the learned have? 2. God hath made plain his will to you in his word; he hath given you teachers and many other helps; so that you have no excuse if you are ignorant: you must know how to be christians if you are no scholars. You may hit the way to heaven in English, though you have no skill in Hebrew or Greek; but in the darkness of ignorance you can never hit it. 3. Will not God judge you as well as the learned? And will not he require an account of the talents which you possess? He hath set you on his

work as well as others, and therefore you must know how to do his work. If you think therefore that you may be excused from knowledge, you may as well think that you may be excused from love and from all obedience; for there can be none of this without knowledge.

Object. But I am not of so quick an apprehension as others; and therefore I cannot learn so well. And I have been brought up in ignorance, and therefore it cannot be expected from me.

Ans. Can any man have excuse for ignorance that liveth among such teaching, and books, and christian company as we now do? You may as well shut your eyes at noon-day, and say you cannot do your work for want of light. Were you but as willing to get the knowledge of God and heavenly things as you are to know how to work in your trade, you would have set yourselves to it before this day, and you would have spared no cost or pains till you had got it. But you account seven years little enough to learn your trade, and will not bestow one day in seven in diligent learning the matters of your salvation. Is there not many an opportunity of getting knowledge, which you miss of through your own neglect? You are at home, or upon other business, when you might have been hearing the word of God, and in the company of diligent christians, that are inquiring and learning these necessary things; and when you neglect the means, you think to be excused for your ignorance. The way that God commandeth you for getting knowledge, is, that you receive the word of God, and hide his commandments with you; and incline your ears to wisdom, and apply your hearts to understand, and that you cry after knowledge; and lift up your voice for understanding, and seek it as silver, and search for it as for hid treasures. And if you would do thus, the Lord hath promised that you shall understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, Prov. ii. 1—5. Methinks light itself should be pleasant to you. Did Adam so desire unnecessary knowledge as to undo himself and his posterity to procure it? and will not you so desire that knowledge which is necessary to your salvation, and by which you may be recovered from that miserable estate? Acts xxvi. 18. How many years' study will men spend to know a little of the creature! and will you not take pains to know the Maker and End of the whole creation?

Object. But we hope we may be saved without so much knowledge.

Ans. Not without knowing the necessary, fundamental points of christianity; and a desire to know more. Doth Christ say, "It is life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ," John xvii. 3; and do you think to have life eternal without it? God saith of people that have no understanding, "That he that made them will not save them, and he that formed them will show them no favour," Isa. xxvii. 11; and that "Christ shall come in flaming fire to render vengeance to them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. And that they shall be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord."

SECT. VIII.

Hinderance 4. The next hinderance of conversion, is, unbelief: when men will not be persuaded that the word of God is true, but doubt of the things which he hath revealed to them, concerning the everlasting state of men. Men have but a slight opinion of the truth of the word of God, which will not serve turn to prevail against their fleshly inclination.

Three great enemies of the christian faith we have to deal with, which if we overcome not, we lose all. 1. The one is our own unbelieving hearts, and our carnal inclinations and interests; flesh and blood cannot reveal the things of God to us, nor discern them when they are revealed, Matt. xvi. 17; 1 Cor. ii. 14. A sound belief of the life to come, and of the whole christian faith, would certainly turn the heart to God, and turn the course of all your lives. It is this faith that purifieth the heart, Acts xv. 9; and without it no wonder if the word be unprofitable, Heb. iv. 3, as to the producing of any further work of sanctification, for it must first beget faith before it can do the rest. 2. Another enemy to the christian faith, is the devil; who believeth and trembleth himself, but laboureth to keep others unbelieving and secure. So great is his malice against Christ and our souls, that when he seeth that he cannot make a poor sinner forget God, and make light of his word any longer, he flieth openly in the very face of God, and disturbeth the soul with blasphemous suggestions, and tempteth them to doubt whether there be a God, or not, or whether Scripture be his word, or whether it be true. It was his first way of deceiving, to make the woman doubt of the truth of God's word, which had told her, that if she sinned she should die. And experience teacheth him to follow on this course, which he hath found to be so successful; most of the world are destroyed by this unbelief. How sensible is many a poor christian of the incessant malice of Satan in this point; when he followeth them from day to day with such violence, that their hearts are ready to be overwhelmed with the horror of the temptation! But the ungodly do yield to them without so much reluctance. 3. Another sort of enemies of the christian faith, are, notorious ungodly men; such as either by the power of their own unbelieving hearts, have prevailed against the light that should have drawn them to believe, or such as have by the reasonings of infidels, been made infidels themselves, and are desirous to make others such as they are: these are the devil's instruments to draw men to unbelief.

SECT. IX.

Direct. 4. If ever you would be savingly converted, see that you soundly believe the word of God: believe soundly that there is an everlasting happiness, which is the reward of a holy life, and an everlasting torment, which is the punishment of ungodliness; and you cannot choose but forsake your ungodliness, and become holy. To this end observe these few things following. 1. Watch over your carnal hearts with jealousy: do not take your hearts to be clear and impartial; and therefore commit not the matter to their trust: they are naturally enemies to the word of God, and therefore no wonder if they hardly believe it. 2. Do not think too highly of your own understandings, as if you were able to comprehend the depths of God, or were competent judges of each passage in his word, before you have had time and means to understand them, or before you have improved your time and means by diligent study and prayer to God: search the Scripture, as a learner, and not as a foolish caviller. 3. Abhor the very first temptation of Satan that tends to draw your souls to unbelief, and suffer not his malice to make too deep impressions in your fancies: cast out such horrid thoughts with detestation, and give them not the least countenance or willing entertainment. 4. Detest the company of atheistical men, or any infidels that dare open their mouths to speak against the word of God. Yea, though they pretend to do it but by way of question. Hear every word against

the Scripture from such deceivers, as if you heard it from the devil himself, or as if you saw him behind them, prompting them what to say, and putting them on: for it is he that doth it by their mouth. As it was Satan that caused Judas to betray Christ, and filled the heart of Ananias and Sapphira to lie against the Holy Ghost, Luke xxii. 3; Acts v. 3; so is it Satan that filleth the hearts of these unbelievers to speak against Christ, and to contradict the word, which the Holy Ghost hath delivered. 5. Labour to understand the sense of Scripture, and the great evidence of its truth, and of the christian faith; and have recourse to those for your confirmation that are of better understandings herein than yourselves, and read those books that are written to that end, to manifest the divine authority of Scripture. 6. Submit to the truth which you know, and strive not against the light, but let it have its due impress upon your souls, that you may have the experience of its power and excellency to confirm you. By these means you may do much to overcome your unbelief; and if that were once done, the rest of the work would go on apace.

Sect. X.

Hinderance 5. The next hinderance, is, inconsiderateness: of which I spoke in the beginning, but shall add somewhat in this place. When truths are not considered of, they are but as medicines that lie in a box, and therefore are not like to work; it is the work of consideration to bring down truths from the understanding to the heart, and to hold them there till they do work. We cannot get poor sinners so much as soberly to bethink them of their ways, and to call to mind the things we speak to them, and consider of them for their good. Because I intend, if the Lord will, to speak hereafter more fully of this subject, I shall pass it over now thus briefly.

Sect. XI.

Direct. 5. If ever you would be converted, use to consider frequently and seriously of those truths of God that must do the work. The word of God is pure and powerful to convert the soul, but can you look it should convert you, if you will not so much as soberly think upon it? How can that work upon your hearts, which is out of your minds? It is you that must join with us for your own conversion, and do the rest of the work when you come home, and not think that a sermon can do it, when you forget it, and never mind it more. If you seek to the ablest physician for your body, he can but give you physic, it is you that must take it and keep it, and observe directions till it work. If you will presently cast it up again, how can it do you good? We tell you of those truths that are most useful to your conversion, and if you will take them home, and keep them, and ponder of them when you are alone, till they sink into your hearts, and take rooting, you may be happy men; but if you will cast them all up again, and will not be persuaded to bestow now and then a few of your deepest serious thoughts for the further entertainment of them, how should they do you saving good? If I could prevail with this congregation to be but considerate, and now and then to bestow some time to get the truth to their hearts, I should have great hopes of the conversion of you all; for light is stronger than darkness: if you would but open the window by consideration, and let it in, you should find the darkness presently dispelled, and it would be day with you that have sat in the shadow of death. The Spirit of God is able to overcome the flesh, and Christ is able to conquer Satan, and bind him, and cast him out of your souls. And if you

would but set in, and take his part, and open him the door by sober consideration, when he knocks and seeks admittance, and not discourage him by your wilful neglect, you would feel the working of his power to your salvation. There have now been many sermons preached to you on this text: have you considered of them when you came home? Have you taken yourselves alone, and asked your own hearts, whether you are converted or not? And have you bethought you of the blessedness of the converted, and the misery of the unconverted, which you have heard? Have you dwelt upon these thoughts, till they have sunk down into your hearts? If you have, I dare say this doctrine hath done you good; but if you have not, what wonder if you be unconverted still, and if you live and die so, and if you be damned among the unconverted, when you will not be persuaded so much as seriously to consider of the matter? If it be not a matter worthy the thinking of, it is not worth the hearing; and if this be not to be thought on, I know not what is. We do not go home with you from church into your houses, nor see what you think of there in secret, nor whether you fall down there before the Lord, and pray over the sermons that you hear; nor do we hear what you say of it to others: but God followeth you home, and he seeth and heareth all; and he that is here ready with his grace to enter into your hearts, if you do not resist or slight him, is there also ready to help you to make use of what you have heard, if you do not wilfully throw it off yourselves. O, did you but earnestly consider what God is, and what your duty is, and what you were made for, and whither you are going, and what sin and the world are, and what grace is, and what Christ is and hath done for you, and what death is, and what judgment is, and what heaven is, and what hell is, how is it possible you should continue unconverted? how is it possible but you should presently run out of your present carnal, worldly state, as you should do out of a house that is all on fire over your head, and should become most zealous and diligent christians? Certainly consideration would do very much to your conversion. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies; I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments," Psal. cxix. 59.

Sect. XII.

Hinderance 6. The next great impediment to your conversion, is, hardness of heart, and seariness of conscience. Though every man have some of this in his original corruption, yet resisting of light and motions of grace doth usually bring men to a far greater measure of it; both by the nature of the thing, and by the just judgment of God. When men have sinned often or long against knowledge and conscience, and receive not the truth in the love of it that they may be saved, but suppress the light, and live not up to the convictions that are upon their consciences, it is usual for such to grow blockish and senseless, and for the brutish part so far to prevail, that they are in a sort "unreasonable men," 2 Thess. iii. 2. Men are naturally dead in sin, but when they have sinned wilfully, they grow more dead; that is, they are more insensible, and have more of the marks of death upon them. And when they fall, especially from former conviction and profession, they "become twice dead, and plucked up by the roots," Jude 12; and then the work of conversion is hard indeed. When the heart is thus hardened, no words are much regarded by them: no saying will serve; you speak as to a post. We shoot our arrows as at a wall of flint, where they will not enter: the

dew of holy instructions doth fall upon a stone, where no fruit can be expected. You cannot devise what to say that will touch them, because they are stupid, and will not lay it to heart: you cannot tell how to sharpen your words to make them enter. The Lord have mercy upon poor wretches, for their case is lamentable. It would make a man of consideration wonder to see what piercing, weighty truths a hard heart will make light of. Speak to them as from the God that made them, and they regard you not: speak to them of their everlasting state, and they regard you not: tell them of the heinous evil of sin, and all its aggravations, and they take it all but as words of course; and will say, God help us, we are all sinners, and there is an end. Tell them of the infinite love of God, and the precious blood of Christ that was shed for them, and the free pardon that is offered, and the rich abundant grace which they might have, and it will increase their presumption and security; but it will not raise their estimation of it, nor quicken their desire after it, nor make them forsake all and follow Christ. Tell them of an everlasting state of glory, which they may obtain in the presence of the Lord, and they make light of it, and hear it as they do a story of the Fortunate islands, or the Elysian fields: tell them of the endless torments of the damned that despised grace in the day of their visitation, and either they feel not and fear not what you say; or if they fear a little, it is not so much as to move them from their courses, nor bring them to a change of heart and life. Oh what a sad work it is to have to deal with a hardened heart! It is to hew at a stone; and to cleave a knotty block that will not receive the wedge; to plough and sow on a rock, where you cannot make the plough to enter. This is the trouble of a preacher's life; this dultheth his hopes, this wearieth and tireth him; this maketh him say, I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought: and this hath broken many of their hearts. Alas! to see our poor people within a few days or years of eternal fire, which they might prevent if they would look about them in time, and we cannot get them to lay it to heart! Alas! to hear what a feeling they must have for ever, and yet we cannot get them to feel or fear, and prevent it now! Oh! thinks a poor minister, if I could but awaken him, and make him regard the case of his soul, I should have hope yet to prevent his damnation: for no man can destroy him against his will; and the light is so clear, that methinks he should see it, if he would not wilfully shut his eyes. But alas! we cannot get them to regard it. How sad a case is it to think of an everlasting glory which they might have, and how freely Christ hath purchased it, and how freely he doth offer it to them, and they might have it if they would, and if they did not wilfully slight it and reject it; and yet that we cannot awaken them to consideration, nor bring such matters as these to their hearts! I have formerly said it, and I will say it again, that I profess that I often marvel that the weight of everlasting matters doth not rather overwhelm your spirits, and overwhelm them. I have wondered that it doth not even amaze and astonish you to think how great a change you are near, and what a thing it is to be everlastingly in heaven or in hell; and yet we cannot get our people to feel or lay to heart these things. Oh, what lamentable hearts are these! What will they regard and feel if they will not feel everlasting matters? What words will ever pierce their hearts if the words of the living God will not do it, and the words by which they know they shall be judged? Do but call one of them by some disgraceful name, and he will quickly feel:

threaten him with death, promise him but a hundred pounds, and he will regard it: but let God declare his sin and misery to him, and he will not feel it: let God threaten him with hell, and promise him everlasting life, if he will return, and he will not regard it. Oh what a happy life might a minister have if it were not for hard-hearted men! If we could deal with them but on such terms for their souls as we do for their bodies, how certainly should we prevail, and then how comfortable would our employments be! If a lawyer tell them their evidence or cause is naught, they will hear and regard him; if a physician tell them they must take physic or die, they will lay it to heart; if their landlord tell them they must pay their rent, or be turned out of their houses, they can feel what he saith: but if we tell them that they must repent and be converted, or be condemned for ever, and miss of salvation, we cannot be regarded; their hearts are blocked up from us, by the world, and pride, and lust, and sin, and we cannot get into their bosom; we know not how to come at their hearts. Alas! if it were not for their own sakes this trouble were small to us; for what good else should it do us to trouble them, and break their hearts and change them? But when we consider, if we could but convert them we should save them; and if we could help them to grace, we might meet them in everlasting glory; this maketh us long for better success. Fain then would we get them to hear, and regard, and feel what we say, that it might go well with them for ever; but we cannot; alas! to the grief of our hearts we cannot. It is a tiring life to have none but hard-hearted sinners to persuade; we lose our study for them; we lose our breath upon them. Some of them can think of other things while we are speaking to them of the greatest matters in all the world; and some of them can drop asleep under it, and some of them sit as dull as blocks; and some of them will look upon us as if they were affected, and yet it never goes to the quick; and some of them that seem to be somewhat sensible, do shake off all again in a few days' time, and when they have been awhile among their old companions, and about their old business, they show us that they are the old men, and that it is one thing to be a little affrighted for a few days, and another thing to have a changed, softened heart. Were it not for this sin of hardness of heart, it were not possible that so many sermons should be lost; nor that so many ministers in England should see so little fruit of their labours. Why, alas! sinners, what else can be the matter? We come on as reasonable an errand as any men in the world can come on; it is but that men would accept salvation that is freely purchased and offered them, and that they would be content to change a life of sin and misery, for a life of grace and everlasting glory. One would think that such a message as this should take with every man and woman in the congregation; especially when it is sent from God himself, and brought to them with such evidence of certain truth, and themselves profess to believe what we say. One would think a message so reasonable as this should prevail with every man in a whole country or kingdom where it comes: and yet it doth not. Nay, alas! how few are they with whom it doth prevail! If we came hither to offer every man in this congregation that he should live in a palace as a prince, on condition he would leave his cottage and accept it, who would make any question of the success? I should not doubt but every man and woman of you would yield. And yet when we come in the name of God to offer them grace and glory on free cost, if they will but let go sin and the world, they will not be persuaded;

say what we can, though they will not tell us so, yet they will not be persuaded: and whence can this come but from a hardened heart? Did we not speak to men that have lost their sense and reason, and are past feeling, it could not be: when every man naturally desireth his own happiness, and yet men will not be happy when it is offered them.

Yea, this is not all; but when the heart is thus hardened, some of them are given over to such a desperate case that they hear the word with a malicious mind; and instead of receiving it in power to their salvation, they do but cavil at it, and pick quarrels with it, to their condemnation; and prate among their companions against that which they understand not, nor ever laid to heart. If a physician would heal them for nothing, and they should maliciously reproach him or quarrel with all that he doth for them, did they not deserve to be left to perish by the disease? If they had forfeited their lives, and a free pardon were offered them, what would you think of him, that instead of a thankful accepting of the pardon, would pick quarrels with it, and prove it nonsense, or scorn the messenger? This is the case of many of our hearers. Poor souls, their lives declare their misery, and God sendeth us to them with the offers of a remedy, and one goes home and makes a jest of it, and another foolishly cavilleth against it, and another thinks it a needless thing; and this is our success with hard-hearted men. Now the Lord have mercy upon you that hear me in this congregation, and grant that this may be none of your case, or if it be, that he would powerfully and quickly cure it; for it is one of the saddest cases in this world; and of all sorts of men, there are few or none that we have so little hope of as hard-hearted men. If a man were never so much mistaken and never so far out of the way, yet if he had but any regard or feeling with him, we might hope by the force of reason and the light of the word of God, to bring him to himself, and set him in the way; but when men are past feeling, what shall we say to them, or what can we do for them? Nay, it is not only words, but even the works of God that are lost upon such men: mercies do but harden them, and judgments themselves do but harden them, which one would think should humble and soften them, if any outward means could do it. When the Jews had sinned, God punished them with war, and let loose plundering, robbing soldiers upon their estates, and destroyers upon their bodies; and yet they were so far from being humbled and softened by it, that they did not so much as regard the cause, nor the hand that did it. "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned?" For they would not walk in his way, neither were they obedient to his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not, and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." Isa. xlii. 24, 25. And hath not this been our own case in England? Who would have thought, if people had but had life, and sense, and reason in them, but that so many years' war should have humbled them for their sins, and made them willing to learn and to be reformed? Who would have thought but they would have searched and tried their ways, and turned to the Lord that did afflict them; and have loved his word, and have given up themselves to his will, and even in the open assemblies have voluntarily acknowledged and bewailed their iniquities? And yet we see how many are the same. As the sword found them, so it hath left them, if not worse: and if the fury of God's anger cannot be felt, no wonder if

they cannot feel our preaching: and if they lay not to heart the fire that burneth them up, what wonder if they lay not to heart the message we deliver? If Peter and Paul, yea, or Christ himself, had preached to one of these hardened sinners, they would have made light of it, or gone home and ignorantly cavilled against them as they do against the ministers now, unless the powerful arm of God had inwardly concurred to the softening of their hearts: for indeed they did thus by Christ and his apostles while they were upon earth: and by all the prophets that went before them. Ezek. iii. 4—7, saith the Lord, "Son of man, get thee to the house of Israel, and speak with my words to them. Not to many people of a strange speech and a hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened to thee. But the house of Israel will not hearken to thee; for they will not hearken to me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted." And Christ himself, when he had wrought even miracles to confirm his doctrine, was put to grieve for the hardness of their hearts, Mark iii. 5. And when the apostles preached the gospel of salvation, "divers were hardened and believed not, but spoke evil of the way of God before the people," till the apostles resolved to leave them to themselves, Acts ix. 9. So that hardness of heart is the great impediment of conversion.

SECT. XIII.

Direct. 6. The advice therefore that I would give you for this work of conversion, is, That you especially take heed of this dangerous case of a hardened heart. In the name of God, see that you run not into this miserable state; or if you be in it, oh that I could awaken you, that you might speedily be brought out of it. Have you yet time of repentance? and are your souls and bodies yet together? Yet hath God's patience kept you out of hell? O harden not your hearts, lest time be gone, and death and darkness be upon you before you are aware. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation," saith the Holy Ghost, 2 Cor. vi. 2. Doth God give you warning once again before he smiteth you into everlasting vengeance, and doth he once more call you to repent before he summon you to judgment? O take the counsel of the Holy Ghost; "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," Heb. iii. 7, 8, 15; Psal. xciv. 8. I say, to-day, lest he bear not with thee till to-morrow. "Boast not of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth," Prov. xxvii. 1. And if God do call thine impenitent soul out of this world before our next meeting in this place, or at least, ere long, remember then that thou hadst time to have prevented the misery which thou must feel to all eternity.

There is not a more fearful plague on earth than a hardened heart; none is more like to be sealed up to damnation than such a one. Dost thou hear of the greatness of thy sin, and hear of judgment and eternal life, and hear of the love and severity of the Lord, and yet dost thou not feel it? O sad case, and sadly to be lamented by all that understand it! for from thyself it cannot be expected. Believe it, sinner, God hath a voice that will be heard and regarded. If the voice of mercy be made light of, the voice of judgment shall not be made light of. When we have told thee of thy danger, and of the remedy by Christ, thou canst go home and cast it out of thy mind. But when God hath said, "Go, ye cursed, to everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," then make light of that if thou canst. When he hath newly said, "Take him and bind him hand

and foot, and cast him into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" then forget this, and cast this out of thy mind, if thou canst. O poor wretch, if thou hadst to do but with such an one as I, or any one of the sons of men, perhaps thou mightest think to escape well enough; but thou hast to do with the Eternal Majesty, and how then wilt thou escape? Canst thou grapple with his Almighty strength? or canst thou make good thy part against him? When we call on thee to repent and reform, thou wilt not; when we call on thee to a holy and heavenly life, thou wilt not; but when he shall say, Depart from me, thou cursed wretch, wilt thou then say, thou wilt not? When he shall deliver thee to the devils to be tormented by them for ever, who deceived thee in thy life-time, and bid them take thee to everlasting flames, wilt thou then say, thou wilt not go? Alas, poor wretch! what power hast thou to resist? It is the same Almighty God that made all the world of nothing, and beareth it up in his hand, and disposeth of it at his will, which then will command thee to remediless perdition. If he bid the sun in the firmament move, it moveth; and once when he bade it stand still, it did stand still; and nothing is able to resist his power; and canst thou resist it? Why, if he send but a disease upon thee, thou art unable to resist it! If he bid thee die, wilt thou say, I will not die? Alas! if sinners could have resisted God, and saved themselves from the stroke of justice, the churchyard would not have been so full of graves, nor hell so full of damned souls as it is at this day. "But who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?" Job ix. 4. Name me the man, and tell me where he dwells, that hardened his heart against the Lord, and sped well by it in the latter end. I tell you again, if sermons cannot make you feel; if mercies and warning, if threatening and affliction, cannot make you feel, judgment and hell shall make you feel. Say not but thou wast told so, and remember this when thou seest not me. Remember that I foretold thee that God will not be always jested with, or abused, and that thou canst not make so light of hell as thou didst of the warnings of God and man. If thou be turned into a rock, God hath a hammer that can batter and dash in pieces that rock.

Object. But if God will harden my heart, how can I help it? Is it he that hardened Pharaoh's heart; and so he did the Jews, Mark iv. 12. And if he will do it, what remedy?

Answe. 1. Dost thou think to have any excuse or comfort by accusing the righteous and holy God? Oh what a foolish thing is sin, and how it bereaveth poor sinners of their understanding! Thou mightest better have laid the blame upon any one in the world, than upon the righteous and most holy God. For never sin came from him, nor was caused by him. Dost thou think he will not be justified in his judging? God's hardening men is but his leaving them to themselves, to go on in that hardness that he found them in, and denying them that grace which he no way oweth them. 2. And God doth not this neither, till thou abusest his grace, and strivest against the light, and castest away thy own mercy; and is it not just then that he should take his mercy from thee? If children will play with their meat, or cast it to the dogs, and tread it under feet, it is time to take it away. This is God's hardening of the hearts of sinners; he leaveth them as he found them, after they have abused and refused his grace. And withal, he letteth loose the tempter upon them, that seeing they will be wicked, they may be taken in their own wickedness, and destroy themselves by it. As you will lay a purse in his way

to catch a thief by, when you do not make him thievish; so God will try and catch a sinner, when yet he never gives him any inclination to the sin. But when he seeth that they are and will be such, it is just with him to let them take their course, and smart by their folly. And as, if you see a thief that is running into a pit, you are not bound to keep him out; no more is God to keep a sinner from destroying of himself, especially when he hath so often refused his assistance.

Quest. But what can I do for the softening of my own heart?

Answe. Oh that thou wert but willing to do what thou shouldst and mightest do! If thou be willing; 1. Get alone and consider of the misery of thy condition; and of the time when thou shalt feel whether thou wilt or no. 2. Keep under the most powerful preaching of the word, which is God's ordinary means for melting of the heart. 3. Keep in the company of those that will remember thee of those holy truths which have a softening nature, and will bring everlasting things into thy mind. 4. Keep out of the company of foolish and ungodly men, who by their words and practices will harden thee more. 5. Resolve that thou go not on in the practice of thy known sin; no, not once more. For sinning against knowledge doth harden the heart, and tempt the Lord to leave thee to thyself. If thou wilt be drunk when thou knowest it to be a sin; and wilt be worldly, and wilt be fleshly, when God and conscience speak against it; this will desperately harden thy heart. 6. Beg daily of God that he would soften thy heart. Beseech him upon thy knees to pardon those sins by which thou hast hardened it, and to give thee his Spirit which must deliver thee from this misery; and follow him hard with these requests from day to day; for if thou prevail not, thou art undone and lost for ever. For saith the Holy Ghost, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy. Happy is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief," Prov. xxviii. 13, 14. "He that being oft reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy," Prov. xxix. 1.

Sect. XIV.

Hinderance 7. Another hinderance of conversion, is, The too great esteem that men have of this world, and the great interest that it hath gotten in their hearts. By this it is that God is shut out, that Christ is so neglected, that heavenly things are so much undervalued; because men have that in their hands already, or at least in their eyes, which they like better. God and mammon cannot be loved; these two masters cannot be both served. While the world is leaned to, Christ will be made light of. The glory to come can never be obtained, but by the hearty forsaking of this present world. It is this that stole the heart from God; and it is this that possesseth it, till grace recovereth it to God again: and therefore it is the work of grace to cast out the world, and to set up God; to dethrone this usurper, and to give God again the possession of his own. As truly as darkness goeth out of the room when light comes in, so truly doth the love of the world depart where the love of God doth enter into the soul. For "if any man (predominantly) love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15. Men cannot make God their end, and the world their end too. They cannot love God above all, and the world above all too. They cannot set their hearts on heaven, nor make it their treasure and their chiefest good, while they set their hearts on

earth, and make it their treasure; "for where their treasure is, their hearts will be," Matt. vi. 21. When men are drowned in worldly cares, and taken up so much with worldly contrivances and businesses, there is then no room for the matters of their salvation. If they would go to consider of their sin and misery, and think of these things that might further their conversion, their worldly matters step in, and turn away their thoughts; so that, when they are alone, and have opportunity for such considerations, yet they have no hearts to such a work. When they are considering, and begin to perceive that they must either change or perish, and that this life will not serve the turn, presently the world doth turn their minds, and telleth them of other matters to be minded, and so all is forgotten again. If their hearts be a little awakened and troubled for sin, the pleasure or business of the world doth quiet them; and while it maketh them forget their misery, they live as if it were cured, and all their trouble vanisheth away. If they are moved to set up the worship of God in their families, to read, and pray, and instruct those that are under them, the world will not give them leave, they have somewhat else to mind, which it seemeth they think of greater necessity. And thus the world is an enemy to God, and the love of it keepeth out the love of God, and the serving of it excludeth his service, and they that are friends of it, are certainly his enemies," James iv. 8. And this is a grievous hindrance of conversion.

Sect. XV.

Direct. 7. Let go the world then, if ever you would be converted. You renounced it in your baptism, see that your hearts now unfeignedly renounce it, unless you will renounce your part in Christ and the world to come. Think not to keep both, and make up a felicity to yourselves between them. It is now become your enemy, and as an enemy it must be affected and used, or else as an enemy it will effectually destroy you. It is a killing, conquering enemy, to those that take it not heartily for their enemy. But it is only a troubling, but a conquered enemy to them that take it and use it as an enemy. Oh that poor worldlings did but know what a feather, what a shadow, what an empty unprofitable thing they do pursue! You run after it eagerly, but when you overtake it, you will befool yourselves, and say, What have I gotten? Is this all that I have cared and toiled for? Is this all that I forsook God and my salvation for? For your souls' sake, sinners, forsake not God till you know for what. Neglect not heaven till you have somewhat better to regard. Renounce not your salvation till you know such reason for it as you dare own, and stand to at death and judgment. Is a little plenty of wealth and worldly trifles a matter for a man to sell his soul for? You think, I know, that you do not sell your salvation for it, because you hope that you may have both: but this is but your wilful delusion. If you will not believe God now that telleth you you cannot have two portions, two treasures, two ends, or two masters, you will find it true when your deceit hath undone you. Doth God tell you that you cannot love both, and that the world and he cannot both have your hearts, and will you not believe him? If the world be better than God, then take it, and let him go. If it be more durable than heaven, then follow it and spare not. But, alas! what a dream, what a shadow is it! How soon will it be gone! Will you always dwell in these houses? or will your friends and riches stay with you for ever? Will you carry your lands, and wealth, and fleshly provision to another world? Alas, that men should wilfully

undo themselves! There is not a worldling, but will confess all this to be true that I say; and yet their hearts are still the same, and the world hath their love, and care, and pleasure, and worldlings they will be still. Oh what a self-condemning sinner is a worldling, and how much against his knowledge doth he sin! He knows that he misplaceth his affections, and yet he will do it. He foreseeth that the world will deceive him at the last, and yet he will follow it, to the neglect of his salvation. Christ hath made but "one thing necessary," Luke x. 42. Do that and do all: get that and get all. But they needlessly cumber themselves about many things, and make themselves more work than God hath made them; and will not see that they have lost their labour, till they find that they lost their souls. O poor foolish sinners, that now are so busy for you know not what, and rejoicing in your possessions, as if you were happy, when "your souls shall be required of you, whose then shall these things be?" Luke xii. 10. When death and judgment shall awaken you to your account, and help you better to understand your reckoning, then make your boast of the world, and boast of your gain, if you find it worth your boasting of. Then tell us who was the wiser merchant, he that sold all for the pearl of grace and glory, or he that let go that treasure for the world. Then tell us whether a heavenly or an earthly conversation be the wiser course; and who it was that chose the better part.

Sect. XVI.

Hindrance 8. Another great impediment to conversion, is, When custom in sinning hath given it the mastery, and made the flesh the ruler of your reason, and made men think that they have a kind of necessity to sin. Nature as corrupted, doth bring forth sin in too great strength; but custom doth make it stronger, and blotteth out the remnants of moral wisdom and honesty from the soul. When men have long taken a custom of sinning, they grow hardened and senseless, as the highway doth by being often trod upon, or as a labourer's hand grows hard by constant labour. And so sin becometh familiar to them, and they become "past feeling," and are "given up to work uncleanness with greediness," Eph. iv. 19, 20. A custom of sinning against reason doth make men in a sort unreasonable, by giving their sensuality the rule of their reason. We see by sad experience, when men grow old in ignorance, how hardly they are brought to knowledge, yea, or to be willing to learn; and when men are often drunk, or commit any other heinous sin, how it prostitueth their souls to the next temptation, and maketh sin as familiar to them as water to the fish. It must be by a miracle, or next to a miracle, that an old, ignorant, worldly, or sensual sinner must be converted. By often sinning they have lost their understandings, and hardened their hearts, and think the greatest good to be evil, and think they cannot live without their sin. But as a man in a fever calls for cold water, so do they for the pleasure of their flesh. They must have it, they cannot forbear it, their flesh will have no nay. "If the blackamoor can change his skin, or the leopard his spots, then may they that are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well," Jer. xiii. 23. We see in public cases, what a power custom hath. If men be but used to any thing in God's worship, that is unmeet or contrary to the word of God, they will not hearken to the Scripture, but cry out, Custom, custom, against that plain word that must judge them, and should direct them; as if the custom of their forefathers were of more authority than the word of God. No wonder then if a

custom of swearing, or drunkenness, or worldliness, or wickedness, or contempt of a religious, godly life, do prevail with thousands to harden them to perdition; and this be a grievous hinderance to their conversion.

Sect. XVII.

Direct. 8. You that are yet young, take heed of a custom in sin; and you that are hardened in it already, in the fear of God make a stand and go no further. It is sad that you have gone so far. But if you wilfully go on but one day more, you know not but God may leave you to yourselves; and if you wilfully add but one sin more to the heap, it may seal you to perdition, it may break your backs, and sink you into hell. Oh what a folly is it then for men to delay their repentance to the last, when custom in sinning doth make the work of their conversion to be more difficult. Remember, I beseech you, that your custom is the aggravation of your sin, and not any just excuse. What! if you had taken a custom of spitting in the face of your own father or dearest friend, or any way abusing him, would you think it a good excuse for you to continue it, because you are accustomed to it? Why, the oftener you have sinned, the oftener you have wronged God; and the oftener you have wronged him, the more should you now bewail it, and not therefore go on to wrong him more. If you had oftentimes hurt yourselves by falls, or cut your fingers by negligence or carelessness, will you do so still to keep a custom? What greater madness can there be than to plead custom for sinning against the living God, and hastening your own souls to everlasting perdition? You shall have custom for suffering then, as you have for sinning now, and see whether you will therefore love your suffering. If you will love sin, because you are accustomed to it, you shall try whether you can love hell, because you are accustomed to it.

Sect. XVIII.

Hinderance 9. Another hinderance of conversion, is, Foolish self-love, that makes men unwilling to know the worst of themselves, and so keepeth them from believing their sinfulness and misery; and causeth them to presume and keep up false deceiving hopes, that they may be saved whether they are converted or not, or that they are converted, when indeed they are not. They think it is every one's duty to hope well of themselves, and therefore they will do so; and so while they hope they are converted already, or may be saved without conversion, no wonder if they look not seriously after it. Like many a sick man that I have known in the beginning of a consumption, or some grievous disease, they hope there is no danger in it; or they hope it will go away of itself, and it is but some cold; or they hope that such or such an easy medicine may cure it; till they are past hope, and then they must give up these hopes, and their lives together, whether they will or no. Just so do poor wretches by their souls. They know that all is not well with them, but they hope God is so merciful, that he will not damn them, or they hope to be converted sometime hereafter, or they hope that less ado may serve turn, and that their good wishes and prayers may save their souls; and in these hopes they hold on, till they find themselves to be past remedy, and their hopes and they be dead together. I speak not this without the Scripture: Prov. xi. 7, "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish, and the hope of the unjust man perisheth." Job xxvii. 8, 9, "What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he have gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry

when trouble cometh upon him?" Job xi. 20, "And the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape; and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost." There is scarce a greater hinderance of conversion, than these false, deceiving hopes of sinners; that think they are converted when they are not, or hope to be saved when they have no ground for their hopes. Were it not for this, men would look about them and return.

Sect. XIX.

Direct. 9. I have formerly spoke and wrote to you of this point, and I have told you that it is none of my desire that any man should absolutely despair. But despair you must of ever being saved without conversion, or finding heaven in the way to hell. Till that kind of despair possess your hearts, we cannot expect a saving change. For men will not let go all their pleasure, and cast themselves upon these difficulties, which flesh and blood apprehendeth to be in the way of God, as long as they hope to do well enough without it. No wonder if men be unholy, that hope to be saved whether they be holy or not. It is hope that keepeth your hearts from breaking, which must be broken for your former sins. It is hope of doing well enough in your present case, that keeps you from seeking out for a better: if you knew that you must be converted or condemned, and had no hopes of being saved unless you were born again, then you would look about you, and run to God by prayer for his grace, and run to the word by reading for instruction, and run to the minister with inquiry for direction, and be glad of that company which would help you to heaven. I tell you, it is these carnal hopes that deceive the world, and hinder them from seeking Christ and life. The thing, therefore, that I request of you for the sake of your own souls, is but this, That you would but try your hopes by the word of God, and prove them sound before you trust them; and content not yourselves to say, I hope I shall be saved, but prove and try, whether you are such as God hath promised salvation to, or not: for there are hopes that will never deceive men; that is, those that are well grounded on the word of God: and there are hopes, as you have heard, that will die with men, and undo them; that is, those that had no ground but their own self-love; when men hope they shall be saved, because they would have it so, and hope to come to heaven, when they will not go the way to heaven. Is it not one of the dreadfullest sights in the world, to see a man ready to leave this world, and have no hopes but what will die when he dieth? O, if you did but know what a terrible thing it will be for a man in his lifetime to hope for salvation, and as soon as he is dead to find himself in damnation, and all his hopes to vanish like a dream, you would sure be persuaded to try your hopes. Prove once by the marks of grace in your souls, that thou art one of those that God hath promised salvation to; that is, one of the regenerate, the heavenly, and the holy; and then hope for salvation and spare not, and the Lord confirm and maintain thy hopes. For these hopes are grounded on the word of God, which never yet deceived any. But if you hope well, and know not why, and you have nothing to show for your hopes of heaven, but what an ungodly man can show, or the most of the world may show that shall perish, and cannot prove that you are new creatures, and holy, and heavenly, these hopes do but hinder your conversion and salvation.

Sect. XX.

Hinderance 10. The next hinderance of conversion,

is, Those counterfeit graces, or half-conversion, which are like to true graces, but are not them, and so do not bring over the soul to God, but strengthen the false hopes, which we mentioned before. There is somewhat in the heart of an unconverted man, which is like in his eyes to true conversion. Some fears and accusation of conscience he may have, and some change thereupon: he may be convinced of his sin and misery, and see the necessity of another course, and hereupon may change his company, and betake himself to many duties, and break off many of his former sins, and seem to himself to be truly converted, and glory in this as long as he liveth, and think verily that he is indeed a converted man. He may know the very time, the book, the sermon, the words that were the means of doing this work upon his soul, and therefore think that it is truly done. He may remember so great change that was made on him, that he may confidently conclude that it was a saving change; and yet it may be but common preparation, or mere terrors or convictions, or some common works, which many that perish partake of. He may have hereupon somewhat that in his eye is like to every grace of the Spirit, and therefore think that these are they indeed; and this is a fearful deceiving state, and mightily quieteth men in a miserable condition; when these common gifts should be otherwise used.

Sect. XXI.

Direct. 10. Take heed, therefore, of trusting to counterfeit graces, or superficial works that do not effectually convert the soul. Labour to discern by the light of the word of God, whether the work be savingly done or not; how you may discern it, I have told you before. If God be set up highest in your souls, and brought nearest to your hearts, and your hopes are set upon the life to come, and all things in this world seem vain to you in comparison of it; if sin be bitter to you, and Christ, and grace, and holiness be sweet, then you may conclude that it is a saving work, but otherwise not. And therefore rest not in common works.

Sect. XXII.

Hinderance 11. Another hinderance is, When men live among strong temptations, and occasions of sin; as when they depend upon some great men, or parents, or other friends that are enemies to godliness, and would undo them if they should follow it; or when they are so engaged in a course of sin, that they cannot break it off without their worldly undoing or suffering; when their credit or their gain depends upon it: as the oppressor liveth by oppression, and the ale-seller liveth by the sins of drunkards, or tippling, idle companions, and because they think this gain is sweet, therefore they will not leave the sin. As Acts xix. 24, 25, because Demetrius and the rest of the craftsmen had their wealth and living by making shrines for the idol Diana, therefore they stirred up the people against the gospel and the preachers of it, that would take down the idol that caused their commodity. In like manner, when men that are addicted to drunkenness will live among such company or temptations as will draw them to it; when lustful persons will live among those that do provoke or tempt them; when ignorant, unresolved persons live among those that speak ill of godliness; it is a hard thing to be converted under these temptations; especially if men wilfully cast themselves upon them.

Sect. XXIII.

Direct. 11. Fly therefore the occasions and appear-

ances of evil. If you would not be drowned, what do you so near the water-side? If you would not be wounded, why do you thrust yourselves among your enemies? If you would escape the hook, meddle not with the bait: walk not among the lime-twigs if you would not be entangled. You may fly from temptation, and yet resist the devil, and make him fly. Be not too confident of your own strength; consider whether it be safe to die in your sin and ungodliness? If not, why should you live in it? And if you may not live in it, why should you commit it? If you cannot digest it when it is down, but it must up again by repentance, or you perish, why then should you let it down? If you may not let it down, what reason have you to be tasting it? And if you may not taste it, why should you once look upon it, to entice your taste? And if you may not look on it, why should you think on it, and make your own fancy to be your tempter? Present and strong temptations have shaken those that seemed to be cedars; therefore take heed of them; for they may much more hinder the conversion of the impenitent, and such difficulties may easily block up the way of life to you.

Sect. XXIV.

Hinderance 12. Another common hinderance of conversion, is, The scandalous lives of the professors of religion. When those that seem godly, or indeed are so, shall fall into division among themselves, and withdraw from each other, and censure one another, and cry out against one another as deceived; when the common people see so many religions, as they think, and so many several minds and ways, they think it is as good be of none, as to venture among so many, where they are not sure to hit of the right; and it maketh them question all, when they see so many that they know not which to own. When they see men change their opinions, which awhile ago they seemed so zealous for, this makes them think that the rest may be as uncertain as these: and thus we have seen by sad experience in these times, that many have been kept off from the approving and practice of a godly life, because of the unhappy differences that are among us: and alas! when they see one that seemed religious to be worldly, and another to fall into this or that sin, this makes them think that religion is but hypocrisy, and themselves are already in as good a condition as the godly are.

Sect. XXV.

Direct. 12. I will not excuse the sins of any; offence must come, but woe to him by whom it comes! If they be godly, their profession doth aggravate it, and therefore I do not intend to extenuate it: but yet, as I must needs say that the malice of the ungodly doth frequently make even holiness to be a crime, and virtue itself to be the greatest vice, and those to be faults that are really none, and those to be common that are seldom, and but the case of very few, and those to be great that are not so; so I must needs tell you that there is no sufficient reason in the faults and divisions of those that are religious to dissuade any from religion, or excuse them in their sin, or sinful neglect of their own salvation: for consider these things following.

(1.) It is not men's lives that are any disgrace to the word of God, any more than it is a dishonour to the sun that some men are blind, or others wilfully abuse his light. Will you fall a railing at the sun, because a thief may steal by the light of it, or a murderer may kill men by the light of it, or some men may miss their way? This is not long of it, but of themselves. (2.) Yea, consider that it is for want of being

more religious that men are so bad, and not because they are religious. Can you prove that ever religion did teach men to be bad? Doth the word of God teach men to be worldly, to be proud, to divide the church, and abuse one another? You know it doth not: nay, you know that it forbiddeth and condemneth all this; and that no one in the world hath said and done so much against these sins as God hath done. And no religion is so much against them as the christian religion. And is it not an abuse beyond all modesty then, to think ill of the word of God, or of his way, because men offend against it, and forsake it? to accuse the law, because men break it? to wrong God because others have wronged him? (3.) Consider, that the sins of others will be no excuse to you. Their fall should be your warning, and not your hardening. Will God pardon or save without repentance and faith, because some that seemed religious have miscarried? If they are wicked while they seem religious, they and you, if you so continue, shall be damned together. But if they rise by repentance, and hate and forsake the sins which they did fall into, and you stumble upon them, and will not rise with them, but quarrel with religion because of their falls, they shall be pardoned, and you shall perish. I tell thee, man, if all the world should fall from God, he will not therefore change his law, nor admit one unconverted sinner into heaven. Do you think to be saved without holiness, because some men counterfeit holiness that have it not? Methinks this should cast you into greater terrors, and make you think with yourselves how much you have yet to do, that must go further and be better than ever any hypocrite was, before you can have any durable hopes of salvation. If you will have any part in God, you must stick to him, though all men else should forsake him; and not forsake him, because you think that others do so that seemed to stick to him. (4.) Consider also, that as to the divisions that offend you, it is not every difference in judgment or practice that makes a new religion. While we are here we shall know but in part, and therefore shall differ in part; but as long as we all agree in the fundamentals, and live to God, we are of one religion, for all our differences. (5.) And can you think that it will excuse you to be of no religion, because that other men are of a wrong religion? Will you sit still and let heaven go, because some men have missed the way to it? Do you think that this is a reasonable conclusion? Surely they that would fain know the way if they could, and are diligent to seek it, are likelier to be accepted, though they fall into many errors, than those that mind it not, but prefer the things of the world before it. (6.) The more by-ways there be, the more need have you to look about you, and see that you miss not the way yourselves. Salvation is not a matter that we can spare, and therefore the difficulty must make us more diligent, and not more negligent. (7.) Among all the religions and opinions in the world, God hath not left you at a loss, he hath given you his word to tell you which is the right, and many means to understand it. So that if proud or careless men will err, it followeth not that therefore the humble and diligent may not be certain which way is the right. Go you to the Scripture with a humble reverence, willing to know the will of God, that you may do it, and take the helps which you may have from ministers and private christians, and show not by your neglect that you despise the word of God and your salvation, and then you shall have no cause to complain that you cannot find the right religion, and not hit the way to heaven, because there are so many opinions. (8.) I pray you con-

sider of that which I have often answered you to this objection. Will you but faithfully practise that which all, or almost all, these different parties are agreed in? If not, then make not their differences any more pretence for your ungodliness. If you will, then consider, whether they be not all agreed of the necessity of conversion and a holy life. Will they not all acknowledge that there is no salvation without sanctification and newness of life? Let their agreement then move you, and do not for shame neglect so great and necessary a thing, which is owned by them all, who differ much in other things.

Sect. XXVI.

Hinderance 13. The next hinderance of conversion, is, The ill education of children: when they are trained up in ignorance, or kept unacquainted with the truths of God, till they are grown hardened in their evil way; especially when they are taught from their childhood to think hardly of godliness, and speak reproachfully of it, and hear nothing of the godly, but by way of slander or contempt. That which people receive in their youth, doth usually possess them all their days: they receive it with more advantage, when they are most teachable and tractable; and when they receive it from parents, and those that have the greatest interest in their affections, and the most absolute rule over them. And therefore we see the most of the world are such as they were taught in their childhood to be: and it is hard to change them from the way that they were brought up in.

Sect. XXVII.

Direct. 13. O you that have children, remember they are Christ's. (1.) If you are christians, both you and yours are devoted to God: will you be so forward to devote them to God in baptism, and will you rob him afterwards of his own; and break these covenants, and, contrary to your own promises, will you hinder them from the knowledge and fear of God? Oh what desperate hypocrisy and wickedness is this? Will you come here in the face of the congregation, and consecrate and offer your children to Christ, and when you have done, will you keep them from the way of Christ, and make them believe that godliness is more ado than needs, and that holiness is but foolish preciseness? Will you here undertake to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and when you have done, never once instruct them in his fear, nor persuade them to a holy life, nor restrain them from sin, but rather teach them to rail, and curse, and swear, and be carnal? O cruel wretches, that dare thus murder your children's souls! To murder the body is a heinous sin, yea, though it were the body of an enemy; but to murder the soul, yea, and the soul of a child, and so to be guilty of their eternal damnation; what greater sin can you commit? Oh what a horror it will be to you to see your own children in eternal flames by your procurement; and to hear them there cry out against you, and say, you hardened them in evil, you discouraged them from good; you gave them ill examples, you used to rail, curse, and swear before them; you took no pains to convince them of their natural sin and misery, and to get them to Christ that they might be healed by him. O pity your poor children, and do not hinder them from that glory that is offered them: if the devil be against their salvation, be not you so too. It is more excusable in the devil himself to seek to destroy the souls of your children, than it is in their own parents to do it; for nature and christianity

doth bind them to do otherwise. If you settle them in an ignorant, carnal course, they will remember it as long as they live; and if you possess them with hard thoughts of the holy ways of God, they will make this an argument against us, whenever we would seek to reform and convert them. Do we not hear it from them daily? Our fathers, say they, taught us otherwise, and we hope they are saved, and therefore we will venture to do as they did: so that it is the false conceits that you put into their minds in their childhood, which ministers have to encounter with all their days after. The devil hath instruments enough to seek your children's damnation besides you: be not you his instruments, as ever you would not lie with them in everlasting misery; take some more pity on yourselves and them. You could not find in your hearts to dash your children against the stones, or cut their throats; and if you should, the world would ring of your wickedness, and the law of the land would deservedly put you to a painful death; and will you do them a greater mischief? Will you blind them, and keep them off from Christ and godliness? And will you embolden them in the way of sin, and help them to damnation? God forbid. But alas! they that have no more pity on their own souls, but to use them thus, what wonder if they have no more pity of others!

(2.) The next part of my direction, therefore, is to you that have been brought up in ignorance and ungodliness from your youth. O look about you while you have time and means. If your parents have been false to you, be not false to God and your souls. If your parents have betrayed your souls, do not you betray your own. They kept you in ignorance because they were ignorant themselves; they bred you up in worldliness and ungodliness, because they were worldly and ungodly themselves; they spoke against holiness, because they knew it not, but were themselves unholy: but you have one that hath more interest in you than your parents, that calls to you for your conversion. Harken to him if all the world should gainsay it: do not care as little for your own souls as your parents cared for them: do not take on you, even to love your parents so well as to follow them to damnation; their company will not make hell any easier to you. Should not the love of your heavenly Father do more to draw you to heaven, than the love of your parents to draw you to hell? O hearken then to God and to his word, though all the world should say against it.

Sect. XXVIII.

Hinderance 14. Another hinderance of conversion, is, Striving against the Spirit of grace. When God would illuminate a sinner, and he is unwilling to see, when God would take off a sinner from his lusts and evil ways, and he is loth to be taken off; God sheweth him his sin to humble him, and he is unwilling to be humbled, but striveth against the Spirit, and runneth into worldly businesses, or merry company, or turneth his thoughts to other things. As Christ said to the Jews, "How oft would I have gathered you, but you would not," Matt. xxiii. 37; so he may say to many a sinner, How oft did I show thee a better way, and thou wouldst not walk in it; how oft did I show thee the sinfulness and misery of thy estate, and thou wouldst not come off from it. When men fight against Christ, and purposely wink because they hate the light that would reform them, and when they strive against the Spirit that would convert them, what wonder if they be unconverted?

Sect. XXIX.

Direct. 14. If ever you would be converted, yield

to the Spirit of God that would convert you. It is his office to sanctify all that shall be saved: be not you unwilling to be sanctified by him. If you refuse help when it is offered you, you may justly be left helpless and perish for want of that which you did despise. You are baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost, by which you have professed to take him for your Sanctifier, and are you now unwilling to be sanctified by him? And will you now strive against him when you are so solemnly engaged to him? You cannot be saved unless you be sanctified, and you cannot be sanctified unless it be done by the Holy Ghost, whom you now resist. Oh how easily and prosperously doth the work go on, when the Spirit of God assisteth, and how impossible is it to be done without him! They that would have a prosperous voyage will take wind and tide, and not be so foolish as to set against them when they stand to their advantage: he that would have health will not abuse the physician, and drive him away from him. O take heed how you use the Spirit of God if ever you would be converted!

Sect. XXX.

Hinderance 15. Another hinderance of conversion, is, Unresolvedness and half-purposes; when men will hang wavering between God and the world; and though the light be never so clear to convince them, yet they will not be persuaded to resolve. "A double-minded man," saith James, "is unstable in all his ways," James i. 8. Oh how many shall perish for want of resolution! They have been convinced that they must be changed or else they are undone, and yet they would not resolve: they have long been inclining to a better course, and had some thoughts of it, but the world hindereth, or friends hinder, or the flesh hindereth, and they will not resolve; and thus they hang loose from God, and never unfeignedly resign up themselves to him, till either God in judgment leave them to themselves, or death and hell do find them unresolved.

Sect. XXXI.

Direct. 15. If you would be converted and saved, do not stand wavering, but resolve, and presently turn to God. If it were a doubtful business, I would not persuade you to do it rashly, or if there were any danger to your souls in resolving, then I would say no more. But when it is a case that should be beyond all dispute with men of reason, why should you stand staggering, as if it were a doubtful case? What a horrible shame is it to be unresolved whether God or the world should have your hearts? Were it not a disgrace to that man's understanding that were unresolved whether gold or dung were better? or whether a bed of thorns or a feather-bed were the easier? or whether the sun or a clod of earth were the more light and glorious? It is a far greater shame for a man to be unresolved, whether it be God or the world that must make him happy, and that should have his heart, and whether a life of sin or holiness be the better. What! have you read Scripture, and heard sermons so long, and yet are you unresolved of this? Nay, have you common reason, and do you believe that there is a God, and a world to come, and yet are you unresolved whether you must be godly or not? I say to you, as Elias did to Israel, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If God be God, follow him; if Baal be God, follow him," 1 Kings xviii. 21. If it be better to be damned than leave your sins, then keep them, and the curse of God with them. But if it be better to deny your flesh, than to suffer everlastingly the wrath of God, then away with your iniquities, and meddle with

hem no more; if it be better to live in an ale-house awhile, than in heaven for ever, then drink on and spare not; but if it be not, why do you not consider and come away. If God and godliness be not better than the world and wickedness, then take your course; but if they be, why do you stand wavering, and do not resolve to be the people of God with all your hearts? Oh what a blind and miserable creature is a wicked man, that such matters as these should seem doubtful to him! or that he should yet be unresolved of them! What, unresolved whether it be best to go to heaven, or not! and whether it be best to be damned, or not! and all this for the love of a stinking, unprofitable lust! If this be wisdom, what then is folly?

Sect. XXXII.

Hinderance 16. Another hinderance of conversion, is, delay. When men are resolved that they must be converted or condemned, and purpose to let go sin, and to take another course, yet they delay and put off the time. They would yet have a little more of the pleasure of their sin before they part with it. Yet they cannot spare it, but shortly they will do it. They are yet young, and they hope they have daylight, and time enough before them. They are yet in health, and therefore they hope there is no such haste, but they may have time to think on it. Because God will receive a sinner whensoever he returneth, they think they may stay a little longer. And thus some grow hardened by custom in their sin, and others are cut off while they are purposing to return; and many thousand souls are lost for ever that once were purposed to have turned to God, and all because they delayed their return: as the sluggard saith, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber," Prov. vi. 10; xxiv. 33; so saith the sinner, Yet I may sin a little while; till they have sinned themselves into a reprobate sense, or provoked God to leave them to themselves, and so they must perish everlastingly by their delay.

Sect. XXXIII.

Direct. 16. O consider, therefore, sinners, that conversion is not a work to be delayed. Would a man lie under the wrath and curse of God one day, that knew what it is? Methinks he should not. Are you loth to come out of the bondage of the devil? Why, your delay doth show that your heart is false, and that you be not willing truly to be converted. He that is loth to leave his sin this day or hour, would never leave it, if he knew how to keep it: if he did not love it, he would be willing to be rid of it without delay. He that loveth God, had rather return and be reconciled to him, and partake of the joy of his Spirit to-day, than to-morrow. Did you but know what God is, you would not delay your conversion to him. Did you but know what the glory is that he offereth you, you would not delay to make sure of it any longer. Did you but see the nature of sin, and know the miserable effects of it, oh how hastily would you endeavour to be rid of it! If you had so many serpents or toads in your bosoms, you would not say, I will cast them out to-morrow, but how quickly would you shake them from you! If you had but felt the sting of sin, it would appear another matter to you than now it doth. It is one kind of face that sin hath in an ale-house, or in the height of your filthy lust, or in the seeming gain of your covetous practices; and it is another kind of face that it hath when God will reckon for it with the guilty soul. Should a man trifle in such a course, wherein, if he die, he is lost for ever? Why, poor, wretched sinner, how long wilt thou delay?

And why wilt thou delay? Wilt thou delay till death shall seize upon thee, and thou drop into hell before thou art aware? Dost thou not know that sin gets advantage by thy delay? God hath not promised thee that ever his Spirit shall be offered to thee more, if thou refuse his assistance, and delay thy conversion but one day longer. And woe be to thee if he depart from thee! Hos. ix. 12; Jer. vi. 8. When people will have none of God, nor will hearken to his voice, he often giveth them up to their own heart's lusts, to walk in their own counsels, Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12. O unworthy wretch! if thou hadst any of the ingenuity of a christian within thy breast, thou wouldst say, I have abused Christ and his grace so long, that I am utterly ashamed of it, and will abuse him no more; I have too long slighted Christ already, and too long hearkened to his enemy's voice. If thy dead heart were but well awakened to consider and feel thy own condition, thou wouldst be quickly affrighted out of thy delay, and run as hastily from thy state of sin, as thou wouldst out of a house that were all on fire over thy head, or out of a boat that were sinking under thee. What! hast thou not yet served the devil long enough? Hast thou not yet sufficiently abused Christ, not oft enough rejected the grace of God? Hast thou not yet wallowed long enough in the filth of sin? but must thou needs have more of it? Hast thou not yet done enough to the destruction of thy soul? nor drunk in enough of that deadly poison, nor stabbed thyself sufficiently by thy wickedness, but thou must needs have more? Will sin come up easier, when it is deeper rooted? And canst thou easier be converted, when thou hast driven away the Spirit of God that should convert thee? Wilt thou travel out of thy way till night, before thou wilt turn back again? And wilt thou drive the nail yet faster to the head, which thou knowest must be drawn out again? O be not wilfully befooled by sin. Wilt thou be converted, or wilt thou not? If not, thou art a lost man. If thou know thou must, why not to-day rather than to-morrow? What reason have you for any longer delay? Is a state of sin or a state of grace better? If sin be better, keep it, and make the best of it; but if grace, and holiness, and happiness be better, why then should you delay? If you were sick you would not care how soon you were well; and if you had a bone broken, you care not how soon it were set; and when your souls are in a state of sin and misery, are you afraid of being safe and happy too soon? Remember another day, that a day, and many a day, of grace thou hadst; and if thou lose this day, thou mayst thank thyself, if thou lose thy soul, and if thou never have another day like this. "To-day, whilst it is called to-day, therefore, hear his voice, and harden not your hearts," Heb. iii. 7, 8. When David thought of his ways, he made haste and delayed not to turn to God, and keep his precepts, Psal. cxix. 60; as was aforesaid.

Sect. XXXIV.

Hinderance 17. Another great hinderance of conversion, is, When good beginnings are not followed on, but suffered to die and come to nothing before they bring men over to God. Commonly preparing works of grace go before thorough sanctifying works; and men have many convictions, and half-reformations, and troubles of mind, before they come to close with Christ upon the terms that he is offered. These common preparatory works are the way to more; if men would but cherish these, and follow them on, and improve the light and motions which they have, they know not what a blessed issue they might see; but when they will forget the

truth that once did move them, and lose the purposes that once they had, and turn back again to the sins they were in before; no wonder if these be left in their iniquities. Is not this the case of you that hear me this day? You have been convinced that God and your souls must be regarded, whatsoever else be neglected; and did you not thereupon begin to pray, and to use means, and take the helps in public and private that are necessary for your salvation? And have not some of you fallen into company that have taken you off by foolish cavils or vain objections, and evil examples, and enticing you to sin? And have not others of you grown cold, and lost your feeling, as if you were not the same men, and had never heard or felt such things? And others of you turned to this present world, and choked the word with the cares of this life? And so the hopeful beginnings that you once had, are turned to a relapse into your old condition.

Sec. XXXV.

Direct. 17. If there be any such sinners that hear me this day, (as I fear there be too many,) consider whence you are fallen, and be zealous and amend, Rev. iii. 19. Are you turned with "the dog to his vomit, and with the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire?" 2 Pet. ii. 22. What! do you "look back when you had put your hand to the plough of God?" Luke ix. 62. Did Christ give you any cause to repent of his service, or to forsake him? Have you found indeed that the devil is the better master, and that the way of sin is the better way, and the wages of sin the better wages? What! did the thoughts of everlasting life once move you, and will they not move you now? Is heaven become as no heaven to you, and God as no God, and Christ as no Christ, and the promises as no promises? And are you grown able to resist the terrors of the Lord? O poor souls, that you did but know the misery of apostates! The Lord hath professed, that "if any draw back, his soul shall have no pleasure in him," Heb. x. 38. And they that draw back, shall find they do it to their own perdition; when they should have "believed and persevered to the saving of their souls," ver. 39. There are none of all the damned more miserable than they that were sometimes fair for heaven, and did once begin to look after godliness; for the "latter end of these men is worse than their beginning," 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. Alas! how sad will it be to see the faces of such among the wicked and condemned at the last, and to think that once we saw the faces of these men among the godly, and once they seemed to set themselves for heaven! And are they fallen off to this? and is this the end of them? In the name of God, sirs, I warn and charge every one of you that ever had a thought of returning to God, and giving up yourselves to a holy life, that you presently bethink you, what is gone with these thoughts and purposes, and why did you turn from these beginnings? What reason had you for it? and what cause hath Christ given you? What! will the world now be a faster friend to you than before? and will you now continue with it, and never die? or can you better be without God and his grace than before? O be awakened from this desperate folly, and once again renew your former resolutions, and consider whether you are not nearer eternity than you were; and have not as much need of Christ as ever? And sleep not on till hell awake you.

Sec. XXXVI.

Hinderance 18. The next hinderance of conversion to be mentioned, is, A misunderstanding of Scripture, and erroneous thoughts of the ways of God.

If error possess the mind, it will keep out grace from possessing the heart, so far as the error prevaileth. I shall instance in some few particulars.

(1.) Some men know not what true grace or conversion is, and therefore think they have it when they have none, and do not set themselves to look after it. They think that it is but to forsake some gross sins, and to use some outward service of God, and do no one wrong, and then they think they have true conversion; because they have turned from many sins that once they lived in. But these must know, that conversion is the withdrawing of the soul from the world, and from carnal self, and the devoting of ourselves and all that we have to God. If you should be never so zealous in forms, and take up never so strict principles, and stick to the strictest party; this is no proof of true conversion, if your souls do not cleave to God as your portion, and to Christ as the only way to God.

(2.) Some there be that do not think there is any such thing as saving grace or true conversion in the world; because they have none themselves, they do not think that any one else hath. When they hear of a hope and heart in heaven, and of loving God above all creatures, they do not think that any one doth reach to it, but that men merely talk of such things, which they never had experience of. But these men must know, that it is an arrogant madness to contradict the scope of the word of God, and the common experience of the best men in the world; and all because they are so bad themselves. Doth God talk so much of sanctifying his people, and putting the Spirit of Jesus into their hearts, and ruling them, and dwelling in them, and crucifying the world to them, and "purifying a peculiar people to himself, that are zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14; and now dare they say there is no such thing? Whether is God or they to be believed? What! hath Christ died to procure it, and is it the office of the Holy Ghost to work it, and now is there no such thing? Are the word, and ministers, and all the ordinances to that end, and now is there no such thing? God will make them know that such a thing was offered once to them, and such a thing as grace and a heavenly life were necessary to their salvation. And if they will not believe the experience of the saints, nor will see the graces of God, as they shine in the conversation of his people, they shall be forced one day to see, and be ashamed.

(3.) Others there be that think holiness is but needless preciseness; and that to meditate on God and heaven, and make it our main business, is but more ado than needs; and that this is but to be godly overmuch, and God will accept less; and this is the way even to drive men beside themselves.

Ans. Though I have formerly answered this objection, yet because it here again falls in my way, I shall distinctly answer it in these particulars.

Quest. 1. Tell me truly, do you think that God or you are fitter to be judges of what is necessary to the salvation of a sinner? Doth God command it? and dare you say it is more ado than needs? Why, what is this, but plainly to say, that God hath set us upon a needless work? Yea, what is it but to say, you are wiser than he? There is no master so foolish and unmerciful, as will set his servant to pick straws, and labour to no purpose: and will you impute such unmerciful folly to God? Dare you say he makes you more ado than needs?

Quest. 2. And then I ask, Is it more ado than Scripture doth require? Doth not the word of God make it necessary, which you call unnecessary? Read and judge.—"Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth: but lay up for yourselves treasures

in heaven. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," Matt. vi. 19, 20, 23. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," Matt. xi. 12. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able," Luke xiii. 24. "Labour not for the food which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life," John vi. 27. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, redeeming the time," Eph. v. 15. "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" 2 Pet. iii. 11. And a hundred more such places may be mentioned. So that if it be an error to require so much ado for our salvation, it is God himself that is the cause of it. And who is likelier to be in the right; the Lord that made you, or such silly, ignorant worms as you? You scarce know good from bad; and will you take on you to be wiser than God, and to control his law?

Quest. 3. Do you think indeed in your consciences, that a man can do too much for heaven, (as long as he doth but what God bids him,) and that he can be at more cost and labour for it, than it is worth? Is that man worthy or meet to see the face of God in glory, that thinks it not worth his utmost diligence? Do you set so much by your labour, or do you set so light by God and glory, as to think the everlasting enjoyment of it to be unworthy of your pains?

Quest. 4. Do you think there ever was a man that got well to heaven, that repented of coming thither at so dear a rate; or that was there of your mind, that this godliness is more ado than needs? If we could but speak with one of the glorified saints that see the face of God, and put the case to him, whether is the wiser man, he that doth all that he can to be saved, or he that saith what needs all this ado? which side do you think he would be on? Cannot you easily conjecture?

Quest. 5. Is Christ, or the apostles, or any of the servants of God, of your mind? Judge by their conversations whether they thought it more ado than needs. The best of his saints never had so much grace but they longed for more; they never were so holy, but they longed to be better; and do you think that you are wiser than all they, and that neither prophets, apostles, nor any saints of God did know what they did?

Quest. 6. What is it that you think is so painful a life as to be too much for God and heaven? Do you know what you talk of? Why, it is the only joyful life on earth. It is more a receiving from God, than a giving to him. It is an employment that is suited both to the new nature of the saints, and to their necessity and good. What is holiness but a living in the love of God and joy of the Holy Ghost, and hope of the life to come, and a daily communion with God in the Spirit, in the use of his holy ordinances? to hear of his love, and the promise of his glory, and the pardon of our sins, and to beg of him what we want, and thank and praise him for what we have received? And do you think this is so tedious a life? Is it a toil to you to eat and drink of the best, when your bodies do require it? or to rest when you are weary? or to love your dearest friend, and to be in his company? If not, why should we think it a toil to live in the love of God, and in holy communion with him in his service?

Quest. 7. And is it not a certain mark of a graceless heart to think that this is such a grievous work? Sure that soul is void of the love of God, that thinks it a grievous thing to love him. A man that hates his wife, and loveth harlots, will say, I cannot love her, nor abide to dwell with her; but if he loved her

he would think otherwise. If you did not hate God you would not think it so grievous to live in the love of him, and to be much in his holy worship.

Quest. 8. Do you desire to come to heaven, or not? If not, then remember, if you are shut out, it is by your own consent. If you would come thither, then do you not know that all your employment there must be such as this, and much more holy and perfect than this? Will you account heaven itself grievous? and the praises of God there, to be more ado than needs? If not, how dare you say so of a far lower degree which we have in this life? If you are weary of this little, how weary would you be of heaven!

Quest. 9. I pray you tell me, do you think indeed that any man on earth is so good as he should be? Do you not know, that he that is best is too bad; and he that doth most comes unspeakably too short of what he should do? And dare you say then, that this is more ado than needs? Why if you had spoken to Peter or Paul, or the holiest man that ever lived, he would have rather complained that he could be no better, and cried out, Oh that I were more holy, and could be more taken up in the love of God! Alas! I fall exceeding short of what is my duty. And shall such sinners as we are, yea, some of the vilest sinners, say, that this is more ado than needs? Why, thou proud, insensible wretch, dost thou not better know thy own needs than so? Doth not thy soul need this, and more than this? What, darest thou justify thyself in thy ungodliness, and judge of godliness as a needless thing?

Quest. 10. Canst thou tell me how long thou wilt be of that mind? When thou liest a dying wilt thou then think that holiness was more ado than needs? When thou seest that the world hath left thee, and that thou art presently to appear before the Lord, speak as thou thinkest, man, hadst thou not rather then be found in the case of the holiest and diligentest saints on earth, than in the case of the careless, proud, or carnal? Will holy duty, or the neglect and deriding of it, be then more comfortable? Wouldst thou not then change states with one of those that did the most for God, and for their souls, and wouldst thou not say with Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be as his?" Numb. xxxiii. 10.

Quest. 11. What is it, do you think, that is worth a man's pains and care, if God and everlasting glory be not? Is there any thing of greater worth? Man was not made for nothing, and idleness is no delight to him. Something he would be doing and looking after, and something he expects to make him happy, and that which he takes for his happiness, he cannot choose but think it worth all his pains. And have you found out any thing that is better than heaven? Will this world last longer? or stand you in greater stead at last? Alas, that we should be put to ask or answer such questions as these! Why, sirs, either heaven or earth must have your love, and care, and labour, and which do you think doth more deserve it? You can talk of the world from day to day, and you can work and toil for the world all the year long, and yet you never say it is more ado than needs. If your servant labour harder for you in a day than God's servants do for him in a week, you will not tell him that he doth more than needs. Foolish worldlings, let me deal plainly with you, and tell you to your faces, it is you that make more ado than needs. Is the world worth all this care and stir that you make about it? Is it worth your thoughts and unwearied diligences, and is it worth the venturing of your salvation to obtain it? I tell you it is not, and you partly know yourselves

it is not. Why, where are your wits, to toil yourselves all your lives for these trifles; and to tell them that labour for salvation, that they make more ado than needs? Well, hearken of the end, and then you shall see whether it be labour for heaven or for earth that will be repented of. If you know not now, you shall shortly know it.

Quest. 12. One question more I shall yet put to you. Do you think the pains of duty to be greater than the pains of hell? If you do not, should not we choose the lesser to escape the greater? If you had not the love of God to make you delight in his service, methinks you should have that love of yourselves to make you fear his everlasting wrath. Never flatter yourselves with other thoughts. Believe it, if you will needs take it for a pain which should be your pleasure, you must undergo the pain of an unfeignedly holy life, or the pain of hell; choose you whether.

(4.) Another of their errors that hindereth conversion, is, That their own good meanings, and praying, and good works will make God amend for their sins, and after all will procure their acceptance with God. And if these will not do, they think the case is sad, for there is nothing else for us to do. And so they see not the evil of their own meanings and good works, and how much sin is in them to be wailed; nor do they see the need of a Christ in all, nor the need of a thorough change of their condition, that they may be made the justified sons of God, and have new hearts and new conversations. But they think while they live to the world and the flesh, to make up all and procure acceptance by good meaning, and good praying, and good works. I would not be misunderstood, as if I were speaking against that which is truly good in any. But I would desire these people well to consider; 1. That the meanings and works of unconverted men are not truly and properly good; but it is the end that denominateth the work: and seeing no unconverted man doth make God his ultimate end, therefore he hath properly no good meaning, nor work; for he meaneth all ultimately for his carnal self, for the flesh, and for the world, and for these are his works. As the true christian doth make his worldly labour to be ultimately for God, so doth the ungodly make his seeming service of God to be ultimately for his flesh. 2. You should consider that all your good works must have a pardon themselves, and therefore cannot satisfy for your sins. 3. That if your works were perfectly good without any blemish, yet could they not satisfy for that sin which is past, but that must be expected only from the blood of Christ. It is, therefore, a lamentable case to hear many of the grossly ignorant people to talk of all their good meanings and praying, as if their confidence were all in these, while they make no mention of the blood of a Redeemer; or feel not the need of it; nor what it is that Christ hath done for them, nor how much they are beholden to him. 4. It is no patching up of your old unregenerate state, that will serve turn for your salvation, but you must be wholly made new. "He that is in Christ is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things have become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. It is not forsaking this or that sin, or falling to your prayers, that will serve turn; but you must have new hearts, and new ends, and a new conversation, and the main business and drift of your lives must be new. Those hearts that were set on the world before, must be set on God; and those desires that run to the pleasures of the flesh, must run out after the pleasing of God. I say, it is not patching up the old condition, but all must be new.

(5.) Another error that hindereth conversion, is, The misunderstanding of those Scriptures that promise salvation to some particular graces or duties. As because the Scripture saith, "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish," therefore they say that they truly believe; and, therefore, though they have not such holiness of life, yet God hath promised them salvation. So also, where it is said, that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," therefore they say, we call on the name of the Lord, and so shall be saved, though we be not converted, nor so holy as you require.

To these men I have these several things to say for the cure of this dangerous error.

1. Poor ignorant souls, they talk of they know not what; and suffer themselves to be deceived by words which they understand not. If they did but know well what faith is, and what calling upon God is, they would never be troubled with this objection. To believe in Christ, is to believe him to be the Saviour of his church, to save them from their sins, and heartily to consent that he shall be so to us, to save us from our sins; and can you believe in him as a Saviour, and yet be unwilling to be saved by him? Sin is the mischief from which he saveth you, and conversion is one half of his saving work; and can you then say you believe, and therefore need not be converted? Why you may as well say, I take such a man for my physician, and I trust in him for a cure, and therefore I need not be cured. Is not this nonsense, or a contradiction? And what is it better, to say, I believe in Christ as my Saviour, that is, to save me from my sins, and therefore I may be saved, though I be not saved from my sins. These are the wise reasonings that many of our self-conceited hearers make use of to delude themselves and other men. And the very nature of faith is to take Christ as Christ, and as he is offered in the gospel; as our Teacher to guide us in the way of holiness, and as our King to rule us, as well as a sacrifice for our sins. And how can he do this for us, if we will not be converted?

2. Moreover, faith in Jesus Christ is always annexed to a belief in God the Father. "If you believe in God, believe also in me," John xiv. 1. "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," John xvii. 3. Now to believe in God, is to take him for our Maker, that hath absolute right in us, and absolute power over us, whom we must obey before all; and our happiness and chief good, whom we must love and desire above all. And can this be done without conversion?

3. To believe in Christ is ever accompanied with believing in the Holy Ghost, which is the receiving him to be our Sanctifier; and can you do this, and yet be unconverted?

4. By this much that hath been said, you may perceive that conversion and faith is in a sort one and the same thing; to be a true believer, and to be converted, is all one; for conversion is to make you true believers. And is it not then a wise kind of cavil to say, that if you believe, you may be saved without conversion? as much as to say, if I have the sunshine I may see without light; or if I have a soul, I need not life or understanding. I tell you there is no such thing as true faith without conversion.

5. Moreover, where true faith is, all other saving graces do accompany it; there is ever repentance, hope, love, humility, and a heavenly mind. So that it is no true faith which is separated from these, and which the ungodly deceive themselves with, but an opinion, and a mere ungrounded presumption.

(6.) Another error which hindereth men's conversion, is, Some false apprehensions of the doctrine of God's eternal decree of election or predestination; from which many desperate consequences are raised by them, to the deceiving of their own souls: and this I find abundance among us in this country decuded by; how the devil hath brought it to pass, I know not. They have many of them learned this foolish pretence; if God hath chosen us we shall be saved, and if he hath not, we shall not, whatsoever we do: no diligence will save a man that is not elected, and "it is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy." Those that God will save, shall be saved, whatsoever they be; and those that he will damn, shall be damned; and no man can have grace except God give it him; for we can do nothing of ourselves: and upon these grounds they think they may be secure, and cast all upon God, as a matter that they have little to do with; and think that their endeavours are to little purpose, if they should make never so much ado.

Ans. One would think common reason should teach men to answer such silly cavils as these; but because I find so many ignorant souls do stick at them, I shall give you a full answer in these particulars.

1. God electeth no man to the end without means, but to the end and means together. All that he electeth to salvation, he electeth to conversion and sanctification, and all that he denieth conversion to, he denieth salvation to also.

2. If therefore you care whether you are saved or damned, it concerneth you to make both your calling and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10. Make but your calling sure, and you need not make any question of your election. Make sure that you are converted, and hold fast what you have, and then you may be certain you shall be saved. You begin at the wrong end, if you would first ask whether you are elected, that you may know whether you shall be saved; but you must first try whether you are converted and saved from the power of sin, and then you may certainly gather that you are elected and shall be saved from hell. Will you begin at the top of the ladder and not the bottom? Did God ever damn any man that was truly converted and sanctified, because he was not elected? No such matter: prove any such thing if you can: nay, we can fully prove the contrary, for he hath promised salvation to all that are truly converted and sanctified: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," Matt. v. 8; with abundance the like which have been named frequently to you. And can you prove that ever God saved any man that was not converted, because he was elected? No such matter; for he electeth all that are converted. And he hath resolved to save none but the converted, as is plain, John iii. 3; Heb. xii. 14; and many other places formerly quoted.

3. These reasonings therefore of yours, if they keep you from conversion and a heavenly life, are a certain mark that you are without the evidence of your election; and if you so live and die, that you are none of the elect. And, therefore, by such reasonings you do but show your own misery, like a man that hath the plague that will glory in his botch: it should make your hearts to tremble to find so sad a mark as this upon your souls, that you have a heart that dares hold off from conversion, and fetch vain pretences from the decree of God.

4. Consider also, that God's decrees are not the cause of your impitenency or any sin, though his grace be the cause of men's conversion; he is the beginner of our good, but we are the causes of our own evil; all our grace is from him, but all our sin

is from ourselves: he giveth us grace before we so much as willed it, and accordingly he decreed to give it before the foresight of our own willing it; but he causeth not our sin, but only permitteth us to cause it, and accordingly he decreed not the event of sin before he did foresee that we would be sinners, and our wills of themselves would turn from God, and so proceed till grace recover us. You have no more ground therefore of excusing yourselves, because of the decree of God, than if he had made no such decree at all. What if I could foretell, from the obstinate wickedness of such a thief, or such a drunkard, that he will never be cured; is it long of me because I foreknew it? What if the prophet foretold Hazael, what cruelty he shall commit on the children of Israel, is the prophet therefore the cause of it?

5. Consider also, that if you knew not how to answer any objection of this nature, yet you have the very principles of reason and all religion to assure you that God is most wise, and good, and just, and holy; and, therefore, that he cannot be the author of your sin, nor shall you ever be able to fetch any just excuse from him. You might better have looked about you any where in the world for one to bear the blame of your miscarriages than the most wise and holy God. For nothing is more certain, than that the Infinite Good cannot be the author of evil; and whosoever it comes from, it cannot come from him. Oh how easily will God stop these mouths that excuse themselves by accusing him in so foul a case!

6. And why do you not consider what madness it would be to argue about your bodies as you do about your souls. It is as true that God hath decreed how many years and days you shall live, as that he hath decreed whether you shall be saved. And I will refer it to your own reason, what you would think of the wit of that man that would give over eating and drinking, and say, God hath decreed how long I shall live, and if he have decreed that I shall live any longer, I shall, whether I eat and drink or not. And if he have not decreed that I shall live, it is not eating nor drinking that will keep me alive? What would you say to such a man but this, that God decreeth no man to live, but by the ordinary means of living. And therefore ordinarily if you will give over eating and drinking, it is certain that you will give over living; and that God hath made no decree to save you alive whether you eat and drink, or not. So if a man should have a journey to go on life or death, what would you think of that man that will say, If God have decreed that I shall come to my journey's end, I shall do it, whether I go or not; and if he have not decreed it, I shall never come thither, though I travel never so hard? This is true; but if you hence infer, that therefore it is as good to sit still as go, you will show your own folly, and not procure an excuse for your neglect. Why even so it is in our present case. If you will say, If God have elected me, I shall be saved; and if he have not, I shall not, whatsoever I do; and therefore I may spare my pains; it is no wiser than to give over eating and drinking, because God hath decreed how long you shall live; or to give over travelling, because God hath decreed whether you shall come to your journey's end. Will you be thus mad about the matters of your trades and callings in the world? Why do not all the weavers in this town then give over their trades, and say, If God have decreed that I shall live well and be rich, I shall be so whether I labour or not; and if he have not, my labour will not serve? Why do you not give over ploughing and sowing, and say, If God have decreed that I shall have a crop, I shall have one, whether I plough and

sow or not; and if he have not, I shall not, whatsoever I do? If you will needs be fools, let it be about these worldly things, which you may better spare. Try your own opinion awhile, and give over eating and drinking and working; but do not befooled yourselves about the one thing necessary, and play not the madman about the flames of hell; and do not in such jest throw away your salvation. It were a hundred times a wiser course for a man to set his house on fire, and say, If God have decreed the saving of it, the fire shall not burn it; if he have not, it will perish whatsoever I do. I tell you again, God hath not ordinarily decreed the end without the means; and if you will neglect the means of salvation, it is a certain mark that God hath not decreed you to salvation. But you shall find that he hath left you no excuse, because he hath not thus predestinated you.

7. But you say, We cannot convert ourselves; what can man do without the grace of God? And, therefore, if God give us not grace we are excusable.

Ans. Do your consciences justify you, that you have done all that you can? Can you not go to church when you stay at home? Can you not go among the servants of God when you go to your worldly businesses, or to an ale-house? Cannot you keep out of evil company? or cannot you so much as consider of your ways, or bethink you of the things of the life to come? I say, cannot you do these things if you will? and have you done these, or have you not? Have you avoided temptations and occasions of evil, and used the means of grace, and attended God in the use of his ordinances, and marked diligently what is said to you, and considered it when you came home? Have you not sinned and neglected the means of grace, both knowingly and wilfully? Conscience may tell you that you have, and God shall make you know that you have; and shortly you shall be convinced past denial, that you did not all that you could, nor forbore the evil that you might have forborne. And if you will refuse and abuse the help of God, can you expect that he should follow you still with his assistance? God will make you know one day, that nobody carried you into an ale-house, nor opened your mouth, nor poured down the drink; and nobody forced you to swear, or to rail, or hate religion, or quarrel with the word that should have saved you, but it was the malicious wickedness of your naughty hearts.

And for the power of conversion and believing itself, you must know that there is a twofold power, the one natural, the other moral. The natural faculty of understanding and willing every man hath; and if they have the use of reason, they have no physical impediment but they may use them; and if they hear the word, they have no such absence of the necessary object, as may make the work impossible to them. The moral power is nothing but a disposition or habit of the soul to believe or repent, &c. or a freedom from contrary habits. And this it is acknowledged that none have, but those that have proportionably received that grace that doth effect it: or, to speak as plain as I can to you, there is a power which lieth in being able to believe and repent if we will, or to do whatsoever we will, that concerneth us to do; and there is a willingness itself to execute this power, and that both actual and habitual. The former every one hath, the latter none but the godly have in sincerity; and those that make so great a stir about this in the church, do seem to be agreed in it for the main, and do not know it. For every man on both parties confesseth that all men have the natural faculty of understanding and will, and that they have so much power that they

can believe and love God above all if they will; and on the other side, I hope we are all agreed that wicked, unregenerate men are not truly willing to repent and believe, and that they have not the habit and disposition thereto, but have the contrary habits. Experience telleth us this, without any more ado. The latter sort of power then, about which all the controversy lieth, is nothing but the very willing, or grace itself, actual or habitual, or the absence of the contrary. And, therefore, it is all one to ask whether a wicked man have power to believe; and to ask whether he be a believer actually or habitually, or not an unbeliever; so that when we are all agreed that the natural power or faculty is present, and the moral, which is but the willingness, is absent, you can ground none of your excuses on the differences of the church in this point. And as I have formerly said to you, if you will but reduce this last kind of power and impotency to its most proper expression, you will open the shame of your own excuses. For morally to be unable to believe, is no more than to be unwilling to believe. And if you should say, I will not believe or repent, and therefore I am excusable, what would your own conscience say to such an excuse? Natural impotency excuseth faults. He that can say, I would believe, but cannot, is excusable; but never a one of you all shall ever be able to say this: but moral impotency aggravateth faults; the more will, the more sin. All the government and justice in the world is grounded upon this principle, and therefore all rewards and punishments are founded in the will of man, and all moral virtue and vice is resolved into that. And if you can but prove that a man offended willingly, you have proved him culpable: for nature hath taught all the world to bring the fault to the will, and there to leave it, and look no further for the cause: unless, as seducers may be made accessory by their persuasions, which yet is no excuse to the offender.

8. And whereas you allege that of the apostle, "It is not in him that willeth, or in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy:"

I answer, that the meaning is not, that our salvation is not in him that willeth, or in him that runneth. The apostle talketh of no such thing. But it is about the giving of the gospel to them that had it not, and taking it from them that had forfeited it by their sin; or the giving of the first special grace to them that had it not, and the denying it them that had forfeited it by their neglects; and the meaning is no more than this, that the reason why God giveth one man or nation the preaching of the gospel, when others for their sins are left in darkness, is not from any merit or precedent willing or running of their own, but from his mere mercy. And the reason why he bleaseth the gospel to the conversion of some, when he leaveth others to despise it by their wilful obstinacy, is not from the merits of any of those unregenerate men, or from any willing or running of theirs, but from God that sheweth mercy. So that you must note that it is, 1. One thing to ask the cause of man's damnation in himself considered; and this is not said to be because God will damn him, but because he hath deserved it by his sin: and so the cause of his preterition in the matter of special grace, is not barely because God will pass him by, but because he hath deserved it; for God denieth the gospel, and faith by the gospel, or his grace to effect it, to no man that hath not first deserved that denial. 2. It is another thing to ask the reason of men's salvation, which is not given in Scripture barely from the will of God, but from the faith and obedience of men, for it is an act of rewarding justice as well as of paternal love and mercy. 3. And it is

yet another thing to ask the reason why God giveth any man the first special grace to repent and believe, considering him simply in himself; and this is because that God is gracious, and no reason can be given but his own mercy; and thus far most of us are agreed. 4. And it is yet another thing to ask the reason why God giveth the special grace to this man, rather than that, comparatively considered, when he might justly have denied it to them both, and neither of them could plead their desert of it. And to this it is that the apostle's answer doth most square, or at least is fitly applied: "It is not in him that willett or runneth, but of God that showeth mercy:" so that, though no man can give any turning reason besides the mere will of God, why God should give this grace to Peter, rather than to Judas, yet we well know that he denieth it not to Judas without his own desert, though he gives it to Peter contrary to his desert.

9. And whereas it is further objected, that "whom he will be hardeneth," and if God will harden us, how can we repent?

Ans. 1. That he hardeneth no man without his own desert; it is not till you have forfeited his softening grace by your resisting and abuse of it. 2. That his hardening is but his leaving you to yourselves, and taking away or denying you that Spirit which you have quenched; or his carrying the just course of his providence so, as he knoweth your corrupt natures will be hardened thereby; but he doth not put any hardness into your hearts, and therefore these afford you no excuse.

(7.) Another error that hindereth conversion, is, The placing of holiness in holding of certain opinions, and so turning from the life of faith and love, to speculation and vain janglings. If once men place their religion in their opinions, they may as well be hypocrites and self-deceivers in a true opinion as in a false. This is a habit by which the devil hath caught multitudes of souls in all ages of the church, and especially of late: when he cannot keep men in open profaneness, then he will tempt them to think that such a party and such a sect are the only right and holy people; and therefore if thou get but among them, and be one of that opinion and party, then thou shalt be saved. And hence it is that we see that men who are so zealous for their parties, and glory so much in several opinions, do yet many, and very many of them, live so unacquaintedly with God and heaven, and are such strangers to christian charity, and can freely reproach both common christians and ministers, and speak evil of the things they understand not, and take their railing accusations for their piety, and walk in discord, and hatred, and disunion from the church of God, and be glad when they can bear down the reputation of their brethren whose labours are necessary for the good of souls. And it is a common mark of an opinionative hypocrite, that he preferreth the interest of his opinion and party, before the interest of those common truths which salvation is clearly laid upon, and all christians are agreed in. And he careth not to hinder ministers from propagating these common truths for the conversion of souls, so he might withal but hinder them from propagating that opinion which is contrary to his. And withal he layeth out more of his zeal and diligence for these opinions, than for the mortification of his lusts, and the maintaining of the union and communion of the saints, and walking holily with God, and uprightly with men.

I shall now say no more to these, but that "the kingdom of God consisteth not in meats and in drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17; and "that circum-

cision availeth nothing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love," Gal. v. 6, "and the new creature," Gal. vi. 15. "For in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor gentile, bond nor free, male nor female;" and why may I not say on the same ground, young nor old; "but Christ is all, and in all," Col. ii. 11; Gal. iii. 28. And that we have many promises of life and salvation to as many as repent and believe, and love God, and hope for the coming of Christ; but we have none to those that are of this or that party or opinion without these graces. And withal we know how tender God is of the unity of his church and people, and how much he hath spoken against division: and they that know not this, when they pretend to know things that are not half so clearly revealed, may be ashamed of their ignorance. I do not know where God hath commanded men to avoid them that hold this or that tolerable different opinion, or that follow this or that tolerable different practice; but I know where he hath commanded us to "mark them that cause division, and avoid them," Rom. xvi. 17.

(8.) Another error that hindereth conversion, is, When men have gotten false conceits against the lawfulness or necessity of those holy ordinances, that are used by the people of God. For the life of religion lieth so much in the use of holy ordinances, that if people be brought out of conceit with these, they will not know what it is to be religious, nor what necessity there is of it. To give you an instance in some particulars.

1. Some grow into doubt of the necessity of family duty, and ask, where hath God commanded us to pray in our families? and that so oft? To which I answer, That it is sufficient that he hath bid us "pray always, and in all things make our requests known to God with prayers, supplication, and thanksgiving," Phil. iv. 6; 1 Thess. v. 17. "All things are sanctified by the word and prayer," 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5; and therefore our families and callings are so. What have we common reason for, but to circumstantiate these duties, that God hath commanded to us for the substance? And common reason telleth us, that as we daily need God, we must daily seek supply of our needs; and so not only our persons, but our families as families, do need this mercy, and receive his mercy, and are related to him as the Head; so our families as families must call on him, and praise him, and love his headship. Besides the example of Daniel, that prayed three times a day in his house, so openly that his enemies had matter of accusation from the matter of his prayer. But I have had occasion to write more largely of this, and therefore will not now stand on it.

2. Others are brought to question the lawfulness of joining with our solemn assemblies, in hearing, or praying, or other public worship of God. The reasons are such as I am ashamed to stand to mention and confute them, and shall be weary to go over them, they are so vain and superficial, and answered at large by many. Some of their reasons are, because we are so bad; when many of the accusers are such themselves, that they deserve to be severely censured by the church; and because the church will not deal with them, they will judge the church, and take themselves too good to have communion with it, and the church unworthy to have communion with them. In a word, they would have not one but many cast out, whom they never dealt with in Christ's way, by admonition; and because it is not done out of Christ's way, to save a labour, they will turn schismatics.

And others of them withdraw on the pretence that we have no ministry. And how prove they that?

You may wait long enough till you can have a word of Scripture or reason for the proof, or before they can answer that sufficient proof that is brought to the contrary. And if you do but put them to tell you which is the true church and ministers, and where it hath been? you shall see what work they will make in the end.

Others withdraw on pretence that we are unbaptized, to which end they must coin a new baptism, or else they are at a loss. And their arguing with us, will be much like the papists in the point of transubstantiation, which requireth that men renounce their sense, and say, that they see not that which they see, and feel not or taste not that which indeed they feel and taste, and then they may come to be in the right. And so we must believe that we see none baptized in our churches, nor hear it, nor know of any such thing, and then we may come to be a church. If these brethren had half so much humility, or christian love, and sense of the unity of the church of Christ, as they should have, they would think on it, and think again, before they would either say of the universal church of Christ for one age, much more for so many ages, that it was no church, or not to be joined with. For he that dares renounce communion with the whole, doth make it hard to be discerned that he is a part; and he that is not a member of the body, will not find another body of Christ, whose communion is desirable. For my part, I believe the church hath had many errors in many ages, but I know no age since the creation, in which, if I had lived, I durst have disclaimed communion with her. Much less dare I think of running out of the way to heaven, which almost all they went in that are there; or of separating from all the church of Christ, from Adam till within this two hundred years, or thereabout: for if there were no church till then, there was no Head, no Christ, and so no christianity; yea, if there were none but for any one time. Oh! if it were the will of God that we could have as clear light in some other weighty points, as we have in Scripture for the baptism of the children of believers, how much would it do to quiet the understandings of many that are willing to know!

3. Others there be that despise the solemn praises of the congregations, because some psalms are such as all cannot truly, they think, recite.

1. As if no recital were lawful, but that which personally owneth the words; which can never be proved.

2. And do they not know that God himself hath prevented their objection? and that it lieth in his own face? Who knoweth not that these psalms, or at least very many of them, were appointed for the solemn praise of God in the temple and congregations of the Jews in those times? And if those could lawfully use them whose hearts were generally no more fitted to them than ours, may not we do so too?

3. And do they not know that their scruple doth make, not only against psalms, but all public prayer also to be unlawful? For you cannot so speak in any such public prayers, or praises, but there will be somewhat which will not suit with the particular dispositions of many in the congregation personally to own, or else your duty will be very defective. If you express rejoicing, must all drooping spirits separate from the assembly that cannot rejoice? But I will trouble you no more with this. If any are unsatisfied, let them read but Mr. Cotton's book on this question, and Mr Ford's, and they may receive satisfaction. And if they will in this, and the foregoing cases of baptism, separation, and the rest, divide from the church, and venture on damnation to save

themselves the labour of reading that which is written to give them information, they must take what they get by it. Who can help it?

Sect. XXXVII.

Hinderance 19. Another hinderance of conversion, is, A proud, unteachable frame of spirit: when people are so wise in their own eyes, that they think they know enough already; and they scorn to be taught. If the wisest minister in England should live with such, they would but despise his counsel in every thing almost that crosseth their conceits. As long as he will humour them, and say as they say, he shall be a good man, and well spoken of by all; but if he will trouble them, and cross them, and tell them that which is against their present opinion, they think themselves wiser in this than he; and if they do not bid him look to himself, and let them alone, at least they will give him little thanks, and show it by their small regard. Some of them will not come near us, nor give us the hearing, when we would teach them; and others, though they hear, do think themselves too wise to believe or obey. And thus they are fixed in a state of misery.

Sect. XXXVIII.

Direct. 19. If ever you will be converted, humbly submit to the word of God, and the instructions of those whom he hath appointed to inform you. What unreasonable pride is it in you that are ignorant, unlearned men, to despise the counsel of the most able, godly ministers, and that in points wherein the godly through all the world are agreed; yea, where God himself doth lead them by his word! Are not they liker to know more than you that have studied it all their days? Discourse with them, and try whether they or you have more knowledge. Consider what you do when you proudly reason against the necessity of conversion and a holy life. What! are you wiser than your teachers, and than the ablest teachers in the land? yea, than all the ministers in the world, and than all the godly people in the world? Silly souls, that scarce know any of the principles of religion, are yet so proud as to despise the instruction from the wisest whoever. But if you think yourselves wiser than all the ministers in the world, will you also think yourselves wiser than God? I tell you, either illuminating grace, or the conviction of God's judgment, shall take down your lofty hearts ere long, and make you wish you had stooped to instruction. The day is coming that will abate your pride, and make you talk a little more submissively. Hearken therefore in time, lest that befall you that is mentioned, Prov. v. 11—13, "Lest thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!" If you are too wise to learn, you will prove in the end too foolish to be saved.

Sect. XXXIX.

Hinderance 20. The last hinderance of conversion that I shall mention, is, Wilful obstinacy. When men have long resisted grace, they are given over oftentimes to themselves, and then they grow wilful; and when they have nothing else to say, why they should not be converted and become the people of God, they can say, they will not: they will never be so holy, nor deny their flesh, nor forsake the world, nor set themselves to a heavenly life; they will not believe that this is so necessary; nor will they ever yield to such a course: come on it what will, they

are resolved against it; before they will do it they will venture their souls, and let God do with them what he will: and this desperate wilfulness is the devil's last hold.

Sect. XL.

Direct. 20. What direction should I give you against this hindrance? When the will is so corrupt and obstinate, whatsoever I give it will be rejected. If you were but willing I should make no doubt but the work might prosper; or if you were but reasonable, and teachable, and persuadable, I should make no doubt, through the blessing of God, but the former means might make you yield; but if men be wilful and resolved to perish, what remedy? If men could give us any reason against conversion and a holy life, and did err through the mere mistake of their understandings, I should make no doubt, through the blessing of God, but by bare reason they might be rectified. But when their will is their reason, and they are resolved, whatsoever comes of it, to hold on, and stop their ears against advice, what can we say to these men? All that I can do, is, to commend to them the former considerations, and to desire them to think of those motives before delivered, which may change their wills. But I have but little hope to prevail with them so much as soberly to think of it. And because so many of our poor people are of this strain, I am forced here to end this subject with lamentation.

Sect. XLI.

I have preached now many sermons to you of conversion, and whether any souls be converted by it, the Lord knows, I know not. But the sad observation of the state of the world, and the uneffectualness of such endeavours, doth justly make me fear the issue. I know that both I and this congregation shall shortly appear before our Judge, to give a strict account of our lives; and if I have not preached these sermons in sincerity, with a true desire after the saving of your souls, then how shall I stand before the Lord, if the blood of Christ through faith and repentance prevail not for remission? And if any man or woman in this town or parish shall there appear in an unconverted state, what will they be able to say for themselves? or how will they escape the threatened damnation? I am not out of hope that I shall meet some souls there, though yet I know not of them, that will be able to say, they were converted by these sermons; but I am so much afraid lest I shall meet abundance of you in an unconverted state, that I could even find in my heart to sit down and weep over these sermons now I have preached them. Alas! that you should be condemned by that which was intended to further your salvation. Have I studied and preached all this to be a witness against you? I know, as true as you sit in these seats, that every soul of you shall be for ever in hell, that passeth out of the body in an unconverted state. And I know when you have heard so much of it, and been so often warned, and now are left without excuse, you will have a double condemnation. For now it is your mere wilfulness that must keep you unconverted. If you say, you cannot convert yourselves, I ask you in a word, will you do what you can? Tell me, will you, or will you not? If you will not, what remedy? If you will, look over the directions I have given you, and set upon the faithful practice of them. Particularly, see that you presently search the Scriptures, and read good books, and forsake your evil company, and come not near

them, but get among those that fear the Lord, and take all opportunities public and private, and inquire of your teachers and neighbours that can help you, what you shall do to be saved? And sin no more wilfully, but avoid the very temptations and appearances of evil; and be much with God in secret and open prayer; and dwell in the consideration of your own estate, of your own sin and danger, of Christ and duty, of grace and glory; and think not any pains too much for your salvation. What say you? Will you do but thus much, or will you not? If you will, you shall find no cause to repent of it, and God will not be wanting to that soul that doth not wilfully forsake him, but is willing to be conformed to the image of his Son, and to be what God would have him be. But, alas! it is this wilfulness and obstinacy that undoes men; that is that which shuts up the heart of God and man from compassionating the wicked in their everlasting misery. They did it wilfully; they would take no warning; they would hear no counsel; no saying would serve them; they chose their own destruction; it was their own doing; they were told of it a hundred times; they were entreated to consider, but they would not be entreated. What could have been said more to them? What could we do more for them? Oh that any one of you could tell me what I should say more, or what I should do now to save the souls of ignorant, fleshly, worldly sinners from damnation! and to convert the unconverted, and turn the hearts of men to God! Oh that you could but tell me how I might accomplish it! Would I not do it? The Lord knows, if any lawful and honest means would accomplish it I would do it, if I know my own heart. But if Christ could not be heard, why should I wonder if many will make light of what is said by such a one as I? If they will not hear the Lord that made them speaking in his word, why should I wonder if they will not hear him speaking by such a worm as I? Sinners, what shall I say more to you? I have told you of an everlasting glory which you might have; if you will set light by it, and prefer your worldly things before it, who can help it? I have told you of eternal misery that you are in danger of; if you will venture on it, and not believe it till you feel it, and are past remedy, who can help it? I have proved to you from the word of God, that without conversion there is no salvation; if you dare go on in an unconverted state, and keep your sin, and follow your fleshly desires and delights, and your worldly vanities and wicked company, if you will not be drawn to the ways of God, what remedy? I have delivered my message, and I hope God will not require your blood at my hands. You shall all be forced to bear me witness that I told you there was no salvation without conversion; and that I manifested to you the reasonableness of the offers of God; and if you be not converted, it is because you would not: and what a torment it will be everlastingly to your consciences to think that you wilfully damned yourselves, and to think that you wilfully refused your salvation; and that you might have been in heaven as well as others, if you had not wilfully and obstinately rejected it; I say, what tormenting thoughts these will prove to you everlastingly, you cannot possibly now conceive, but then you shall know and feel it, if true conversion do not prevent it. Which that it may do, as it hath been the end of all these sermons, so shall it now, and as long as I have life and strength, be the matter of my prayers for you.

CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED

TO TURN AND LIVE,

AND ACCEPT OF MERCY WHILE MERCY MAY BE HAD, AS EVER THEY WOULD FIND
MERCY IN THE DAY OF THEIR EXTREMITY:

FROM THE LIVING GOD.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

FORMS OF PRAYER FOR MORNING AND EVENING FOR A FAMILY, FOR A
PENITENT SINNER, AND FOR THE LORD'S DAY.

IN that short acquaintance I had with that reverend learned servant of Christ, Bishop Usher, he was oft, from first to last, importuning me to write a directory for the several ranks of professed christians, which might distinctly give each one their portion; beginning with the unconverted, and then proceeding to the babes in Christ, and then to the strong; and mixing some special helps against the several sins that they are addicted to. By the suddenness of his motion at our first congress, I perceived it was in his mind before; and I told him, both that it was abundantly done by many already, and that his unacquaintedness with my weakness, might make him think me fitter for it than I was. But this did not satisfy him, but still he made it his request. I confess I was not moved by his reasons, nor did I apprehend any great need of doing more than is done in that way: nor that I was likely to do more. And, therefore, I parted from him without the least purpose to answer his desire. But since his death, his words often came into my mind; and the great reverence I bore to him, did the more incline me to think with some complacency of his motion. And having of late intended to write a "Family Directory," I began to apprehend how congruously the forementioned work should lead the way; and the several conditions of men's souls be spoken of, before we come to the several relations. Hereupon I resolved, by God's assistance, to proceed in the order following. First, to speak to the impenitent, unconverted sinners, who are not yet so much as purposing to turn; or at least are not setting about the work. And with these, I thought, a wakening persuasive was a more necessary means than mere directions; for directions suppose men willing to obey them. But the persons that we have first to deal with, are wilful and asleep in sin, and as men that are past feeling, having given themselves over to sin with greediness, Eph. iv. 19. My next work must be for those that have some purposes to turn, and are about the work, to direct them for a thorough and a true conversion, that they miscarry not in the birth. The third part must be directions for the younger and weaker sort of christians, that they may be established, built up, and persevere. The fourth part, directions for lapsed and backsliding christians, for their safe recovery. Besides these, there is intended some short persuasions and directions against some special errors of the times, and against some common, killing sins. As for directions to doubting, troubled consciences, that is done already. And the strong I shall not write directions for, because they are so much taught of God already. And then the last part is intended more especially for families, as such, directing the several relations in their duties. Some of these are already written. Whether I shall have life and leisure for the rest, God only knoweth: and therefore I shall publish the several parts by themselves, as I write them. And the rather because they are intended for men of different states, and because I would not deter them by the bulk or price, from reading what is written for their benefit. The use that this part is published for, is, 1. For masters and parents to read often in their families, if they have servants or children that are yet unconverted. 2. For all such unconverted persons to read and consider of themselves. 3. For the richer sort, that have any pity on such miserable souls, to give to the unsanctified that need them (if they have not fitter at hand to use and give). The Lord awake us to work while it is day, for the saving of our own and others' souls, in subserviency to the blessed God, the Maker, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier of souls.

RICHARD BAXTER.

TO ALL UNSANCTIFIED PERSONS THAT SHALL READ THIS BOOK, ESPECIALLY
MY HEARERS IN THE PARISH OF KIDDERMINSTER.

MEN AND BRETHREN,

The eternal God that made you for life everlasting, and hath redeemed you by his only Son, when you had lost it, and yourselves being mindful of you in your sin and misery, hath indited the gospel, and sealed it by his Spirit, and commanded his ministers to preach it to the world, that pardon being freely offered you, and heaven being set before you, he might call you off from your fleshly pleasures, and from following after this deceitful world, and acquaint you with the life you were created and redeemed for, before you are dead and past remedy. He sendeth you not prophets or apostles, that receive their message by immediate revelation, but yet he calleth you by his ordinary ministers, who are commissioned by him to preach the same gospel, which Christ and his apostles first delivered. The Lord standeth over you, and seeth how you forget him and your latter end, and how light you make of everlasting things, as men that understand not what they have to do or suffer. He seeth how bold you are in sin, and how fearless of his threatenings, and how careless of your souls, and how the works of infidels are in your lives, while the belief of christians is in your mouths. He seeth the dreadful day at hand, when your sorrows will begin, and you must lament all this with fruitless cries in torment and desperation; and then the remembrance of your folly will tear your hearts, if true conversion now prevent it not. In compassion of your sinful, miserable souls, the Lord, that better knows your case than you can know it, hath made it our duty to speak to you in his name, (2 Cor. v. 19,) and to tell you plainly of your sin and misery, and what will be your end, and how sad a change you will shortly see, if yet you go on a little longer. Having bought you at so dear a rate as the blood of his Son Jesus Christ, and made you so free and general a promise of pardon and grace, and everlasting glory, he commandeth us to tender all this to you, as the gift of God, and to entreat you to consider of the necessity and worth of what he offereth. He seeth and pitieth you, while you are drowned in worldly cares and pleasures, and eagerly following childish toys, and wasting that short and precious time for a thing of nought, in which you should make ready for an everlasting life; and therefore he hath commanded us to call after you, and to tell you how you lose your labour, and are about to lose your souls, and to tell you what greater and better things you might certainly have, if you would hearken to his call, Isa. lv. 1—3. We believe and obey the voice of God; and come to you daily on his message, who hath charged us to preach and be instant with you in season and out of season, and to lift up our voice like a trumpet, and show you your transgressions and your sins, Isa. lviii. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. But woe and alas! to the grief of our souls, and your own undoing, you stop your ears, you stiffen your necks, you harden your hearts, and break our hearts, and send us back to God with groans, to tell him that we have done his message, but can do no good, nor scarcely get a sober hearing. Oh that our eyes were as a fountain of tears, that we might lament our ignorant, careless people, that have Christ before them, and pardon, and life, and heaven before them, and have not hearts to know and value them! that might have Christ, and grace, and glory, as well as others, if it were not for their wilful negligence and contempt! Oh that the Lord would fill our hearts with more compassion to these miserable souls, that we might cast ourselves even at their feet, and follow them to their houses, and speak to them with our bitter tears. For long have we preached to many of them, as in vain: we study plainness to make them understand, and many of them will not understand us: we study serious, piercing words to make them feel, but they will not feel. If the greatest matters would work with them, we should awake them. If the sweetest things would work, we should entice them, and win their hearts. If the most dreadful things would work, we should at least affright them from their wickedness. If truth and sincerity would take with them, we should soon convince them. If the God that made them, and the Christ that bought them, might be heard, the case would soon be altered with them. If Scripture might be heard, we should soon prevail. If reason, even the best and strongest reason, might be heard, we should not doubt but we should speedily convince them. If experience might be heard, and even their own experience, and the experience of all the world, the matter might be mended. Yea, if the conscience within them might be heard, the case would be better with them than it is. But if nothing can be heard, what then shall we do for them? If the dreadful God of heaven be slighted, who then shall be regarded? If the inestimable love and blood of a Redeemer be made light of, what then shall be valued? If heaven have no desirable glory with them, and everlasting joys be worth nothing; if they can jest at hell, and dance about a bottomless pit, and play with the consuming fire, and that when God and man do warn them of it; what shall we do for such souls as these?

Once more, in the name of the God of heaven, I shall do the message to you which he hath commanded us, and leave it in these standing lines to convert you or condemn you; to change you, or rise up in judgment against you, and to be a witness to your faces, that once you had a serious call to turn. Hear, all you that are the drudges of the world, and the servants of flesh and Satan; that spend your days in looking after prosperity on earth, and drown your consciences in drinking, and gluttony, and idleness, and foolish sports, and know you sin, and yet will sin, as if you set God at defiance, and bid him do his worst, and spare not. Harken, all you that mind not God, and have no heart to holy things, and feel no savour in the word or worship of the Lord, or in the thoughts or mention of eternal life; that are careless of your immortal souls, and never bestowed one hour in inquiring what case they are in, whether sanctified or unsanctified, and whether you are ready to appear before the Lord! Harken, all you that by sinning in the light, have sinned yourselves into atheism and infidelity, and do not believe the word of God. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear" the gracious and yet dreadful call of God! His eye is all this while upon you, your sins are registered, and you shall surely hear of them again; God keepeth the book now, and he will write it upon your consciences with his terrors; and then you also shall keep it yourselves. O sinners! that you knew but what you are doing! and who you are all this while offending! The sun itself is darkness before the glory of that Majesty which you daily abuse and carelessly provoke. The sinning angels were not able to stand before him, but were cast down to be tormented with devils. And dare such silly

worms as you so carelessly offend, and set yourselves against your Maker? Oh that you did but a little know what a case that wretched soul is in, that hath engaged the living God against him! The word of his mouth that made thee can unmake thee; a frown of his face will cut thee off, and cast thee out into utter darkness: how eager are the devils to be doing with thee that have tempted thee, and do but wait for the word from God to take and use thee as their own! And then in a moment thou wilt be in hell. If God be against thee, all things are against thee. This world is but thy prison for all that thou so lovest it: thou art but reserved in it to the day of wrath, Job xxi. 30. The Judge is coming, thy soul is even going: yea, a little while and thy friends shall say of thee, He is dead; and thou shalt see the things that thou dost now despise, and feel what now thou wilt not believe. Death will bring such an argument as thou canst not answer; an argument that shall effectually confute thy cavils against the word and ways of God, and all thy self-conceited dotages: and then how soon will thy mind be changed! Then be an unbeliever if thou canst! Stand then to all thy former words which thou wast wont to utter against the Scriptures, or against a holy and heavenly life! Make good that cause then before the Lord, which thou wast wont to plead against thy teachers, and against the people that feared God. Then stand to thy old opinions, and contemptuous thoughts of the diligence of the saints. Make ready now thy strongest reasons, and stand up then before the Judge, and plead like a man, for thy fleshly, thy worldly, and ungodly life; but know that thou must have one to plead with thee, that will not be outfaced by thee, nor so easily put off as we thy fellow-creatures. O poor deceived, wretched soul! there is nothing but a slender veil of flesh betwixt thee and that amazing sight, which will quickly silence thee and turn thy tune, and make thee of another mind! As soon as death has drawn this curtain, thou shalt see that which will quickly leave thee speechless. And how quickly will that day and hour come! When thou hast had but a few more merry hours, and but a few more pleasant draughts and morsels, and a little more of the honours and riches of the world, thy portion will be spent, and thy pleasures ended, and all is then gone that thou settest thy heart upon; of all that thou soldest thy Saviour and salvation for, there is nothing left but the heavy reckoning. As a thief that sits merrily spending the money in an ale-house which he hath stolen, when men are riding in post haste to apprehend him; so it is with you: while you are drowned in cares or fleshly pleasures, and making merry with your own shame, death is coming in post haste to seize upon you, and carry your souls to such a place and state, as now you little know or think of. Suppose when you are bold and busy in your sin, that a messenger were but coming post from London to apprehend you, and take away your life; though you saw him not, yet if you knew of his coming it would mar your mirth, and you would be thinking of the haste he makes, and hearkening when he knocketh at your door. Oh that ye could but see what haste death makes, though yet it hath not overtaken you! No post so swift! No messenger more sure! As sure as the sun will be with you in the morning, though it hath many thousand and hundred thousand miles to go in the night, so sure will death be quickly with you; and then where is your sport and pleasure? Then will you jest and brave it out? Then will you jeer at them that warned you? Then is it better to be a believing saint, or a sensual worldling? And then whose shall all those things be that you have gathered? Luke xii. 19—21. Do you not observe that days and weeks are quickly gone, and nights and mornings come apace, and speedily succeed each other? You sleep, but "your damnation slumbereth not;" you linger, "but your judgment this long time lingereth not," 2 Pet. ii. 3—5; to which you are reserved for punishment, 2 Pet. ii. 8, 9. "Oh that you were wise to understand this, and that you did consider your latter end!" Deut. xxxii. 20. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear" the call of God in this day of his salvation.

O careless sinners, that you did but know the love that you unthankfully neglect, and the preciousness of the blood of Christ which you despise! Oh that you did but know the riches of the gospel! Oh that you did but know a little the certainty, and the glory, and blessedness of that everlasting life, which now you will not set your hearts upon, nor be persuaded first and diligently to seek! Heb. xi. 6; xii. 28; Matt. vi. 13. Did you but know the endless life with God which you now neglect, how quickly would you cast away your sin! how quickly would you change your mind and life, your course and company, and turn the streams of your affections, and lay out your care another way! how resolutely would you scorn to yield to such temptations as now deceive you, and carry you away! how zealously would you bestir yourselves for that most blessed life! how earnest would you be with God in prayer! how diligent in hearing, learning, and inquiring! how serious in meditating on the laws of God! Psal. i. 2. how fearful of sinning in thought, word, or deed! and how careful to please God and grow in holiness! Oh what a changed people you would be! And why should not the certain word of God be believed, and prevail with you, which openeth to you these glorious and eternal things? Yea, let me tell you, that even here upon earth, you little know the difference between the life you refuse and the life you choose. The sanctified are conversing with God, when you scarce dare think of him, and when you are conversing but with earth and flesh; their conversation is in heaven, when you are utter strangers to it, and your belly is your god, and you are minding earthly things, Phil. iii. 18—20. They are seeking after the face of God, when you seek for nothing higher than this world. They are busily laying out for an endless life, where they shall be equal with the angels, Luke xx. 36, when you are taken up with a shadow, and a transitory thing of nought. How low and base is your earthly, fleshly, sinful life, in comparison of the noble, spiritual life of true believers! Many a time have I looked on such men with grief and pity, to see them trudge about the world, and spend their lives, care, and labour, for nothing but a little food and raiment, or a little fading pelf, or fleshly pleasures, or empty honours, as if they had no higher thing to mind. What difference is there between the lives of these men, and of the beasts that perish, that spend their time in working, and eating, and living, but that they may live? They taste not of the inward heavenly pleasures which believers taste and live upon. I had rather have a little of their comfort, which the forethoughts of their heavenly inheritance doth afford them, though I had all their scorn and sufferings with it, than to have all your pleasures and treacherous prosperities; I would not have one of your secret gripes and pangs of conscience, dark and dreadful thoughts of death and the life to come, for all that ever the world hath done for you, or all that you should reasonably hope that it should do. If I were in your unconverted, carnal state, and knew but what I know, believed but what I now believe, methinks my life would be a foretaste of hell. How oft should I be thinking of the terrors of the Lord, and of the dismal day that is hasting on! Sure death and hell would be

still before me. I should think of them by day, and dream of them by night; I should lie down in fear, and rise in fear, and live in fear, lest death should come before I were converted: I should have small felicity in any thing that I possessed, and little pleasure in any company, and little joy in any thing in the world, as long as I knew myself to be under the curse and wrath of God: I should still be afraid of hearing that voice, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee," Luke xii. 20. And that fearful sentence would be written upon my conscience, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," Isa. xlvi. 22; lvii. 21. O poor sinner! it is a more joyful life than this that you might live, if you were but willing, but truly willing to hearken to Christ, and to come home to God. You might then draw near to God with boldness, and call him your Father, and comfortably trust him with your souls and bodies. If you look upon promises, you may say, They are all mine; if upon the curse, you may say, From this I am delivered. When you read the law, you may see what you are saved from: when you read the gospel, you may see him that redeemed you, and see the course of his love, and holy life, and sufferings, and trace him in his temptations, tears, and blood, in the work of your salvation. You may see death conquered, and heaven opened, and your resurrection and glorification provided for, in the resurrection and glorification of your Lord. If you look on the saints, you may say, They are my brethren and companions. If on the unsanctified, you may rejoice to think that you are saved from that state. If you look upon the heavens, the sun, and moon, and stars innumerable, you may think and say, My Father's face is infinitely more glorious; it is higher matters that he hath prepared for his saints. Yonder is but the outward court of heaven. The blessedness that he hath promised me, is so much higher, that flesh and blood cannot behold it. If you think of the grave, you may remember that the glorified Spirit, a living Head, and a loving Father, have all so near relation to your dust, that it cannot be forgotten or neglected; but will more certainly revive than the plants and flowers in the spring; because the soul is still alive, that is the root of the body, and Christ is alive, that is the root of both. Even death, which is the king of fears, may be remembered and entertained with joy, as being the day of your deliverance from the remnants of sin and sorrow, and the day which you believed, and hoped, and waited for, when you shall see the blessed things which you have heard of, and shall find by present joyful experience, what it was to choose the better part, and be a sincere believing saint. What say you, sirs? is not this a more delightful life, to be assured of salvation, and ready to die, than to live as the ungodly, that have their hearts "overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day comes upon them unawares?" Luke xxi. 34, 36. Might you not live a comfortable life, if once you were made the heirs of heaven, and sure to be saved when you leave the world? O look about you then, and think what you do, and cast not away such hopes as these for very nothing. The flesh and world can give you no such hopes or comforts.

And besides all the misery that you bring upon yourselves, you are the troublers of others as long as you are unconverted. You trouble magistrates to rule you by their laws. You trouble ministers, by resisting the light and guidance which they offer you: your sin and misery is the greatest grief and trouble to them in the world. You trouble the commonwealth, and draw the judgments of God upon us: it is you that most disturb the holy peace and order of the churches, and hinder our union and reformation, and are the shame and trouble of the churches where you intrude, and of all the places where you are. Ah, Lord! how heavy and sad a case is this, that even in England, where the gospel doth abound above any other nation in the world; where teaching is so plain and common, and all the helps we can desire are at hand; when the sword hath been hewing us, and judgment hath run as a fire through the land; when deliverances have relieved us, and so many admirable mercies have engaged us to God, and to the gospel, and to a holy life; that yet after all this our cities, and towns, and countries, shall abound with multitudes of unsanctified men, and swarm with so much sensuality, as every where to our grief we see. One would have thought, that after all this light, and all this experience, and all these judgments and mercies of God, the people of this nation should have joined together, as one man, to turn to the Lord; and should have come to their godly teachers, and lamented all their former sins, and desired them to join with them in public humiliation to confess them openly, and beg pardon of them from the Lord, and should have craved their instruction for the time to come, and be glad to be ruled by the Spirit within, and the ministers of Christ without, according to the word of God. One would think, that after such reason and Scripture evidence as they hear, and after all these means and mercies, there should not be an ungodly person left among us, nor a worldling, or a drunkard, or a hater of reformation, or an enemy to holiness, be found in all our towns or countries. If we be not all agreed about some ceremonies or forms of government, one would think that, before this, we should have been all agreed to live a holy and heavenly life, in obedience to God, his word and ministers, and in love and peace with one another. But, alas! how far are our people from this course! Most of them, in most places, do set their hearts on earthly things, and seek not first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, but look at holiness as a needless thing: their families are prayerless, or else a few heartless, lifeless words must serve instead of hearty, fervent, daily prayer; their children are not taught the knowledge of Christ, and the covenant of grace, nor brought up in the nurture of the Lord, though they falsely promised this in their baptism. They instruct not their servants in the matters of salvation; but so their work be done they care not. There are more oaths, and curses, and ribald and railing speeches in their families, than gracious words that tend to edification. How few are the families that fear the Lord, and inquire after his word and ministers, how they should live, and what they should do; and are willing to be taught and ruled, and that heartily look after everlasting life! And those few that God hath made so happy, are commonly the by-word of their neighbours; when we see some live in drunkenness, and some in pride and worldliness, and most of them have little care of their salvation, though the cause be gross, and past all controversy, yet will they hardly be convinced of their misery, and more hardly recovered and reformed; but when we have done all that we are able, to save them from their sins, we leave them, most of them, as we find them. And if, according to the law of God, we cast them out of the communion of the church, when they have obstinately rejected all our admonitions, they rage at us as if we were their enemies, and their hearts are filled with malice against us, and they will sooner set themselves against the Lord, and his laws, and church, and ministers, than against their deadly sins. This is the doleful case of England; we have magistrates that countenance the ways of godliness, and a happy opportunity for unity and reformation is before us; and faithful ministers long to see the right ordering of the

church, and of the ordinances of God; but the power of sin in our people doth frustrate almost all. No where almost can a faithful minister set up the unquestionable discipline of Christ, or put back the most scandalous, impenitent sinners from the communion of the church, and participation of the sacrament, but the most of the people rail at them, and revile them; as if these ignorant, careless souls were wiser than their teachers, or than God himself; and fitter to rule the church than they. And thus in the day of our visitation, when God calls upon us to reform his church, though magistrates seem willing, and faithful ministers are willing, yet are the multitude of the people still unwilling; and sin hath so blinded them, and hardened their hearts, that even in these days of light and grace, they are the obstinate enemies of light and grace, and will not be brought by the calls of God, to see their folly, and know what is for their good. Oh that the people of England knew, "at least in this their day, the things that belong unto their peace, before they are hid from their eyes!" Luke xix. 42. O foolish and miserable souls! Gal. iii. 1, who hath bewitched your minds into such madness, and your hearts into such deadness, that you should be such mortal enemies to yourselves, and go on so obstinately towards damnation, that neither the word of God nor the persuasions of men can change your minds, or hold your hands, or stop you till you are past remedy? Well, sinner! this life will not last always; this patience will not wait upon you still. Do not think that you shall abuse your Maker and Redeemer, and serve his enemies, and debase your souls, and trouble the world, and wrong the church, and reproach the godly, and grieve your teachers, and hinder reformation, and all this upon free cost. You know not yet what this must cost you, but you must shortly know, when the righteous God shall take you in hand, who will handle you in another manner than the sharpest magistrates or the plainest dealing pastors did, unless you prevent the everlasting torments by a sound conversion, and a speedy obeying the call of God. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear," while mercy hath a voice to call.

One desperate objection (which I have after touched, but with too much brevity) I find sticks close to the hearts of many ungodly men. They think that God doth not so much care what men think, or say, or do, as we persuade them; and therefore they care so little themselves. For the convincing of such atheistical men as these, I shall propound the following questions.

1. Dost thou think God careth whether thou be a man or not? If not, who made thee, and preserved thee? If he do, then sure he careth whether thou behave thyself as a man. No man is so foolish as to make any instrument, build a house, or a ship, and not care, when he hath done, whether it be good for the use he made it. Do not for shame, then, impute such folly to the God of wisdom, as if he made so noble a creature as man, and endowed him with such noble faculties, and all for nothing, and careth not what becometh of him when he hath done. Why should God give thee a mind that can know him, and a heart that can love him, when he careth not whether thou know him, and love him, or not? Do you not see, that in the course of nature, every thing is fitted to its use? The beasts know not God, nor are capable of loving him, because they were made for no such use; but thy capacity shows that thou wast made for God, and for a life to come.

2. Dost thou think that God is every where present, and infinite, and all-sufficient? If not, thou dost not believe that he is God; and it is unreasonable to imagine, that God hath made a world that is greater, and more extensive or comprehensive, than himself! For none can communicate more than he hath. But if thou art forced to confess that God is every where, and as sufficient for every single man, as if he had never another creature to regard, thou must needs confess then that he is not careless of the hearts and ways of the sons of men; for they are things that are still before his eyes. It is base and blasphemous thoughts of God, as if he were limited, absent, or insufficient, that makes men think him so regardless of their hearts and ways.

3. Dost thou think that God careth what becomes of thy body? whether thou be sick or well? whether thou live or die? If not, then how camest thou by thy life, and health, and mercies? If they came from any other fountain, tell us from whence. Is it not to God that thou prayest for thy life and health? Darest thou say to him, I will not depend upon thee? I will not be beholden to thee for the life and mercies of another day? If so, then thou art a blind atheist. But if thou thinkest he cares for thy body, canst thou think he cares not more for thy soul? If he must regard to furnish thee with mercies, he will sure have a regard whether thou love and live to him that gave them.

4. Dost thou believe that God is the Governor of the world, or not? If not, then there can be no rightful government. For as no justice of peace can have a power, but from the sovereign; so no sovereign can have power, but from God; nor be a lawful governor, but under him: and then all the world would be turned into confusion. But if thou must needs confess that God is the Governor of the world, what an unwise, unrighteous governor wouldst thou make him, if thou thinkest that he regardeth not the hearts and ways of those whom he doth govern! This still is but to deny him to be God.

5. If God do not care so much what is in our hearts, or what we do, why then should he make a law for our hearts, and words, and ways? Would he command us that which he doth not care for? Would he so strictly forbid sin, if he were indifferent whether we sin or not? Would he promise eternal life to the holy and obedient, if he cared not whether we be holy and obedient, or no? Would he threaten hell to all that are ungodly, if he cared not whether we are godly or not? Darest thou say, that the almighty, holy God is fain to rule the world by a lie, and to deceive men into obedience? Yea, the very law of nature itself doth contain not only precepts of our duty, but the hopes and fears of the life to come, without which the world could not be governed; and certainly they are no deceits, by which an infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness, doth govern the world.

6. If God did not much regard our hearts and lives, why doth he make all the world to be our servants? Doth he give us the sun, and moon, and stars, the earth, and all creatures to attend us, and serve us with their lives and virtues, and yet doth he not care for our hearts or service? This is as foolish as to say, that he hath made all the world in vain, and careth not for it, now he hath made it.

7. If he cared not for the frame of our hearts and lives, he would not have sent his Son to redeem us, and to cleanse us from iniquity, and sanctify us a peculiar people to himself, Tit. ii. 14. Surely the price that was paid for sinners, and the wonderful design of God in our redemption, doth show that he makes not light of sin, and that he is wonderfully in love with holiness.

8. If God did not regard our hearts and lives, he would not have made it the office of his ministers, to call us daily to repentance and a holy life; nor commanded them to make such a stir with sinners to win them unto God: he would not have appointed all his ordinances, public and private, also to this end. Doth God command all this ado for a thing he regards not?

9. Nor would he punish the world with hell hereafter, or so many dreadful judgments here, as thousands feel, if he cared not what they think or do. Methinks, men that are so often groaning under his rod, should feel that he looks after their hearts and ways.

10. And how can the Holy Ghost be our Sanctifier, if God be so indifferent, whether we be clean or unclean? Dare you think that the Holy Ghost doth take upon him a needless work?

11. Methinks you might perceive, even in the malice of the tempter, that God is holy, and hateth iniquity; and his word is true, that telleth us of the eternal punishment of sin. The Scripture tells us of the angels' fall, and that many of them are become devils by their sin, and are malicious enemies of man's salvation. And do you not easily perceive it to be true? How came they else to be such importunate tempters of men, which we feel, alas! by too much experience? Or if this evidence be not palpable enough to convince the infidel; how come they to make so many bargains with conjurers and witches, to draw them from God and salvation, as they have done? How come they to appear in terrible shapes to so many as they have done, and still upon designs that declare their own dejected, base condition, and their enmity to God and man, and their eager desire to engage men in a way of sin? If any infidel will not believe that really there have been witches and apparitions, and consequently that there are devils, who are miserable, malicious spirits, who by sin are cast out of the favour of God, and would draw men into their miserable case; let them come and reason the case with me, and I shall quickly tell them of so many sure and undeniable instances, and give them so much proof of the truth of it, as shall leave them nothing to say against it, unless they will still say, We will not believe: yea, so much, as that I will not be beholden to the vilest atheist or infidel to believe it, if he will not quite renounce his reason, but give it leave to see the light.

12. Lastly, If yet you think that God (the Sovereign Ruler of the world, that is every where present, and preserveth all) doth care so little what men are, or what they do, whether they are holy or unholy, obedient or disobedient to his laws; then methinks that you yourselves, and all the rest of your fellow-creatures, should little care.

Two questions therefore I must propound to you:

1. Do not you care what men say of you, or do to you? Are you contented that men slander you, and abuse you, or set your houses or towns on fire, or destroy your cattle, or wives or children, and imprison, wound, or kill yourselves? If you will make a great matter what men say or do against you, can you be so mad, (for it is no better,) as to think that the omnipotent, holy God, should little regard what is said or done against himself, and against his servants, and that by such silly worms as men, that are his workmanship? Did not selfishness make you blind and partial, you would know that one sin against God, deserves more punishment than ten thousand thousand times as much against such silly things as you. Do you make no matter of difference between a bad servant and a good? an obedient and disobedient child? a son that will lay down his life for you, and a son that longs for your death, that he may have your land? between a faithful friend and a deadly enemy? If you do not, you are not men, but something else in human shape. If you do, then you are somewhat worse than men, if yet you would have the blessed God to make no great difference between those that love him above all the world, and those that regard him not; between the holy and unholy soul.

And, 2. I would ask you whether you would have the rulers of the world to take care what men say or do, or would you not? If not, then you would have all the world turned loose, and you would have every man that is poorer than you, have leave to rob you; and every man that hateth you, have leave to beat or kill you; and every man that liketh your house, or lands, or goods, or cattle, to have leave to take them from you; and every man defile your wives or daughters, that hath a mind to it? And so we should see whither it is that infidelity leads men. But if you like not this, then you are most unreasonable, if you would have magistrates to be regardless of men's actions, and not God; if magistrates must hang men for wronging you, and the eternal Majesty must not punish them for wronging him, and breaking his laws, which is infinitely a greater matter. As if you would have a constable punish men, and the king or judge to have no regard of it; or kings are under God, as constables are under kings, and a thousand-fold lower.

The truth is, wicked men are fallen so far from God to themselves, that they are as gods to themselves in their own esteem, and besides themselves they know no God; and therefore any wrong that is done against them, or any good that is done for them, they would have regarded; but the wrong and disobedience that is against God, they would have nothing made of it. And they have such narrow, blasphemous thoughts of God, as if he were a finite creature like themselves, that can be but in one place at once, that makes them so blasphemous his providence, and think he minds no good or evil, and will not regard the godly, or punish the ungodly, but were like the idols of the heathen, that have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, and hands without an executive power. But when the memorial book of God is opened, which is written for them that fear the Lord, and think upon his name; and when the Lord shall say of them, "These are mine," as he is making up his jewels, and spareth them as a man spareth his son that serveth him; then shall these infidels return to their wits, and the righteous shall return from their fears and sufferings, and shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, between those that serve God and those that serve him not, Mal. iii. 16—18.

Another objection I find most common in the mouths of the ungodly, especially of late years; they say, We can do nothing without God; we cannot have grace, if God will not give it us; and if he will, we shall quickly turn: if he have not predestinated us, and will not turn us, how can we turn ourselves or be saved? It is not in him that wills, or in him that runs. And thus they think they are excused.

I have answered this formerly, and in this book; but let me now say thus much. 1. Though you cannot cure yourselves, you can hurt and poison yourselves: it is God that must sanctify your hearts; but who corrupted them? Will you wilfully take poison, because you cannot cure yourselves? Methinks you should

the more forbear it : you should the more take heed of sinning, if you cannot mend what sin doth mar. 2. Though you cannot be converted without the special grace of God, yet you must know, that God giveth his grace in the use of his holy means which he hath appointed to that end ; and common grace may enable you to forbear your gross sinning, as to the outward act, and to use those means. Can you truly say, that you do as much as you are able to do ? Are you not able to go by an ale-house door, or to shut your mouths and keep out the drink ? or to forbear the company that hardeneth you to sin ? Are you not able to go hear the word, and think of what you heard when you come home ? and to consider with yourselves of your own condition, and of everlasting things ? Are you not able to read good books, from day to day, at least on the Lord's day, and to converse with those that fear the Lord ? You cannot say that you have done what you are able. 3. And therefore you must know that you can forfeit the grace and help of God, by your wilful sinning or negligence, though you cannot, without grace, turn to God. If you will not do what you can, it is just with God to deny you that grace by which you might do more. 4. And for God's decrees, you must know that they separate not the end and means, but tie them together. God never decreed to save any but the sanctified, nor to damn any but the unsanctified. God doth as truly decree from everlasting, whether your land this year shall be barren or fruitful, and just how long you shall live in the world, as he hath decreed, whether you shall be saved or not. And yet you would think that man but a fool, that would forbear ploughing and sowing, and say, If God have decreed that my ground shall bear corn, it will bear whether I plough and sow or not. If God have decreed that I shall live, I shall live whether I eat or not ; but if he have not, it is not eating will keep me alive. Do you know how to answer such a man, or do you not ? If you do, then you know how to answer yourselves ; for the case is alike : God's decree is as peremptory about your bodies as your souls. If you do not, then try first these conclusions upon your bodies, before you venture to try them on your souls ; see first whether God will keep you alive without food or raiment, and whether he will give you corn without tillage and labour, and whether he will bring you to your journey's end without your travel or carriage ; and if you speed well in this, then try whether he will bring you to heaven without your diligent use of means, and sit down and say, We cannot sanctify ourselves.

And for the point of free-will, which you harp so long upon, divines are not so much disagreed about it as you imagine. Augustine as well as Pelagius, Calvin as well as Arminius, the Dominicans as well as the Jesuits, all do generally maintain, that man hath free-will. The orthodox say, that free-will is corrupted and disposed to evil. Epiphanius condemned Origen for saying, that man had lost the image of God, and makes it a point of heresy. And yet one may truly say, That man hath lost God's image ; and another may truly say, That he hath not lost it. For there is a twofold image of God on man : the one is natural, and that is our reason and free-will, and this is not lost ; the other is qualitative and ethical, and this is our holiness, and this is lost, and by grace restored. No man of brains denieth, that a man hath a will that is naturally free ; it is free from violence, and it is a self-determining principle ; but it is not free from evil dispositions. It is habitually averse to God and holiness, and inclined to earthly, fleshly things ; it is enslaved by a sinful bias. This, no man, methinks, that is a christian, should deny ; and of the aged, I see not how an infidel can deny it. Alas, we easily confess to you, that you have not this spiritual, moral free-will, which is but your right inclination, and your habitual willingness itself. If you had a will that were freed from wicked inclinations, I had no need to write such books as these to persuade you to be willing in a case which your own salvation lieth on. To the grief of our souls, we perceive after all our preachings and persuasions, that the ungodly have not this spiritual free-will. But this is nothing but your willingness itself, and inclination to be willing ; and therefore the want of it is so far from excusing you, that the more you want it (that is, the more you are wilful in sin) the worse you are, and the sorer will be your punishment. And our preaching and persuasions, and your hearing and considering, are the appointed means to get this moral power of freedom, that is, to make you truly willing.

Well, sirs, I have but three requests to you, and I have done : First, That you will seriously read over this small treatise (and if you have such that need it in your families, that you read it over and over to them : and if those that fear God would go now and then to their ignorant neighbours, and read this or some other book to them of this subject, they might be a means of winning of souls). If we cannot entreat so small a labour of men for their own salvation, as to read such short instructions as these, they set little by themselves, and will most justly perish. Secondly, When you have read over this book, I would entreat you to go alone, and ponder a little what you have read, and bethink you, as in the sight of God, whether it be not true, and do not nearly touch your souls, and whether it be not time for you to look about you ; and also entreat that you will fall upon your knees and beseech the Lord that he will open your eyes to understand the truth, and turn your hearts to the love of God, and beg of him all that saving grace, that you have so long neglected, and follow it on from day to day, till your hearts be changed ; and withal, that you will go to your pastors, (that are set over you, to take care of the health and safety of your souls, as physicians do for the health of your bodies,) and desire them to direct you what course to take, and acquaint them with your spiritual estate, that you may have the benefit of their advice and ministerial help. Or if you have not a faithful pastor at home, make use of some other in so great a need. Thirdly, When by reading, consideration, prayer, and ministerial advice, you are once acquainted with your sin and misery, with your duty and remedy, delay not, but presently forsake your sinful company and courses, and turn unto God, and obey his call, and as you love your souls, take heed that you go not on against so loud a call of God, and against your own knowledge and conscience, lest it go worse with you in the day of judgment than with Sodom and Gomorrah. Inquire of God, as a man that is willing to know the truth, and not be a wilful cheater of his soul. Search the holy Scripture daily, and see whether these things be so or not : try impartially whether it be safer to trust heaven or earth ; and whether it be better to follow God or man, the Spirit or the flesh ; and better to live in holiness or sin ; and whether an unsanctified estate be safe for you to abide in one day longer : and when you have found out which is best, resolve accordingly, and make your choice without any more ado. If you will be true to your own souls, and do not love everlasting torments, I beseech you, as from the Lord, that you will but take this reasonable advice. O what happy towns and countries, and what a happy nation, might we have, if we could but persuade our neighbours to agree to such a necessary motion ! What joyful men would all faithful ministers be, if they could but see

their people truly heavenly and holy! This would be the unity, the peace, the safety, the glory of our churches, the happiness of our neighbours, and the comfort of our souls. Then how comfortable should we preach absolution and peace to you, and deliver the sacraments, which are the seals of peace, to you. And with what love and joy might we live among you; at your death-bed, how boldly might we comfort and encourage your departing souls; and at your burial, how comfortably might we leave you in the grave, in expectation to meet your souls in heaven, and to see your bodies raised to that glory.

But if still the most of you will go on in a careless, ignorant, fleshly, worldly, or unholy life; and all our desires and labours cannot so far prevail, as to keep you from the wilful damning of yourselves; we must then imitate our Lord, who delighteth himself in those few that are his jewels, and the little flock that shall receive the kingdom, when the most shall reap the misery which they sowed. In nature excellent things are few. The world hath not many suns or moons; it is but a little of the earth that is gold or silver; princes and nobles are but a small part of the sons of men. And it is no great number that are learned, judicious, or wise, here in this world. And therefore if the gate being strait, and the way narrow, there be but few that find salvation, yet God will have his glory and pleasure in those few. And when Christ "shall come with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, his coming will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all true believers," 2 Thess. i. 7—10.

And for the rest, as God the Father vouchsafed to create them, and God the Son disdained not to bear the penalty of their sins upon the cross; and did not judge such sufferings vain, though he knew that by refusing the sanctification of the Holy Ghost, they would finally destroy themselves; so we that are his ministers, though these be not gathered; judge not our labour wholly lost. See Isa. xlix. 5.

Reader, I have done with thee (when thou hast perused this book); but sin hath not yet done with thee, (even those that thou thoughtest had been forgotten long ago,) and Satan hath not yet done with thee, (though now he be out of sight,) and God hath not yet done with thee, because thou wilt not be persuaded to have done with deadly, reigning sin. I have written thee this persuasive, as one that is going into another world, where the things are seen that I here speak of, and as one that knoweth thou must shortly be there thyself. As ever thou wouldst meet me with comfort before the Lord that made us; as ever thou wilt escape the everlasting plagues prepared for the final neglecters of salvation, and for all that are not sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and love not the communion of the saints, as members of the holy catholic church; and as ever thou hopest to see the face of Christ the Judge, and of the majesty of the Father, with peace and comfort, to be received into glory, when thou art turned naked out of this world; I beseech thee, I charge thee, to hear and obey the call of God, and resolutely to turn, that thou mayst live. But if thou wilt not, even when thou hast no true reason for it, but because thou wilt not; I summon thee, answer for it before the Lord, and require thee there to bear me witness I gave thee warning, and that thou wert not condemned for want of a call to turn and live, but because thou wouldst not believe it, and obey it; which also must be the testimony of thy serious monitor,

RICHARD BAXTER.

EZEKIEL XXXIII. II.

"SAY UNTO THEM, AS I LIVE, SAITH THE LORD GOD, I HAVE NO PLEASURE IN THE DEATH OF THE WICKED; BUT THAT THE WICKED TURN FROM HIS WAY AND LIVE: TURN YE, TURN YE FROM YOUR EVIL WAYS; FOR WHY WILL YE DIE, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?"

It hath been the astonishing wonder of many a man, as well as me, to read in the holy Scripture, how few will be saved, and that the greatest part even of those that are called, will be everlastingly shut out of the kingdom of heaven, and tormented with the devils in eternal fire. Infidels believe not this when they read it, and therefore must feel it. Those that do believe it, are forced to cry out with Paul, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. xi. 33. But nature itself doth teach us all, to lay the blame of evil works upon the doers; and therefore when we see any heinous thing done, a principle of justice doth provoke us to inquire after him that did it, that the evil of the work may return the evil of shame upon the author. If we saw a man killed and cut in pieces by the way, we should presently ask, Oh! who did this cruel deed? If the town were wilfully set on fire, you would ask, What wicked wretch did this? So when we read that the most will be fire-brands of hell for ever, we must needs think with ourselves, how comes this to pass? And, who is it long of? who is it that is so cruel as to be the cause

of such a thing as this? And we can meet with few that will own the guilt. It is indeed confessed by all, that Satan is the cause, but that doth not resolve the doubt, because he is not the principal cause. He doth not force men to sin, but tempt them to it, and leaves it to their own wills, whether they will do it or not. He doth not carry men to an ale-house, and force open their mouths, and pour in the drink; nor doth he hold them that they cannot go to God's service, nor doth he force their hearts from holy thoughts. It lieth, therefore, between God himself, and the sinner: one of them must needs be the principal cause of all this misery, whichever it is; for there is no other to cast it upon. And God disclaimeth it; he will not take it upon him. And the wicked disclaim it usually, and they will not take it upon them; and this is the controversy that is here managed in the text.

The Lord complaineth of the people, and the people think it is long of God: the same controversy is handled in chap. xviii. where, ver. 25, they plainly say, "That the way of the Lord is not equal." And God saith, "It is their ways that are not equal." So here they say, ver. 19, "If our transgressions and

our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how shall we then live?" As if they should say, If we must die and be miserable, how can we help it? as if it were not long of them, but God. But God, in my text, doth clear himself of it, and telleth them how they may help it if they will, and persuadeth them to use the means: and if they will not be persuaded, he lets them know that it is long of themselves; and if this will not satisfy them, he will not therefore, forbear to punish them. It is he that will be their Judge, and he will judge them according to their ways: they are no judges of him, or of themselves, as wanting authority, wisdom, and impartiality; nor is it their cavilling and quarrelling with God, that shall serve their turn, or save them from the execution of justice which they murmur at.

The words of this verse contain, 1. God's purification or clearing himself from the blame of their destruction. This he doth, not by disowning his law, that the "wicked shall die;" nor by disowning his judgments and execution according to that law, or giving them any hope that the law shall not be executed; but by profession that it is not their death that he takes pleasure in, but their returning rather, that they may live. And this he confirmeth to them by his oath. 2. An express exhortation to the wicked to return; wherein God doth not only command, but persuade and condescend also to reason the case with them, Why will they die? The direct end of this exhortation is, that they may turn and live. The secondary, or reserved ends, upon supposition that this is not attained, are these two: First, To convince them by the means which he used, that it is not long of God if they be miserable. Secondly, To convince them from their manifest wilfulness, in rejecting all his commands and persuasions, that it is long of themselves, and they die even because they will die.

The substance of the text doth lie in these observations following.

Doct. I. It is the unchangeable law of God, that wicked men must turn or die.

Doct. II. It is the promise of God, that the wicked shall live, if they will but turn.

Doct. III. God takes pleasure in men's conversion and salvation, but not in their death or damnation; he had rather they would return and live, than go on and die.

Doct. IV. This is a most certain truth, which because God would not have men to question, he hath confirmed it to them solemnly by his oath.

Doct. V. The Lord doth redouble his commands and persuasions to the wicked to turn.

Doct. VI. The Lord condescendeth to reason the case with them, and asketh the wicked, why they will die?

Doct. VII. If after all this, the wicked will not return, it is not long of God that they perish, but of themselves: their own wilfulness is the cause of their damnation; they therefore die because they will die.

Having laid the text open before your eyes in these plain propositions, I shall next speak somewhat of each of them in order, though very briefly.

Doct. I. It is the unchangeable law of God, that wicked men must turn or die.

If you will believe God, believe this. There is but one of these two ways for every wicked man, either conversion or damnation. I know the wicked will hardly be persuaded, either of the truth or equity of this. No wonder if the guilty quarrel with the law. Few men are apt to believe that which they would not have to be true; and fewer would have that to be true, which they apprehend to be against

them. But it is not quarrelling with the law, or with the judge, that will save the malefactor: believing and regarding the law might have prevented his death; but denying and accusing it, will but hasten it. If it were not so, a hundred would bring their reason against the law, for one that would bring his reason to the law; and men would rather choose to give their reasons why they should not be punished, than to hear the commands and reasons of their governors which require them to obey. The law was not made for you to judge, but that you might be ruled and judged by it. But if there be any so blind, as to venture to question either the truth or justice of the law of God, I shall briefly give you that evidence of both, which, methinks, would satisfy a reasonable man. And first, if you doubt whether this be the word of God or not, besides a hundred other texts, you may be satisfied by these few: "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xviii. 3. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him," Col. iii. 9, 10. "Without holiness no man shall see God," Heb. xii. 14. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 8, 9. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," Gal. vi. 15. "According unto his abundant grace, he hath begotten us again to a lively hope," 1 Pet. i. 3. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," ver. 23. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envyings, and evil-speaking, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby," 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," Psal. ix. 17. "And the Lord loveth the righteous; but the wicked his soul hateth," Psal. xi. 4. As I need not stay to open these texts which are so plain, so I think I need not add any more of that multitude which speak the like. If thou be a man that dost believe the word of God, here is already enough to satisfy thee, that the wicked must be converted or condemned. You are already brought so far, that you must either confess that this is true, or say plainly, you will not believe the word of God. And if once you be come to that pass, there is but small hopes of you: look to yourselves as well as you can; for it is like you will not be long out of hell. You would be ready to fly in the face of him that should give you the lie; and yet dare you give the lie to God? But if you tell God plainly you will not believe him, blame him not if he never warn you more, or if he forsake you, and give you up as hopeless: for to what purpose should he warn you, if you would not believe him. Should he send an angel from heaven to you, it seems you would not believe, for an angel can speak but the word of God; and if an angel should bring you any other gospel, you are not to receive it, but to hold him accursed, Gal. i. 8. And surely there is no angel to be believed before the Son of God, who came from the Father to bring us this doctrine. If he be not to be believed, then all the angels in heaven are not to be believed. And if you stand on these terms with God, I shall leave you till he deal with you in

a more convincing way. God hath a voice that will make you hear! Though he entreat you to hear the voice of his gospel, he will make you hear the voice of his condemning sentence, without entreaty. We cannot make you believe against your wills; but God will make you feel against your wills. But let us hear what reason you have, why you will not believe this word of God, which tells us, that the wicked must be converted or condemned. I know your reason; it is because that you judge it unlikely that God should be so unmerciful; you think it cruelty to damn men everlastingly for so small a thing as a sinful life. And this leads us up to the second thing, which is to justify the equity of God in his laws and judgment.

And first, I think you will not deny but that it is most suitable to an immortal soul, to be ruled by laws that promise an immortal reward, and threaten an endless punishment. Otherwise the law should not be suited to the nature of the subject, who will not be fully ruled by any lower means than the hopes or fears of everlasting things: as it is in case of temporal punishment. If a law were now made, that the most heinous crimes should be punished with a hundred years' captivity, this might be of some efficacy, as being equal to our lives. But if there had been no other penalties before the flood, when men lived eight or nine hundred years, it would not have been sufficient, because men would know that they might have so many hundred years' impunity afterward. So it is in our present case.

2. I suppose you will confess, that the promise of an endless and unconceivable glory, is not unsuitable to the wisdom of God, or the case of man. And why then should you not think so of the threatening of an endless and unspeakable misery?

3. When you find it in the word of God, that so it is, and so it will be, do you think yourselves fit to contradict this word? Will you call your Maker to the bar, and examine his word upon the accusation of falsehood? Will you sit upon him, and judge him by the law of your conceits? Are you wiser, and better, and more righteous than he? Must the God of heaven come to school to you to learn wisdom? Must Infinite Wisdom learn of folly; and Infinite Goodness be corrected by a swinish sinner, that cannot keep himself an hour clean? Must the Almighty stand at the bar of a worm? Oh horrid arrogance of senseless dust! Shall every mole, or clod, or dunghill, accuse the sun of darkness, and undertake to illuminate the world? Where were you when the Almighty made the laws, that he did not call you to his counsel? Surely he made them before you were born, without desiring your advice, and you came into the world too late for to reverse them. If you could have done so great a work, you should have stepped out of your nothingness, and have contradicted Christ when he was on earth, or Moses before him, or have saved Adam and his sinful progeny from the threatening death, that so there might have been no need of Christ. And what if God withdraw his patience and sustentation, and let you drop into hell while you are quarrelling with his words, will you then believe that there is a hell?

4. If sin be such an evil that it required the death of Christ for its expiation, no wonder if it deserve our everlasting misery.

5. And if the sins of the devils deserved an endless torment, why not also the sin of man?

6. And methinks you should perceive that it is not possible for the best of men, much less for the wicked, to be competent judges of the desert of sin. Alas! we are both blind and partial. You can never know fully the desert of sin, till you fully know the

evil of sin; and you can never fully know the evil of sin, till you fully know, 1. The excellency of the soul which it deformeth. 2. And the excellency of holiness which it doth obliterate. 3. And the reason and the excellency of the law which it violateth. And, 4. The excellency of the glory which it doth despise. And, 5. The excellency and office of reason which it treadeth down. 6. No, nor till you know the infinite excellency, almightiness, and holiness of that God, against whom it is committed. When you fully know all these, you shall fully know the desert of sin. Besides, you know that the offender is too partial to judge the law, or the proceedings of his judge. We judge by feeling, which binds our reason. We see in common worldly things, that most men think the cause is right which is their own, and that all is wrong that is done against them; and let the most wise, or just, or impartial friends persuade them to the contrary, and it is all in vain. There are few children but think the father unmerciful, or that he dealeth hardly with them, if he whip them. There is scarce the vilest, swinish wretch, but thinketh the church doth wrong him, if they excommunicate him; or scarce a thief or murderer that is hanged, but would accuse the law and judge of cruelty, if that would serve turn.

7. Can you think that an unholly soul is fit for heaven? Alas! they cannot love God here, nor do him any service which he can accept. They are contrary to God, they loathe that which he most loveth, and love that which he abhorreth. They are incapable of that imperfect communion with him, which his saints here do partake of. How then can they live in that perfect love of him, and full delights and communion with him, which is the blessedness of heaven? You do not accuse yourselves of unmercifulness, if you make not your enemy your bosom counsellor; or if you take not your swine to bed and board with you; no, nor if you take away his life, though he never sinned. And yet will you blame the absolute Lord, the most wise and gracious Sovereign of the world, if he condemn the unconverted man to perpetual misery.

Use. I beseech you now, all that love your souls, that instead of quarrelling with God, and with his word, you will presently stoop to it, and use it for your good. All you that are yet unconverted in this assembly, take this as the undoubted truth of God; you must ere long be converted or condemned, there is no other way but turn or die. When God, that cannot lie, hath told you this, when you hear from the Maker and Judge of the world, it is time for him that hath ears to hear; by this time you may see what you have to trust to. You are but dead and damned men, except you will be converted. Should I tell you otherwise I should deceive you with a lie. Should I hide this from you I should undo you, and be guilty of your blood, as the verses before my text assure me: ver. 8, "When I say to the wicked man, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand." You see then, though this be a rough, unwelcome doctrine, it is such as we must preach, and you must hear. It is easier to hear of hell than feel it. If your necessities did not require it, we should not gall your tender ears with truths that seem so harsh and grievous. Hell would not be so full, if people were but willing to know their case, and to hear and think of it. The reason why so few escape it, is, because they strive not to enter in at the strait gate of conversion, and to go the narrow way of holiness while they have time; and they strive not, because they be not awakened

to a lively feeling of the danger they are in; and they be not awakened, because they are loth to hear or think of it; and that is partly through foolish tenderness, and carnal self-love, and partly because they do not well believe the word that threateneth it. If you will not thoroughly believe this truth, methinks the weight of it should force you to remember it, and it should follow you and give you no rest till you are converted. If you had but once heard this word, by the voice of an angel, Thou must be converted or condemned; turn or die! would it not stick in your mind, and haunt you night and day? So that in your sinning you would remember it, as if the voice were still in your ears, Turn or die! Oh happy were your souls, if it might thus work with you, and never be forgotten, or let you alone till it hath driven home your hearts to God. But if you will cast it out by forgetfulness, or unbelief, how can it work to your conversion and salvation? But take this with you, to your sorrow, though you may put this out of your minds, you cannot put it out of the Bible; but there it will stand as a sealed truth, which you shall experimentally know for ever, that there is no other way, but turn or die.

Oh what is the matter then that the hearts of sinners be not pierced with such a weighty truth! A man would think now that every unconverted soul that hears these words should be pricked to the heart, and think with themselves, This is my own case, and never be quiet till they found themselves converted. Believe it, sirs, this drowsy, careless temper will not last long. Conversion and condemnation are both of them awakening things; and one of them will make you feel ere long. I can foretell it as truly, as if I saw it with my eyes, that either grace or hell will shortly bring these matters to the quick, and make you say, What have I done? What foolish, wicked courses have I taken! The scornful and stupid state of sinners will last but a little while: as soon as they either turn or die, the presumptuous dream will be at an end, and then their wits and feeling will return.

But, I foresee there are two things that are like to harden the unconverted, and make me lose all my labour, except they can be taken out of the way: and that is, the misunderstanding of those two words, the wicked, and turn. Some will think with themselves, it is true, the wicked must turn or die; but what is that to me? I am not wicked, though I am a sinner, as all men be. Others will think, it is true that we must turn from our evil ways; but I am turned long ago, I hope this is not now to do. And thus, while wicked men think they are not wicked, but are already converted, we lose all our labour in persuading them to turn. I shall therefore, before I go any further, tell you here who are meant by the wicked, and who they be that must turn or die, and also what is meant by turning; and who they be that are truly converted; and this I have purposely reserved for this place, preferring the method that fits my end.

And here you may observe, that in the sense of the text, a wicked man and a converted man are contraries. No man is a wicked man that is converted, and no man is a converted man that is wicked; so that to be a wicked man, and to be an unconverted man, is all one. And therefore in opening one, we shall open both.

Before I can tell you what either wickedness or conversion is, I must go to the bottom, and fetch up the matter from the beginning.

It pleased the great Creator of the world, to make three sorts of living creatures. Angels he made pure spirits without flesh, and therefore he made them

only for heaven, and not to dwell on earth. Beasts were made flesh without immortal souls; and therefore they were made only for earth, and not for heaven. Man is of a middle nature, between both, as partaking of both flesh and spirit; and therefore he was made both for heaven and earth. But as his flesh is made to be but a servant to his spirit, so is he made for earth, but as his passage or way to heaven, and not that this should be his home or happiness. The blessed state that man was made for, was to behold the glorious majesty of the Lord, and to praise him among his holy angels, and to love him, and be filled with his love for ever. And as this was the end that man was made for, so God did give him means that were fitted to the attaining of it. These means were principally two. First, The right inclination and disposition of the mind of man. Secondly, The right ordering of his life and practice. For the first, God suited the disposition of man to his end; giving him such knowledge of God, as was fit for his present state, and a heart disposed and inclined to God in holy love. But yet he did not fix or confirm him in this condition; but having made him a free agent, he left him in the hands of his own free-will. For the second, God did that which belonged to him; that is, he gave man a perfect law, requiring him to continue in the love of God, and perfectly to obey him. By the wilful breach of this law, man did not only forfeit his hopes of everlasting life, but also turned his heart from God, and fixed it on these lower, fleshly things, and hereby did blot out the spiritual image of God from his soul. So that man did both fall short of the glory of God, which was his end, and put himself out of the way, by which he should have attained it; and this, both as to the frame of his heart and of his life. The holy inclination and love of his soul to God, he lost; and instead of it, he contracted an inclination and love to the pleasing of his flesh, or carnal self, by earthly things; growing strange to God, and acquainted with the creature: and the course of his life was suited to the bent and inclination of his heart; he lived to his carnal self, and not to God; he sought the creature for the pleasing of his flesh, instead of seeking to please the Lord. With this nature or corrupt inclination, we are all now born into the world; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Job xiv. 4. As a lion hath a fierce and cruel nature, before he doth devour, and as an adder hath a venomous nature before she stings, so in our very infancy we have those sinful natures or inclinations, before we think, or speak, or do amiss. And hence springeth all the sin of our lives. And not only so, but when God hath of his mercy provided us a remedy, even the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the Saviour of our souls, and bring us back to God again, we naturally love our present state, and are loth to be brought out of it, and therefore are set against the means of our recovery; and though custom hath taught us to thank Christ for his good will, yet carnal self persuadeth us to refuse his remedies, and to desire to be excused when we are commanded to take the medicines which he offereth, and are called to forsake all, and follow him to God and glory.

I pray you read over this leaf again, and mark it; for in these few words you have a true description of our natural state, and consequently of a wicked man. For every man that is in this state of corrupted nature, is a wicked man, and in a state of death.

By this also you are prepared to understand what it is to be converted; to which end you must further know, that the mercy of God, not willing that man should perish in his sin, provided a remedy, by causing his Son to take our nature, and being in one

person God and man, to become a Mediator between God and man; and by dying for our sins on the cross, to ransom us from the curse of God, and the power of the devil: and having thus redeemed us, the Father hath delivered us into his hands, as his own. Hereupon the Father and the Mediator do make a new law and covenant for man. Not like the first, which gave life to none but the perfectly obedient, and condemned man for every sin; but Christ hath made a law of grace, or a promise of pardon and everlasting life to all, that by true repentance, and by faith in Christ, are converted unto God. Like an act of oblivion, which is made by a prince to a company of rebels, on condition they will lay down their arms, and come in, and be loyal subjects for the time to come.

But because the Lord knoweth that the heart of man is grown so wicked, that for all this men will not accept of the remedy if they be left to themselves; therefore the Holy Ghost hath undertaken it as his office, to inspire the apostles, and seal up the Scripture by miracles and wonders, and to illuminate and convert the souls of the elect.

So that by this much you see, that as there are three Persons in the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; so each of these Persons have their several works, which are eminently ascribed to them.

The Father's works were, to create us, to rule us as his rational creatures, by the law of nature, and judge us thereby; and in mercy to provide us a Redeemer when we were lost; and to send his Son, and accept his ransom.

The works of the Son for us were these: to ransom and redeem us by his sufferings and righteousness, to give out the promise or law of grace, and rule and judge the world as their Redeemer, on terms of grace; and to make intercession for us, that the benefits of his death may be communicated; and to send the Holy Ghost (which the Father also doth by the Son).

The works of the Holy Ghost for us are these: to indite the holy Scriptures, by inspiring and guiding the prophets and apostles; and sealing the word, by his miraculous gifts and works; and the illuminating and exciting the ordinary ministers of the gospel; and so enabling them, and helping them to publish that word, and by the same word illuminating and converting the souls of men. So that as you could not have been reasonable creatures, if the Father had not created you; nor have had any access to God, if the Son had not redeemed you; so neither can you have a part in Christ, or be saved, except the Holy Ghost do sanctify you.

So that by this time you may see the several causes of this work. The Father sendeth the Son; the Son redeemeth us, and maketh the promise of grace; the Holy Ghost inditeth and sealeth this gospel; the apostles are the secretaries of the Spirit, to write it; the preachers of the gospel to proclaim it, and persuade men to obey it; and the Holy Ghost doth make their preaching effectual, by opening the hearts of men to entertain it. And all this to repair the image of God upon the soul, and to set the heart upon God again, and take it off the creature, and carnal self, to which it is revolted, and so turn the current of this life into a heavenly course, which before was earthly; and all this by the entertainment of Christ by faith, who is the Physician of the soul.

By this which I have said, you may see what it is to be wicked, and what it is to be unconverted. Which, I think, will be yet plainer to you, if I describe them, as consisting of their several parts: and

for the first, A wicked man may be known by these three things:

First, He is one that placeth his chief content on earth; and loveth the creature more than God; and his fleshly prosperity above the heavenly felicity: he savoureth the things of the flesh, but neither discerneth nor savoureth the things of the Spirit; though he will say, that heaven is better than earth, yet doth he not really so esteem it to himself. If he might be sure of earth, he would let go heaven, and had rather stay here than be removed thither. A life of perfect holiness, in the sight of God, and in his love, and praises for ever in heaven, doth not find such liking with his heart as a life of health, and wealth, and honour here upon earth. And though he falsely profess that he loveth God above all, yet indeed he never felt the power of divine love within him, but his mind is more set on the world, or fleshly pleasures, than on God. In a word, whoever loveth earth above heaven, and fleshly prosperity more than God, is a wicked, unconverted man.

On the other side, a converted man is illuminated to discern the loveliness of God; and so far believeth the glory that is to be had with God, that his heart is taken up to it, and set more upon it than on any thing in this world. He had rather see the face of God, and live in his everlasting love and praises, than have all the wealth or pleasure of the world. He seeth that all things else are vanity, and nothing but God can fill the soul; and therefore let the world go which way it will, he layeth up his treasures and hopes in heaven; and for that he is resolved to let go all. As the fire doth mount upward, and the needle that is touched with the loadstone still turneth to the north, so the converted soul is inclined unto God. Nothing else can satisfy him; nor can he find any content and rest but in his love. In a word, all that are converted do esteem and love God better than all the world, and the heavenly felicity is dearer to them than their fleshly prosperity. The proof of what I have said, you may find in these places of Scripture, Phil. iii. 18, 21; Matt. vi. 19—21; Col. iii. 1—4; Rom. viii. 3, 6—9, 18, 23; Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26.

Secondly, A wicked man is one that maketh it the principal business of his life to prosper in the world, and attain his fleshly ends. And though he may read and hear, and do much in the outward duties of religion, and forbear disgraceful sins; yet this is all but upon the bye, and he never makes it the trade and principal business of his life to please God and attain everlasting glory, but puts off God with the leavings of the world, and gives him no more service than the flesh can spare; for he will not part with all for heaven.

On the contrary, a converted man is one that makes it the principal care and business of his life to please God, and to be saved; and takes all the blessings of this life, but as accommodations in his journey towards another life, and useth the creature in subordination unto God: he loveth a holy life, and longeth to be more holy; he hath no sin but what he hateth, and longeth, and prayeth, and striveth to be rid of. The drift and bent of his life is for God; and if he sin, it is contrary to the very bent of his heart and life, and therefore he rises again, and lamenteth it, and dare not wilfully live in any known sin. There is nothing in this world so dear to him but he can give it up to God, and forsake it for him and the hopes of glory. All this you may see in Col. iii. 1—5; Matt. vi. 20, 33; Luke xviii. 22, 23, 29; xiv. 18, 24, 26, 27; Rom. viii. 13; Gal. v. 24; Luke xii. 21, &c.

Thirdly, The soul of a wicked man did never truly

discern and relish the mystery of redemption, nor thankfully entertain an offered Saviour, nor is he taken up with the love of the Redeemer, nor willing to be ruled by him, as the Physician of his soul, that he may be saved from the guilt and power of his sins, and recovered unto God; but his heart is insensible of this unspeakable benefit, and is quite against the healing means by which he should be recovered. Though he may be willing to be carnally religious, yet he never resigned up his soul to Christ, and to the motions and conduct of his word and Spirit.

On the contrary, the converted soul having felt himself undone by sin; and perceiving that he hath lost his peace with God, and hopes of heaven, and is in danger of everlasting misery, doth thankfully entertain the tidings of redemption; and believing in the Lord Jesus as his only Saviour, resigneth up himself to him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. He taketh Christ as the life of his soul, and liveth by him, and useth him as a salve for every sore, admiring the wisdom and love of God in his wonderful work of man's redemption. In a word, Christ doth even dwell in his heart by faith, and the life that he now liveth is by faith of the Son of God, that hath loved him, and gave himself for him. Yea, it is not so much he that liveth, as Christ in him. For these, see John i. 11, 12; iii. 19, 20; Rom. viii. 9; Phil. iii. 7—10; Gal. ii. 20; John xv. 2—4; 1 Cor. i. 20; ii. 2.

You see now in plain terms, from the word of God, who are the wicked, and who are the converted. Ignorant people think, that if a man be no swearer, nor curser, nor railer, nor drunkard, nor fornicator, nor extortioner, nor wrong any body in their dealings, and if they come to church, and say their prayers, these cannot be wicked men. Or if a man that hath been guilty of drunkenness, swearing, gaming, or the like vices, do but forbear them for the time to come, they think that this is a converted man. Others think, if a man that hath been an enemy, and a scorner of godliness, do but approve it, and join himself with those that are godly, and be hated for it by the wicked, as the godly are, that this needs must be a converted man. And some are so foolish as to think they are converted, by taking up some new and false opinion; and falling into some dividing party, as baptists, quakers, papists, or such like. And some think, if they have but been affrighted by the fears of hell, and had convictions, and gripes of conscience, and thereupon have purposed and promised amendment, and taken up a life of civil behaviour, and outward religion, that this must needs be true conversion. And these are the poor deluded souls that are like to lose the benefit of all our persuasions. And when they hear that the wicked must turn or die, they think that this is not spoken of them; for they are not wicked, but are turned already. And therefore it is, that Christ told some of the rulers of the Jews, who were more grave and civil than the common people, that "Publicans and harlots do go into the kingdom of God before them," Matt. xxi. 31. Not that a harlot or gross sinner can be saved without conversion, but because it was easier to make those gross sinners perceive their sin and misery, and the necessity of a change, when the civiler sort do delude themselves by thinking that they are converted already when they be not.

O sirs, conversion is another kind of work than most are aware of. It is not a small matter to bring an earthly mind to heaven, and to show man the amiable excellences of God, till he be taken up in such love to him that can never be quenched; to break the heart for sin, and make him fly for refuge unto Christ, and thankfully embrace him as the life

of his soul; to have the very drift and bent of the heart and life to be changed; so that a man renounceth that which he took for his felicity, and placeth his felicity where he never did before, and liveth not to the same end, and driveth not on the same design in the world as formerly he did: in a word, he that is in Christ "is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. He hath a new understanding, a new will and resolution, new sorrows, and desires, and love, and delight; new thoughts, new speeches, new company, (if possible,) and a new conversation. Sin, that before was a jesting matter with him, is now so odious and terrible to him, that he flies from it as from death. The world, that was so lovely in his eyes, doth now appear but as vanity and vexation. God, that was before neglected, is now the only happiness of his soul: before he was forgotten, and every lust preferred before him; but now is set next the heart, and all things must give place to him; and the heart is taken up in the attendance and observance of him, and is grieved when he hides his face, and never thinks itself well without him. Christ himself, that was wont to be slightly thought of, is now his only hope and refuge, and he lives upon him as on his daily bread; he cannot pray without him, nor rejoice without him, nor think, nor speak, nor live, without him. Heaven itself, that before was looked upon but as a tolerable reserve, which he hoped might serve turn better than hell, when he could not stay any longer in the world, is now taken for his home, the place of his only hope and rest, where he shall see, and love, and praise that God that hath his heart already. Hell, that did seem before but as a bugbear to frighten men from sin, doth now appear to be a real misery, that is not to be ventured on or jested with. The works of holiness, which before he was weary of, and seemed to be more ado than needs, are now both his recreation, and his business, and the trade he lives upon. The Bible, which was before to him but almost as a common book, is now as the law of God, as a letter written to him from heaven, and subscribed with the name of the Eternal Majesty; it is the rule of his thoughts, and words, and deeds; the commands are binding, the threats are dreadful, and the promises of it speak life to his soul. The godly, that seemed to him but like other men, are now the most excellent and happiest on earth. And the wicked, that were his play-fellows, are now his grief; and he that could laugh at their sins, is readier now to weep for their sin and misery, Psal. xv. 4; xvi. 3; Phil. iii. 18. In short, he hath a new end in his thoughts, and a new way in his endeavours, and therefore his heart and life are new. Before, his carnal self was his end; and his pleasure, and worldly profits, and credits were his way. And now, God and everlasting glory are his end; and Christ, and the Spirit, and word, and ordinances, holiness to God, and righteousness and mercy to men, these are his way. Before, self was the chiefest ruler, to which the matters of God and conscience must stoop and give place: and now God in Christ, by the Spirit, word, and ministry, is the chiefest Ruler, to whom both self, and all the matters of self, must give place. So that this is not a change in one, or two, or twenty points, but in the whole soul; and the very end and bent of the conversation. A man may step out of one path into another, and yet have his face still the same way, and be still going towards the same place; but it is another matter to turn quite back again, and take his journey the clean contrary way, to a contrary place. So is it here; a man may turn from drunkenness to thriftiness, and forsake his good fel-

lowship, and other gross, disgraceful sins, and set upon some duties of religion, and yet be going still to the same end as before, intending his carnal self above all, and giving it still the government of his soul. But when he is converted, this self is denied, and taken down, and God is set up, and his face is turned the contrary way; and he that before was addicted to himself, and lived to himself, is now by sanctification devoted to God, and liveth unto God. Before he asked himself what he should do with his time, his parts, and his estate, and for himself he used them; but now he asketh God what he shall do with them, and useth them for him: before he would please God so far as might stand with the pleasure of his flesh and carnal self, but not to any great displeasure of them; but now he will please God, let flesh and self be never so much displeased. This is the great change that God will make upon all that shall be saved.

You can say that the Holy Ghost is our Sanctifier; but do you know what sanctification is? Why, this is it that I have now opened to you: and every man or woman in the world must have this, or be condemned to everlasting misery. They must turn or die.

Do you believe all this, sirs, or do you not? Surely you dare not say you do not; for it is past all doubt or denial. These are not controversies, where one learned, pious man is of one mind, and another of another; where one party saith this, and the other saith that: papists and baptists, and every sect among us, that deserve to be called christians, are all agreed in this that I have said; and if you will not believe the God of truth, and that in a case where every sect and party doth believe him, you are utterly unexcusable.

But if you do believe this, how comes it to pass that you are so quiet in an unconverted state? Do you think you are converted? and can you find this wonderful change upon your souls? Have you been thus born again, and made anew? Be not these strange matters to many of you? and such as you never felt upon yourselves? If you cannot tell the day or week of your change, or the very sermon that converted you, yet do you find that the work is done, and such a change indeed there is? and that you have such hearts as are before described? Alas, the most do follow their worldly business, and little trouble their minds with such thoughts. And if they be but restrained from scandalous sins, and can say, I am no whoremonger, nor thief, nor curser, nor swearer, nor tippler, nor extortioner; I go to the church and say my prayers; they think that this is true conversion, and they shall be saved as well as any. Alas, this is foolish cheating of yourselves; this is too much contempt of an endless glory, and too gross neglect of your immortal souls. Can you make so light of heaven and hell? Your corpse will shortly lie in the dust, and angels or devils will presently seize upon your souls; and every man or woman of you all, will shortly be among other company, and in another case than now you are: you will dwell in these houses but a little longer; you will work in your shops and fields but a little longer; you will sit in these seats, and dwell on this earth, but a little longer; you will see with those eyes, and hear with those ears, and speak with those tongues, but a little longer, till the resurrection day; and can you make shift to forget this? Oh what a place will you be shortly in of joy or torment! Oh what a sight will you shortly see in heaven or hell! Oh what thoughts will shortly fill your hearts with unspeakable delight or horror! What work will you be employed in! To praise the Lord with

saints and angels, or to cry out in fire unquenchable with devils: and should all this be forgotten? And all this will be endless, and sealed up by an unchangeable decree. Eternity, eternity will be the measure of your joys or sorrows; and can this be forgotten? And all this is true, sirs, most certainly true: when you have gone up and down a little longer, and slept and awaked but a few times more, you will be dead and gone, and find all true that now I tell you; and yet can you now so much forget it? You shall then remember you heard this sermon, and that this day, in this place, you were remembered of these things, and perceive them matters a thousand times greater than either you or I could here conceive; and yet shall they be now so much forgotten?

Beloved friends, if the Lord had not awakened me to believe and lay to heart these things myself, I should have remained in the dark and selfish state, and have perished for ever; but if he have truly made me sensible of them, it will constrain me to compassionate you, as well as myself. If your eyes were so far open as to see hell, and you saw your neighbours that were unconverted, dragged thither with hideous cries; though they were such as you accounted honest people on earth, and feared no such matter by themselves; such a sight would make you go home and think of it, and think again, and make you warn all about you, as that damned worldling in Luke xvi. 28, would have had his brethren warned, lest they come to that place of torment. Why, faith is a kind of sight, it is the eye of the soul, the evidence of things not seen; if I believe God, it is next to seeing; and therefore I beseech you excuse me, if I be half as earnest with you about these matters, as if I had seen them. If I must die to-morrow, and it were in my power to come again from another world, and tell you what I had seen, would you not be willing to hear me? and would you not believe and regard what I should tell you? If I might preach one sermon to you after I am dead, and have seen what is done in the world to come, would you not have me plainly speak the truth? and would you not crowd to hear me? and would you not lay it to heart? But this must not be: God hath his appointed way of teaching you by Scripture and ministers; and he will not humour unbelievers so far, as to send men from the dead to them, and alter his established way: if any man quarrel with the sun, God will not humour him so far, as to set up a clearer light. Friends, I beseech you regard me now, as you would do if I should come from the dead to you; for I can give you the full assurance of the truth of what I say to you, as if I had been there and seen it with my eyes: for it is possible for one from the dead to deceive you; but Jesus Christ can never deceive you; the word of God delivered in Scripture, and sealed up by the miracles and holy workings of the Spirit, can never deceive you. Believe this, or believe nothing. Believe and obey this, or you are undone. Now, as ever you believe the word of God, and as ever you care for the salvation of your souls, let me beg of you this reasonable request, and I beseech you deny me not, that you would without any more delay, when you are gone from hence, remember what you heard, and enter into an earnest search of your hearts, and say unto yourselves, Is it so indeed? Must I turn or die? Must I be converted or condemned? It is time for me then to look about me, before it be too late. Oh why did I not look after this till now? Why did I venturously put off or slubber over so great a business? Was I awake, or in my wits? O blessed God, what a mercy is it

that thou didst not cut off my life all this while, before I had any certain hope of eternal life! Well, God forbid that I should neglect this work any longer. What state is my soul in? Am I converted, or am I not? Was ever such a change or work done upon my soul? Have I been illuminated by the word and Spirit of the Lord, to see the odiousness of sin, the need of a Saviour, the love of Christ, and the excellences of God and glory? Is my heart broken, or humbled within me, for my former life? Have I thankfully entertained my Saviour and Lord, that offered himself with pardon and life to my soul? Do I hate my former sinful life, and the remnant of every sin that is in me? Do I fly from them as my deadly enemies? Do I give up myself to a life of holiness and obedience to God? Do I love it and delight in it? Can I truly say, that I am dead to the world, and carnal self; and that I live for God, and the glory which he hath promised? Hath heaven more of my estimation and resolution than earth? And is God the dearest and highest in my soul? Once, I am sure, I lived principally to the world and flesh, and God had nothing but some heartless services which the world could spare, and which were the leavings of flesh. Is my heart now turned another way? Have I a new design, and a new end, and a new train of holy affections? Have I set my hope and heart in heaven? And is it the scope, and design, and bent of my heart and life, to get well to heaven, and see the glorious face of God, and live in his everlasting love and praise? And when I sin, is it against the habitual bent and design of my heart? And do I conquer all gross sins, and am I weary and willing to be rid of my infirmities? This is the state of a converted soul. And thus must it be with me, or I must perish. Is it thus with me indeed, or is it not? It is time to get this doubt resolved, before the dreadful Judge resolve it. I am not such a stranger to my own heart and life, but I may somewhat perceive whether I am thus converted or not: if I be not, it will do me no good to flatter my soul with false conceits and hopes. I am resolved no more to deceive myself, but to endeavour to know truly, off or on, whether I be converted, yea or no; that if I be, I may rejoice in it, and glorify my gracious Lord, and comfortably go on till I reach the crown; and if I am not, I may set myself to beg and seek after the grace that should convert me, and may turn without any more delay: for if I find in time that I am out of the way, by the help of Christ I may turn and be received; but if I stay till either my heart be forsaken of God in blindness and hardness, or till I be caught away by death, it is then too late. There is no place for repentance and conversion then; I know it must be now or never.

Sirs, this is my request to you, that you will but take your hearts to task, and thus examine them, till you see, if it may be, whether you are converted or not; and if you cannot find it out by your own endeavours, go to your ministers, if they be faithful and experienced men, and desire their assistance. The matter is great, let not bashfulness nor carelessness hinder you. They are set over you to advise you for the saving of your souls, as physicians advise you for the curing of your bodies. It undoes many thousands, that they think they are in the way to salvation, when they are not; and think that they are converted, when it is no such thing. And then when we call to them daily to turn, they go away as they came, and think that this concerns not them; for they are turned already, and hope they shall do well enough in the way that they are in, at least if they do pick the fairest path, and avoid some of the

fooulest steps; when alas, all this while, they live but to the world and flesh, and are strangers to God and eternal life, and are quite out of the way to heaven. And all this is much because we cannot persuade them to a few serious thoughts of their condition, and to spend a few hours in the examining of their states: is there not many a self-conceited wretch that hears me this day, that never bestowed one hour, or a quarter of an hour, in all their lives, to examine their souls, and try whether they are truly converted or not? O merciful God, that will care for such wretches that care no more for themselves, and that will do so much to save them from hell, and help them to heaven, who will do so little for it themselves! If all that are in the way to hell, and in the state of damnation, did but know it, they durst not continue in it. The greatest hope that the devil hath, of bringing you to damnation without a rescue, is by keeping you blindfold and ignorant of your state, and making you believe that you may do well enough in the way that you are in. If you knew that you were out of the way to heaven, and were lost for ever, if you should die as you are, durst you sleep another night in the state that you are in? Durst you live another day in it? Could you heartily laugh or be merry in such a state? What! and not know but you may be snatched away to hell in an hour! Sure it would constrain you to forsake your former company and courses, and to betake yourselves to the ways of holiness, and the communion of the saints. Sure it would drive you to cry to God for a new heart, and to seek help of those that are fit to counsel you. There is none of you, sure, that cares not for being damned. Well then, I beseech you, presently make inquiry into your hearts, and give them no rest till you find out your condition, that if it be good, you may rejoice in it and go on; and if it be bad, you may presently look about you for recovery, as men that believe they must turn or die. What say you, sirs, will you resolve and promise to be at thus much labour for your souls? Will you fall upon this self-examination when you come home? Is my request unreasonable? Your consciences know it is not; resolve on it then, before you stir: knowing how much it concerneth your souls, I beseech you for the sake of that God that doth command you, at whose bar you will shortly appear, that you will not deny me this reasonable request. For the sake of those souls that must turn or die, I beseech you deny me not; even but to make it your business to understand your own conditions, and build upon sure ground, and know off or on, whether you are converted or no, and venture not your souls on negligent security.

But perhaps you will say, What if we should find ourselves yet unconverted, what shall we do then? This question leadeth me to my second doctrine; which will do much to the answering of it, to which I shall now proceed.

Doct. II. It is the promise of God, that the wicked shall live if they will but turn, unfeignedly and thoroughly turn.

The Lord here professeth, that this is it he takes pleasure in, that the wicked turn and live. Heaven is made as sure to the converted, as hell is to the unconverted. Turn and live, is as certain a truth as turn or die. God was not bound to provide us a Saviour, nor open to us the door of hope, nor call to us to repent and turn, when once we had cast ourselves away by sin. But he hath freely done it to magnify his mercy. Sinners, there are none of you shall have cause to go home and say, I preach desperation to you. Do we use to shut up the door of mercy against you? Oh that you would not shut it

up against yourselves! Do we use to tell you that God will have no mercy on you, though you turn and be sanctified? When did you ever hear a preacher say such a word? You that bark at the preachers of the gospel, for desiring to keep you out of hell, and say that they preach desperation; tell me if you can, when did you ever hear any sober man say, that there is no hope for you, though ye repent and be converted? No, it is the clean contrary that we daily proclaim from the Lord, That whosoever is born again, and by faith and repentance doth become a new creature, shall certainly be saved; and so far we are from persuading you to despair of this, that we persuade you not to make any doubt of it. It is life, and not death, that is the first part of our message to you; our commission is to offer salvation; certain salvation, a speedy, glorious, everlasting salvation, to every one of you; to the poorest beggar, as well as to the greatest lord; to the worst of you, even to the drunkards, swearers, worldlings, thieves, yea, to the despisers and reproachers of the holy way of salvation. We are commanded by our Lord and Master, to offer you a pardon for all that is past, if you will but now at last return and live; we are commanded to beseech and entreat you to accept the offer and return; to tell you what preparation is made by Christ, what mercy stays for you, what patience waiteth on you, what thoughts of kindness God hath towards you; and how happy, how certainly and unspeakably happy, you may be if you will. We have indeed, also, a message of wrath and death; yea, of a twofold wrath and death; but neither of them is our principal message: we must tell you of the wrath that is on you already, and the death that you are born under, for the breach of the law of works; but this is only to show you the need of mercy, and provoke you to esteem the grace of the Redeemer. And we tell you nothing but the truth, which you must know: for who will seek out for physic, that knows not that he is sick? For telling you of your misery, is not it that makes you miserable, but driveth you to seek for mercy. It is you that have brought this death upon yourselves. We tell you also of another death, even remediless, and much greater torment which will fall on those that will not be converted. But as this is true, and must be told you; so it is but the last and saddest part of our message: we are first to offer you mercy, if you will turn; and it is only those that will not turn nor hear the voice of mercy, that we must foretell damnation to. Will you but cast away your transgressions, delay no longer, but come away at the call of Christ, and be converted, and become new creatures, and we have not a word of damning wrath or death to speak against you. I do here in the name of the Lord of life proclaim to you all that hear me this day, to the worst of you, to the greatest, to the oldest sinner, that you may have mercy and salvation if you will but turn. There is mercy in God, there is sufficiency in the satisfaction of Christ, the promise is free, full, and universal: you may have life if you will but turn. But then, as you love your souls, remember what turning it is the Scripture speaks of. It is not to mend the old house, but to pull down all, and build anew on Christ the rock and sure foundation. It is not to mend somewhat in a carnal course of life, but to mortify the flesh, and live after the Spirit. It is not to serve the flesh and the world in a more reformed way, without any scandalous disgraceful sins, and with a certain kind of religiousness; but it is to change your master, and your works, and end, and set your face a contrary way, and do all for the life that you never saw, and dedicate yourselves and all you have to

God. This is the change that must be made, if you will live.

Yourselves are witness now, that it is salvation, and not damnation, that is the great doctrine I preach to you, and the first part of my message to you. Accept of this, and we shall go no further with you; for we would not so much as affright or trouble you with the name of damnation without necessity.

But if you will not be saved, there is no remedy, but damnation must take place; for there is no middle place between the two. You must have either life or death.

And we are not only to offer you life, but to show you the grounds on which we do it, and call you to believe, that God doth mean indeed as he speaks; that the promise is true, and extendeth conditionally to you as well as others, and that heaven is no fancy, but a true felicity.

If you ask, where is our commission for this offer? Among a hundred texts of Scripture, I will show it unto you in these few:

First, you see it here in my text, and the following verses; and in Ezek. xviii. as plain as can be spoke. And in 2 Cor. v. 17—21, you have the very sum of our commission ("If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"). So Mark xvi. 15, 16, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth (that is, with such a converting faith as is expressed) and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." And Luke xxiv. 46, 47, "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance (which is conversion) and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." And Acts v. 30, 31, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." And Acts xiii. 38, 39, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." And lest you think this offer is restrained to the Jews, see Gal. vi. 15, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." And Luke xiv. 17, "Come, for all things are now ready;" and ver. 23, 24.

"You see by this time, that we are commanded to offer life to you all, and to tell you from God, that if you will turn you may live.

Here you may safely trust your souls; for the love of God is the fountain of this offer, John iii. 16. And the blood of the Son of God hath purchased it; the faithfulness and truth of God is engaged to make the promise good; miracles have sealed up the truth of it; preachers are sent through the world to proclaim it; the sacraments are instituted and used for the solemn delivery of the mercy offered, to them that will accept it; and the Spirit doth open the

heart to entertain it, and is itself the earnest of the full possession. So that the truth of it is past controversy, that the worst of you all, and every one of you, if you will but be converted, may be saved.

Indeed, if you will needs believe you shall be saved without conversion, then you believe a falsehood; and if I should preach that to you, I should preach a lie. This were not to believe God, but the devil and your own deceitful hearts. God hath his promise of life, and the devil hath his promise of life. God's promise is, Return and live; the devil's is, Thou shalt live whether thou turn or not. The words of God are, as I have showed you, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xviii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," John iii. 3, 5. "Without holiness none shall see God," Heb. xii. 14. The devil's word is, You may be saved without being born again and converted; you may go to heaven well enough without being holy; God doth but frighten you; he is more merciful than to do as he saith; he will be better to you than his word. And, alas! the greatest part of the world believe this word of the devil before the word of God, just as our first sin and misery came into the world. God saith to our first parents, If ye eat ye shall die; the devil contradicts him, and saith, Ye shall not die; and the woman believed the devil before God. So now the Lord saith, Turn or die; and the devil saith, You shall not die if you do but cry mercy at last, and give over the acts of sin, when you can practise it no longer. And this is the word that the world believes. O heinous wickedness, to believe the devil before God!

And yet that is not the worst, but blasphemously they call this a believing and trusting in God, when they put him in the shape of Satan, who was a liar from the beginning; and when they believe that the word of God is a lie, they call this a trusting God, and say they believe in him, and trust on him for salvation. Where did ever God say, that the unregenerate, unconverted, unsanctified, shall be saved? Show such a word in Scripture, I challenge you, if you can. Why, this is the devil's word, and to believe it is to believe the devil, and is the sin that is commonly called presumption. And do you call this a believing and trusting God? There is enough in the word of God to comfort and strengthen the hearts of the sanctified; but not a word to strengthen the hands of wickedness, nor to give men the least hope of being saved, though they be never sanctified.

But if you will turn, and come into the way of mercy, the mercy of the Lord is ready to entertain you. Then trust God for salvation boldly and confidently, for he is engaged by his word to save you.

He will be a father to none but his children, and he will save none but those that forsake the world, the devil, and the flesh, and come into his family, to be members of his Son, and have communion with the saints. But if they will not come in, it is long of themselves; his doors are open; he keeps none back; he never sent such a message as this to any of you, It is now too late, I will not receive thee, though thou be converted. He might have done so, and done you no wrong, but he did not, he doth not to this day, he is still ready to receive you, if you were but ready unfeignedly, and with all your hearts, to turn. And the fulness of this truth will yet more appear in the two following doctrines, which I shall, therefore, next proceed to, before I make a further application of this.

Doct. III. God taketh pleasure in men's conversion and salvation, but not in their death and damnation.

He had rather they would return and live, than go on and die.

I shall first teach you how to understand this; and then clear up the truth of it to you.

And for the first, you must observe these following things: 1. A simple willingness and complacency is the first act of the will, following the simple apprehension of the understanding, before it proceedeth to compare things together. But the choosing act of the will is a following act, and supposeth the comparing practical act of the understanding; and these two acts may often be carried to contrary objects, without any fault at all in the person.

2. An unfeigned willingness may have divers degrees. Some things I am so far willing of, as that I will do all that lieth in my power to accomplish them. And some things I am truly willing another should do, when yet I will not do all that ever I am able to procure it, having many reasons to dissuade me therefrom; though yet I will do all that belongs to me to do.

3. The will of a ruler, as such, is manifest in making and executing laws; but the will of a man in his simple natural capacity, or as absolute lord of his own, is manifested in desiring or resolving of events.

4. A ruler's will, as lawgiver, is, first and principally, that his law be obeyed, and not at all that the penalty be executed on any, but only on supposition that they will not obey his laws. But a ruler's will, as judge, supposeth the law already either kept or broken. And, therefore, he resolveth on reward or punishment accordingly.

Having given you these necessary distinctions, I shall next apply them to the case in hand, in these following propositions:

1. It is in the glass of the word and creatures that in this life we must know God. And so, according to the nature of man, we ascribe to him understanding and will, removing all the imperfections that we can, because we are capable of no higher positive conceptions of him.

2. And on the same grounds we do (with the Scriptures) distinguish between the acts of God's will, as diversified from the respects, or the objects, though as to God's essence they are all one.

3. And the bolder, because that when we speak of Christ, we have the more ground for it from his human nature.

4. And thus we say, that the simple complacency, will, or love of God, is to all that is naturally or morally good, according to the nature and degree of its goodness. And so he hath pleasure in the conversion and salvation of all, which yet will never come to pass.

5. And God, as Ruler and Lawgiver of the world, had so far a practical will for their salvation, as to make them a free deed of gift of Christ and life, and an act of oblivion for all their sins, so be it they will not unthankfully reject it; and to command his messengers to offer this gift to all the world, and persuade them to accept it. And so he doth all that, as Lawgiver or Promiser, belongs to him to do for their salvation.

6. But yet he resolveth, as Lawgiver, that they that will not turn, shall die. And as Judge, when their day of grace is past, he will execute that decree.

7. So that he thus unfeignedly willet the conversion of those that never will be converted, but not as absolute Lord, with the fullest efficacious resolution, nor as a thing which he resolveth shall undoubtedly come to pass, or would engage all his power to accomplish. It is in the power of a prince

to set a guard upon a murderer, to see that he shall not murder and be hanged. But if upon good reason he forbear this, and do but send to his subjects, and warn and entreat them not to be murderers, I hope he may well say, that he would not have them murder and be hanged; he takes no pleasure in it, but rather that they forbear, and live. And if he do more for some, upon some special reason, he is not bound to do so by all. The king may well say to all the murderers and felons in the land, I have no pleasure in your death, but rather that you would obey my laws and live; but if you will not, I am resolved, for all this, that you shall die. The judge may truly say to the thief, or a murderer, Alas! man, I have no delight in thy death, I had rather thou hadst kept the law, and saved thy life; but seeing thou hast not, I must condemn thee, or else I should be unjust. So, though God have no pleasure in your damnation, and therefore calls upon you to return and live, yet he hath pleasure in the demonstration of his own justice, and the executing his laws; and, therefore, he is for all this fully resolved, that if you will not be converted, you shall be condemned. If God were so much against the death of the wicked, as that he were resolved to do all that he can to hinder it, then no man should be condemned, whereas Christ telleth you, that few will be saved. But so far God is against your damnation, as that he will teach you and warn you, and set before you life and death, and offer you your choice, and command his ministers to entreat you not to damn yourselves, but accept his mercy, and so to leave you without excuse; but if this will not do, and if still you be unconverted, he professeth to you he is resolved of your damnation, and hath commanded us to say to you in his name, ver. 18, "O wicked man, thou shalt surely die!" And Christ hath little less than sworn it over and over, with a "Verily, verily, except ye be converted and born again, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xviii. 3; John iii. 3. Mark that he saith, "You cannot." It is in vain to hope for it, and in vain to dream that God is willing of it; for it is a thing that cannot be.

In a word, you see then the meaning of the text, that God, the great Lawgiver of the world, doth take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn and live; though yet he be resolved that none shall live but those that turn; and as a judge even delighteth in justice, and manifesteth his hatred of sin, though not in their misery which they have brought upon themselves, in itself considered.

2. And for the proofs of this point, I shall be very brief in them, because I suppose you easily believe it already.

1. The very gracious nature of God proclaimed, Exod. xxxiv. 6; xx. 6, and frequently elsewhere, may assure you of this, that he hath no pleasure in your death.

2. If God had more pleasure in thy death, than in thy conversion and life, he would not have so frequently commanded thee in his word to turn; he would not have made thee such promises of life, if thou wilt but turn; he would not have persuaded thee to it by so many reasons. The tenor of his gospel proveth the point.

3. And his commission that he hath given to the ministers of the gospel, doth fully prove it. If God had taken more pleasure in thy damnation, than in thy conversion and salvation, he would never have charged us to offer you mercy, and to teach you the way of life, both publicly and privately; and to entreat and beseech you to turn and live; to acquaint you of your sins, and foretell you of your danger;

and to do all that possibly we can for your conversion, and to continue patiently so doing, though you should hate or abuse us for our pains. Would God have done this and appointed his ordinances for your good, if he had taken pleasure in your death?

4. It is proved also by the course of his providence. If God had rather you were damned than converted and saved, he would not second his word with his works, and entice you by his daily kindness to himself, and give you all the mercies of this life, which are his means to lead you to repentance, Rom. ii. 4, and bring you so often under his rod, to force you into your wits. He would not set so many examples before your eyes; no, nor wait on you so patiently as he doth from day to day, and year to year. These be not signs of one that taketh pleasure in your death; if this had been his delight, how easily could he have had thee long ago in hell! How oft, before this, could he have caught thee away in the midst of thy sins, with a curse, or oath, or lie in thy mouth, in thy ignorance, and pride, and sensuality; when thou wert last in thy drunkenness, or last deriding the ways of God! How easily could he have stopped thy breath, and tamed thee with his plagues, and made thee sober in another world! Alas! how small a matter is it for the Almighty to rule the tongue of the profane railer, and tie the hands of the most malicious persecutor; or calm the fury of the bitterest of his enemies, and make them know they are but worms! If he should but frown upon thee, thou wouldst drop into thy grave. If he gave commission to one of his angels to go and destroy ten thousand sinners, how quickly would it be done! How easily can he lay thee upon the bed of languishing, and make thee lie roaring there in pain, and make thee eat the words of reproach which thou hast spoken against his servants, his word, his worship, and his holy ways; and make thee send to beg their prayers, whom thou didst despise in thy presumption! How easily can he lay that flesh under gripes and groans, and make it too weak to hold thy soul, and make it more loathsome than the dung of the earth! That flesh which now must have what it loves, and must not be displeased, and must be humoured with meat, drink, and clothes, whatsoever God says to the contrary, how quickly would the frowns of God consume it! When thou wast passionately defending thy sin, and quarrelling with them that would have drawn thee from it, and showing thy spleen against the reprovers, and pleading for the works of darkness; how easily could God snatch thee away in a moment, and set thee before his dreadful Majesty, where thou mayst see ten thousand times ten thousand of glorious angels waiting on his throne, and call thee there to plead thy cause, and ask thee, What hast thou now to say against thy Creator, his truth, his servants, or his holy ways? now plead thy cause, and make the best of it thou canst. Now what canst thou say in excuse of thy sins? Now give account of thy worldliness and fleshly life, of thy time, of all thy mercies thou hast had. Oh how thy stubborn heart would have melted, and thy proud looks be taken down, and thy countenance appalled, and thy stout words turned into speechless silence, or dreadful cries; if God had but set thee thus at his bar, and pleaded his own cause with thee, which thou hast here so maliciously pleaded against! How easily can he, at any time, say to thy guilty soul, Come away, and live in that flesh no longer, till the resurrection, and it cannot resist! A word of his mouth, would take off the noise of thy present life, and then all thy parts and powers would stand still; and if he say unto thee, Live no longer, or, Live in hell, thou couldst not disobey.

But God hath yet done none of this; but hath patiently forborne thee, and mercifully upheld thee, and given thee that breath which thou didst breathe out against him, and given those mercies which thou didst sacrifice to the flesh, and afforded thee that provision which thou spentest to satisfy thy greedy throat: he gave thee every minute of that time which thou didst waste in idleness, and drunkenness, or worldliness. And doth not all his patience and mercy show that he desired not thy damnation? Can the candle burn without the oil? Can your houses stand without the earth to bear them? As well as you can live one hour without the support of God. And why did he so long support thy life, but to see when thou wouldst bethink thee of the folly of thy ways, and return and live? Will any man purposely put arms into his enemy's hands to resist him? Or hold a candle to a murderer that is killing his children? or to an idle servant that plays and sleeps the while? Surely it is to see whether thou wilt at last return and live, that God has so long waited on thee.

5. It is further proved by the sufferings of his Son that God taketh no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Would he have ransomed them from death at so dear a rate? Would he have astonished angels and men by his condescension? Would God have dwelt in flesh, and have come in the form of a servant, and have assumed humanity into one person with the Godhead? And would Christ have lived a life of suffering, and died a cursed death for sinners, if he had rather taken pleasure in their death? Suppose you saw him but so busy in preaching and healing of them, as you find him in Mark iii. 21; or so long in fasting, as in Matt. iv.; or all night in prayer, as in Luke vi. 12; or praying with drops of blood trickling from him instead of sweat, as Luke xxii. 44; or suffering a cursed death upon the cross, and pouring out his soul as a sacrifice for our sins; would you have thought these the signs of one that delighteth in the death of the wicked?

And think not to extenuate it by saying, that it was only for his elect. For it was thy sin, and the sin of all the world, that lay upon our Redeemer; and his sacrifice and satisfaction is sufficient for all, and the fruits of it are offered to one as well as another; but it is true that it was never the intent of his mind, to pardon and save any that would not by faith and repentance be converted. If you had seen and heard him weeping and bemoaning the state of disobedience in impenitent people, Luke xix. 41, 42, or complaining of their stubbornness, as Matt. xxiii. 37, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Or if you had seen and heard him on the cross, praying for his persecutors, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" would you have suspected that he had delighted in the death of the wicked, even of those that perish by their wilful unbelief? "When God hath so loved" (not only loved, but so loved) "the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him" (by an effectual faith) "should not perish, but have everlasting life," I think he hath hereby proved, against the malice of men and devils, that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but had rather that they would turn and live.

6. Lastly, If all this will not yet satisfy you, take his own word, that knoweth best his own mind; or at least believe his oath. But this leadeth me up to the fourth doctrine.

Doct. IV. The Lord hath confirmed it to us by his oath, that he hath no pleasure in the death of

the wicked, but rather that he turn and live; that he may leave man no pretence to question the truth of it.

If you dare question his word, I hope you dare not question his oath. As Christ hath solemnly protested, that the unregenerate and unconverted cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, in Matt. xviii. 3; John iii. 3; so God hath sworn, that his pleasure is not in their death, but in their conversion and life. And as the apostle saith, Heb. vi. 13, 16—18, "Because he can swear by no greater than himself, he saith, As I live, &c. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." If there be any man that cannot reconcile this truth with the doctrine of predestination, or the actual damnation of the wicked, that is his own ignorance; he hath no pretence left to deny or question therefore the truth of the point in hand; for this is confirmed by the oath of God, and therefore must not be distorted, to reduce it to other points; but doubtful points must rather be reduced to it, and certain truths must be believed to agree with it, though our shallow brains do hardly discern the agreement.

Use. I do entreat thee, if thou be an unconverted sinner that hearest these words, that thou wouldst ponder a little upon the forementioned doctrines, and bethink thyself awhile, who it is that takes pleasure in thy sin and damnation. Certainly it is not God. He hath sworn for his part, that he takes no pleasure in it. And I know it is not the pleasing of him that you intend in it. You dare not say that you drink and swear, and neglect holy duties, and quench the motions of the Spirit, to please God. That were as if you should reproach the prince, and break his laws, and seek his death, and say, you did all this to please him.

Who is it then that takes pleasure in your sin and death? Not any that bear the image of God, for they must be like-minded to him. God knows, it is small pleasure to your faithful teachers, to see you serve your deadly enemy, and madly venture your eternal state, and wilfully run into the flames of hell. It is small pleasure to them, to see upon your souls (in the sad effects) such blindness, and hard-heartedness, and carelessness, and presumption; such wilfulness in evil, and such uncharitableness, and stiffness against the ways of life and peace: they know these are marks of death, and of the wrath of God, and they know, from the word of God, what is like to be the end of them; and therefore it is no more pleasure to them, than to a tender physician to see the plague-marks break out upon his patient. Alas! to foresee your everlasting torments, and know not how to prevent them! To see how near you are to hell, and we cannot make you believe it, and consider it! To see how easily, how certainly you might escape, if we knew but how to make you willing! How fair you are for everlasting salvation, if you would but turn and do your best, and make it the care and business of your lives! But you will not do it; if our lives lay on it, we cannot persuade you to do it. We study day and night what to say to you, that may convince you, and persuade you, and yet it is undone: we lay before you the word of God, and show you the very chapter and verse where

it is written, that you cannot be saved except you be converted; and yet we leave the most of you as we find you: we hope ye will believe the word of God, though you believe not us, and that you will regard it when we show you plain Scripture for it; but we hope in vain, and labour in vain, as to any saving change upon your hearts. And do you think that this is a pleasant thing to us? Many a time in secret prayers we are fain to complain to God with sad hearts, Alas, Lord, we have spoken it to them, in thy name, but they little regard us; we have told them what thou bidst us tell them, concerning the danger of an unconverted state, but they do not believe us; we have told them that thou hast protested, "That there is no peace to the wicked," Isa. xlviii. 22; lvii. 21; but the worst of them all will scarcely believe that they are wicked: we have showed them the word, where thou hast said, "That if they live after the flesh they shall die," Rom. viii. 13; but they say, they will believe in thee, when they will not believe thee; and that they will trust in thee, when they give no credit to thy word; and when they hope that the threatenings of thy word are false, they will yet call this a hoping in God; and though we show them where thou hast said, "That when a wicked man dieth, all his hopes perish," Prov. xi. 7, yet cannot we persuade them from their deceitful hopes. We tell them what a base, unprofitable thing sin is, but they love it, and therefore will not leave it. We tell them how dear they buy their pleasure, and what they must pay for it in everlasting torment, and they bless themselves and will not believe it, but will do as the most do; and because God is merciful, they will not believe him, but will venture their souls, come on it what will. We tell them how ready the Lord is to receive them; and this does but make them delay their repentance, and be bolder in their sin. Some of them say, they purpose to repent, but they are still the same; and some say, they do repent already, while yet they are not converted from their sins. We exhort them, we entreat them, we offer them our help, but we cannot prevail with them, but they that were drunkards are drunkards still; and they that were voluptuous, flesh-pleasing wretches, are such still; and they that were worldlings are worldlings still; and they that were ignorant, proud, and self-conceited, are so still. Few of them will see and confess their sin, and fewer will forsake it, but comfort themselves that all men are sinners; as if there were no difference between a converted sinner and an unconverted. Some of them will not come near us when we are willing to instruct them, but think they know enough already, and need not our instruction; and some of them will give us the hearing, and do what they list; and most of them are like dead men that cannot feel; so that when we tell them of the matters of everlasting consequence, we cannot get a word of it to their hearts. If we do not obey them, and humour them in baptizing children of the most obstinately wicked, and giving them the Lord's supper, and doing all that that they would have us, though never so much against the word of God, they will hate us, and rail at us; but if we beseech them to confess and forsake their sins, and save their souls, they will not do it. We tell them, if they will but turn, we will deny them none of the ordinances of God, neither baptism to their children, nor the Lord's supper to themselves; but they will not hear us: they would have us to disobey God, damn our souls to please them, and yet they will not turn, and save their own souls to please God. They are wiser in their own eyes than all their teachers; they rage, and are confident in their own way; and if we would

never so fain we cannot change them. Lord, this is the case of our miserable neighbours, and we cannot help it; we see them ready to drop into hell, and we cannot help it: we know if they would unfeignedly turn, they might be saved; but we cannot persuade them: if we would beg it of them on our knees, we cannot persuade them to it; if we would beg it of them with tears, we cannot persuade them: and what more can we do?

These are the secret complaints and moans that many a poor minister is fain to make; and do you think that he hath any pleasure in this? Is it a pleasure to him to see you go on in sin and cannot stop you? to see you so miserable, and cannot so much as make you sensible of it? to see you merry, when you are not sure to be an hour out of hell? to think what you must for ever suffer because you will not turn? and to think what an everlasting life of glory you wilfully despise and cast away? What sadder things can you bring to their hearts, and how can you devise to grieve them more?

Who is it then that you pleasure by your sin and death? It is none of your understanding, godly friends. Alas, it is the grief of their souls to see your misery, and they lament you many a time, when you give them little thanks for it, and when you have not hearts to lament yourselves.

Who is it then that takes pleasure in your sin? It is none but the three great enemies of God, whom you renounced in your baptism, and now are turned falsely to serve.

1. The devil, indeed, takes pleasure in your sin and death; for this is the very end of all his temptations: for this he watches night and day: you cannot devise to please him better, than to go on in sin. How glad is he when he sees thee going to the ale-house, or other sin; and when he heareth thee curse, or swear, or rail! How glad is he when he heareth thee revile the minister that would draw thee from thy sin, and help to save thee! These are his delight.

2. The wicked are also delighted in it, for it is agreeable to their nature.

3. But I know, for all this, that it is not the pleasing of the devil that you intend, even when you please him; but it is your own flesh, the greatest and most dangerous enemy, that you intend to please. It is the flesh that would be pampered, that would be pleased in meat, and drink, and clothing, that would be pleased in your company, and pleased in applause and credit with the world, and pleased in sports, and lusts, and idleness; this is the gulf that devoureth all. This is the very god that you serve; for the Scripture saith of such, "that their bellies are their god," Phil. iii. 18.

But I beseech you stay a little and consider the business.

1. *Quest.* Should your flesh be pleased before your Maker? Will you displease the Lord, and displease your teacher, and your godly friends, and all to please your brutish appetites, or sensual desires? Is not God worthy to be a ruler of your flesh? if he shall not rule it, he will not save it; you cannot in reason expect that he should.

2. *Quest.* Your flesh is pleased with your sin; but is your conscience pleased? Doth not it grudge within you, and tell you sometimes that all is not well, and that your case is not so safe as you make it to be? And should not your souls and consciences be pleased before that corruptible flesh?

3. *Quest.* But is not your flesh preparing for its own displeasure also? It loves the bait, but doth it love the hook? It loves the strong drink and sweet morsels; it loves its ease, and sport, and merriment,

it loves to be rich, and well spoken of by men, and to be somebody in the world; but doth it love the curse of God? Doth it love to stand trembling before his bar, and to be judged to everlasting fire? Doth it love to be tormented with the devils for ever? Take all together; for there is no separating sin and hell, but only by faith and true conversion; if you will keep one, you must have the other. If death and hell be pleasant to thee, no wonder then if thou go on in sin; but if they be not, (as I am sure they be not,) then what if sin be never so pleasant, is it worth the loss of life eternal? Is a little drink, meat, ease, the good word of sinners, or the riches of this world, to be valued above the joys of heaven? or are they worth the sufferings of eternal fire? Sirs, these questions should be considered, before you go any farther, by every man that hath reason to consider, and that believes he hath a soul to save or lose.

Well, the Lord here sweareth that he hath no pleasure in your death, but rather that you would turn and live: if yet you will go on and die, rather than turn, remember it was not to please God that you did it, it was to please the world, and to please yourselves. And if men will damn themselves to please themselves, and run into endless torments for delight, and have not the wit, the heart, the grace to hearken to God or man that would reclaim them, what remedy? But they must take what they get by it, and repent in another manner, when it is too late. Before I proceed any farther in the application, I shall come to the next doctrine; which giveth a fuller ground for it.

Doct. V. So earnest is God for the conversion of sinners, that he doubleth his commands and exhortations with vehemency; "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

This doctrine is the application of the former, as by a use of exhortation, and accordingly I shall handle it. Is there ever an unconverted sinner, that heareth these vehement words of God? Is there ever a man or woman in this assembly, that is yet a stranger to the renewing, sanctifying works of the Holy Ghost? (It is a happy assembly if it be not so with the most.) Hearken then to the voice of your Maker, and turn to him by Christ without delay. Would you know the will of God? Why this is his will, that you presently turn. Shall the living God send so earnest a message to his creatures, and should they not obey? Hearken then, all you that live after the flesh; the Lord that gave thee thy breath and being, hath sent a message to thee from heaven, and this is his message, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Shall the voice of the Eternal Majesty be neglected? If he do but terribly thunder, thou art afraid; O but this voice doth more nearly concern thee: if he do but tell thee thou shalt die tomorrow, thou wouldst not make light of it; O but this word concerneth thy life or death everlasting! It is both a command and an exhortation: as if he said to thee, I charge thee upon the allegiance thou owest to me thy Creator and Redeemer, that thou renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil, and turn to me that thou mayst live. I condescend to entreat thee, as thou lovest or fearest him that made thee, as thou lovest thine own life, even thine everlasting life, turn and live; as ever thou wouldst escape eternal misery, turn, turn, "for why wilt thou die?" And is there a heart in man, in a reasonable creature, that can once refuse such a message, such a command, such an exhortation as this? Oh what a thing then is the heart of man!

Hearken then, all that love yourselves, and all that

regard your own salvation. Here is the most joyful message that ever was sent to the ears of man, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" You are not yet shut up under desperation. Here is mercy offered you; turn and you shall have it. O sirs, with what glad and joyful hearts should you receive these tidings! I know that this is not the first time that you have heard it: but how have you regarded it, or how do you regard it now? Hear, all you ignorant, careless sinners, the word of the Lord! Hear, all you worldlings, you sensual flesh-pleasers, you gluttons and drunkards, and whoremongers and swearers, you railers and backbiters, slanderers and liars; "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

Hear, all you cold and outside professors, and all that are strangers to the life of Christ, and never knew the power of his cross and resurrection, and never felt your hearts warmed with his love, and live not on him as the strength of your souls; "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

Hear, all that are void of the love of God, whose hearts are not towards him, nor taken up with the hopes of glory, but set more by your earthly prosperity and delights, than by the joys of heaven; you that are religious but a little on the bye, and give God no more than your flesh can spare; that have not denied your carnal selves, and forsaken all that you have for Christ, in the estimation and grounded resolution of your souls; but have some one thing in the world so dear to you, that you cannot spare it for Christ, if he requires it, but will rather even venture on his displeasure, than forsake it; "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

If you never heard it or observed it before, remember that ye were told it from the word of God this day, that if you will but turn, you may live; and if you will not turn, you shall surely die.

What now will you do, sirs? What is your resolution? Will you turn, or will you not? Halt not any longer between two opinions: if the Lord be God, follow him; if your flesh be God, then serve it still. If heaven be better than earth and fleshly pleasures, come away then and seek a better country, and lay up your treasure where rust and moths do not corrupt, and thieves cannot break through and steal, and be awakened at last with all your might to seek the kingdom that cannot be moved, Heb. xii. 28; and to employ your lives on a higher design, and turn the stream of your cares and labours another way than formerly you have done: but if earth be better than heaven, or will do more for you, or last you longer, then keep it and make your best of it, and follow it still. Sirs, are you resolved what to do? If you be not, I will set a few more moving considerations before you, to see if reason will make you resolve.

Consider, first, what preparations mercy hath made for your salvation; and what pity it is that any man should be damned after all this. The time was, when the flaming sword was in the way, and the curse of God's law would have kept thee back, if thou hadst been never so willing to turn to God: the time was, when thyself, and all the friends that thou hadst in the world, could never have procured thee the pardon of thy sins past, though thou hadst never so much lamented, and reformed them. But Christ hath removed this impediment by the ransom of his blood. The time was, that God was wholly unreconciled, as being not satisfied for the violation of his law; but now he is so far satisfied and reconciled, as that he hath made thee a free act of oblivion, and a free deed of the gift of Christ and life, and offereth it to thee, and entreateth thee to accept it, and it may be thine if thou wilt. For, "He was in Christ

reconciling the world unto himself, and hath committed to us the word of actual reconciliation," 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. Sinners, we are commanded to do this message to you all, as from the Lord. "Come, for all things are ready," Luke xiv. 17. Are all things ready, and are you unready? God is ready to entertain you and pardon all that you have done against him, if you will but come. As long as you have sinned, as wilfully as you have sinned, as heinously as you have sinned, he is ready to cast all behind his back, if you will but come. Though you have been prodigals, and run away from God, and have staid so long, he is ready even to meet you, and embrace you in his arms, and rejoice in your conversion, if you will but turn. Even the earthly worldling and swinish drunkard may find God ready to bid him welcome, if they will but come. Doth not this turn thy heart within thee? O sinner, if thou hast a heart of flesh and not of stone in thee, methinks this should melt it. Shall the dreadful infinite Majesty of heaven, even wait for thy returning, and be ready to receive thee who hast abused him, and forgotten him so long? shall he delight in thy conversion, that might at any time glorify his justice in thy damnation? and doth it not yet melt thy heart within thee, and art thou not yet ready to come in? Hast thou not as much reason to be ready to come, as God hath to invite thee and bid thee welcome?

But that is not all; Christ hath done his part on the cross, and made such a way for thee to the Father, that on his account thou mayst be welcome, if thou wilt come; and yet art thou not ready?

A pardon is already expressly granted, and offered thee in the gospel; and yet art thou not ready?

The ministers of the gospel are ready to assist thee, to instruct thee, and pronounce the absolving words of peace to thy soul; they are ready to pray for thee, and to seal up thy pardon by the administration of the holy sacrament; and yet art thou not ready?

All that fear God about thee, are ready to rejoice in thy conversion, and to receive thee into the communion of saints, and to give thee the right hand of fellowship, yea, though thou hadst been one that had been cast out of their society: they dare not but forgive where God forgiveth, when it is manifest to them by thy confession and amendment; they dare not so much as hit thee in the teeth with thy former sins, because they know that God will not upbraid thee with them. If thou hadst been never so scandalous, if thou wouldst but heartily be converted and come in, they would not refuse thee, let the world say what they would against it. And are all these ready to receive thee, and yet art thou not ready to come in?

Yea, heaven itself is ready; the Lord will receive thee into the glory of the saints, as vile a beast as thou hast been, if thou wilt but be cleansed thou mayst have a place before his throne; his angels will be ready to guard thy soul to the place of joy, if thou do but unfeignedly come in. And is God ready, the sacrifice of Christ ready, the promise ready, and pardon ready; are ministers ready, the people of God ready, and heaven itself ready, and angels ready, and all these but waiting for thy conversion, and yet art thou not ready? What! not ready to live, when thou hast been dead so long? not ready to come to thy right understanding, (as the prodigal is said to come to himself, Luke xv. 17,) when thou hast been beside thyself so long? not ready to be saved, when thou art even ready to be condemned? Art thou not ready to lay hold on Christ that would deliver thee, when thou art even ready to drown, and sink into damnation? Art thou not ready to be saved from hell,

when thou art even ready to be cast remediless into it; alas! man, dost thou know what thou dost? If thou die unconverted, there is no doubt to be made of thy damnation: and thou art not sure to live an hour; and yet art thou not ready to turn, and to come in? O miserable wretch! hast thou not served the flesh and the devil long enough? Yet hast thou not enough of sin? Is it so good to thee, or so profitable for thee? Dost thou know what it is, that thou wouldst yet have more of it? Hast thou had so many calls, and so many mercies, and so many blows, and so many examples, hast thou seen so many laid in the grave, and yet art thou not ready to let go thy sins, and come to Christ? What! after so many convictions, and gripes of conscience, after so many purposes and promises, art thou not yet ready to turn and live? Oh that thy eyes, thy heart were opened, to know how fair an offer is now made to thee! and what a joyful message it is that we are sent on, to bid thee come, for all things are ready!

2. Consider, also, what calls thou hast to turn and live; how many, how loud, how earnest, how dreadful, and yet what encouraging, joyful calls.

For the principal inviter, it is God himself. He that commandeth heaven and earth, commandeth thee to turn; and presently, without delay, to turn. He commandeth the sun to run its course, and to rise upon thee every morning; and though it be so glorious a creature, and many times bigger than all the earth, yet it obeyeth him, and faileth not one minute of its appointed time. He commandeth all the planets and orbs of heaven, and they obey. He commandeth the sea to ebb and flow, and the whole creation to keep its course, and all they obey him. The angels of heaven obey his will, when he sends them to minister to such silly worms as we on earth, Heb. i. 14. And yet if he command but a sinner to turn, he will not obey him: he only thinks himself wiser than God, and he cavils and pleads the cause of sin, and will not obey. If the Lord Almighty says the word, the heavens and all therein obey him; but if he call a drunkard out of an ale-house he will not obey; or if he call a worldly, fleshly sinner to deny himself, and mortify the flesh, and set his heart on a better inheritance, he will not obey.

If thou hadst any love in thee, thou wouldst know the voice, and say, O this is my Father's call! How can I find in my heart to disobey? For the sheep of Christ do "know and hear his voice; and they follow him, and he giveth them eternal life," John xii. 4. If thou hast any spiritual life and sense in thee, at least thou wouldst say, This call is the dreadful voice of God, and who dare disobey? For saith the prophet, "The lion hath roared, who will not fear?" Amos iii. 8. God is not a man that thou shouldst dally and play with him. Remember what he said to Paul at his conversion, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," Acts ix. 5. Wilt thou yet go on and despise his word, and resist his Spirit, and stop thine ears against his call? Who is it that will have the worst of this? Dost thou know whom thou disobeyest and contendest with, and what thou art doing? It were a far wiser and easier task for thee, to contend with the thorns, and spurn them with thy bare feet, and beat them with thy bare hands, or put thy head into the burning fire. "Be not deceived, God will not be mocked," Gal. vi. 7. Whosoever else be mocked, God will not; you had better play with the fire in your thatch, than with the fire of his burning wrath. "For our God is a consuming fire," Heb. xii. 29. Oh how unmeet a match art thou for God! It is a fearful thing to fall into his hands," Heb. x. 31; and therefore it is a fearful thing to contend with him, or resist him. As you love your

own souls, take heed what you do. What will you say if he begin in wrath to plead with you? What will you do if he take you once in hand? Will you then strive against his judgment, as now you do against his grace? Saith the Lord, "Fury is not in me;" that is, I delight not to destroy, I do it as it were unwillingly: but yet, "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me," Isa. xxvii. 4, 6. It is an unequal combat for the briers and stubble to make war with the fire.

And thus you see who it is that calleth you, that should move you to hear this call, and turn: so consider also, by what instruments, and how often, and how earnestly he doth it.

1. Every leaf of the blessed book of God hath, as it were, a voice, and calls out unto thee, "Turn and live, turn, or thou wilt die." How canst thou open it, and read a leaf, or hear a chapter, and not perceive God bids thee turn?

2. It is the voice of every sermon thou hearest; for what else is the scope and drift of all, but to call, and persuade, and entreat thee to turn?

3. It is the voice of many a motion of the Spirit, that secretly speaks over these words again, and urgeth thee to turn.

4. It is likely sometimes it is the voice of thy own conscience. Art thou not sometimes convinced, that all is not well with thee; and doth not thy conscience tell thee, that thou must be a new man, and take a new course, and often call upon thee to return?

5. It is the voice of the gracious examples of the godly. When thou seest them live a heavenly life, and fly from the sin which is thy delight, this really calls upon thee to turn.

6. It is the voice of all the works of God. For they also are God's books that teach thee this lesson, by showing thee his greatness, and wisdom, and goodness, and calling thee to observe them, and admire the Creator. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge," Psal. xix. 1, 2. Every time the sun riseth upon thee, it really calleth thee to turn; as if it should say, What do I travel and compass the world for, but to declare to men the glory of their Maker, and to light them to do his work? And do I still find thee doing the work of sin, and sleeping out thy life in negligence? "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. 14. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand. It is now high time to awake out of sleep. Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," Rom. xiii. 11—14. (This text was the means of Augustine's conversion.)

7. It is the voice of every mercy thou dost possess. If thou couldst but hear and understand them, they all cry out unto thee, Turn. Why doth the earth bear thee, but to seek and serve the Lord? Why doth it afford thee fruit, but to serve him? Why doth the air afford thee breath, but to serve him? Why do all the creatures serve thee with their labours, and their lives, but that thou mightest serve the Lord of them and thee? Why doth he give thee time, and health, and strength, but to serve

him? Why hast thou meat, drink, and clothes, but for his service? Hast thou any thing which thou hast not received? And if thou didst receive them, it is reason thou shouldst bethink thee from whom, and to what end and use, thou didst receive them. Didst thou never cry to him for help in thy distress? And didst thou not then understand that it was thy part to turn and serve him if he would deliver thee? He hath done his part, and spared thee yet longer, and tried thee another and another year, and yet thou dost not turn. You know the parable of the unfruitful fig-tree, Luke xiii. 6—9. When the Lord had said, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" he was entreated to try it one year longer, and then, if it proved not fruitful, to cut it down. Christ himself there makes the application twice over, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," ver. 3, 5. How many years hath God looked for the fruits of love and holiness from thee, and hath found none? and yet hath spared thee. How many times, by thy wilful ignorance, carelessness, and disobedience, hast thou provoked justice to say, "Cut him down, why cumbereth he the ground?" and yet mercy hath prevailed, and patience hath forborne the killing, damning blow to this day. If thou hadst the understanding of a man within thee, thou wouldst know that all this calleth thee to turn. "Dost thou think thou shalt still escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every one according to his deeds," Rom. ii. 3—6.

8. Moreover, it is the voice of every affliction, to call thee to make haste and turn. Sickness and pain cry, Turn. Poverty, the loss of friends, and every twig of the chastising rod, cry, Turn; and yet wilt thou not hearken to the call? These have come near thee, and made thee feel. They have made thee groan, and can they not make thee turn.

9. The very frame of thy nature and being itself bespeaketh thy return. Why hast thou reason, but to rule thy flesh, and serve thy Lord? Why hast thou an understanding soul, but to learn and know his will, and do it? Why hast thou a heart within thee that can love, fear, and desire, but that thou shouldst fear him, and love him, and desire after him?

10. Yea, thine own engagements by promise to the Lord do call upon thee to turn and serve him. Thou hast bound thyself to him by a baptismal covenant, and renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil; this thou hast confirmed by the profession of christianity, and renewed it at sacraments, and in times of affliction. And wilt thou promise, and vow, and never perform, and turn to God?

Lay all these together now, and see what should be the issue. The holy Scriptures call upon thee to turn; the ministers of Christ do call upon thee to turn; the Spirit cries, Turn; thy conscience cries, Turn; the godly, by persuasions and examples, cry, Turn; the whole world, and all the creatures therein that are presented to thy consideration, cry, Turn; the patient forbearance of God cries, Turn; all the mercies which thou receivest cry, Turn; the rod of God's chastisement cries, Turn; thy reason and the frame of thy nature bespeaks thy turning; and so do all thy promises to God: and yet art thou not resolved to turn?

3. Moreover, poor hard-hearted sinner, didst thou ever consider upon what terms thou standest all this while with him that calleth thee to turn? Thou art

his own, and owest him thyself, and all thou hast; and may he not command his own? Thou art his absolute servant, and shouldst serve no other master. Thou standest at his mercy, and thy life is in his hand; and he is resolved to save thee upon no other terms. Thou hast many malicious spiritual enemies, that would be glad if God would but forsake thee, and let them alone with thee, and leave thee to their will; how quickly would they deal with thee in another manner! And thou canst not be delivered from them, but by turning unto God. Thou art fallen under his wrath by thy sin already; and thou knowest not how long his patience will yet wait. Perhaps this is the last year; perhaps the last day. His sword is even at thy heart, while the word is in thine ear; and if thou turn not, thou art a dead and undone man. Were thy eyes but open to see where thou standest, even upon the brink of hell, and to see how many thousands are there already that did not turn, thou wouldest see that it is time to look about thee.

Well, sirs, look inwards now, and tell me how are your hearts affected with these offers of the Lord? You hear what is his mind; he delighteth not in your death. He calls to you, Turn, turn; it is a fearful sign, if all this move thee not, or if it do but half move thee; and much more if it make thee more careless in thy misery, because thou hearest of the mercifulness of God. The working of the medicine will partly tell us, whether there be any hope of the cure. Oh what glad tidings would it be to those that are now in hell, if they had but such a message from God! What a joyful word would it be to hear this, Turn and live! Yea, what a welcome word would it be to thyself, when thou hast felt that wrath of God but an hour; or, if after a thousand, and ten thousand years' torment, thou couldst but hear such a word from God, Turn and live! and yet wilt thou neglect it, and suffer us to return without our errand?

Behold, sinners, we are set here as the messengers of the Lord, to set before you life and death; what say you, which of them will you choose? Christ standeth, as it were, by thee, with heaven in one hand and hell in the other, and offereth thee thy choice; which wilt thou choose? The voice of the Lord maketh the rocks to tremble. See Psal. xxix. And is it nothing to hear him threaten thee, if thou wilt not turn? Dost thou not understand and feel this voice, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" Why, it is the voice of love, of infinite love, of thy best and kindest Friend, as thou mightest easily perceive by the motion, and yet canst thou neglect it? It is the voice of pity and compassion. The Lord seeth whither thou art going better than thou dost, which makes him call after thee, Turn, turn. He seeth what will become of thee, if thou turn not: he thinketh with himself, Ah this poor sinner will cast himself into endless torment, if he do not turn; I must in justice deal with him according to my righteous law: and therefore he calleth after thee, Turn, turn. O sinner! if thou didst but know the thousandth part as well as God doth, the danger that is near you, and the misery that you are running into, we should have no more need to call after you to turn.

Moreover, this voice that calleth to thee, is the same that hath prevailed with thousands already, and called all to heaven that are now there; and they would not now for a thousand worlds that they had made light of it, and not turned to God. Now what are they possessing that turned at God's call? Now they perceive indeed that it was the voice of love, that meant them no more harm than their salvation. And if thou wilt obey the same call thou shalt come to the same happiness. There be millions that must

for ever lament that they turned not, but there is never a soul in heaven that is sorry that they were converted.

Well, sirs, are you yet resolved, or are you not? Do I need to say any more to you, what will you do? Will you turn or not? Speak, man, in thy heart to God, though thou speak not out to me: speak, lest he take thy silence for a denial; speak quickly, lest he never make thee the like offer more; speak resolutely, and not waveringly, for he will have no indifferents to be his followers. Say in thy heart now, without any more delay, even before you stir hence, By the grace of God, I am resolved presently to turn. And because I know mine own insufficiency, I am resolved to wait on God for his grace, and follow him in his ways, and forsake my former courses and companions, and give up myself to the guidance of the Lord.

Sirs, you are not shut up in the darkness of heathenism, nor in the desperation of the damned. Life is before you, and you may have it on reasonable terms if you will; yea, on free-cost if you will accept it. The way of God lieth plain before you, the church is open to you, and you may have Christ, pardon, and holiness, if you will. What say you? Will you or will you not? If you say nay, or say nothing, and still go on, God is witness, and this congregation is witness, and your own consciences are witness, how fair an offer you had this day. Remember you might have Christ, and you would not. Remember, when you have lost it, that you might have had eternal life, as well as others, and would not: and all this because you would not turn!

But let us come to the next doctrine, and hear your reasons.

Doct. VI. The Lord condescendeth to reason the case with unconverted sinners, and to ask them why they will die.

A strange disputation it is, both as to the controversy, and as to the disputants.

1. The controversy or question propounded to dispute of, is, Why wicked men will damn themselves? or, Whether they will die rather than turn? Whether they have any sufficient reason for so doing?

2. The disputants are God and man; the most holy God, and wicked, unconverted sinners.

Is it not a strange thing which God doth seem here to suppose, that any man should be willing to die, and be damned; yea, that this should be the case of all the wicked; that is, of the greatest part of the world? But you will say, This cannot be; for nature desireth the preservation and felicity of itself, and the wicked are more selfish than others, and not less; and therefore how can any man be willing to be damned?

To which I answer, 1. It is a certain truth, that no man can be willing of any evil, as evil, but only as it hath some appearance of good; much less can any man be willing to be eternally tormented. Misery, as such, is desired by none. 2. But yet for all that, it is most true, which God here teacheth us, that the cause why the wicked die and are damned, is, because they will die and be damned. And this is true in several respects.

1. Because they will go the way that leads to hell, though they are told by God and man whither it goes and where it ends; and though God hath so often professed in his word, that if they hold on in that way they shall be condemned; and that they shall not be saved unless they turn. "There is no peace (saith the Lord) unto the wicked," Isa. xlvi. 22; lvii. 21. "The way of peace they know not; there is no judgment in their going; they have made them crooked paths, whosoever goeth therein shall

not know peace," Isa. lix. 8. They have the word and the oath of the living God for it, that if they will not turn, they shall not enter into his rest. And yet wicked they are, and wicked they will be, let God and man say what they will; fleshly they are, and fleshly they will be, worldlings they are, and worldlings they will be, though God hath told them, that "the love of the world is enmity to God; and that if any man love the world (in that measure) the love of the Father is not in him," James iv. 4; 1 John ii. 15. So that consequently these men are willing to be damned, though not directly: they are willing of the way to hell, and love the certain cause of their torment, though they be not willing of hell itself, and do not love the pain which they must endure.

Is not this the truth of your case, sirs? You would not burn in hell, but you will kindle the fire by your sins, and cast yourselves into it; you would not be tormented with devils in hell, but you will do that which will certainly procure it in despite of all that can be said against it. It is just as if you would say, I will drink poison, but yet I will not die. I will cast myself headlong from the top of a steeple, but yet I will not kill myself. I will thrust my knife into my heart, but yet I will not take away my life. I will put this fire into the thatch of my house, but yet I will not burn it. Just so it is with wicked men; they will be wicked, and live after the flesh in the world, and yet they would not be damned. But do you not know, that the means do lead unto the end? and that God hath by his righteous law concluded, that ye must repent or perish? He that will take poison may as well say, I will kill myself, for it will prove no better in the end: though perhaps he loved it for the sweetness of the sugar that was mixed with it, and would not be persuaded it was poison, but that he might take it and do well enough; but it is not his conceit and confidence that will save his life. So if you will be drunkards, or fornicators, or worldlings, or live after the flesh, you may as well say plainly, We will be damned; for so you shall be unless you turn. Would you not rebuke the folly of a thief or murderer that would say, I will steal or kill, but I will not be hanged; when he knows, that if he do the one, the judge in justice will see that the other be done. If he says, I will steal and murder, he may as well say plainly, I will be hanged; so if you will go on in a carnal life, you may as well say plainly, We will go to hell.

2. Moreover, the wicked will not use those means without which there is no hope of their salvation: he that will not eat, may as well say plainly he will not live, unless he can tell how to live without meat. He that will not go his journey, may as well say plainly he will not come to the end. He that falls into the water, and will not come out, nor suffer another to help him out, may as well say plainly he will be drowned. So if you be carnal and ungodly, and will not be converted, nor use the means by which you should be converted, but think it more ado than needs, you may as well say plainly you will be damned. For if you have found out a way to be saved without conversion, you have done that which was never done before.

3. Yea, this is not all, but the wicked are unwilling even of salvation itself. Though they may desire somewhat which they call by the name of heaven, yet heaven itself, considered in the true nature of the felicity, they desire not; yea, their hearts are quite against it. Heaven is a state of perfect holiness, and of continual love and praise to God, and the wicked have no heart to this. The imper-

fect love, praise, and holiness which is here to be obtained, they have no mind of; much less of that which is so much greater: the joys of heaven are of so pure and spiritual a nature, that the heart of the wicked cannot truly desire them.

So that by this time you may see on what ground it is that God supposeth that the wicked are willing of their own destruction: they will not turn, though they must turn or die. They will rather venture on certain misery, than be converted; and then to quiet themselves in their sins, they will make themselves believe, that they shall nevertheless escape.

2. And as the controversy is matter of wonder, (that ever men should be such enemies to themselves, as wilfully to cast away their souls,) so are the disputants too: that God should stoop so low, as thus to plead the case with man; and that man should be so strangely blind and obstinate as to need all this in so plain a case; yea, and to resist all this, when their own salvation lieth upon the issue.

No wonder if they will not hear us that are men, when they will not hear the Lord himself: as God saith, when he sent the prophet to the Israelites, "The house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted," Ezek. iii. 7. No wonder if they can plead against a minister, or a godly neighbour, when they will plead against the Lord himself, even against the plainest passages of his word, and think they have reason on their side. When they weary the Lord with their words, they say, "Wherein have we wearied him?" Mal. ii. 7. The priests that despised his name, durst ask, "Wherein have we despised thy name?" And when they "polluted his altar, and made the tables of the Lord contemptible," they durst say, "Wherein have we polluted thee?" Mal. vi. 1, 7. But, "Woe unto him (saith the Lord) that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?" Isa. xlv. 9.

Quest. But why is it that God will reason the case with man?

Ans. 1. Because that man, being a reasonable creature, is accordingly to be dealt with; and by reason to be persuaded and overcome. God hath therefore endowed them with reason, that they might use it for him. One would think a reasonable creature should not go against the clearest and greatest reason in the world, when it is set before him.

2. At least men shall see that God did require nothing of them that was unreasonable, but that whatever he commandeth them, and whatever he forbiddeth them, he hath all the right reason in the world on his side, and they have good reason to obey him, but none to disobey. And thus even the damned shall be forced to justify God, and confess that it was but reason that they should have turned to him; and they shall be forced to condemn themselves, and confess that they have little reason to cast away themselves by the neglecting of his grace in the day of their visitation.

Use. Look up your best and strongest reasons, sinners, if you will make good your way: you see now with whom you have to deal. What sayst thou, unconverted, sensual wretch? Darest thou venture upon a dispute with God? art thou able to confute him? Art thou ready to enter the lists? God asketh thee, Why wilt thou die? Art thou furnished with a sufficient answer? Wilt thou undertake to prove that God is mistaken, and that thou art in the right? Oh what an undertaking is that! Why either he or you is mistaken, when he is for your conver-

sion, and you are against it. He calls upon you to turn, and you will not: he bids you do it presently, even to-day, while it is called to-day, and you delay, and think it time enough hereafter. He saith, it must be a total change, and you must be holy and new creatures, and born again; and you think that less may serve the turn, and that it is enough to patch up the old man, without becoming new. Who is in the right now, God or you? God calleth on you to turn, and to live a holy life, and you will not; by your disobedient lives it appears you will not. If you will, why do you not? Why have you not done it all this while? And why do you not fall upon it yet? Your wills have the command of your lives. We may certainly conclude, that you are unwilling to turn, when you do not turn. And why will you not? Can you give any reason for it, that is worthy to be called a reason?

I that am but a worm, your fellow-creature, of a shallow capacity, dare challenge the wisest of you all to reason the case with me, while I plead my Maker's cause; and I need not be discouraged, when I know I plead but the cause that God pleadeth, and contend for him that will have the best at last. Had I but these two general grounds against you, I am sure that you have no good reason on your side.

1. I am sure it can be no good reason, which is against the God of truth and reason; it cannot be light that is contrary to the sun. There is no knowledge in any creature, but what it had from God; and therefore none can be wiser than God. It were damnable presumption for the highest angel to compare with his Creator; what is it then for a lump of dirt, an ignorant sot, that knoweth not himself, nor his own soul; that knoweth but little of the things which he seeth, yea, that is more ignorant than many of his neighbours; to set himself against the wisdom of the Lord? It is one of the fullest discoveries of the horrible wickedness of carnal men, and the stark madness of such who sin, that so silly a mole dare contradict his Maker, and call in question the word of God: yea, that those people in our parishes, that are so beastly ignorant, that they cannot give us a reasonable answer, concerning the very principles of religion, are yet so wise in their own conceit, that they dare question the plainest truths of God, yea, contradict them, and cavil against them, when they can scarce speak sense, and will believe them no farther than agreeth with their foolish wisdom.

2. And as I know that God must needs be in the right, so I know the case is so palpable and gross which he pleadeth against, that no man can have reason for it. Is it possible that a man can have any good reason to break his master's laws, and reason to dishonour the Lord of glory, and reason to abuse the Lord that bought him? Is it possible that a man can have any good reason to damn his own immortal soul? Mark the Lord's question, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" Is eternal death a thing to be desired? Are you in love with hell? What reason have you willingly to perish? If you think you have some reason to sin, should you not remember that "death is the wages of sin?" Rom. vi. 23. And think whether you have any reason to undo yourselves, body and soul, for ever? You should not only ask whether you love the adder, but whether you love the sting. It is such a thing for a man to cast away his everlasting happiness, and to sin against God, that no good reason can be given for it; but the more any one pleads for it, the more mad he showeth himself to be. Had you a lordship or a kingdom offered to you for every sin that you commit, it were not reason but madness to accept it.

Could you by every sin obtain the highest thing on earth that flesh desireth, it were of no considerable value to persuade you in reason to commit it. If it were to please your greatest and dearest friends, or obey the greatest prince on earth, or to save your lives, or to escape the greatest earthly misery, all these are of no consideration to draw a man in reason to the committing of one sin. If it were a right hand or a right eye that would hinder your salvation, it would be the gainfullest way to cast it away, rather than go to hell to save it. For there is no saving a part, when you lose the whole. So exceeding great are the matters of eternity, that nothing in this world deserveth once to be named in comparison with them, nor can any earthly thing, though it were life, or crowns and kingdoms, be a reasonable excuse for matters of so high and everlasting consequence. A man can have no reason to cross his ultimate end. Heaven is such a thing, that if you lose it, nothing can supply the want, or make up the loss. And hell is such a thing, that if you suffer it, nothing can remove your misery, or give you ease and comfort. And therefore nothing can be a valuable consideration to excuse you for neglecting your own salvation. For saith our Saviour, "What shall it profit a man to win all the world and lose his own soul?" Mark viii. 36.

O sirs! did you but know what matters they are we are now speaking to you of! The saints in heaven have other kind of thoughts of these things. If the devil could come to them that live in the sight and love of God, and should offer them a cup of ale, or a whore, or merry company, or sport, to entice them away from God and glory, I pray you tell me, how do you think they would entertain the motion? Nay, if he should offer them to be kings on the earth, do you think this would entice them down from heaven? Oh, with what hatred and holy scorn would they disdain and reject the motion! and why should not you do so that have heaven opened to your faith, if you had but faith to see it? There is never a soul in hell, but knows by this time, that it was a mad exchange to let go heaven for fleshly pleasure; and that it is not a little mirth, or pleasure, or worldly riches or honour, or the good will or the word of men, that will quench hell-fire, or make him a saver that loseth his soul. Oh if you had heard what I believe, if you had seen what I believe, and that on the credit of the word of God, you would say, there can be no reason to warrant a man to damn his soul; you durst not sleep quietly another night, before you had resolved to turn and live.

If you see a man put his hand into the fire till it burn off, you marvel at it; but this is a thing that a man may have reason for, as Bishop Crammer had when he burnt off his hand for subscribing to popery. If you see a man cut off a leg, or an arm, it is a sad sight; but this is a thing a man may have good reason for; as many a man doth to save his life. If you see a man give his body to be burnt to ashes, and to be tormented with strappadoes and racks, and refuse deliverance when it is offered; this is a hard case to flesh and blood. But this a man may have good reason for; as you may see in Heb. xi. 33—36; and as many a hundred martyrs have done. But for a man to forsake the Lord that made him, and for a man to run into the fire of hell, when he is told of it, and entreated to turn, that he may be saved; this is a thing that can have no reason in the world, that is reason indeed, to justify or excuse it. For heaven will pay for the loss of any thing that we can lose to get it, or for any labour which we bestow for it. But nothing can pay for the loss of heaven.

I beseech you now, let his word come nearer to your hearts. As you are convinced you have no reason to destroy yourselves, so tell me what reason you have to refuse to turn, and live to God; what reason hath the veriest worldling, or drunkard, or ignorant, careless sinner of you all, why you should not be as holy as any you know, and be as careful for your souls as any other? Will not hell be as hot to you as to others? Should not your own souls be as dear to you, as theirs to them? Hath not God as much authority over you? Why then will ye not become a sanctified people as well as they?

O sirs, when God bringeth down the matter to the very principles of nature, and shows you that you have no more reason to be ungodly, than you have to damn your own souls; if yet you will not understand and turn, it seems a desperate case that you are in.

And now either you have reasons for what you do, or you have not. If not, will you go on against reason itself? Will you do that which you have no reason for? But if you think you have, produce them, and make the best of your matter; reason the case a little while with your fellow-creature, which is far easier than to reason the case with God. Tell me, man, here, before the Lord, as if thou wert to die this hour, why shouldst thou not resolve to turn this day, before thou stir from the place thou standest in? What reason hast thou to deny, or to delay? Hast thou any reasons that satisfieth thine own conscience for it? or any that thou darest own and plead at the bar of God? If thou hast, let us hear them, bring them forth, and make them good. But alas! what poor stuff, what nonsense, instead of reasons, do we daily hear from ungodly men! But for their necessity, I should be ashamed to name them.

1. One saith, If none shall be saved but such converted and sanctified ones as you talk of, heaven would be but empty; then God help a great many.

Ans. What, it seems you think God doth not know, or else that he is not to be believed: measure not all by yourself; God hath thousands and millions of his sanctified ones; but yet they are few in comparison of the world, as Christ himself hath told us in Matt. vii. 13, 14, and Luke xii. 32. It better beseems you to make that use of this truth which Christ teacheth you; "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it: but wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat," Luke xiii. 22—24. "And fear not, little flock, (saith Christ to his sanctified ones,) for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," Luke xii. 32.

Object. 2. I am sure if such as I go to hell, we shall have store of company.

Ans. And will that be any ease or comfort to you? or do you think you may not have company enough in heaven? Will you be undone for company? or will you not believe that God will execute his threatenings, because there are so many that are guilty? All these are silly, unreasonable conceits.

Object. 3. But all men are sinners, even the best of you all.

Ans. But all are not unconverted sinners. The godly live not in gross sins; and their very infirmities are their grief and burden, which they daily long, and pray, and strive to be rid of. Sin hath not dominion over them.

Object. 4. I do not see that professors are any better than other men; they will overreach and oppress, and are as covetous as any.

Ans. Whatever hypocrites are, it is not so with those that are sanctified. God hath thousands and ten thousands that are otherwise. Though the malicious world doth accuse them of what they can never prove, and of that which never entered into their hearts. And commonly they charge them with heart sins, which none can see but God; because they can charge them with no such wickedness in their lives, as they are guilty of themselves.

Object. 5. But I am no whoremonger, nor drunkard, nor oppressor; and therefore why should you call upon me to be converted?

Ans. As if you were not born after the flesh, and had not lived after the flesh, as well as others. Is it not as great a sin as any of these, for a man to have an earthly mind, and to love the world above God, and to have a faithless, unhumiliated heart? Nay, let me tell you more, that many persons that avoid disgraceful sins, are fast glued to the world, and as much slaves to the flesh, and as strange to God, and averse to heaven, in their more civil course, as others are in their more shameful, notorious sins.

Object. 6. But I mean nobody any harm, or do no harm; and why then should God condemn me?

Ans. Is it no harm to neglect the Lord that made thee, and the work for which thou camest into the world, and prefer the creature before the Creator, and neglect grace that is daily offered thee? It is the depth of thy sinfulness, to be insensible of it. The dead feel not that they are dead. If once thou wert made alive, thou wouldst see more amiss in thyself, and marvel at thyself for making so light of it.

Object. 7. I think you will make men mad under a pretence of converting them: it is enough to rack the brains of simple people, to muse so much on matters too high for them.

Ans. 1. Can you be madder than you are already? Or at least, can there be a more dangerous madness, than to neglect your everlasting welfare, and willfully undo yourselves?

2. A man is never well in his wits till he be converted; he neither knows God, nor sin, nor Christ, nor the world, nor himself, nor what his business is on the earth, so as to set himself about it, till he be converted. The Scripture saith that the wicked are unreasonable men, 2 Thess. iii. 2; and "that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God," 1 Cor. i. 20; and Luke xv. 17, it is said of the prodigal, "that when he came to himself," he resolved to return. It is a wise world when men will disobey God, and run to hell for fear of being out of their wits.

3. What is there in the work that Christ calls you to, that should drive a man out of his wits? Is it the loving of God, and calling upon him, and comfortable thinking of the glory to come, and the forsaking of our sins, and the loving of one another, and delighting ourselves in the service of God? Are these such things as should make men mad?

4. And whereas you say, that these matters are too high for us, you accuse God himself for making this our work, and giving us his word, and commanding all that will be blessed, to meditate in it day and night. Are the matters which we are made for, and which we live for, too high for us to meddle with? This is plainly to unman us, and to make beasts of us, as if we were like to them that must meddle with no higher matters than what belongeth to flesh and earth. If heaven be too high for you to think on, and to provide for, it will be too high for you ever to possess.

5. If God should sometimes suffer any weak-headed person to be distracted by thinking of eternal things, this is because they misunderstand them, and

run without a guide. And of the two, I had rather be in the case of such a one, than of the mad, unconverted world, that take their distraction to be their wisdom.

Object. 8. I do not think that God doth care so much what men think, or speak, or do, as to make so great a matter of it.

Ans. It seems then, you take the word of God to be false; and then what will you believe? But your own reason might teach you better, if you believe not the Scriptures; for you see God doth not set so light by us, but that he vouchsafed to make us, and still preserveth us, and daily upholdeth us, and provideth for us; and will any wise man make a curious frame for nothing? Will you make or buy a clock, or a watch, and daily look to it, and not care whether it go true or false? Surely if you believe not a particular eye of Providence observing your hearts and lives, you cannot believe or expect any particular Providence to observe your wants and troubles, to relieve you. And if God had so little cared for you, as you imagine, you would never have lived till now; a hundred diseases would have striven which should first destroy you. Yea, the devil would have haunted you, and fetched you away alive, as the great fishes devour the less; and as ravenous beasts and birds devour others. You cannot think that God made man for no end or use; and if he made him for any, it was sure for himself. And can you think he cares not whether his end be accomplished, and whether we do the work that we are made for?

Yea, by this atheistical objection, you make God to have made and upheld all the world in vain. For what are all other lower creatures for, but for man? What doth the earth but bear us, and nourish us? And the beasts do serve us with their labours and lives; and so of the rest. And hath God made so glorious a habitation, and set man to dwell in it, and made all his servants; and now doth he look for nothing at his hands? nor care how he thinks, or speaks, or lives? This is most unreasonable.

Object. 9. It was a better world when men did not make so much ado in religion.

Ans. It hath ever been the custom to praise the time past. That world that you speak of, was wont to say, It was a better world in our forefathers' days, and so did they of their forefathers. This is but an old custom, because we all feel the evil of our own times, but we see not that which was before us.

2. Perhaps you speak as you think: worldlings think the world is at the best, when it is agreeable to their minds, and when they have most mirth and worldly pleasure. And I doubt not but the devil, as well as you, would say, that then it was a better world: for then he had more service, and less disturbance; but the world is best, when God is most loved, regarded, and obeyed. And how else will you know when the world is good or bad, but by this?

Object. 10. There are so many ways and religions, that we know not which to be of; and therefore we will be even as we are.

Ans. Because there are many, will you be of that way that you may be sure is wrong? None are farther out of the way, than worldly, fleshly, unconverted sinners. For they do not err in this or that opinion, as many sects do; but in the very scope and drift of their lives. If you were going a journey that your life lay on, would you stop or turn again, because you meet some cross-ways, or because you saw some travellers go the horse-way and some the foot-way, and some perhaps break over the hedge, yea, and some miss the way? Or would you not rather be the more careful to inquire the way? If you have some servants that know not how to do

your work right, and some that are unfaithful, would you take it well at any of the rest, that would therefore be idle and do you no service, because they see the rest so bad?

Object. 11. I do not see that it goes any better with those that are so godly, than with other men. They are as poor, and in as much trouble, as others.

Ans. And perhaps in much more, when God sees it meet. They take not an earthly prosperity for their wages. They have laid up their treasure and hopes in another world, or else they are not christians indeed. The less they have, the more is behind: and they are content to wait till then.

Object. 12. When you have said all that you can, I am resolved to hope well, and trust in God, and do as well as I can, and not make so much ado.

Ans. 1. Is that doing as well as you can, when you will not turn to God, but your heart is against his holy and diligent service? It is as well as you will, indeed; but that is your misery.

2. My desire is that you should hope and trust in God. But for what is it that you will hope? Is it to be saved, if you turn and be sanctified? For this you have God's promise; and therefore hope for it, and spare not; but if you hope to be saved without conversion and a holy life, this is not to hope in God, but in Satan, or yourselves; for God hath given you no such promise, but told you the contrary; but it is Satan and self-love that made you such promises, and raised you to such hopes.

Well, if these, and such as these, be all you have to say against conversion and a holy life, your all is nothing, and worse than nothing; and if these, and such as these, seem reasons sufficient to persuade you to forsake God, and cast yourselves into hell, the Lord deliver you from such reasons, and from such blind understandings, and from such senseless, hardened hearts. Dare you stand to every one of these reasons at the bar of God? Do you think it will then serve your turn, to say, Lord, I did not turn, because I had so much to do in the world, or because I did not like the lives of some professors, or because I saw men of so many minds? Oh how easily will the light of that day confound and shame such reasons as these! Had you the world to look after? Let the world which you served, now pay you your wages, and save you if it can! Had you not a better world to look after first? And were ye not commanded to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, and promised, that other things shall be added to you? Matt. vi. 33. And were you not told, "that godliness was profitable to all things, having the promise of this life, and of that which is to come?"

1 Tim. iv. 8. Did the sins of professors hinder you? You should rather have been the more heedful, and learned by their falls to beware; and have been the more careful, and not to be more careless; it was the Scripture and not their lives, that was your rule. Did the many opinions of the world hinder you? Why, the Scripture that was your rule, did teach you but one way, and that was the right way; if you had followed that, even in so much as was plain and easy, you would never have miscarried. Will not such answers as these confound and silence you? If these will not, God hath those that will. When he asketh the man, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" Matt. xxii. 12; that is, what dost thou in my church amongst professed christians, without a holy heart and life? what answer did he make? Why, the text saith, "He was speechless," he had nothing to say. The clearness of the case, and the majesty of God, will then easily stop the mouths of the most confident of you, though you will not be put down by any thing

that we can say to you now, but will make good your cause, be it never so bad. I know already, that never a reason that now you can give me, will do you any good at last, when your case must be opened before the Lord and all the world.

Nay, I scarce think that your own consciences are well satisfied with your reasons. For if they are, it seems then you have not so much as a purpose to repent: but if you do but purpose to repent, it seems you do not put much confidence in your reasons which you bring against it.

What say you, unconverted sinners? Have you any good reason to give, why you should not turn, and presently turn with all your hearts? or, will you go to hell in despite of reason itself? Bethink you what you do, in time, for it will shortly be too late to bethink you. Can you find any fault with God, or his work, or wages? Is he a bad master? Is the devil whom ye serve a better? or is the flesh a better? Is there any harm in a holy life? Is a life of worldliness and ungodliness better? Do you think in your conscience, that it would do you any harm to be converted, and live a holy life? What harm can it do you? Is it harm to you to have the Spirit of Christ within you? and to have a cleansed, purified heart? If it be bad to be holy, why doth God say, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." 1 Pet. i. 15, 16; Lev. xx. 7. Is it evil to be like God? Is it not said, that "God made man in his own image?" Why, this holiness is his image: this Adam lost, and this Christ by his word and Spirit would restore you, as he doth to all that he will save. Why were you baptized into the Holy Ghost, and why do you baptize your children into the Holy Ghost, as your Sanctifier, if ye will not be sanctified by him, but think it a hurt to be sanctified? Tell me truly, as before the Lord, though you are loth to live a holy life, had you not rather die in the case of those that do so, than of others? If you were to die this day, had you not rather die in the case of a converted man, than of the unconverted? of a holy and heavenly man, than of a carnal, earthly man? And would you not say as Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?" Numb. xxiii. 10. And why will you not now be of the mind that you will be of then? First or last you must come to this; either to be converted, or to wish you had been when it is too late.

But what is it that you are afraid of losing if you turn? Is it your friends? You will but change them: God will be your friend, and Christ and the Spirit will be your friend, and every christian will be your friend. You will get one Friend that will stand in more stead than all the friends in the world could have done. The friends you lose would have but enticed you to hell, but could not have delivered you; but the Friend you get will save you from hell, and bring you to his own eternal rest.

Is it your pleasures that you are afraid of losing? You think you shall never have a merry day again, if once you be converted. Alas! that you should think it a greater pleasure to live in foolish sports and merriments, and please your flesh, than live in the believing thoughts of glory, and in the love of God, and in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, in which the state of grace consisteth, Rom. xiv. 17. If it be a greater pleasure to you to think of your lands and inheritance, (if you were lord of all the country,) than it is to a child to play with pins; why should it not be a greater joy to you to think of the kingdom of heaven being yours, than all the riches or pleasures of the world? As it is but foolish childishness that makes children so delight in gawds, that

they would not leave them for all your lands; so it is but foolish worldliness, and fleshliness, and wickedness, that makes you so much delight in your houses, and lands, and meat, and drink, and ease, and honour, as that you would not part with them for heavenly delights. But what will you do for pleasure when these are gone? Do you not think of that? When your pleasures end in horror, and go out with a stinking snuff, the pleasures of the saints are then at the best. I have had myself but a little taste of the heavenly pleasures, in the forethoughts of the blessed approaching day, and in the present persuasions of the love of God in Christ; but I have taken too deep a draught of earthly pleasures; (so that you may see, if I be partial, it is on your side;) and yet I must profess from that little experience, that there is no comparison. There is more joy to be had in a day (if the sun of life shine clear upon us) in the state of holiness, than in a whole life of sinful pleasure: I had "rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. A day in his courts is better than a thousand" any where else, Psal. lxxxiv. 10. The mirth of the wicked is like the laughter of a madman, that knows not his own misery: and therefore Solomon saith of such laughter, "It is mad; and of mirth, What doth it?—It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than to hear the song of fools; for as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of a fool." Eccl. ii. 2; vii. 2—6. All the pleasure of fleshly things, is but like the scratching of a man that hath the itch; it is his disease that makes him desire it: and a wise man had rather be without his pleasure, than be troubled with his itch. Your loudest laughter is but like that of a man that is tickled, he laughs when he hath no cause of joy. And it is a wiser thing for a man to give all his estate, and his life, to be tickled to make him laugh, than for you to part with the love of God, and the comforts of holiness, and the hopes of heaven, and to cast yourselves into damnation, that you may have your flesh tickled with the pleasure of sin for a little while. Judge as you are men whether this be a wise man's part. It is your carnal, unsanctified nature that makes a holy life seem grievous to you, and a course of sensuality seem more delightful. If you will but turn, the Holy Ghost will give you another nature and inclination, and then it will be more pleasant to you to be rid of your sin, than now it is to keep it; and you will then say that you knew not what a comfortable life was till now, and that it was never well with you till God and holiness were your delight.

Quest. But how cometh it to pass, that men should be so unreasonable in the matters of salvation? They have wit enough in other matters; what makes them so loth to be converted, that there should need so many words in so plain a case; and all will not do, but the most will live and die unconverted?

Ans. To name them only in few words, the causes are these:

1. Men are naturally in love with earth and flesh, they are born sinners, and their nature hath an enmity to God and godliness, as the nature of a serpent hath to a man. And when all that we can say goes against the habitual inclinations of their natures, no marvel if it little prevail.

2. They are in darkness, and know not the very things that they hear. Like a man that was born blind, and hears a high commendation of the light: but what will hearing do, unless he sees it? They know not what God is, nor what is the power of the cross of Christ, nor what the Spirit of holiness is, nor what it is to live in love by faith. They know not the certainty, and suitableness, and excellency of the heavenly inheritance. They know not what conversion and a holy mind and conversation are, even when they hear of them. They are in a mist of ignorance, they are lost and bewildered in sin; like a man that hath lost himself in the night, and knows not where he is, nor how to come to himself again, till the daylight do recover him.

3. They are wilfully confident that they need no conversion, but some partial amendment; and that they are in the way to heaven already, and are converted, when they are not. And if you meet a man that is quite out of his way, you may long enough call on him to turn back again, if he will not believe you that he is out of the way.

4. They are become slaves to their flesh, and drowned in the world to make provision for it. Their lusts, and passions, and appetites have distracted them, and got such a hand over them, that they cannot tell how to deny them, or how to mind any thing else. So that the drunkard saith, I love a cup of good drink, and cannot forbear it. The glutton saith, I love good cheer, and I cannot forbear. The fornicator saith, I love to have my lusts fulfilled, and I cannot forbear. And the gamester loveth to have his sports, and he cannot forbear. So that they are even become captivated slaves to their flesh, and their very wilfulness is become an impotency, and what they would not do they say they cannot. And the worldling is so taken up with earthly things, that he hath neither heart, nor mind, nor time for heavenly; but as in Pharaoh's dream, Gen. xli. 4, the lean kine did eat up the fat ones, so this lean and barren earth do eat up all the thoughts of heaven.

5. Some are so carried away by the stream of evil company, that they are possessed with hard thoughts of a godly life, by hearing them speak against it: or at least they think they may venture to do as they see most do; and so they hold on in their sinful ways. And when one is cut off and cast into hell, and another snatched away from among them to the same condemnation, it doth not much daunt them, because they see not whither they are gone. Poor wretches! they hold on in their ungodliness for all this; for they little know that their companions are now lamenting it in torments. In Luke xvi. the rich man in hell would fain have had one to warn his five brethren, lest they should come to that place of torment. It is like he knew their minds and lives, and knew that they were hasting thither, and little dreamed that he was there; yea, and little would have believed one that should have told them so. I remember a passage a gentleman told me he saw upon a bridge over the Severn.^a A man was driving a flock of fat lambs, and something meeting them and hindering their passage, one of the lambs leaped upon the wall of the bridge, and his legs slipping from under him, he fell into the stream; and the rest seeing him, did one after another leap over the bridge into the stream, and were all, or almost all, drowned. Those that were behind, did little know what was become of them that were gone before, but thought that they might venture to follow their companions. But as soon as ever they were over the wall and falling headlong,

the case was altered. Even so it is with unconverted, carnal men. One dieth by them, and drops into hell, and another follows the same way; and yet they will go after them, because they think not whither they are going. Oh! but when death has once opened their eyes, and they see what is on the other side of the wall, even in another world, then what would they give to be where they were!

6. Moreover, they have a subtle, malicious enemy, that is unseen of them, and plays his game in the dark; and it is his principal business to hinder their conversion; and therefore to keep them where they are, by persuading them not to believe the Scriptures, or not to trouble their minds with these matters; or by persuading them to think ill of a godly life, or to think that it is more ado than needs, and that they may be saved without conversion, and without all this stir; and that God is so merciful, that he will not damn any such as they, or, at least, that they may stay a little longer, and take their pleasure, and follow the world a little longer yet, and then let it go, and repent hereafter; and by such juggling, deluding cheats as these, the devil keeps most in his captivity, and leadeth them to his misery.

These, and such like impediments as these, do keep so many thousands unconverted, when God hath done so much, and Christ hath suffered so much, and ministers have said so much, for their conversion; when their reasons are silenced, and they are not able to answer the Lord that calls after them, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" yet all comes to nothing with the greatest part of them; and they leave us no more to do after all, but to sit down and lament their wilful misery.

I have now showed you the reasonableness of God's commands, and the unreasonableness of wicked men's disobedience. If nothing will serve turn, but men will yet refuse to turn, we are next to consider who it is long of if they be damned. And this brings me to the last doctrine; which is,

Doct. VII. That if, after all this, men will not turn, it is not long of God that they are condemned, but of themselves, even their own wilfulness. They die because they will die, that is, because they will not turn.

If you will go to hell, what remedy? God here acquits himself of your blood: it shall not lie on him if you be lost. A negligent minister may draw it upon him; and those that encourage you, or hinder you not, in sin, may draw it upon them; but be sure of it, it shall not lie upon God. Saith the Lord concerning his unprofitable vineyard, "Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard: what could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it?" When he had "planted it in a fruitful soil, and fenced it, and gathered out the stones, and planted it with the choicest vines," what should he have done more to it? Isa. v. 1-4. He hath made you men, and ended you with reason; he hath furnished you with external necessities, all creatures are at your service; he hath given you a righteous, perfect law; when you had broke it, and undone yourselves, he had pity on you, and sent his Son by a miracle of condescending mercy to die for you, and be a sacrifice for your sins, and he "was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." The Lord Jesus hath made you a deed of gift of himself, and eternal life with him, on the condition you will but accept it, and return. He hath, on this reasonable condition, offered you the free pardon of all your sins: he hath written this in his word, and sealed it by his Spirit, and sent it you by his ministers; they have made the offer to you a hundred and a hundred times, and called you to accept it, and turn to God. They have

^a Mr. R. Rowley, of Shrewsbury, upon Acham bridge.

in his name entreated you, and reasoned the case with you, and answered all your frivolous objections. He hath long waited on you, and staid your leisure, and suffered you to abuse him to his face. He hath mercifully sustained you in the midst of your sins; he hath compassed you about with all sorts of mercies; he hath also intermixed afflictions, to mind you of your folly, and call you to your wits; and his Spirit hath been often striving with your hearts, and saying there, Turn sinner, turn to him that calleth thee: whither art thou going? What art thou doing? Dost thou know what will be the end? How long wilt thou hate thy friends, and love thine enemies? When wilt thou let go all, and turn, and deliver up thyself to God, and give thy Redeemer the possession of thy soul? When shall it once be? These pleadings have been used with thee; and when thou hast delayed, thou hast been urged to make haste, and God hath called to thee, "To-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your heart? Why not now without any more delay?" Life hath been set before you; the joys of heaven have been opened to you in the gospel; the certainty of them have been manifested; the certainty of the everlasting torments of the damned hath been declared to you, unless you would have had a sight of heaven and hell, what could you desire more? Christ hath been, &c. it were, set forth crucified before your eyes, Gal. iii. 1. You have been a hundred times told, that you are but lost men, till you come unto him; as oft as you have been told of the evil of sin, and of the vanity of sin, the world, and all the pleasures and wealth it can afford; of the shortness and uncertainty of your lives, and the endless duration of the joy or torment of the life to come. All this, and more than this, have you been told, and told again, even till you were weary of hearing it, and till you could make the lighter of it, because you had so often heard it; like the smith's dog, that is brought, by custom, to sleep under the noise of the hammers, when the sparks do fly about his ears: and though all this have not converted you, yet you are alive, and might have mercy, to this day, if you had but hearts to entertain it. And now let reason itself be judge, whether it be long of God or you, if after all this you will be unconverted, and be damned? If you die now it is because you will die. What should be said more to you? or what course should be taken, that is liker to prevail? Are you able to say and make it good, We would fain have been converted and become new creatures, but we could not; we would have changed our company, and our thoughts, and our discourse, but we could not. Why could you not if you would? What hindered you, but the wickedness of your hearts? Who forced you to sin? or who did hold you back from duty? Had you not the same teaching, and time, and liberty to be godly as your godly neighbours had? Why then could you not have been godly as well as they? Were the church doors shut against you, or did you not keep away yourselves? or sit and sleep, or hear as if you did not hear? Did God put in any exceptions against you in his word, when he invited sinners to return, and when he promised mercy to those that do return? Did he say, I will pardon all that repent, except thee? Did he shut you out from the liberty of his holy worship? Did he forbid you to pray to him, any more than others? You know he did not. God did not drive you away from him, but you forsook him, and run away yourselves. And when he called you to him, you would not come. If God had excepted you out of the general promise and offer of mercy, or had said to you, Stand off, I will have nothing to do with such as you; pray not to me, for I

will not hear you. If you repent never so much, and cry for mercy never so much, I will not regard you. If God had left you nothing to trust to but desperation, then you had had a fair excuse. You might have said, To what end should I repent and turn, when it will do no good? But this was not your case. You might have had Christ to be your Lord and Saviour, your Head and Husband, as well as others, and you would not; because that ye felt not yourselves sick enough for the physician; and because you could not spare your disease: in your hearts ye said as those rebels, Luke xix. 14, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Christ would have gathered you under the wings of his salvation, and ye would not, Matt. xxiii. 27. What desires of your welfare did the Lord express in his holy word! With what compassion did he stand over you and say, "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and that they had walked in my way!" Psal. lxxxi. 13. "Oh that there were such a heart in this people, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Deut. v. 29. "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, and that they would consider their latter end!" Deut. xxxii. 29. He would have been your God, and done all for you that your souls could well desire; but you loved the world and your flesh above him, and therefore you would not hearken to him; though you complimented with him, and gave him high titles, yet when he came to the closing, you would have none of him. No marvel then, if "he gave you up to your own heart's lusts, and you walked in your own counsels," Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12. He condescends to reason, and pleads the case with you, and asks you, What is there in me, or my service, that you should be so much against me? What harm have I done thee, sinner? Have I deserved this unkind dealing at thy hands? Many mercies have I showed thee; for which of them dost thou despise me? Is it I, or is it Satan, that is thy enemy? Is it I, or is it thy carnal self, that would undo thee? Is it a holy life, or a life of sin, that thou hast cause to fly from? If thou be undone, thou procurest this to thyself, by forsaking me the Lord, that would have saved thee, Jer. ii. 17. "Doth not thine own wickedness correct thee, and thy sin reprove thee: thou mayest see that it is an evil and bitter thing, that thou hast forsaken me," Jer. ii. 19. "What iniquity have ye found in me, that you have followed after vanity, and forsaken me?" Jer. ii. 5, 6. He calleth out, as it were, to the brutes to hear the controversy he hath against you. "Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. O my people, what have I done to thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me; for I brought thee out of Egypt, and redeemed thee," &c. Mic. ii. 2-5. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers!" &c. Isa. i. 2-4. "Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father that bought thee, made thee, and established thee?" Deut. xxxii. 6. When he saw that you forsook him even for nothing, and turned away from your Lord and life, to hunt after the chaff and feathers of the world, he told you of your folly, and called you to a more profitable employment. "Wherefore do you spend

your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.—Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,” Isa. lv. 1—3, 6, 7. And so Isa. i. 16—18. And when you would not hear, what complaints have you put him to, charging it on you as your wilfulness and stubbornness! “Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid: for my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water,” Jer. ii. 12, 13. Many a time hath Christ proclaimed that free invitation to you, “Let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,” Rev. xxii. 17. But you put him to complain after all his offers, “They will not come to me that they may have life,” John v. 40. He hath invited you to feast with him in the kingdom of his grace; and you have had excuses from your grounds, and your cattle, and your worldly business; and when you would not come, you have said you could not, and provoked him to resolve that you should never taste of his supper, Luke xiv. 15—23. And who is it long of now but yourselves? And what can you say is the chief cause of your damnation, but your own wills? You would be damned. The whole case is laid open by Christ himself, Prov. i. 20, to the end: “Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse: How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer: they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil.” I thought best to recite the whole text at large to you, because it doth so fully show the cause of the destruction of the wicked. It is not because God would not teach them, but because they would not learn. It is not because God would not call them, but because they would not turn at his reproof. Their wilfulness is their undoing.

Use. From what hath been said, you may further learn these following things:

1. From hence you may see, not only what blasphemy and impiety it is, to lay the blame of men's destruction upon God; but also how unfit these wicked wretches are, to bring in such a charge

against their Maker. They cry out upon God, and say, he gives them no grace, and his threatenings are severe, and God forbid that all should be damned that be not converted and sanctified, and they think it hard measure, that a short sin should have an endless suffering; and if they be damned, they say, they cannot help it. When in the mean time they are busy about their own destruction, even cutting the throat of their own souls, and will not be persuaded to hold their hand. They think God were cruel if he should damn them, and yet they are cruel to themselves, and they will run into the fire of hell, when God hath told them it is a little before them; and neither entreaties nor threatenings, nor any thing that can be said, will stop them. We see them almost undone; their careless, worldly, fleshly lives do tell us, that they are in the power of the devil; we know, if they die before they are converted, all the world cannot save them; and knowing the uncertainty of their lives, we are afraid every day lest they drop into the fire. And, therefore, we entreat them to pity their own souls, and not to undo themselves when mercy is at hand; and they will not hear us. We entreat them to cast away their sin, and come to Christ without delay, and to have some mercy on themselves; but they will have none. And yet they think that God must be cruel if he condemn them. O wifful, wretched sinners! it is not God that is so cruel to you; it is you that are cruel to yourselves. You are told you must turn or burn, and yet you turn not. You are told, that if you will needs keep your sins, you shall keep the curse of God with them, and yet you will keep them. You are told, that there is no way to happiness but by holiness, and yet you will not be holy. What would you have God say more to you? What would you have him do with his mercy? He offered it to you, and you will not have it. You are in the ditch of sin and misery, and he would give you his hand to help you out, and you refuse his help; he would cleanse you of your sins, and you had rather keep them. You love your lusts, and love your gluttony, and sports, and drunkenness, and will not let them go; and would you have him bring you to heaven whether you will or no? or would you have him to bring you and your sins to heaven together? Why, that is an impossibility; you may as well expect he should turn the sun into darkness. What! an unsanctified, fleshly heart be in heaven? it cannot be! “There entereth nothing that is unclean,” Rev. xxi. 17. “For what communication hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?” 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. “All the day long hath he stretched out his hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people,” Rom. x. 25. What will ye do now? Will you cry to God for mercy? Why, God calleth upon you to have mercy upon yourselves, and you will not; ministers see the poisoned cup in the drunkard's hand, and tell him, There is poison in it, and desire him to have mercy on his soul, and forbear, and he will not hear us; drink it he must, and will; he loves it, and, therefore, though hell comes next, he saith, he cannot help it. What should one say to such men as these? We tell the ungodly, careless worldlings, It is not such a life that will serve the turn, or ever bring you to heaven. If a bear were at your back, you would mend your pace; and when the curse of God is at your back, and Satan and hell are at your back, you will not stir, but ask, What needs all this ado? Is an immortal soul of no more worth? O have mercy upon yourselves! But they will have no mercy on themselves, nor once regard us. We tell them the end will be bitter. Who can dwell with the everlasting fire? And yet they will have no mercy upon them-

selves. And yet will these shameful wretches say, that God is more merciful than to condemn them? when it is themselves that cruelly and unmercifully run upon condemnation. And if we should go to them with our hats in our hands, and entreat them, we cannot stop them; if we should fall down on our knees to them, we cannot stop them; but to hell they will, and yet will not believe that they are going thither. If we beg of them, for the sake of God that made them, and preserveth them; for the sake of Christ that died for them; for the sake of their own poor souls; to pity themselves, and go no farther in the way to hell, but come to Christ while his arms are open, and enter into the state of life while the door stands open, and now take mercy while mercy may be had, they will not be persuaded. If we should die for it, we cannot get them so much as now and then to consider with themselves of the matter, and to turn. And yet they can say, I hope God will be merciful. Did you never consider what he saith, Isa. xxvii. 11, "It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour." If another man will not clothe you when you are naked, and feed you when you are hungry, you will say he is unmerciful. If he should cast you into prison, or beat or torment you, you would say he is unmerciful. And yet you would do a thousand times more against yourselves, even cast away both soul and body for ever, and never complain of your own unmercifulness. Yea, and God that waited upon you all the while with his mercy, must be taken to be unmerciful, if he punish you after all this. Unless the holy God of heaven will give these wretches leave to trample upon his Son's blood, and with the Jews, as it were, again to spit in his face, and do despite to the Spirit of grace, and make a jest of sin, and a mock at holiness, and set more light by saving mercy, than by the filth of their fleshly pleasure; and unless, after all this, he will save them by the mercy which they cast away, and would none of, God himself must be called unmerciful by them: but he will be justified when he judgeth; and he will not stand or fall at the bar of a sinful worm.

I know there are many particular evils, that are brought by them against the Lord, but I shall not here stay to answer them particularly, having done it already in my "Treatise of Judgment," to which I shall refer them. Had the disputing part of the world been as careful to avoid sin and destruction, as they have been busy in searching after the cause of them, and forward indirectly to impute it to God, they might have exercised their wits more profitably, and have less wronged God, and sped better themselves. When so ugly a monster as sin is within us, and so heavy a thing as punishment is on us, and so dreadful a thing as hell is before us, one would think it should be an easy question who is in the fault, and whether God or man be the principal or culpable cause? Some men are such favourable judges of themselves, that they are proner to accuse the Infinite Perfection and Goodness itself, than their own hearts; and imitate their first parents, that said, "The serpent tempted me, and the woman that thou gavest me, gave unto me, and I did eat," secretly implying that God was the cause. So say they, The understanding that thou gavest me was unable to discern; the will that thou gavest me, was unable to make a better choice; the objects which thou didst set before me did entice me; the temptation which thou didst permit to assault me prevailed against me. And some are so loth to think, that God can make a self-determining creature, that they dare not deny

him that which they take to be his prerogative, to be the determiner of the will in every sin, as the first efficient, immediate, physical cause. And many could be content to acquit God from so much causing of evil, if they could but reconcile it with his being the chief cause of good. As if truths would be no longer truths, than we are able to see them in their perfect order and coherence; because our ravelled wits cannot set them right together, nor assign each truth its proper place, we presume to conclude, that some must be cast away. This is the fruit of proud self-conceitiveness, when men receive not God's truth as a child his lesson, in a holy submission to the holy omniscience of our Teacher, but as censors that are too wise to learn.

Object. But we cannot convert ourselves till God convert us; we can do nothing without his grace. It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy.

Ans. 1. God hath two degrees of mercy to show: the mercy of conversion first, and the mercy of salvation last. The latter he will give to none but those that will and run, and hath promised it to them only. The former is to make them willing that were unwilling; and though your own willingness and endeavours deserve not his grace, yet your wilful refusal deserveth that it should be denied unto you. Your disability is your very unwillingness itself, which excuseth not your sin, but maketh it the greater. You could turn, if you were but truly willing; and if your wills themselves are so corrupted, that nothing but effectual grace will move them, you have the more cause to seek for that grace, and yield to it, and do what you can in the use of the means, and not neglect it, nor set against it. Do what you are able first, and then complain of God for denying you grace, if you have cause.

Object. But you seem to intimate, all this while, that man hath free-will.

Ans. The dispute about free-will is beyond your capacity; I shall, therefore, now trouble you with no more but this about it. Your will is naturally a free, that is, a self-determining faculty; but it is viciously inclined, and backward to do good; and therefore, we see by sad experience that it hath not a virtuous, moral freedom. But that is the wickedness of it which deserveth the punishment. And I pray you let us not befool ourselves with opinions. Let the case be your own. If you had an enemy so malicious, that he falls upon you and beats you every time he meets you, and takes away the lives of your children, will you excuse him, because he saith, I have not free-will, it is my nature, I cannot choose, unless God give me grace? If you have a servant that robbeth you, will you take such an answer from him? Might not every thief and murderer that is hanged at the assize, give such an answer, I have not free-will, I cannot change my own heart. What can I do without God's grace? And shall they, therefore, be acquitted? If not, why, then, should you think to be acquitted for a course of sin against the Lord?

2. From hence also you may observe these three things together. (1.) What a subtle tempter Satan is. (2.) What a deceitful thing sin is. (3.) What a foolish creature corrupted man is. A subtle tempter, indeed, that can persuade the greatest part of the world to go wilfully into everlasting fire, when they have so many warnings and dissuaves as they have! A deceitful thing is sin, indeed, that can bewitch so many thousands to part with everlasting life, for a thing so base and utterly unworthy! A foolish creature is man, indeed, that will be so cheated of his salvation for nothing; yea, for a known nothing! and that by an enemy, and a known

enemy! You would think it impossible that any man in his wits should be persuaded for a trifle, to cast himself into the fire or water, into a coal-pit, to the destruction of his life; and yet men will be enticed to cast themselves into hell. If your natural lives were in your own hands, that you should not die till you would kill yourselves, how long would most of you live! And yet, when your everlasting life is so far in your own hands, under God, that you cannot be undone till you undo yourselves, how few of you will forbear your own undoing! Ah, what a silly thing is man! and what a bewitching and befooling thing is sin!

3. From hence also you may learn, that it is no great wonder, if wicked men be hinderers of others in the way to heaven, and would have as many unconverted as they can, and would draw them into sin, and keep them in it. Can you expect that they should have mercy on others, that have none upon themselves? and that they should much stick at the destruction of others, that stick not to destroy themselves? They do no worse by others, than they do by themselves.

4. Lastly, You may hence learn that the greatest enemy to man is himself, and the greatest judgment in this life, that can befall him, is to be left to himself; and that the great work that grace hath to do, is to save us from ourselves, and the greatest accusations and complaints of men should be against themselves; and that the greatest work we have to do ourselves, is to resist ourselves; and the greatest enemy we should daily pray, and watch, and strive against, is our carnal hearts and wills; and the greatest part of your work, if you would do good to others, and help them to heaven, is to save them from themselves, even from their own blind understandings, and corrupted wills, and perverse affections, and violent passions, and unruly senses. I only name all these for brevity sake, and leave them to your further consideration.

Well, sirs, now we have found out the great delinquent and murderer of souls (even men's selves, their own wills); what remains, but that you judge according to the evidence, and confess this great iniquity before the Lord, and be humbled for it, and do so no more? To these three ends distinctly, I shall add a few words more. 1. Further to convince you. 2. To humble you. And, 3. To reform you, if there be yet any hopes.

1. We know so much of the exceeding gracious nature of God, who is willing to do good, and delightheth to show mercy, that we have no reason to suspect him of being the culpable cause of our death, or call him cruel. He made all good, and he preserveth and maintaineth all. "The eyes of all things do wait upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due season; he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desires of all the living," Psal. cxlv. 15, 16. He is not only "righteous in all his ways," (and, therefore, will deal justly,) "and holy in all his works, (and, therefore, not the author of sin,) but "he is also good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works," Psal. cxlv. 17, 9.

But as for man, we know his mind is dark, his will perverse, his affections carry him so headlong, that he is fitted by folly and corruption to such a work as the destroying of himself. If you saw a lamb lie killed in the way, would you sooner suspect the sheep, or the dog or wolf to be the author of it, if they both stand by; or if you see a house broken, and the people murdered, would you sooner suspect the prince, or judge, that is wise and just, and had no need; or a known thief, or murderer? I say, therefore, as James i. 13—15, "Let no man say when

he is tempted, that he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (to draw him to sin); "but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." You see here, that sin is the brat of your own concupiscence, and not to be fathered on God; and that death is the offspring of your own sin, and the fruit which it will yield you as soon as it is ripe. You have a treasure of evil in yourselves, as a spider hath of poison, from whence you are bringing forth hurt to yourselves; and spinning such webs as entangle your own souls. Your nature shows it is you that are the cause.

2. It is evident, you are your own destroyers, in that you are so ready to entertain any temptation almost that is offered you. Satan is scarce readier to move you to any evil, than you are ready to hear, and to do as he would have you. If he would tempt your understanding to error and prejudice, you yield. If he would hinder you from good resolutions, it is soon done. If he would cool any good desires or affections, it is soon done. If he would kindle any lust, or vile affections and desires, in you, it is soon done. If he would put you on to evil thoughts, words, or deeds, you are so free, that he needs no rod or spur. If he would keep you from holy thoughts, and words, and ways, a little doth it; you need no curb. You examine not his suggestions, nor resist them with any resolution, nor cast them out as he casts them in, nor quench the sparks which he endeavoureth to kindle. But you set in with him and meet him half-way, and embrace his motions, and tempt him to tempt you. And it is easy to catch such greedy fish that are ranging for a bait, and will take the bare hook.

3. Your destruction is evidently long of yourselves, in that you resist all that would help to save you, and would do you good, or hinder you from undoing yourselves. God would help and save you by his word, and you resist it, it is too strict for you. He would sanctify you by his Spirit, and you resist and quench it. If any man reprove you for your sin, you fly in his face with evil words: and if he would draw you to a holy life, and tell you of your present danger, you give him little thanks, but either bid him look to himself, he shall not answer for you; or else at best, you put him off with a heartless thanks, and will not turn when you are persuaded. If ministers would privately instruct and help you, you will not come at them, your unhumiliated souls do feel but little need of their help. If they would catechise you, you are too old to be catechised, though you are not too old to be ignorant and unholy. Whatever they can say to you for your good, you are so self-conceited and wise in your own eyes, (even in the depth of ignorance,) that you will regard nothing that agreeth not with your present conceits, but contradict your teachers, as if you were wiser than they; you resist all that they can say to you, by your ignorance and wilfulness, and foolish cavils, and shifting evasions, and unthankful rejections; so that no good that is offered, can find any welcome acceptance or entertainment with you.

4. Moreover, it is apparent that you are self-destroyers, in that you draw the matter of your sin and destruction, even from the blessed God himself. You like not the contrivance of his wisdom. You like not his justice, but take it for cruelty. You like not his holiness, but are ready to think he is such a one as yourselves, Psal. l. 21, and makes a slight of sin as you. You like not his truth, but would have his threatenings, even his peremptory threaten-

ings, prove false. And his goodness, which you seem most highly to approve, you partly abuse to the strengthening of your sin, as if you might the freelier sin, because God is merciful, and because his grace doth so much abound.

5. Yea, you fetch destruction from your blessed Redeemer, and death from the Lord of life himself. And nothing more imboldeneth you in sin, than that Christ hath died for you; as if now the danger of death were over, and you might boldly venture. As if Christ were become a servant to Satan and your sins, and must wait upon you while you are abusing him; and because he is become the Physician of souls, and is able to save to the utmost all that come to God by him, you think he must suffer you to refuse his help, and throw away his medicines, and must save you, whether you will come to God by him or no: so that a great part of your sins are occasioned by your bold presumption upon the death of Christ.

Not considering that he came to redeem his people from their sin, and to sanctify them a peculiar people to himself, and to conform them in holiness to the image of their heavenly Father, and to their Head, Matt. i. 21; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16; Col. iii. 10, 11; Phil. iii. 9, 10.

6. You also fetch your own destruction from all the providences and works of God. When you think of his eternal foreknowledge and decrees, it is to harden you in your sin, or possess your minds with quarrelling thoughts, as if his decrees might spare you the labour of repentance and a holy life, or else were the cause of your sin and death. If he afflict you, you repine; if he prosper you, you the more forget him, and are the more backward to the thoughts of the life to come. If the wicked prosper, you forget the end that will set all reckonings straight; and are ready to think, it is as good to be wicked as godly. And thus you draw your death from all.

7. And the like you do from all the creatures, and mercies of God to you; he giveth them to you as the tokens of his love, and furniture for his service, and you turn them against him to the pleasing of your flesh. You eat and drink to please your appetite, and not for the glory of God, and to enable you for his work. Your clothes you abuse to pride. Your riches draw your hearts from heaven, Phil. iii. 18. Your honours and applause do puff you up; if you have health and strength, it makes you more secure, and forget your end. Yea, other men's mercies are abused by you to your hurt. If you see their honours and dignity, you are provoked to envy them. If you see their riches, you are ready to covet them. If you look upon beauty, you are stirred up to lust. And it is well if godliness be not an eye-sore to you.

8. The very gifts that God bestoweth on you, and the ordinances of grace which he hath instituted for his church, you turn unto your sin. If you have better parts than others, you grow proud and self-conceited. If you have but common gifts, you take them for special grace. You take the bare hearing of your duty for so good a work, as if it would excuse you for not obeying it. Your prayers are turned into sin, because you "regard iniquity in your hearts," Psal. lxxvi. 18. "And depart not from iniquity when you call on the name of the Lord," 2 Tim. ii. 19. "Your prayers are abominable, because you turn away your ear from hearing the law," Prov. xxviii. 9. And are more ready to "offer the sacrifice of fools," (thinking you do God some special service,) "than to hear his word, and obey it," Eccl. v. 1. You examine not yourselves before you receive the supper of the Lord, but not discerning

the Lord's body, do eat and drink judgment to yourselves, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.

9. Yea, the persons you converse with, and all their actions, you make the occasions of your sin and destruction. If they live in the fear of God, you hate them. If they live ungodly, you imitate them. If the wicked are many, you think you may the more boldly follow them. If the godly be few, you are the more imboldened to despise them; if they walk exactly, you think they are too precise; if one of them fall into a particular temptation, you stumble upon them, and turn away from holiness, because others are imperfectly holy; as if you were warranted to break your necks because some others have, by their heedlessness, sprained a sinew or put out a bone. If a hypocrite discover himself, you say, They are all alike; and think yourselves as honest as the best. A professor can scarce slip into any miscarriage, but because he cuts his finger, you think you may boldly cut your throats. If ministers deal plainly with you, you say they rail; if they speak gently or coldly, you either sleep under them, or are little more affected than the seats you sit upon. If any errors creep into the church, some greedily entertain them, and others reproach the christian doctrine for them, which is most against them. And if we would draw you from any ancient, rooted error, which can but plead two, or three, or six, or seven hundred years' custom, you are as much offended with a motion for reformation, as if you were to lose your life by it, and hold fast old errors while you cry out against new ones. Scarce a difference can arise among the ministers of the gospel, but you will fetch your own death from it. And you will not hear, or at least not obey, the unquestionable doctrine of any of those that jump not with your conceits: one will not hear a minister, because he readeth his sermons; and another will not hear him, because he doth not read them. One will not hear him because he saith the Lord's prayer; and another will not hear him, because he doth not use it. One will not hear them that are for episcopacy, and another will not hear them that are against it. And thus I might show you in many other cases, how you turn all that comes near you to your own destruction; so clear is it, that the ungodly are self-destroyers, and that their perdition is of themselves.

Methodists, now, upon the consideration of what is said, and the review of your own ways, you should bethink you what you have done, and be ashamed, and deeply humbled, to remember it. If you be not, I pray you consider these following truths.

1. To be your own destroyers, is to sin against the deepest principle in your natures, even the principle of self-preservation. Every thing naturally desireth or inclineth to its own felicity, welfare, or perfection. And will you set yourselves to your own destruction? When you are commanded to love your neighbours as yourselves, it is supposed that you naturally love yourselves; but if you love your neighbours no better than yourselves, it seems you would have all the world be damned.

2. How extremely do you cross your own intentions! I know you intend not your own damnation, even when you are procuring it; you think you are but doing good to yourselves, by gratifying the desires of your flesh. But, alas! it is but as a draught of cold water in a burning fever, or as the scratching of an itching wildfire, which increaseth the disease and pain. If indeed you would have pleasure, profit, or honour, seek them where they are to be found, and do not hunt after them in the way to hell.

3. What pity is it, that you should do that against yourselves which none else in earth or hell can do!

If all the world were combined against you, or all the devils in hell were combined against you, they could not destroy you without yourselves, nor make you sin but by your own consent. And will you do that against yourselves which none else can do? You have hateful thoughts of the devil, because he is your enemy, and endeavoureth your destruction. And will you be worse than devils to yourselves? Why thus it is with you, if you had hearts to understand it; when you run into sin, and run from godliness, and refuse to turn at the call of God, you do more against your own souls than men or devils could do besides. And if you should set yourselves, and bend your wits, to do yourselves the greatest mischief, you could not devise to do a greater.

4. You are false to the trust that God hath reposed in you. He hath much intrusted you with your own salvation; and will you betray your trust? He hath set you with all diligence to keep your hearts; and is this the keeping of them? Prov. iv. 23.

5. You do even forbid all others to pity you, when you will have no pity on yourselves. If you cry to God in the day of your calamity, for mercy, mercy; what can you expect, but that he should thrust you away, and say, Nay, thou wouldst not have mercy on thyself; who brought this upon thee but thine own wilfulness? And if your brethren see you everlastingly in misery, how should they pity you, that were your own destroyers, and would not be dissuaded?

6. It will everlastingly make you your own tormentors in hell, to think on it, that you brought yourselves wilfully to that misery. Oh, what a gripping thought it will be for ever, to think with yourselves, that this was your own doing! That you were warned of this day, and warned again, but it would not do; that you wilfully sinned, and turned away from God; that you had time as well as others, but you abused it; you had teachers as well as others, but you refused their instruction; you had holy examples, but you did not imitate them; you were offered Christ, grace, and glory as well as others, but you had more mind to fleshly pleasures; you had a prize in your hands, but had not a heart to lay it out, Prov. xvii. 16. Can it choose but torment you, to think of this your present folly? Oh that your eyes were opened to see what you have done in the wilful wronging of your own souls! and that you better understood those words of God, Prov. viii. 33—36, "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me, love death."

And now I am come to the conclusion of this work, my heart is troubled to think how I shall leave you, lest after this the flesh should deceive you, and the world and the devil should keep you asleep, and I should leave you as I found you, till you awake in hell. Though, in care of your poor souls, I am afraid of this, as knowing the obstinacy of a carnal heart, yet I can say with the prophet Jeremiah, "I have not desired the woeful day, the Lord knoweth," Jer. xvii. 16. I have not, with James and John, desired that fire might come down from heaven, to consume them that refused Jesus Christ. But it is the preventing of the eternal fire that I have been all this while endeavouring: and oh that it had been a needless work! that God and conscience might have been as willing to spare me this labour, as some of you could have been! But, dear friends, I am so loth you should lie in everlasting fire, and be shut out of

heaven, if it be possible to prevent it, that I shall once more ask you, What do you now resolve? Will you turn or die? I look upon you as a physician on his patient, in a dangerous disease, that saith unto him, Though you are so far gone, take but this medicine, and forbear but these few things that are so hurtful to you, and I dare warrant your life; but if you will not do this, you are a dead man. What would you think of such a man, if the physician, and all the friends he hath, cannot persuade him to take one medicine to save his life, or to forbear one or two poisonous things that would kill him? This is your case. As far as you are gone in sin, do but now turn and come to Christ, and take his remedies, and your souls shall live. Cast up your deadly sins by repentance, and return not to your poisonous vomit any more, and you shall do well. But yet if it were your bodies that we had to deal with, we might partly know what to do for you. Though you would not consent, you might be held or bound, while the medicine was poured down your throats, and hurtful things might be kept from you. But about your souls it cannot be so; we cannot convert you against your wills. There is no carrying madmen to heaven in fetters. You may be condemned against your wills, because you sinned with your wills; but you cannot be saved against your wills. The wisdom of God hath thought meet to lay men's salvation or destruction exceeding much upon the choice of their own wills: that no man shall come to heaven that choose not the way to heaven; and no man shall come to hell, but shall be forced to say, I have the thing I chose, my own will did bring me hither. Now if I could but get you to be willing, to be thoroughly, and resolutely, and habitually willing, the work were more than half done. And alas! must we lose our friends, and must they lose their God, their happiness, their souls, for want of this? O God forbid! It is a strange thing to me, that men are so inhuman and stupid in the greatest matters, that in lesser things are very civil and courteous, and good neighbours. For aught I know, I have the love of all, or almost all my neighbours, so far, that if I should send to every man in the town, or parish, or country, and request a reasonable courtesy of them, they will grant it me; and yet when I come to request of them the greatest matter in the world, for themselves, and not for me, I can have nothing of many of them but a patient hearing. I know not whether people think a man in the pulpit is in good sadness or not, and means as he speaks; for I think I have few neighbours, but if I were sitting familiarly with them, and telling them of what I have seen or done, or known in the world, they would believe me, and regard what I say; but when I tell them from the infallible word of God, what they themselves shall see and know in the world to come, they show by their lives that they do either not believe it, or not much regard it. If I met ever any one of them on the way, and told them, yonder is a coal-pit, or there is a quicksand, or there are thieves lay in wait for you, I could persuade them to turn by. But when I tell them that Satan lieth in wait for them, and that sin is poison to them, and that hell is not a matter to be jested with, they go on as if they did not hear me. Truly, neighbours, I am in as good earnest with you in the pulpit, as I am in any familiar discourse, and if ever you will regard me, I beseech you let it be here. I think there is never a man of you all, but if my own soul lay at your wills, you would be willing to save it (though I cannot promise that you would leave your sins for it). Tell me, thou drunkard, art thou so cruel to me that speaks to thee, that thou wouldst not forbear a

few cups of drink, if thou knewest it would save my soul from hell? Hadst thou rather I did burn there for ever, than thou shouldst live soberly as other men do? If so, may I not say, thou art an unmerciful monster, and not a man? If I came hungry or naked to one of your doors, would you not part with more than a cup of drink to relieve me? I am confident you would; if it were to save my life, I know you would (some of you) hazard your own. And yet will you not be entreated to part with your sensual pleasures for your own salvation? Wouldst thou forbear a hundred cups of drink, man, to save my life, if it were in thy power, and wilt thou not do it to save thy own soul? I profess to you, sirs, I am as heartily a beggar with you this day, for the saving of your souls, as I would be for my own supply, if I were forced to come a begging to your doors. And, therefore, if you would hear me then, hear me now. If you would pity me then, be entreated now to pity yourselves. I do again beseech you, as if it were on my bended knees, that you would hearken to your Redeemer, and turn, that you may live. All you that have lived in ignorance, and carelessness, and presumption, to this day; and all you that have been drowned in the cares of the world, and have no mind of God and eternal glory; all you that are enslaved to your fleshly desires of meats and drinks, sports and lusts; and all you that know not the necessity of holiness, and never were acquainted with the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost upon your souls; that never embraced your blessed Redeemer by a lively faith, and with admiring and thankful apprehensions of his love, and that never felt a higher estimation of God and heaven, and a heartier love to them, than to your fleshly prosperity, and the things below; I earnestly beseech you, not only for my sake, but for the Lord's sake, and for your soul's sake, that you go not on one day longer in your former condition, but look about you and cry to God for converting grace, that you may be made new creatures, and may escape the plagues that are a little before you. And if ever you will do any thing for me, grant me this request, to turn from your evil ways and live: deny me any thing that ever I shall ask you for myself, if you will but grant me this. And if you deny me this, I care not for any thing else that you would grant me. Nay, as ever you will do any thing at the request of the Lord that made you, and redeemed you, deny him not this; for if you deny him this, he cares for nothing that you shall grant him. As ever you would have him hear your prayers, and grant your requests, and do for you at the hour of death and day of judgment, or in any of your extremities, deny not his request now in the day of your prosperity. O sirs, believe it, death and judgment, and heaven and hell, are other matters when you come near them, than they seem to carnal eyes afar off. Then you will hear such a message as I bring you, with more awakened, regardful hearts.

Well, though I cannot hope so well of all, I will hope that some of you are by this time purposing to turn and live; and that you are ready to ask me, as the Jews did Peter, Acts ii. 37, when they were pricked to their hearts, and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" How might we come to be truly converted? We are willing, if we did but know our duty. God forbid that we should choose destruction, by refusing conversion, as hitherto we have done.

If these be the thoughts and purposes of your hearts, I say of you, as God did of a promising people, Deut. v. 28, 29, "They have well said, all that they have spoken: oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always!" Your purposes are good:

oh that there were but a heart in you to perform these purposes! And in hope thereof, I shall gladly give you direction what to do, and that but briefly, that you may the easier remember it for your practice.

Direct. 1. If you would be converted and saved, labour to understand the necessity and true nature of conversion; for what, and from what, and to what, and by what it is that you must turn.

Consider what a lamentable condition you are in till the hour of your conversion, that you may see it is not a state to be rested in. You are under the guilt of all the sins that ever you committed, and under the wrath of God, and the curse of his law; you are bond-slaves to the devil, and daily employed in his work against the Lord, yourselves, and others. You are spiritually dead and deformed, as being void of the holy life, and nature, and image of the Lord. You are unfit for any holy work, and do nothing that is truly pleasing unto God. You are without any promise or assurance of his protection; and live in continual danger of his justice, not knowing what hour you may be snatched away to hell, and most certain to be damned if you die in that condition. And nothing short of conversion can prevent it. Whatever civilities, or amendments, or virtues, are short of true conversion, will never procure the saving of your souls. Keep the true sense of this natural misery, and so of the necessity of conversion, on your hearts.

And then you must understand what it is to be converted; it is to have a new heart or disposition, and a new conversation.

Quest. 1. For what must we turn?

Ans. For these ends following, which you may attain. 1. You shall immediately be made living members of Christ, and have interest in him, and be renewed after the image of God, and be adorned with all his graces, and quickened with a new and heavenly life, and saved from the tyranny of Satan and the dominion of sin, and be justified from the curse of the law, and have the pardon of all the sins of your whole lives, and be accepted of God, and made his sons, and have liberty with boldness to call him Father, and go to him by prayer in all your needs, with a promise of acceptance; you shall have the Holy Ghost to dwell in you, to sanctify and guide you. You shall have part in the brotherhood, communion, and prayers of the saints. You shall be fitted for God's service, and be freed from the dominion of sin, and be useful and a blessing to the place where you live, and shall have the promise of this life and that which is to come. You shall want nothing that is truly good for you, and your necessary afflictions you will be enabled to bear. You may have some taste of the communion of God in the Spirit; especially in all holy ordinances, where God prepareth a feast for your souls. You shall be heirs of heaven while you live on earth, and may foresee, by faith, the everlasting glory, and so may live and die in peace; and you shall never be so low, but your peace and happiness will be incomparably greater than your misery.

How precious is every one of these blessings, which I do but briefly name, and which in this life you may receive!

And then, 2. At death your souls shall go to Christ, and at the day of judgment both soul and body shall be justified and glorified, and enter into your Master's joy; where your happiness will consist in these particulars.

(1.) You shall be perfected yourselves: your mortal bodies shall be made immortal, and the corruptible shall put on incorruption; you shall no more be hungry, thirsty, weary, or sick; nor shall you need to fear either shame, sorrow, death, or hell.

Your souls shall be perfectly freed from sin, and perfectly fitted for the knowledge, love, and praises of the Lord.

(2.) Your employment shall be to behold your glorified Redeemer, with all your holy fellow-citizens of heaven; and to see the glory of the most blessed God, and to love him perfectly, and be loved by him, and to praise him everlastingly.

(3.) Your glory will contribute to the glory of the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, which is more than to have a private felicity to yourselves.

(4.) Your glory will contribute to the glorifying of your Redeemer, who will everlastingly be magnified and pleased in you, that are the travail of his soul. And this is more than the glorifying of yourselves.

(5.) And the Eternal Majesty, the living God, will be glorified in your glory, both as he is magnified by your praises, and as he communicateth of his glory and goodness to you, and as he is pleased in you; and in the accomplishment of his glorious works, in the glory of the New Jerusalem, and of his Son.

All this the poorest beggar of you that is converted, shall certainly and endlessly enjoy.

2. You see for what you must turn; next you must understand from what you must turn. And that is, in a word, from your carnal self, which is the end of all the unconverted. From the flesh, that would be pleased before God, and would still be enticing you thereto. From the world, that is the bait; and from the devil, that is the angler for souls, and the deceiver. And so from all known and wilful sins.

3. Next you must know to what you must turn. And that is, to God, as your end; to Christ, as the way to the Father; to holiness, as the way appointed you by Christ; and so, to the use of all the helps and means of grace offered you by the Lord.

4. Lastly, You must know by what you must turn. And that is, by Christ, as the only Redeemer and Intercessor; and by the Holy Ghost, as the Sanctifier; and by the word, as his instrument or means; and by faith and repentance, as the means and duties on your part to be performed. All this is of necessity.

Direct. 2. If you would be converted and saved, be much in secret, serious consideration. Inconsiderateness undoes the world. Withdraw yourselves off into retired secrecy, and there bethink you of the end why you were made, of the life you have lived, the time you have lost, the sins you have committed; of the love, and sufferings, and fulness of Christ; of the danger you are in; of the nearness of death and judgment; and of the certainty and excellency of the joys of heaven; and of the certainty and terror of the torments of hell, and the eternity of both; and of the necessity of conversion and a holy life: steep your hearts in such considerations as these.

Direct. 3. If you will be converted and saved, attend upon the word of God, which is the ordinary means. Read the Scripture, or hear it read, and other holy writings that do apply it; constantly attend upon the public preaching of the word. As God will lighten the world by the sun, and not by himself alone, without it; so will he convert and save men by his ministers, who are the lights of the world, Acts xxvi. 17, 18; Matt. v. 14. When he hath miraculously humbled Paul, he sendeth him to Ananias, Acts ix. 10. And when he hath sent an angel to Cornelius, it is but to bid him send for Peter, who must tell him what he is to believe and do.

Direct. 4. Betake yourselves to God, in a course of earnest, constant prayer. Confess and lament

your former lives, and beg his grace to illuminate and convert you. Beseech him to pardon what is past, and give you his Spirit, and change your hearts and lives, and lead you in his ways, and save you from temptation. And ply this work daily, and be not weary of it.

Direct. 5. Presently give over your known and wilful sins, make a stand, and go that way no further. Be drunk no more, but avoid the places and occasion of it. Cast away your lusts and sinful pleasures with detestation. Curse, and swear, and rail no more; and if you have wronged any, restore as Zaccheus did. If you will commit again your old sins, what blessing can you expect on the means of conversion?

Direct. 6. Presently, if possible, change your company, if it hath hitherto been bad; not by forsaking your necessary relations, but your unnecessary, sinful companions; and join yourselves with those that fear the Lord, and inquire of them the way to heaven, Acts ix. 19, 26; Psal. xv. 4.

Direct. 7. Deliver up yourselves to the Lord Jesus, as the Physician of your souls, that he may pardon you by his blood, and sanctify you by his Spirit, by his word and ministers, the instruments of his Spirit. "He is the way, the truth, and the life: there is no coming to the Father but by him," John xiv. 6; "nor is there any other name under heaven by which you can be saved," Acts iv. 12. Study therefore his person, and nature, and what he hath done and suffered for you, and what he is to you, and what he will be, and how he is fitted to the full supply of all your necessities.

Direct. 8. If you mean indeed to turn and live, do it speedily without delay. If you be not willing to turn to-day, you will not be willing to do it at all. Remember you are all this while in your blood; under the guilt of many thousand sins, and under God's wrath, and you stand at the very brink of hell; there is but a step between you and death. And this is not a case for a man that is well in his wits to be quiet in. Up therefore presently, and fly as for your lives; as you would be gone out of your house if it were all on fire over your heads. Oh if you did but know what continual danger you live in, and what daily unspeakable loss you sustain, and what a safer and sweeter life you might live, you would not stand trifling, but presently turn. Multitudes miscarry that wilfully delay when they are convinced that it must be done. Your lives are short and uncertain; and what a case are you in, if you die before you thoroughly turn! You have staid too long already; and wronged God too long; sin getteth strength and rooting; while you delay, your conversion will grow more hard and doubtful. You have much to do, and therefore put not all off to the last, lest God forsake you, and give you up to yourselves, and then you are undone for ever.

Direct. 9. If you will turn and live, do it unreservedly, absolutely, and universally. Think not to capitulate with Christ, and divide your heart between him and the world, and to part with some sins and keep the rest; and to let go that which your flesh can spare. This is but self-deluding: you must in heart and resolution forsake all that you have, or else you cannot be his disciples, Luke xiv. 26, 33. If you will not take God and heaven for your portion, and lay all below at the feet of Christ, but you must needs also have your good things here, and have an earthly portion, and God and glory is not enough for you; it is in vain to dream of salvation on these terms; for it will not be. If you seem never so religious, if yet it be but a carnal righteousness, and the flesh's prosperity, or pleasure, or safety,

be still excepted in your devotedness to God; this is as certain a way to death, as open profaneness, though it be more plausible.

Direct. 10. If you will turn and live, do it resolutely, and not stand still deliberating, as if it were a doubtful case. Stand not wavering, as if you were yet uncertain whether God or the flesh be the better master; whether heaven or hell be the better end; or whether sin or holiness be the better way: but away with your former lusts, and presently, habitually, and fixedly resolve: be not one day of one mind, and the next of another; but be at a point with all the world, and resolutely give up yourselves, and all you have, to God. Now, while you are reading or hearing this, resolve. Before you sleep another night, resolve. Before you stir from the place, resolve. Before Satan hath time to take you off, resolve. You will never turn indeed till you do resolve; and that with a firm, unchangeable resolution. So much for the directions.

And now I have done my part in this work, that you may turn at the call of God and live. What will become of it, I cannot tell. I have cast the seed at God's command; but it is not in my power to give the increase. I can go no further with my message, I cannot bring it to your hearts, nor make it work: I cannot do your parts for you to entertain it, and consider of it; nor can I do God's part, by opening your heart, to cause you to entertain it; nor can I show you heaven or hell to your eyesight, nor give you new and tender hearts. If I knew what more to do for your conversion, I hope I should do it.

But, O thou that art the gracious Father of spirits, that hast sworn thou delightest not in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn and live; deny not thy blessing to these persuasions and directions, and suffer not thine enemies to triumph in thy sight; and the great deceiver of souls to prevail over thy Son, thy Spirit, and thy word. O pity poor unconverted sinners, that have no hearts to pity or help themselves: command the blind to see, and the deaf to hear, and the dead to live, and let not sin and death be able to resist thee. Awaken the secure; resolve the unresolved; confirm the wavering; and let the eyes of sinners, that read these lines, be next employed in weeping over their sins; and bring them to themselves, and to thy Son, before their sins have brought them to perdition. If thou say but the word, these poor endeavours shall prosper, to the winning many a soul to their everlasting joy, and thine everlasting glory. Amen.

Five Prayers: one for Families: one for a Penitent Sinner: one for the Lord's day: one for Children and Servants: one in the method of the Lord's Prayer, being an Exposition of it: for the use of those only who need such helps.

Two reasons moved me to annex these prayers: 1. I observe that abundance of people, who have some good desires, do forbear, through disability, to worship God in their families, who I hope would do it, if they had some helps. And though there be many such extant, yet few of these poor families have the books, and I can give them my own at a little cheaper rate, than I can buy others to give them.

2. Some that seem to have been brought to true repentance and newness of life, by God's blessing, on the reading of my books, have earnestly entreated

me to write them a form of prayer for their families, because long disuse hath left them unable to pray before others.

For the service of God, and the good of men, I am contented to bear the censures of those who account all forms of book-prayers to be sin; for in an age when pride (the father) and ignorance (the mother) hath bred superstition (the daughter), and taught men to think that God as fondly valueth their several modes of speaking to him, as they do themselves, and thinketh as contemptuously of the contrary as they, the question whether form or no form, book or no book, hath been resolved unto such tragical and direful effects, that I were too tender, if a censure should discourage me.

A Prayer for Families, Morning and Evening.

Almighty, all-seeing, and most gracious God, the world and all therein, is made, maintained, and ordered by thee: thou art every where present, being more than the soul of all the world. Though thou art revealed in thy glory to those only that are in heaven, thy grace is still at work on earth to prepare men for that glory: thou madest us not as the beasts that perish, but with reasonable, immortal souls, to know, and seek, and serve thee here, and then to live with all the blessed in the everlasting sight of thy heavenly glory, and the pleasures of thy perfect love and praise. But we are ashamed to think how foolishly and sinfully we have forgotten and neglected our God and our souls, and our hopes of a blessed immortality, and have overmuch minded the things of this visible, transitory world, and the prosperity and pleasure of this corruptible flesh, which we know must turn to rottenness and dust. Thou gavest us a law which was just and good, to guide us in the only way to life; and when by sin we had undone ourselves, thou gavest us a Saviour, even thy Eternal Word made man, who by his holy life and bitter sufferings reconciled us to thee, and both purchased salvation for us, and revealed it to us, better than an angel from heaven could have done, if thou hadst sent him to us sinners on such a message: but alas, how light have we set by our Redeemer, and by all that love which thou hast manifested by him! and how little have we studied and understood, and less obeyed, that covenant of grace which thou hast made by him to lost mankind!

But, O God, be merciful to us vile and miserable sinners; forgive the sins of our natural pravity and the follies of our youth, and all the ignorance, negligence, omissions, and commissions of our lives: and give us true repentance for them, or else we know that thou wilt not forgive them. Our life is but as a shadow that passeth away, and it is but as a moment till we must leave this world, and appear before thee to give up our account, and to speed for ever as here we have prepared. Should we die before thou hast turned our hearts from this sinful flesh and world to thee by true faith and repentance, we shall be lost for evermore. Oh woe to us that ever we were born, if thou forgive not our sins, and make us not holy, before this short, uncertain life be at an end! had we all the riches and pleasures of this world, they would shortly leave us in the greater sorrows. We know that all our life is but the time which thy mercy alloteth us to prepare for death; therefore we should not put off our repentance and preparation to a sick bed: but now, Lord, as if it were our last and dying words, we earnestly beg thy pardoning and sanctifying grace, through the merits and intercession of our Redeemer. O thou that hast

pitied and saved so many millions of miserable sinners, pity and save us also, that we may glorify thy grace for ever: surely thou delightest not in the death of sinners, but rather that they return and live: hadst thou been unwilling to show mercy, thou wouldest not have ransomed us by so precious a price, and still entreat us to be reconciled unto thee: we have no cause to distrust thy truth or goodness, but we are afraid lest unbelief, and pride, and hypocrisy, and a worldly, fleshly mind, should be our ruin. O save us from Satan, and this tempting world, but especially from ourselves: teach us to deny all ungodliness and fleshly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world. Let it be our chiefest daily work to please thee, and to lay up a treasure in heaven, and to make sure of a blessed life with Christ, and quietly to trust thee with soul and body. Make us faithful in our callings, and our duties to one another, and to all men, to our superiors, equals, and inferiors: bless the queen, and all in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty: give wise, holy, and peaceable pastors to all the churches of Christ, and holy and peaceable minds to the people: convert the heathen and infidel nations of the world; and cause us, and all thy people, to seek first the hallowing of thy name, the coming of thy kingdom, the doing of thy will on earth as it is done in heaven: give us our daily bread, even all things necessary to life and godliness, and let us be therewith content. Forgive us our daily sins, and let thy love and mercy constrain us to love thee above all: and for thy sake to love our neighbours as ourselves; and in all our dealings to do justly and mercifully, as we would have others do by us. Keep us from hurtful temptations, from sin, and from thy judgments, and from the malice of our spiritual and corporal enemies; and let all our thoughts, affections, passions, words, and actions, be governed by thy word and Spirit to thy glory: make all our religion and obedience pleasant to us; and let our souls be so delighted in the praises of thy kingdom, thy power, and thy glory, that it may secure and sweeten our labour by day, and our rest by night, and keep us in a longing and joyful hope of the heavenly glory: and let the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God our Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us now and for ever. Amen.

A Confession and Prayer for a Penitent Sinner.

O most great, most wise, and gracious God, though thou hatest all the workers of iniquity, and canst not be reconciled unto sin; yet through the mediation of thy blessed Son, with pity behold this miserable sinner who casteth himself down at the footstool of thy grace. Had I lived to those high and holy ends, for which I was created and redeemed, I might now have come to thee in the boldness and confidence of a child, in assurance of thy love and favour; but I have played the fool and the rebel against thee! I have wilfully forgotten the God that made me, and the Saviour that redeemed me, and the endless glory which thou didst set before me: I forgot the business which I was sent for into the world; and have lived as if I had been made for nothing, but to pass a few days in fleshly pleasure, and pamper a carcass for the worms: I wilfully forgot what it is to be a man, who had reason given him to rule his flesh, and to know his God, and to foresee his death, and the state of immortality: and I made my reason a servant to my senses, and lived too like the beasts that perish. Oh the precious time which I

have lost, which all the world cannot call back! Oh the calls of grace, which I have neglected! Oh the calling of God, which I have resisted! the wonderful love which I unthankfully rejected! and the manifold mercies which I have abused, and turned into wantonness and sin! How deep is the guilt which I have contracted! and how great are the comforts which I have lost! I might have lived all this while in the love of thee my gracious God; and in the delight of thy holy word and ways; in the daily sweet foresight of heaven, and in the joy of the Holy Ghost; if I would have been ruled by thy righteous laws: but I have hearkened to the flesh, and to this wicked and deceitful world, and have preferred a short and sinful life before thy love and endless glory.

Alas, what have I been doing since I came into the world? Folly and sin have taken up my time. I am ashamed to look back upon the years that I have spent; and to think of the temptations that I have yielded to. Alas, what trifles have enticed me from my God! How little have I had for the holy pleasures which I have lost! Like Esau, I have profanely sold my birthright for one morsel, to please my fancy, my appetite, and my lust; I have set light by all the joys of heaven; I have unkindly despised the goodness of my Maker; I have slighted the love and grace of my Redeemer; I have resisted thy Holy Spirit, silenced my own conscience, and grieved thy ministers and my own faithful friends, and have brought myself into this woeful case, wherein I am a shame and burden to myself, and God is my terror, who should be only my hope and joy.

Thou knowest my secret sins, which are unknown to men; thou knowest all my aggravations. My sins, O Lord, have found me out. Fears and sorrows overwhelm me! If I look behind me, I see my wickedness pursue my soul, and, as an army, ready to overtake me, and devour me. If I look before me, I see the just and dreadful judgment, and I know that thou wilt not acquit the guilty. If I look within me, I see a dark, defiled heart. If I look without me, I see a world still offering fresh temptations to deceive me. If I look above me, I see thee offended dreadful Majesty; and if I look beneath me, I see the place of endless torment, and the company which I deserve to suffer with. I am afraid to live, and more afraid to die.

But yet when I look to thy abundant mercy, and to thy Son, and to thy covenant, I have hope. Thy goodness is equal to thy greatness; thou art love itself, and thy mercy is over all thy works. So wonderfully hath thy Son condescended unto sinners, and done and suffered so much for their salvation, that if yet I should question thy willingness to forgive, I should but add to all my sins, by dishonouring that matchless mercy which thou dost design to glorify. Yea more, I find upon record in thy word, that through Christ thou hast made a covenant of grace, and act of oblivion, in which thou hast already conditionally but freely pardoned all; granting them forgiveness of all their sins, without any exception, whenever by unfeigned faith and repentance they turn to thee by Jesus Christ. And thy present mercy doth increase my hope, in that thou hast not cut me off, nor utterly left me to the hardness of my heart, but shonest me my sin and danger, before I am past remedy.

O, therefore, behold this prostrate sinner, which with the publican smiteth on his breast, and is ashamed to look up towards heaven: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." I confess not only my original sin, but the follies and furies of my youth, my manifold sins of ignorance and knowledge, of

negligence and wilfulness, of omission and commission; against the law of nature, and against the grace and gospel of thy Son: forgive and save me, O my God, for thy abundant mercy, and for the sacrifice and merit of thy Son, and for the promise of forgiveness which thou hast made through him, for in these alone is all my trust. Condemn me not who condemn myself. O thou that hast opened so precious a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. Though thy justice might send me presently to hell, let mercy triumph in my salvation. Thou hast no pleasure in the death of sinners, but rather that they repent and live: if my repentance be not such as thou requirest, O soften this hardened, flinty heart, and give me repentance unto life. Turn me to thyself, O God of my salvation, and cause thy face to shine upon me. "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." Meet not this poor, returning prodigal in thy wrath, but with the embracement of thy tender mercies. Cast me not from thy presence, and sentence me not to depart from thee with the workers of iniquity. Thou who didst patiently endure me when I despised thee, refuse me not now I seek unto thee, and here in the dust implore thy mercy. Thou didst convert and pardon a wicked Manasseh, and a persecuting Saul. And there are multitudes in heaven, who were once thine enemies. Glorify also thy superabounding grace, in the forgiveness of my abounding sins.

I ask not for liberty to sin again, but for deliverance from the sinning nature. O give me the renewing Spirit of thy Son, which may sanctify all the powers of my soul. Let me have the new and heavenly birth and nature, and the Spirit of adoption to reform me to thine image, that I may be holy as thou art holy. Illuminate me with the saving knowledge of thyself, and thy Son Jesus Christ. O fill me with thy love, that my heart may be wholly set upon thee, and the remembrance of thee be my chief delight: let the freest and sweetest of my thoughts run after thee; and the freest and sweetest of my discourse be of thee, and of thy glory, and of thy kingdom, and of thy word and ways! O let my treasure be laid up in heaven, and there let me daily and delightfully converse. Make it the great and daily business of my devoted soul, to please thee, and to honour thee, to promote thy kingdom, and to do thy will! Put thy fear into my heart, that I may never depart from thee. This world hath had too much of my heart already; let it now be crucified to me, and I to it, by the cross of Christ: let me not love it nor the things which are therein; but having food and raiment, cause me therewith to be content. Destroy in me all fleshly lusts, that I may not live after the flesh, but the Spirit. Keep me from the snares of wicked company, and from the counsel and ways of the ungodly. Bless me with the helpful communion of the saints, and with all the means that thou hast appointed to further our sanctification and salvation. Oh that my ways were so directed, that I might keep thy statutes! Let me never return again to folly, nor forget the covenant of my God: help me to quench the first motion of sin, and to abhor all sinful desires and thoughts; and let thy Spirit strengthen me against all temptations; that I may conquer and endure to the end. Prepare me for sufferings, and for death, and judgment; that when I must leave this sinful world, I may yield up my departing soul with joy into the faithful hands of my dear Redeemer; that I be not numbered with the ungodly, which die in their unpardoned sin, and pass into everlasting misery; but may be found in Christ, having the righteousness which is of God by faith;

and may attain to the resurrection of the just: that so the remembrance of the sin and miseries from which thou hast delivered me, may further my perpetual thanks and praise to thee my Creator, my Redeemer, and my Sanctifier.

And oh that thou wouldst call and convert the miserable nations of idolaters and infidels, and the multitudes of ungodly hypocrites, who have the name of christians, and not the truth, and power, and life. O send forth labourers into thy harvest, and let not Satan hinder them. Prosper thy gospel, and the kingdom of thy Son, that sinners may more abundantly be converted to thee, and this earth may be made like unto heaven: that when thou hast gathered us all into unity with Christ, we may all, with perfect love and joy, ascribe to thee the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A Form of Praise and Prayer for the Lord's Day.

Glorious Jehovah, while angels and perfected spirits are praising thee in the presence of thy glory, thou hast allowed and commanded us to take our part in the presence of thy grace: we have the same most holy God to praise; and though we see thee not, our Head and Saviour seeth thee, and our faith discerneth thee in the glass of thy holy works and word. Though we are sinners, and unworthy, and cannot touch those holy things, without the marks of our pollution; yet we have a great High Priest with thee, who was separated from sinners, holy, harmless, and undefiled, who appeareth for us, in the merits of his spotless life and sacrifice, and by whose hands only we dare presume to present a sacrifice to the most holy God. And thou hast ordained this day of holy rest, as a type and means of that heavenly rest with the triumphant church to which we aspire, and for which we hope. Thou didst accept their lower praise on earth, before they celebrated thy praise in glory: accept ours also by the same Mediator.

Glory be to thee, O God, in the highest: on earth peace, good-will towards men. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who wast, and art, and art to come; eternal, without beginning or end; immense, without all bounds or measure; the infinite Spirit, Father, Word, and Holy Ghost; the infinite Life, Understanding, and Will, infinitely powerful, wise, and good; of thee, and through thee, and to thee are all things: to thee be glory for evermore. All thy works declare thy glory; for thy glorious perfections appear on all, and for thy glory, and the pleasure of thy holy will, didst thou create them. The heavens, and all the hosts thereof; the sun, and all the glorious stars; the fire, with its motion, light, and heat; the earth, and all that dwell thereon, with all its sweet and beauteous ornaments; the air, and all the meteors; the great deeps, and all that swim therein; all are the preachers of thy praise, and show forth the great Creator's glory. How great is that power which made so great a world of nothing; which with wonderful swiftness moved those great and glorious luminaries, which in a moment send forth the influences of their motion, light, and heat through all the air, to sea and earth! Thy powerful life giveth life to all; and preserveth this frame of nature which thou hast made. How glorious is that wisdom which ordereth all things, and assigneth to all their place and office, and by its perfect law maintaineth the beauty and harmony of all! how glorious is that goodness and love, which made all good and very good!

We praise and glorify thee, our Lord and Owner; for we and all things are thine own. We praise and glorify thee, our King and Ruler; for we are thy subjects, and our perfect obedience is thy due: just are all thy laws and judgments; true and sure is all thy word. We praise and glorify thee, our great Benefactor; in thee we live, and move, and are; all that we are, or have, or can do, is wholly from thee, the Cause of all; and all is for thee, for thou art our End. Delightfully to love thee, is our greatest duty, and our only felicity; for thou art love itself, and infinitely amiable.

When man by sin did turn away his heart from thee, believed the tempter against thy truth, obeyed his senses against thy authority and wisdom, and forsaking thy fatherly love and goodness, became an idol to himself, thou didst not use him according to his desert: when we forsook thee, thou didst not utterly forsake us; when we had lost ourselves, and by sin became thine enemies, condemned by thy law, thy mercy pitied us, and gave us the promise of a Redeemer, who in the fulness of time did assume our nature, fulfilled thy law, and suffered for our sins, and conquering death, did rise again, ascended to heaven, and is our glorified Head and Intercessor. Him hast thou exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, to give us repentance and remission of sins. In him thou hast given pardon and justification, reconciliation and adoption, by a covenant of grace, to every penitent believer. Of enemies, and the heirs of death, thou hast made us sons and heirs of life.

We are the brands whom thou hast plucked out of the fire; we are the captives of Satan whom thou hast redeemed; we are the condemned sinners whom thou hast pardoned: we praise thee, we glorify thee, our merciful God, and gracious Redeemer. Our souls have now refuge from thy revenging wrath. Thy promise is sure: Satan, and the world, and death are overcome; our Lord is risen; he is risen, and we shall rise through him. O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! Our Saviour is ascended to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God; and we shall ascend; to his hands we may commit our departing souls: our Head is glorified, and it is his will and promise that we shall be with him where he is to see his glory; he hath sealed us thereunto by his Holy Spirit: we were dead in sins, and he hath quickened us; we were dark in ignorance and unbelief, and he hath enlightened us; we were unholy and carnal, sold under sin, and he hath sanctified our wills, and killed our concupiscence. We praise and glorify this Spirit of life, with the Father and the Son, from whom he is sent to be life, and light, and love to our dead, and dark, and disaffected souls. We are created, and redeemed, and sanctified by thy holy love, and praise, and service: O let these be the very nature of our souls, and the employment and pleasure of all our lives! O, perfect thy weak and languid graces in us, that our love and praise may be more perfect! We thank thee for thy word, and sacred ordinances, for the comfort of the holy assemblies and communion of the saints, and for the mercy of these thy holy days. But let not thy praise be here confined; but be our daily life, and bread, and work.

Fain we would praise thee with more holy and more joyful souls. But how can we do it with so weak a faith, and so great darkness and strangeness to thee? with so little assurance of thy favour and our salvation? Can we rightly thank thee for the grace which we are still in doubt of? Fain we would be liker to those blessed souls who praise thee without our fears and dulness. But how can it be, while

we love thee so little, and have so little taste and feeling of thy love? and whilst this load of sin doth press us down, and we are imprisoned in the remnant of our carnal affections? O kill this pride and selfishness, these lusts and passions. Destroy this unbelief and darkness, and all our sins, which are the enemies of us, and of thy praise. Make us more holy and heavenly: and O bring us nearer thee in faith and love, that we may be more suitable to the heavenly employment of thy praise.

Vouchsafe more of thy Spirit to all thy churches and servants in the world: that as their darkness, and selfishness, and imperfections have defiled, and divided, and weakened them, and made them a scandal and hardening to infidels; so their knowledge, self-denial, and impartial love, may truly reform, unite, and strengthen them: that the glory of their holiness may win the unbelieving world to Christ. O let not Satan keep up still so large a kingdom of tyranny, ignorance, and wickedness in the earth, and make this world as the suburbs of hell: but let the earth be more conformable to heaven, in the glorifying of thy holy name, the advancing of thy kingdom, and the doing of thy just and holy will. Let thy way be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee! Yea, give thy Son the heathen for his inheritance, and let his gospel enlighten the dark, forsaken nations of the earth. Let every knee bow to him, and every tongue confess that he is Christ, to their salvation and thy glory. Provide and send forth the messengers of thy grace through all the earth. Deliver all the churches from sin, division, and oppression. Let thy holy word and worship continue in these kingdoms, whilst this world endureth. Bless the queen, and all in authority, with all that wisdom, justice, and holiness, which are needful to her own and her subjects' safety, peace, and welfare. Let every congregation among us have burning and shining lights, that the ignorant and ungodly perish not for want of teaching and exhortation: and open men's hearts to receive thy word, and cause them to know the day of their visitation. Be merciful to the afflicted, in sickness, dangers, wants, or sorrows, according to thy goodness and their necessities. Let all the prayers and praises of the faithful throughout the world, sent up this day in the name of our common Mediator, by him be presented acceptable unto thee; notwithstanding the imperfections and blemishes that are on them, and the censures, divisions, and injuries, which in their frowardness they are guilty of against each other: let them enter as one in Christ our Head, who are too sadly and stiffly distant among themselves. Prepare us all for that world of peace, where the harmony of universal love and praise shall never be interrupted by sins, or griefs, or fears, or discord; but shall be everlastingly perfect to our joy and to thy glory, through our glorified Mediator, who taught us when we pray to say, Our Father, which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

A short Prayer for Children and Servants.

Ever-living and most gracious God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! infinite is thy power, thy wisdom, and thy goodness! Thou art the Maker of all the

world, the Redeemer of lost and sinful man, and the Sanctifier of the elect ! Thou hast made me a living, reasonable soul, placed awhile in this flesh and world to know, and love, and serve thee, my Creator, with all my heart, and mind, and strength, that I might obtain the reward of the heavenly glory. This should have been the greatest care, and business, and pleasure of all my life : I was bound to it by thy law ; I was invited by thy mercy. And in my baptism I was devoted to this holy life, by a solemn covenant and vow. But, alas, I have proved too unfaithful to that covenant ; I have forgotten and neglected the God, the Saviour, and the Sanctifier, to whom I was engaged ; and have too much served the devil, the world, and flesh, which I renounced : I was born in sin, and sinfully I have lived. I have been too careless of my immortal soul, and of the great work for which I was created and redeemed ; I have spent much of my precious time in vanity, in minding and pleasing this corruptible flesh ; and I have hardened my heart against those instructions, by which thy Spirit, and my teachers, and my own conscience, did call upon me to repent and turn to thee.

And now, Lord, my convinced soul doth confess, that I have deserved to be forsaken by thee, and given over to my lust and folly, and to be cast out of thy glorious presence into damnation. But seeing thou hast given a Saviour to the world, and made a pardoning and gracious law, promising forgiveness and salvation through his merits, to every true penitent believer, I thankfully accept the mercy of thy covenant in Christ ; I humbly confess my sin and guiltiness ; I cast my miserable soul upon thy grace, and the merits, and sacrifice, and intercession of my Saviour. O pardon all the sins of my corrupted heart and life ; and as a reconciled Father, take me to be thy child ; and give me thy renewing Spirit, to be in me a principle of holy life, and light, and love, and thy seal and witness that I am thine. Let him quicken my dead and hardened heart ; let him enlighten my dark, unbelieving mind by clearer knowledge and firm belief ; let him turn my will to the ready obedience of thy holy will ; let him reveal to my soul the wonders of thy love in Christ, and fill it with love to thee and my Redeemer, and to all thy holy word and works, till all my sinful, carnal love be quenched in me, and my sinful pleasures turned into a sweet delight in God : give me self-denial, humility, and lowliness, and save me from the great and hateful sins of selfishness, worldliness, and pride. O set my heart upon the heavenly glory, where I hope ere long to live with Christ and all his holy ones, in the joyful sight, and love, and praise of thee, the God of love, for ever. Deny me not any of those helps and mercies, which are needful to my sanctification and salvation. And cause me to live in a continual readiness for a safe and comfortable death. For what would it profit me to win all the world, and lose my soul, my Saviour, and my God ?

Additions for Children.

Let thy blessing be upon my parents and governors, cause them to instruct and educate me in thy fear ; and cause me with thankfulness to receive their instructions, and to love, honour, and obey them in obedience to thee. Keep me from the snares of evil company, temptations, and youthful pleasures, and let me be a companion of them that fear thee. Let my daily delight be to meditate on thy law ; and let me never have the mark of the ungodly, to be a lover of pleasures more than of God. Furnish my youth with those treasures of wisdom and holiness, which may be daily increased and used to thy glory.

Additions for Servants.

And as thou hast made me a servant, make me conscientious and faithful in my place and trust, and careful of my master's goods and business, as I would be if it were my own. Make me submissive and obedient to my governors ; keep me from self-will and pride, from murmuring and unreverent speeches, from falsehood, slothfulness, and all deceit. That I might not be an eye-servant, pleasing my lust and fleshly appetite ; but may cheerfully and willingly do my duty, as believing that thou art the revenger of all unfaithfulness ; and may do my service not only as unto man, but as to the Lord, expecting from thee my chief reward.

All this I beg and hope for, on the account of the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ, concluding in the words which he hath taught us : Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

A Prayer for the Morning, in the method of the Lord's Prayer, being but an Exposition of it.

Most glorious God, who art power, and wisdom, and goodness itself, the Creator of all things ; the Owner, the Ruler, and the Benefactor of the world, but especially of thy church, and chosen ones. Though by sin original and actual we were thy enemies, the slaves of Satan and our flesh, and under thy displeasure and the condemnation of thy law ; yet thy children, redeemed by Jesus Christ thy Son, and regenerated by thy Holy Spirit, have leave to call thee their reconciled Father. For by thy covenant of grace, thou hast given them thy Son to be their Head, their Teacher, and their Saviour. And in him thou hast pardoned, adopted, and sanctified them ; sealing and preparing them by thy Holy Spirit for thy celestial kingdom, and beginning in them that holy life, and light, and love, which shall be perfected with thee in everlasting glory. Oh with what wondrous love hast thou loved us, that of rebels we should be made the sons of God ! Thou hast advanced us to this dignity, that we might be devoted wholly to thee as thine own, and might delightfully obey thee, and entirely love thee with all our heart ! And so might glorify thee here and for ever.

O cause both us, and all thy churches, and all the world, to hallow thy great and holy name ! And to live to thee as our ultimate end ! that thy shining image on holy souls may glorify thy divine perfection.

And cause both us and all the earth, to cast off the tyranny of Satan and the flesh, and to acknowledge thy supreme authority, and to become the kingdoms of thee and thy Son Jesus, by a willing and absolute subjection. O perfect thy kingdom of grace in ourselves and in the world, and hasten the kingdom of glory.

And cause us and thy churches, and all people of the earth, no more to be ruled by the lusts of the flesh, and their erroneous conceits, and by self-will, which is the idol of the wicked ; but by thy perfect wisdom and holy will revealed in thy laws, make known thy word to all the world, and send them the messengers of grace and peace ; and cause men to understand, believe, and obey the gospel of salva-

tion. And that, with such holiness, unity, and love, that the earth, which is now too like to hell, may be made like unto heaven; and not only thy scattered, imperfect flock, but those also who in their carnal and ungodly minds do now refuse a holy life, and think thy words and ways too strict, may desire to imitate even the heavenly church; where thou art obeyed, and loved, and praised, with high delight, in harmony and perfection.

And because our being is the subject of our well-being, maintain us in the life which thou hast here given us, until the work of life be finished; and give us such health of mind and body, and such protection, and supply of all our wants, as shall best fit us for our duty; and make us contented with our daily bread, and patient if we want it. And save us from the love of riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, and the pride, and idleness, and sensuality which they cherish; and cause us to serve thy providence by our diligent labour, and to serve thee faithfully with all that thou givest us; and let us not make provision for the flesh, to satisfy its desires and lusts.

And we beseech thee of thy mercy, through the sacrifice and propitiation of thy beloved Son, forgive us all our sins, original and actual, from our birth to this hour; our omissions of duty, and committing of what thou didst forbid; our sins of heart, and word, and deed; our sinful thoughts and affections, our sinful passions and discontents; our secret and our open sins; our sins of negligence, and ignorance, and rashness; but especially our sins against knowledge and conscience, which have made the deepest guilt and wounds. Spare us, O Lord, and let not our sin so find us out as to be our ruin; but let us so find it out as truly to repent and turn to thee! Especially punish us not with the loss of thy grace! Take not thy Holy Spirit from us, and deny us not his assistance and holy operations. Seal to us by that Spirit the pardon of our sins, and lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, and give us the joy of thy favour and salvation. And let thy love and mercy to us fill us not only with thankfulness to thee, but with love and mercy to our brethren and our enemies, that we may heartily forgive them that do us wrong, as through thy grace we hope to do.

And for the time to come, suffer us not to cast ourselves wilfully into temptations, but carefully to avoid them, and resolutely to resist and conquer what we cannot avoid; and O mortify those inward sins and lusts, which are our constant and most dangerous temptations. And let us not be tempted by Satan or the world, or tried by thy judgments, above the strength which thy grace shall give us. Save us from a fearless confidence in our own strength; and let us not dally with the snare, nor taste the bait, nor play with the fire of wrath. But cause us to fear and depart from evil; lest before we are aware, we be entangled and overcome, and wounded with our guilt and with thy wrath, and our end should be worse than our beginning. Especially save us from those radical sins of error and unbelief, pride, hypocrisy, hard-heartedness, sensuality, slothfulness, and the love of this present world, and the loss of our love to thee, to thy kingdom, and thy ways.

And save us from the malice of Satan and of wicked men, and from the evils which our sins would bring upon us.

And as we crave all this from thee, we humbly tender our praises with our future service to thee! Thou art the King of all the world, and more than the life of all the living! Thy kingdom is everlast-

ing; wise, and just, and merciful, is thy government. Blessed are they that are faithful subjects; but who hath hardened himself against thee, and hath prospered? The whole creation proclaimeth thy perfection. But it is heaven where the blessed see thy glory, and the glory of our Redeemer; where the angels and saints behold thee, admire thee, adore thee, love thee, and praise thee with triumphant, joyful songs, the holy, holy, holy God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who was, and is, and is to come; of thee, and through thee, and to thee are all things. To thee be glory for ever. Amen.

The Creed.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Ten Commandments.

I. I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV. Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

V. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

NOW OR NEVER.

THE HOLY, SERIOUS, DILIGENT BELIEVER JUSTIFIED, ENCOURAGED, EXCITED, AND DIRECTED. AND THE OPPOSERS AND NEGLECTERS CONVINCED BY THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE AND REASON.

It is a question more boldly than accurately debated by many, Whether a man may not be saved in any religion, that is faithful to the principles of it by serious, diligent practice? The true solution is this: religion is that which men hold and do to serve and please God. 1. If men make themselves a religion of serving idols or devils instead of God; 2. Or if they place their service to God himself in things that are evil; (as what evil is there that some men have not brought into their religion, and fathered upon God?) the more diligent such men are in their religion, the more they sin. 3. Or if they make themselves a religion of irrational, ludicrous ceremonies, their greatest diligence in this will not save them. 4. Or if they hold all the essentials of the true religion, except some one, it cannot save them while one thing is wanting which is essential to that religion, and so necessary to salvation (which is the case of real heretics); for they are not indeed of that religion, if they want that which is essential to it. 5. Or if they hold all that is essential to the true religion only notionally, and hold any thing with it practically which is contradictory and inconsistent with it, the soundness of the notional belief will not save them from the mortal poison of their practical heresy or error.

But, 1. Whosoever holdeth all that is necessary to salvation, and is serious and diligent in living according thereunto, shall be saved, whatever error he holdeth with it. For if he be serious and diligent in the practice of all things necessary to salvation, he hath all that is necessary to salvation, viz. in belief and practice; and it must needs follow, that his errors are either not contradictory to the things necessary which he holdeth and practiseth, or that he holdeth not those errors practically but notionally, as an opinion, or uneffectual cogitation in a dream, which provoketh not to action: and in such a case the error keepeth no man from salvation.

What is necessary to be believed by them that never hear the gospel, it so little concerneth us to know, that God hath not thought meet to make it so plain to us, as things that more concern ourselves. But as it is certain, that without the atonement, satisfaction, and reconciliation made by Christ, and without new terms of grace to be judged by, and without his grace for the performance of their part, no man can be saved (that hath the use of reason); so there is so much knowledge necessary to salvation, as is necessary to engage the heart to love God above all, and sincerely to obey his revealed will, and to prefer the life to come before the transitory pleasures of this life. Now if any man can prove to me, that those that never heard the gospel, can thus love God, and the life to come, and obey sincerely, without the knowledge of the person, life, death, resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the declaration of the attractive love and goodness of God in him, and in the work of our redemption, then I should believe that such negative infidels may be saved; for God cannot damn a sanctified soul, that sincerely loveth him. But if the discovery of the love of God in our redemption be so necessary a moral means to engage the heart (now corrupted by sin and creature love) to the true love of God, that this love cannot be wrought without it; or if Christ give not his Spirit to produce the love of God in any but those that hear the gospel, and believe in him, then no such persons can be saved by their religion. For Christ is the way to the Father, and no man cometh to the Father but by him; and the love of God is absolutely and of itself necessary to salvation; and faith in Christ is so far necessary to salvation, as it is necessary to bring men to the love of God, as pardoning sin and reconciled to them.

But if any should never so confidently conclude, that some that hear not of Christ may be saved, yet he must needs confess that the want of this clear and great discovery of the love and goodness of God, in his pardoning grace, and of the glorious life which he hath prepared for us, must needs make the love of God a very rare and difficult thing, and consequently their salvation rare and difficult, in comparison of ours.

The christian faith is, The believing an everlasting life of happiness to be given by God (with the pardon of all sin) as procured by the sufferings and merits of Jesus Christ, to all that are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and do persevere in love to God and to each other, and in a holy and heavenly conversation. This is saving faith and christianity, if we consent as well as assent. All that was necessary to salvation to be believed, was formerly thought to be contained in the creed, and that was the test or symbol of the christian faith; and the christian religion is the same, and hath the same rule, and test, and symbol in all ages. But since faction and tyranny, pride and covetousness, became the matters of the religion of too many, vice and selfish interest hath commanded them to change the rule of faith by their additions, and to

make so much necessary to salvation, as is necessary to their affected universal dominion, and to their commodity and carnal ends. And since faction entered, and hath torn the church into many sects, (the Greek, the Roman, the Armenian, the Jacobites, the Abassine, and many more,) it seemeth meet to the more tyrannical sect to call these several religions, and to say that every man that differeth from them in any of their opinions or additions, which they please to call articles of faith, is of another religion.

^a And if the word religion be taken in this sense, and if all that agree in one christian religion are said to be of as many religions as different opinions, in points that some call necessary, then I answer the question thus. He is the true catholic christian that hath but one, even the christian religion: and this is the case of the protestants, who casting off the additions of popery, adhere to the primitive simplicity and unity. If papists, or any others, corrupt this religion with human additions and innovations, the great danger of these corruptions is, lest they draw them from the sound belief and serious practice of that ancient christianity, which we are all agreed in: and (among the papists, or any other sect) where their corruptions do not thus corrupt their faith and practice in the true essentials, it is certain that those corruptions shall not damn them. For he that truly believeth all things that are essential to christianity, and liveth accordingly with serious diligence, hath the promise of salvation: and it is certain, that what error that man holdeth, it is either not inconsistent with true christianity, or not practically, but notionally held, and so not inconsistent as held by him; for how can that be inconsistent which actually doth consist with it?

If a papist or any other sectary do seriously love God and his brother, and set his heart upon the life to come, and give up himself to the merits and grace of Jesus Christ, and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, to be fitted for that glory, and liveth by faith above the world, and mortifieth the desires of the flesh, and liveth willfully in no known sin, but presseth after further degrees of holiness, I doubt not of the salvation of that person; no more than of the life of him that hath taken poison but into his mouth and spit it out again, or let down so little as nature and antidotes do expel; but I will not therefore plead for poison, nor take it, because men may live that thus take it.

Having answered this great question, reader, I am now come up to the subject of my following discourse, and to tell thee, that though it be a great question whether serious diligence in a corrupt religion will save a man, it is past all question, and agreed on by all sides, that no religion will save a man, that is not serious, sincere, and diligent in it. If thou be of the truest religion in the world, and art not true thyself to that religion, the religion is good, but it is none of thine. Objectively thou art of a true and good religion, the things in themselves are true and good, but subjectively thou art sincerely of no religion at all; for if thou art not serious, hearty, and diligent in it, it is certain that thou dost not truly entertain it, and make it thine; but it is thy books that have the true religion, or thy tongue, or fantasy, or brain, but not thy heart: and the best meat on thy table, or that goeth no farther than thy mouth, will never feed thee, or preserve thy life. So certain is the salvation of every holy, mortified christian, and so certain the damnation of every ungodly, worldly, fleshly sensualist; that I had a thousandfold rather have my soul in the case of a godly anabaptist, yea, or a monk or friar among the papists, that liveth a true heavenly life, in the love of God and man, and in a serious, diligent obedience to God, according to his knowledge, than in the case of a protestant, or whomsoever you can imagine to be rightest in his opinions, that is worldly, and sensual, and a stranger (if not an enemy) to the power and serious practice of his own professed religion, and void of a holy and heavenly heart and life. If ever such a man be saved, the principles of all religion do deceive us.

And certainly such men's hypocrisy doth aggravate their sin, and will increase their misery. So many as there be in the world, that profess themselves christians, and yet are not serious and diligent in their religion, but are ungodly neglecters or enemies of a holy life, so many hypocrites are in the world. And I wonder that their consciences call them not hypocrites when they stand up at the creed, or profess themselves believers: though the congregation seeth not hypocrite written in their foreheads, God seeth it written on their hearts, and those that converse with them may see it written in their lives. And yet these men are the forwardest to cry out against hypocrites. The devil hath taught it them to stop the suspicion and the chase of conscience, as he hath taught the greatest schismatics or church-dividers (the papists) to cry out most against schism and division, and pretend to unity. But these shifts do blind none but fools and forsaken consciences; and the cheat that is now detected by the wise, will quickly by God be detected before all the world. Till then let them make merry in their deceptions: who would envy the drunkard the pleasure of an hour's swinish, sick delight? This is their portion; and this is their time: as we have chosen and covenanted for another portion, we are content to stay the time assigned, till God shall tell them and all the world, who was sincere, and who the hypocrite. For our parts, we believe that he is most or least sincere, that is most or least serious in the practice of his own professed religion.

For my part, I must profess that (by the mercy of God) I have made it the work of many a year, to look about me, and think wherein the felicity of man doth indeed consist; and I have long been past doubt (as much as I am that I am a man) that it is not in transitory, sensual delights; and that these are such lean and dry commodities, and pitiful pleasures, leaving men so speedily in a forlorn state, that I am contented that my greatest enemy have my part of them. I have renounced them to God, (as any part of my felicity,) and I renounce them to men. Let them do with me about these things as God will give them leave. I will have a portion after death, or I will have none.

And the case is so palpable, that it is my admiration that the contrary deceit is consistent with the nature and reason of a man; and that so many gentlemen, and scholars, and persons of an ingenious education, can no better distinguish, and can possibly conquer their reason so easily with the presence of

^a And yet when they have divided the church, and damned the greatest part of christians, and raged with fire and sword against the brethren, they confess themselves that it is no point of faith at all, that it is of divine right that the bishop of Rome is St. Peter's successor, and not only of human right. And must the church be divided, and most be damned for not believing or submitting to a human ordinance? If we be of many religions, is not popery then a human religion? The very words of Smith, bishop of Chalcodon, the chiefest of the English popish clergy, are these, "Survey," chap. v. "To us it sufficeth that the bishop of Rome is St. Peter's successor, and all the fathers testify, and all the catholic church believeth; but whether it be *jure divino*, or *humano*, is no point of faith." And how do their laics here know what is a point of faith, but by the testimony of their priests?

sensual delights, and so easily make nothing of that which will be to-morrow and for ever, merely because it is not to-day. Well, I must say, the wisdom and justice of God is abundantly seen in the government of the world with the liberty of the will, and determining that all men should speed as they choose.

It may be the reader will say, he expected that instead of writing such popular discourses, I should have vindicated myself against the accusations, that in multitudes of libels and pamphlets are scattered abroad against me. But doth he think that man is seriously a christian that is not more zealous for God, and religion, and the souls of men, than for himself? Have I nothing else to do with my time and labour, but plead a cause of my own, which God will so speedily and effectually plead? Will it not be time enough to be justified at the bar and day of God? I am content that they carry it as they desire till then (were it not more for their own and other men's sakes than mine). Am I like to forsake my life and all for Christ, and endure torments if I were called to it, if I cannot endure to be reviled and slandered by passionate men? Was it nothing that our Lord would not answer for himself, when he was accused before Pilate? Shall they be able to calumniate under the threatenings of the revenge of Heaven, and shall I not be able to be silent under such a promise as Matt. v. 10—12? The servant of the Lord must not strive. Our Lord gave us an example of not reviling again when he was reviled; he made himself of no reputation, but endured the cross and contradiction of sinners, despising the shame. I confess I think when God's interest and the good of others doth require it, a man should not be wanting to his own defence; and I have long ago written that which will satisfy the impartial: but when I saw that it is like to tend to heats, and set more on work, I had rather let men call me all the names they can devise, and voluminously accuse me of any thing that malice shall suggest, than do any thing to foment contentions in the church. But if God convince me that it is my duty to detect the calumnies of men, it is a work soon done.

But what good will it do the world for me to open the numerous untruths that other men have published, or to confute every script, when all that I converse with are satisfied already, and believe not the reproachers; and all the evidence in the world will not satisfy those that will not read it, or are resolved by their malice or interest never to be satisfied?

For my part, I do not but God and their consciences will give them such a confutation, as shall be sufficient to them and me to end the controversy.

My work is to plead the cause of God and holiness against the profane and sensual world, and no further to plead any cause of my own, than is necessary to that. If I must bear the effects of men's displeasure, I had a hundred times rather it were for pleading for holiness, and love, and peace, and concord against impiety, uncharitableness, and divisions, than for defending myself, or upon the account of ceremonies or smaller matters. And if for these I bear it, I doubt not of more comfort at the present, much less do I doubt of a better issue than false accusers can expect. We shall be shortly upon even ground: the time is short; the pleasures of sin, the triumphs of malice, the sufferings of innocency, are but for a moment. I envy them not so short and dark a day: the Judge is at the door that will judge all again, and set all straight, and judge in righteousness. When I am afraid of leaving a noisome and unrighteous world, and ending all my pain and trouble, and being beyond the reach of malice, then I will fear what man can do. Let them keep me out of heaven, or deprive me of my peace and comfort, if they can. If they fear not the threatenings of God against the malicious and unjust, surely I have less reason to fear their threatenings. When they have done their worst to others, let them save themselves from death if they can. I am devoted to God, and I never yet found cause to repent it. I am resolved to use the utmost of my power for the interest of holiness, charity, and peace, and for loyalty to the king, and obedience or patient submission to superiors; and if yet I bear the fruits of fury, let those that insult over sufferers as if they were therefore guilty or miserable, remember that we could have avoided it if we would, and have found the way of applause and prosperity as well as they; and that no man takes that for his misery which he chooseth. If this kind of preaching or writing offend, could not I have avoided it? I am not in love with sufferings from men, nor will I escape them at the rates of God's displeasure. I never think myself in the highest form of christians, till I am more conformed to the sufferings of Christ, and have endured more than yet I have.

It is the christians' old apology in Tertulliana *Quasi non totum quod in nos potestis nostrum sit arbitrium? Certe si velim, christianus sum: tunc ergo me damnabis, si damnari velim: quum vero quod in me potes, nisi velim non potes, jam mea voluntatis est quod potes, non tua potestatis. Proinde et vulgus vane de nostra vexatione gaudet: proinde et nostrum est gaudium quod sibi vendicant, qui malum damnari quam a Deo excidere. Contra, ibi qui nos oderunt, dolere non gaudere debent, consecutis nobis quod eligimus.* Tert. Apologet. cap. 30. That is, "As if all that you can do against us were not our own choice (or will). Certainly it is because I will, that I am a christian; therefore if I will be condemned, then thou wilt condemn me. And when that which thou canst do against me, thou canst not do unless I will, it is not now from thy power that thou canst do it, but from my will; and therefore the vulgar do in vain rejoice at our vexation. And therefore it is our joy, which they challenge to themselves, while we had rather be condemned than fall from God. On the contrary, they that hate us, should grieve, and not rejoice, while we attain but what we choose."

For my part, if the world will needs be mad, I think both the laughing and the weeping philosopher are more excusable than he that would be over-angry at them, or over-busy in disputing with them. Saith Seneca, *Quare fers ægri rabiem et phrenetici verba? nempe quia videnter nescire quid faciunt. Quid interest quo quisque vitio fiat imprudens?* Sen. de Ira, lib. 3. cap. 26. Anger and frenzy are but several ways of a man's losing his wit; and therefore he that can bear with one, should somewhat bear with the other (though indeed voluntariness or involuntariness maketh a great difference). It is not worth a man's time, and labour, and cost, to be over-solicitous in his own vindication, let the world say of him what they please. *Mulum temporis ultio assumi; multis se injuriis objicit, dum unam dolet. Diutius irascimur omnes quam ledimur.* Sen. de Ira, lib. 3. cap. 27. "Revenge takes up a deal of time. He that complaineth of one injury, objects himself to many. We are all angry longer than we are hurt."

I have truly given you now the reasons, why I rather choose to speak these common necessary things, against the devil's party, the ungodly, the enemies or neglecters of serious holiness, (agreeable to the subject of his Majesty's christian and excellent declaration against debauchery, at his entrance upon his royal government,) than to meddle with any of the contending parties of these times, (who are so angry because

in obedience to authority I once endeavoured to reconcile them,) or to be unseasonable in pleading any cause that is my own. And now referring the reader to this short discourse, I must first desire that he misunderstand me not in one or two passages. 1. That my citation of the passage in the Homilies, be not taken as if I spoke a word against it, though I say, I dare not myself subscribe it; for though I think myself, that seeing a persecutor like Saul may repent, and be pardoned, a mocker at godliness may repent and be forgiven also; yet I am resolved still to suspect my own understanding, rather than to speak against the doctrine of the church.

2. Think it not strange that I reprehend even ministers that are secret or open opposers of a holy diligence; for our aforesaid Homily telleth us as followeth: Hom. for Information, &c. part 2. p. 150, 151. "Examples of such scornors we read in 2 Chron. When the good king Hezekiah, in the beginning of his reign, had destroyed idolatry, purged the temple, and reformed religion in his realm, he sent messengers into every city to gather the people to Jerusalem to solemnize the feast of Easter in such sort as God had appointed; the posts went from city to city.—And what did the people, think ye? Did they laud and praise the name of the Lord that had given them so good a king, so zealous a prince to abolish idolatry, and to restore again God's true religion? No, no; the Scripture saith, the people laughed them to scorn, and mocked the king's messengers. And in the last chapter of the same book it is written, that Almighty God having compassion on his people, sent his messengers the prophets to them, to call them from their abominable idolatry, and wicked kind of living; but they mocked his messengers, they despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, and till there was no remedy.—The wicked people that were in the days of Noah made but a mock at the word of God, when Noah told them that God would take vengeance on them for their sins.—Lot preached to the Sodomites, that except they repented, both they and their city should be destroyed; they thought his sayings impossible to be true; they scorned and mocked his admonitions, and reputed him as an old doting fool. But God burnt up those scornors and mockers of his holy word. And what estimation had Christ's doctrine among the scribes and Pharisees? What reward had he among them?—The Pharisees which were covetous, did scorn him in his doctrine. O then ye see that worldly rich men do scorn the doctrine of their salvation; the worldly wise men scorn the doctrine of Christ as foolishness to their understandings. These scornors have ever been, and ever shall be to the world's end. For St. Peter prophesied that such scornors should be in the end before the latter day. Take heed, therefore, my brethren, take heed; be ye not scornors of God's most holy word: provoke him not to pour out his wrath upon you, as he did upon those gibbers and mockers: be not wilful murderers of your own souls." Thus far the Homily.

And no marvel if priests may be guilty as well as people, if it be true that is said by the church in Hom. 3. against Peril of Idolatry, p. 56, 57. "But a true preacher to stay this mischief, is in very many places scarcely heard once in the whole year, and somewhere not once in seven years, as it is evident to be proved. Further, it appeareth not by any story of credit, that true and sincere preaching hath endured in any one place above a hundred years. But it is evident that images, superstition, and worshipping of images, and idolatry, have continued many hundred years.—For preaching of God's word (most sincere in the beginning) by process of time waxed less and less pure, and after corrupt, and last of all altogether laid down and left off, and other inventions of men crept in place of it:—So that laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sexes, and degrees of men, women and children of whole christendom, (a most horrible and most dreadful thing to think,) have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry, of all other vices most detested of God, and most damnable to man, and that by the space of eight hundred years." So far the church of England.

And though I am far from crediting the many fabulous stories in that and such other books; yet I shall recite one instance in the Life of Philip Neri, the father of the Oratorians, which shall show you, that even among the papists, holy, serious diligence, where it is, hath the same usage from the profane, both clergy and laity, as in other places; and so that every where holiness is persecuted by men professing the same religion with those they persecute.

The meetings of the Oratorians and their exercises, so like those now abhorred by many, are by Baronius (that was one of them) thus described, as you may see in the Life of Neri, p. 45.

"Certainly by the divine wisdom was it brought to pass, that in our times—Assemblies were instituted in the city, much what after the form of those apostolical conventions; such especially as by the apostle were appointed for discoursing of divine matters, both for edifying the hearers, and for propagating the church.—It was agreed, that the zealous christians should meet a-days at Saint Hieron's Oratory, and there a religious meeting should be held after this manner. First, silence being made, they began with prayer, and one of the brothers read some pious lesson. At the reading of which, the father used to interpose upon occasion, explaining more fully, enlarging, and vehemently inculcating on the minds of the auditors the things read, continuing his discourse sometimes a whole hour (to the great satisfaction of the hearers) dialogue-wise, asking some of the company their opinions of such a thing. Afterward, by his appointment, one of them went up into the desk, raised upon steps, and made an oration, without flourishes or varnish of language, composed out of the approved and choice lives of saints, sacred writ, and sentences of holy fathers. He that succeeded him, discoursed after the same manner, but on a differing matter. Then followed the third, who related some part of the church story in the order of its several ages. Every of these had his half-hour allotted him, and performed all with marvellous delight and approbation: then singing some hymn, and going to prayers again, the company broke up. All things thus ordered, and ratified by the pope as far as the times would suffer, the beautiful face of the primitive apostolical assembling seemed to be revived again; whereat all good men rejoicing, and many taking their model from them, the like exercises of piety were set up and practised in other places." So far Baronius.

If any say that this long and zealous exercise was not in private houses; I answer, allow us an oratory, as the pope himself allowed them, and we had rather far be there than in private houses: but if any that hinder such from being public, shall then reproach it for being in a less public place, they scarce play fair. The church of England, in the third part of the sermon against Peril of Idolatry, p. 66, 67, saith, In Maximian and Constantius the emperor's proclamation, the places where christians resorted to public prayer were called conventicles. See further.

But how were the Oratorians esteemed and used? In chap. xvi. of *Nerius's Persecutions*, after the mention of men's rancour and railing that maligned him, it follows, p. 56, "that the prelate that was deputy of the city, moved by the reports of them that bore a spleen to Philip, sent for him, and reprehended him sharply: 'Is it not a shame (saith he) that you who profess a contempt of the world, should hunt for popular applause, and walk through the city guarded with troops, with such nets as these, fishing for church-preferments?' When having shrewdly taunted him with such like expressions, he prohibits him the hearing of confessions for fifteen days, and to use the customs of the Oratory, but by leave first obtained, or to lead about with him any companies of men, threatening imprisonment upon his disobedience: neither would he let him depart till he put in security for his appearance, saying, 'Come, you do all this not for the glory of God, but to make a party for yourself.' Meantime, while the good man was commending himself to God, having entreated divers religious persons to be instant in prayer about this business, one appeareth, and saith, 'This trouble shall be quickly over, and the work that is begun be more strongly confirmed; they who resist now, shall assist hereafter; and if any one shall dare to oppose it any longer, God shall speedily avenge it on him: the prelate, that is your chiefest adversary, shall certainly die within fifteen days.' And it fell out precisely as he foretold; for the prelate (the pope's deputy) relating the proceedings to his Holiness somewhat partially, died suddenly. No sooner was this blaze of persecutions out, but a much fiercer was kindled against the order: for under pretext of piety and religion, some possessed the pope that the preachers of St. Hierom's many times delivered things ridiculous, and unsound, which argued high indiscretion, or ignorance, and must needs endanger their hearers."—

I would not have troubled you with any of these citations, but to let those know that are offended at my reproof of impious ministers, that in all places and parties in the world, where there is any serious diligence for salvation, there are always enemies of the same profession even among the clergy as well as others. The hindering of holy diligence and seriousness, is the work of the devil and his instruments in the world. The promoting it is the work of Christ, and of his servants. The great actions of the world are but the conflictings of these two armies, the salvation of the conquerors, and the damnation of the conquered, being the end. By this contending for faith and holiness, and bearing the cross, I take myself bound to perform my covenant of professing the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully fighting under his banner, against the devil, the world, and the flesh, to my life's end. Reader, thou art engaged to the like as well as I, and shalt be judged accordingly, and reap as thou hast sowed. CHOOSE and DO as thou wilt SPEED.

ECCLESIASTES IX. 10.

"WHATSOEVER THY HAND FINDETH TO DO, DO IT WITH THY MIGHT; FOR THERE IS NO WORK, NOR DEVICE, NOR KNOWLEDGE, NOR WISDOM, IN THE GRAVE, WHITHER THOU GOEST."

THE mortality of man being the principal subject of Solomon in this chapter, and observing that wisdom and piety exempt not men from death, he first hence infers, that God's love or hatred to one man above another, is not to be gathered by his dealing with them here, where "all things" in the common course of providence "do come alike to all." The common sin hath introduced death as a common punishment, which levelleth all, and endeth all the contrivances, businesses, and enjoyments of this life, to good and bad; and the discriminating justice is not ordinarily manifested here. An epicure or infidel would think Solomon were here pleading their unmanly, impious cause; but it is not the cessation of the life, or operations, or enjoyments of the soul that he is speaking of, as if there were no life to come, or the soul of man were not immortal; but it is the cessation of all the actions, and honours, and pleasures of this life, which to good or bad shall be no more. Here they have no more reward, the memory of them will be here forgotten. "They have no more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun," ver. 5, 6.

From hence he further inferreth, that the comforts of life are but short and transitory, and, therefore, that what the creature can afford, must be presently taken: and as the wicked shall have no more but present pleasures, so the faithful may take their lawful comforts in the present moderate use of creatures; for if their delightful goodness be of right and use to any, it is to them: and therefore, though they may not use them to their hurt, to the pampering of their flesh, and strengthening their lusts, and hindering spiritual duties, benefits, and salvation, yet must

they "serve the Lord with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things," which he giveth them, Deut. xxviii. 47.

Next, he inferreth from the brevity of man's life, the necessity of speed, and diligence in his duty. And this is in the words of my text: where you have, I. The duty commanded. II. The reason or motive to enforce it.

The duty is in the first part; "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," that is, whatever work is assigned thee by God to do in this thy transitory life, "do it with thy might;" that is, I. Speedily, without delay; 2. Diligently, and as well as thou art able, and not with slothfulness, or by the halves.

The motive is in the latter part; "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest;" that is, it must be *now* or *never*; the grave, where thy work cannot be done, will quickly end thy opportunities. The Chaldee paraphrase appropriates the sense too narrowly to works of charity, or alms; whatsoever good and alms-giving thou findest to do: and the moving reason they read accordingly, for nothing but thy works of righteousness and mercy follow thee. But the words are more general, and the sense is obvious, contained in these two propositions.

Doct. I. The work of this life cannot be done when this life is ended. Or, There is no working in the grave, to which we are all making haste.

Doct. II. Therefore while we have time we must do our best. Or, Do the work of this present life with vigour and diligence.

It is from an unquestionable and commonly acknowledged truth, that Solomon here urgeth us to

diligence in duty; and therefore to prove it would be but loss of time. As there are two worlds for man to live in, and so two lives for man to live, so each of these lives hath its peculiar employment. This is the life of preparation; the next is the life of our reward or punishment: we are now but in the womb of eternity, and must live hereafter in the open world. We are now but set to school to learn the work that we must do for ever. This is the time of our apprenticeship; we are learning the trade that we must live upon in heaven. We run now, that we may then receive the crown; we fight now, that we may then triumph in victory. The grave hath no work, but heaven hath work; and hell hath suffering: there is no repentance unto life hereafter; but there is repentance unto torment, and to desperation. There is no believing of a happiness unseen in order to the obtaining of it; or of a misery unseen in order to the escaping of it; nor believing in a Saviour in order to these ends: but there is the fruition of the happiness which was here believed; and feeling of the misery that men would not believe; and suffering from him as a righteous Judge, whom they rejected as a merciful Saviour. So that it is not all work that ceaseth at our death; but only the work of this present life.

And indeed no reason can show us the least probability of doing our work when our time is done, that was given us to do it in. If it can be done, it must be, 1. By the recalling of our time. 2. By the return of life. 3. Or, by opportunity in another life: but there is no hope of any of these.

1. Who knoweth not that time cannot be recalled? That which once was will be no more. Yesterday will never come again. To-day is passing, and will not return. You may work while it is day; but when you have lost that day, it will not return for you to work in. While your candle burneth, you may make use of its light; but when it is done, it is too late to use it. No force of medicine, no orator's elegant persuasions, no worldling's wealth, no prince's power, can call back one day or hour of time. If they could, what endeavours would there be used, when extremity hath taught them to value what they now despise! What chafferings would there be at last, if time could be purchased for any thing that man can give! Then misers would bring out their wealth and say, All this will I give for one day's time of repentance more. And lords and knights would lay down their honours, and say, Take all, and let us be the basest beggars, if we may but have one year of the time that we misspent. Then kings would lay down their crowns and say, Let us be equal with the lowest subjects, so we may but have the time again that we wasted in the cares and pleasures of the world. Kingdoms would then seem a contemptible price for the recovery of time. The time that is now idled and talked away; the time that is now feasted and complimented away; that is unnecessarily sported and slept away; that is wickedly and presumptuously sinned away; how precious will it one day seem to all! How happy a bargain would they think that they had made, if at the dearest rates they could redeem it! The profane mariner falls a praying, when he fears his time is at an end. If opportunity would then prevail, how earnestly would they pray for the recovery of time, that formerly derided praying, or minded it not, or could not have while, or mocked God with lip-service, and customary forms, and feigned words, instead of praying! What a liturgy would death teach the trifling, time-despising gallants, the idle, busy, dreaming-active, ambitious, covetous lovers of this world, if time could be entreated to return! How

passionately then would they roar out their requests! Oh that we might once see the days of hope, and means, and mercy, which once we saw, and would not see! Oh that we had those days to spend in penitential tears and prayers, and holy preparations for an endless life, which we spent at cards, in needless recreations, in idle talk, in humouring others, on the pleasing of our flesh, or in the inordinate cares and businesses of the world! Oh that our youthful vigour might return! that our years might be renewed! that the days we spent in vanity might be recalled! that ministers might again be sent to us publicly and privately, with the message of grace that we once made light of! that the sun would once more shine upon us! and patience and mercy would once more reassume their work! If cries or tears, or price or pains, would bring back lost, abused time, how happy were the now distracted, dreaming, dead-hearted, and impenitent world! If it would then serve their turn to say to the vigilant believers, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out," or to cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," when the door is shut, the foolish would be saved as well as the wise, Matt. xxv. 8, 10, 11. But "this is the day of salvation! this is the accepted time," 2 Cor. vi. 2. "While it is called to-day, hearken, and harden not your hearts," Psal. xciv. 8. Awake, thou that sleepest, and stand up from thy slothful, wilful death, and use the light that is afforded thee by Christ, Eph. v. 14, or else the everlasting, utter darkness, will shortly end thy time and hope.

2. And as time can never be recalled, so life shall never be here restored. "If a man die, shall he live (here) again? All the days of our appointed time we must therefore wait (in faith and diligence) till our change shall come," Job xiv. 14. One life is appointed us on earth to despatch the work that our everlasting life dependeth on; and we shall have but one. Lose that, and all is lost for ever. Yet you may hear, and read, and learn, and pray; but when this life is ended, it shall be so no more. You shall rise from the dead indeed to judgment, and to the life that now you are preparing for; but never to such a life as this on earth: your life is as the fighting of a battle, that must be won or lost at once. There is no coming hither again to mend what is done amiss. Oversights must be presently corrected by repentance, or else they are everlastingly past remedy. Now if you be not truly converted, you may be: if you find that you are carnal and miserable, you may be healed: if you are unpardoned, you may be pardoned: if you are enemies, you may be reconciled to God: but when once the thread of life is cut, your opportunities are at an end. Now you may inquire of your friends and teachers, what a poor soul must do that he may be saved, and you may receive particular instructions and exhortations, and God may bless them to the illuminating, renewing, and saving of your souls; but when life is past, it will be so no more. O then, if desperate souls might but return, and once more be tried with the means of life, what joyful tidings would it be! How welcome would the messenger be that bringeth it! Had hell but such an offer as this, and would any cries procure it from their righteous Judge, oh what a change would be among them! How importunately would they cry to God, O send us once again unto the earth! Once more let us see the face of mercy, and hear the tenders of Christ and of salvation! Once more let the ministers offer us their helps, and teach in season and out of season, in public and in private, and we will refuse their help and exhortations no more; we will hate them and drive them away from our houses and towns no more.

Once more let us have thy word and ordinances, and try whether we will not believe them, and use them better than we did. Once more let us have the help and company of thy saints, and we will scorn them, and abuse them, and persecute them no more. Oh for the great, invaluable mercy of such a life as once we had! O try us once more with such a life, and see whether we will not condemn the world, and close with Christ, and live as strictly, and pray as earnestly, as those that we hated and abused for so doing! Oh that we might once more be admitted into the holy assemblies, and have the Lord's days to spend in the business of our salvation! We would plead no more against the power and purity of the ordinances; we would no more call that day a burden, nor hate them that spent it in works of holiness, nor plead for the liberty of the flesh therein.

It makes my heart even shake within me, to think with what cries those damned souls would strive with God, and how they would roar out, O try us once again! if they had but the least encouragement of hope. But it will not be; it must not be! They had their day, and would not know it. They cannot lose their time and have it. They had faithful guides, and would not follow them: teachers they had, but would not learn. The dust of their feet must witness against them, because their entertained, obeyed message cannot witness for them. Long did Christ wait with the patient tenders of his blood and Spirit, his grace was long and earnestly offered them, but could not be regarded and received. And they cannot finally refuse a Christ, and yet have a Christ; or refuse his mercy, and yet be saved by it. He that would have Lazarus sent from the dead to warn his unbelieving brethren on earth, no doubt would have strongly purposed himself on a reformation, if he might once more have been tried. And how earnestly would he have begged for such a trial, that begged so hard for a drop of water! But, alas! such mouths must be stopped for ever with a "Remember, that thou in thy life-time receivest thy good things," Luke xvi. 24, 25, 27, 28.

So that "it is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment," Heb. ix. 27. But there is no return to earth again. The places of your abode, employment, and delight, shall know you no more. You must see these faces of your friends, and converse in flesh with men, no more! This world, these houses, this wealth and honour, as to any fruition, must be to you as if you had never known them. You must assemble here but a little while! yet a little longer, and we must preach, and you must hear it no more for ever. That, therefore, which you will do, must presently be done, or it will be too late. If ever you will repent and believe, it must be *now*. If ever you will be converted and sanctified, it must be *now*. If ever you will be pardoned, and reconciled to God, it must be *now*. If ever you will reign, it is now that you must fight and conquer. Oh that you were wise, that you understood this, and that you would consider your latter end, Deut. xxxii. 29. And that you would let those words sink down into your hearts, which came from the heart of the Redeemer, as was witnessed by his tears: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace. But now they are hidden from thine eyes," Luke xix. 41, 42. And that these warnings may not be the less regarded, because you have so often heard them, when often hearing increaseth your obligation, and diminisheth not the truth, or your danger.

3. And as there is no return to earth, so is there no doing this work hereafter. Heaven and hell are for other work. If the infant be dead-born, the open

world will not revive him. That which is generated and born a beast or serpent, will not, by all the influences of the heavens, or all the powers of sun or earth, become a man. The second and third concoction presuppose the first; the harvest doth presuppose the seed-time, and the labour of the husbandman. It is now that you must sow, and hereafter that you must reap. It is now that you must work, and then that you must receive your wages. Is this believed and considered by the sleepy world? Alas, sirs, do you live as men that must live here no more? Do you work as men that must work no more, and pray as men that must pray no more, when once the time of work is ended? What thinkest thou, poor besotted sinner! will God command the sun to stand still while thou rebellest or forgettest thy work and him? Dost thou look he should pervert the course of nature, and continue the spring and seed-time till thou hast a mind to sow? or that he will return the dead-born or misshapen infant into the womb that it may be better formed or quickened? Will he renew thy age and make thee young again, and call back the hours that thou prodigally wastedst on thy lusts and idleness? Canst thou look for this at the hand of God, when nature and Scripture assure thee of the contrary? If not, why hast thou not yet done with thy beloved sins? Why hast thou not yet begun to live? Why sittest thou still while thy soul is unrenewed, and all thy preparation for death and judgment is yet to make? How fain would Satan find thee thus at death! How fain would he have leave to blow out thy candle, before thou hast entered into the way of life! Dost thou look to have preachers sent after thee, to bring thee the mercy which thy contempt here left behind? Wilt thou hear and be converted in the grave and hell? or wilt thou be saved without holiness? that is, in despite of God that hath resolved, it shall not be? O ye sons of sleep, of death, of darkness, awake and live, and hear the Lord, before the grave and hell have shut their mouths upon you! Hear now, lest hearing be too late! Hear now, if you will ever hear! Hear now, if you have ears to hear! And O ye sons of light, that see what sleeping sinners see not, call to them, and ring them such a peal of lamentations, tears, and compassionate entreaties, as is suited to such a dead and doleful state; who knows but God may bless it to awake them?

If any of you be so far awakened, as to ask me, what I am calling you to do, my text tells you in general, Up and be doing: look about you, and see what you have to do, and do it with your might.

1. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do;" that is, whatsoever is a duty imposed by the Lord, whatsoever is a means conducing to thy own or other's welfare; whatsoever necessity calleth thee to do, and opportunity alloweth thee to do.

"Thy hand findeth;" that is, thy executive power by the conduct of thy understanding is now to do.

"Do it with thy might." Do thy best in it. 1. Trifle not, but do it presently, without unnecessary delay. 2. Do it resolutely. Remain not doubtful, unresolved, in suspense, as if it were yet a question with thee whether thou shouldst do it or not.

3. Do it with thy most awakened affections, and serious intention of the powers of thy soul. Sleepiness and insensibility are most unsuitable to such works. It is a peculiar people, zealous of good works, that Christ hath purchased to himself, Tit. ii. 14.

4. Do it with all necessary forecast and contrivance. Not with a distracting, hindering care; but with such a care as may show that you despise not your Master, and are not regardless of his work. And with such a care as is suited to the difficulties

and nature of the thing, and is necessary to the due accomplishment.

5. Do it not slothfully, but vigorously, and with diligence. Strick not at thy labour, lest thou hear, "Thou wicked and slothful servant," Matt. xxv. 26. "Hide not thy hand in thy bosom with the slothful," and say not, "There is a lion in the way," Prov. xxvi. 13, 14. The negligent and the vicious, the waster and the slothful, differ but as one brother from another, Prov. xviii. 9. As the self-murderer of the wilfully ungodly, so also, "the desire of the slothful killeth him, because his hands refuse to labour," Prov. xxi. 25. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat," Prov. xiii. 4. "Be not slothful in business, but be fervent in Spirit serving the Lord," Rom. xii. 11.

6. Do it with constancy, and not with destructive pauses and intermissions, or with weariness and turning back. "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that is of clean hands shall be stronger and stronger," Job xvii. 9. "Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58. "Be not weary of well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not," Gal. vi. 9. These six particulars are necessary, if you will observe the precept in my text.

But that misunderstanding hinder not the performance, I shall acquaint you further with the sense, by these few explicatory cautions.

1. The might and diligence here required, excludeth not the necessity of deliberation and prudent conduct. Otherwise, the faster you go, the further you may go out of the way; and misguided zeal may spoil all the work, and make it but an injury to others or yourselves. A little imprudence in the season, and order, and manner of a duty, sometimes may spoil it, and hinder the success, and make it do more hurt than good. How many a sermon, or prayer, or reproof, is made the matter of derision and contempt, for some imprudent passages or deportment? God sendeth not his servants to be jesters of the world, or to play the madmen as David in his fears: we must be wise and innocent, as well as resolute and valiant. Though fleshly and worldly wisdom be not desirable, as being but foolishness with God; yet the "wisdom which is from above, and is first pure, and then peaceable," and is acquainted with the high and hidden mysteries, and is "justified of her children," must be the guide of all our holy actions. Holiness is not blind. Illumination is the first part of sanctification. Believers are children of the light. Nothing requireth so much wisdom as the matters of God, and of our salvation. Folly is most unsuitable to such excellent employments, and most unbecoming the sons of the Most High. It is a spirit of wisdom that animateth all the saints, 1 Cor. iii. 19; ii. 6, 7; Eph. i. 8, 17; Col. iii. 16. It is the treasures of wisdom that dwelleth in Christ, and are communicated to his members, Col. ii. 3. We must "walk in wisdom toward them that are without," Col. iv. 5. And our "work must be shown out of a good conversation, with meekness of wisdom," Jam. iii. 13. Yet I must needs say, that it is more in great things than in small, in the substance than the circumstances; in a sound judgment and estimate of things, and suitable choice and prosecution, than in fine expressions or deportment, answering proud men's expectations.

2. Though you must work with your might, yet with a diversity agreeable to the quality of your several works. Some works must be preferred before others. All cannot be done at once. That is a

sin out of season, which in season is a duty. The greatest and the most urgent work must be preferred. And some works must be done with double fervour and resolution, and some with less. Buying, and selling, and marrying, and possessing, and using the world, must be done with a fear of overdoing, and in a sort as if we did them not, though they also must have a necessary diligence, 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. God's kingdom and its righteousness must be first sought, Matt. vi. 33. And our labour for the meat that perisheth, must be comparatively as none, John vi. 27.

3. Lastly, it is not an irregular, nor a self-disturbing, vexatious violence that is required of us; but a sweet, well-settled resolution, and a delightful, expeditious diligence, that makes the wheels go merrily on, and the more easily get over those rubs and difficulties, that clog and stop a slothful soul.

And now will you lend me the assistance of your consciences, for the transcribing of this command of God upon your hearts, and taking out a copy of this order, for the regulating of your lives? Whatsoever, is not a word so comprehensive as to include any vanity or sin; but so comprehensive as to include all your duty.

1. To begin with the lowest: the very works of your bodily callings must have diligence. "In the sweat of your brows you must eat your bread," Gen. iii. 19. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do," Exod. xx. 9. "He that will not work, let him not eat," 2 Thess. iii. 10. "Disorderly walkers, busybodies, that will not work with quietness, and eat their own bread, are to be avoided and shamed by the church," 2 Thess. iii. 6, 11, 12, 14. Lazy servants are unfaithful to men, and disobedient to God, who commandeth them to "obey their masters according to the flesh" (unbelieving, ungodly masters) "in all things," (that concerns their service,) "and that not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, and in the fear of God, doing whatsoever they do as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord" (even for this) "they shall receive the reward of the inheritance," Col. iii. 22—24. "But he that doth wrong" (by slothfulness, or unfaithfulness) "shall receive for the wrong which he hath done," ver. 25.

Success is God's ordinary temporal reward of diligence, Prov. x. 4; xii. 24, 27. And diseases, poverty, shame, disappointment, or self-tormenting melancholy, are his usual punishments of sloth. Hard labour redeemeth time: you will have the more to lay out on greater works. The slothful is still behindhand, and therefore must leave much of his work undone.

2. Are you parents, or governors of families? You have work to do for God, and for your children's and servants' souls. Do it with your might. Deal wisely, but seriously and frequently, with them about their sins, their duty, and their hopes of heaven. Tell them whither they are going, and which way they must go. Make them understand that they have a higher Father and Master that must be first served, and greater work than yours. Waken them from their natural insensibility and sloth. Turn not all your family duties into lifeless, customary forms (whether extemporate, or by rote); speak about God, and heaven, and hell, and holiness, with that seriousness as becometh men that believe what they say, and would have those they speak to, to believe it. Talk not either drowsily, or lightly, or jestingly, of such dreadful, or joyful, unexpressible things. Remember, that your families and you are going to the grave, and to the world where there is no more room for your exhortations. There is no catchising, examining, or serious instructing them

in the grave, whither they and you are going. It must be *now* or *never*; and, therefore, do it with your might. The words of God must be "in your hearts, and you must diligently teach them to your children, talking of them when you sit in your houses, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up," Deut. vi. 6—8; xi. 18—20.

3. Have you ignorant or ungodly neighbours, whose misery calls for your compassion and relief? Speak to them and help them with prudent diligence. Lose not your opportunities. Stay not till death hath stopt your mouths, or stopt their ears. Stay not till they are out of hearing, and taken from your converse. Stay not till they are in hell before you warn them of it, or till heaven be lost, before you have seriously called to them to remember it. Go to their houses; take all opportunities; stoop to their infirmities; bear with unthankful frowardness; it is for men's salvation. Remember there is no place for your instructions or exhortations in the grave or hell. Your dust cannot speak, and their dust cannot hear. Up, therefore, and be doing with all your might!

4. Hath God intrusted you with the riches of the world, with many talents or with few, by which he looketh you should relieve the needy, and especially should promote those works of piety which are the greatest charity? Give (prudently, but willingly and liberally) while you have to give. It is your gain. The time of market for your souls, and of laying up a treasure in heaven, and setting your money to the most gainful usury; and of making your friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; and furthering your salvation, by that which hindereth other men's, and occasioneth their perdition. "As you have opportunity, do good to all men, but especially to them of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 6—9, 12. "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth," Eccles. xi. 1, 2. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good," ver. 6. "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it. Say not to thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee," Prov. iii. 27, 28. Lay up a foundation for the time to come. Do good before thy heart be hardened, thy riches blasted and consumed, thy opportunities taken away; part with it before it part with thee. Remember it must be *now* or *never*. There is no working in the grave.

5. Hath God intrusted you with power, or interest, by which you may promote his honour in the world, and relieve the oppressed, and restrain the rage of impious malice! Hath he made you governors, and put the sword of justice into your hands? Up, then, and be doing with your might. Defend the innocent, protect the servants of the Lord, cherish them that do well, be a terror to the wicked, encourage the strictest obedience to the Universal Governor, discountenance the breakers of his laws. Look not to be revered or obeyed before him, or more carefully than he. Openly maintain his truth and worship without fear or shame. Deal gently and tenderly with his lambs and little ones. Search after vice that you may successfully suppress it. Hate those temptations that would draw you to man-pleasing, temporizing, remissness, or countenancing sin; but especially those that would insare you in a controversy with Heaven, and in quarrels against the ways of holiness, or in that self-confounding sin

of abusing and opposing the people that are most careful to please the Lord. Your trust is great, and so is your advantage to do good. And how great will be your account, and how dreadful, if you be unfaithful! As you signify more than hundreds or thousands of the meaner sort, and your actions do most good or hurt, so you must expect to be accordingly dealt with, when you come to the impartial, final judgment. Befriend the gospel as the charter of your everlasting privileges. Own those that Christ hath told you he will own. Use them as men that are ready to hear. "Insomuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me," Matt. xxv. "Know not a wicked person;" but let "your eyes be on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell therein, and lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty," Psal. ci.; 1 Tim. ii. 2. "Let those that work the work of the Lord, be with you without fear," 1 Cor. xvi. 10. Remember that it is the character of a Pharisee and hypocrite, to see the mote of the non-observance of a ceremony, or tradition, or smaller matter of difference in religion, in their brother's eye, and not to see the beam of hypocrisy, injustice, and malicious, cruel opposition of Christ and his disciples in their own eyes. And that it is the brand of them that please not God, that are filling up their sins, on whom God's wrath is coming to the utmost, to "persecute the servants of the Lord, forbidding them to preach to the people that they might be saved," 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

Learn well the second and the hundred and first Psalm. And write these sentences on your walls and doors, as an antidote against that self-undoing sin: "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea," Matt. xviii. 16. "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 8. "Him that is weak in the faith, receive you; but not to doubtful disputations. For God hath received him," Rom. xiv. 1, 2; xv. 1. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoso shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward," Matt. x. 40—42. If you love not the godly, love yourselves (so far as to such self-love is possible): wound not your own hearts, to make their fingers bleed. Damn not your own souls, (and that by the surest, nearest way,) that you may hurt their bodies. Provoke not God to thrust you from his presence, and deny your suits, by your dealing so with them. Stop not your own mouths, when your misery will bespeak your loudest cries for mercy, by your stopping the mouths of the servants of the Lord, and refusing to hear their requests for justice. If you have the serpent's enmity against the woman's seed, you must expect the serpent's doom. Your heads will be bruised when you have bruised their heels, Gen. iii. 15. "Kick not against the pricks," Acts ix. 5. Let not "briers and thorns set themselves in battle against the Lord, lest he go, therefore, through them, and burn them together," Isa. xxvii. 4.

I speak not any of this by way of accusation or dishonourable reflection on the magistrate. Blessed be God that hath given us the comfort of your defence. But knowing what the tempter aimeth at, and where it is that your danger lieth, and by what means the rulers of the earth have been undone,

faithfulness commandeth me to tell you of the snare, and to set before you good and evil, as ever I would escape the guilt of betraying you by flattery, or cruel and cowardly silence.

And especially when your magistracy is but annual, or for a short time, it concerneth you to be doing with your might. It is but this year, or short space of time, that you have to do this special service in; lose this, and lose all. By what men on earth should God be eminently served and honoured, if not by magistrates, whom he hath eminently advanced, empowered, and intrusted? With considerate foresight, seriously ask yourselves the question, Are you willing to hear, at the day of your accounts, that you had but one year, or a few, to do God special service in, and that you knew this, and yet would not do it? Can your hearts bear it then, to hear and think, that you lost, and wilfully lost, such an opportunity? Look about you then, and see what is to be done. Are there not ale-houses to be suppressed, and drunkards and riotous persons to be restrained? preaching and piety to be promoted? Do it with your might. For it must be *now* or *never*.

6. To come yet a little nearer you, and speak of the work that is yet to be done in your own souls. Are any of you yet in the state of unrenewed nature, born only of the flesh, and not of the Spirit, John iii. 3, 5, 6; "minding the things of the flesh, and not the things of the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1, 5, 7, 9, 13; and consequently yet in the "power of Satan, taken captive by him at his will?" Acts xxvi. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 26. Up and be doing, if thou love thy soul. If thou care whether thou be in joy or misery for ever, bewail thy sin and spiritual distress. Make out to Christ, cry mightily to him for his renewing and reconciling, pardoning grace. Plead his satisfaction, his merits, and his promises. Away with thy rebellion, and thy beloved sin; deliver up thy soul entirely to Christ, to be sanctified, governed, and saved by him. Make no more demurs about it; it is not a matter to be questioned, or trifled in. Let the earth be acquainted with thy bended knees, and the air with thy complaints and cries, and men with thy confessions and inquiries after the way of life; and heaven with thy sorrows, desires, and resolutions; till thy soul be acquainted with the Spirit of Christ, (Rom. viii. 9,) and with the new, the holy, and heavenly nature; and thy heart have received the transcript of God's law, the impress of the gospel, and so the image of thy Creator and Redeemer. Ply this work with all thy might. For there is no conversion, renovation, or repentance unto life in the grave, whither thou goest. It must be *now* or *never*. And never saved, if never sanctified, Heb. xii. 14.

7. Hast thou any prevailing sin to mortify, that either reigneth in thee, or woundeth thee and keepeth thy soul in darkness and unacquaintedness with God? Assault it resolutely; reject it speedily; abhor the motions of it; turn away from the persons or things that would entice thee. Hate the doors of the harlot, and of the ale-house, or the gaming-house; and go not as the "ox to the slaughter, and as a bird to the fowler's snare, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks, as if thou knewest not that it is for thy life," Prov. vii. 22, 23. Why, thou befooled, stupid soul! wilt thou be tasting of the poisoned cup? wilt thou be sporting thee with the bait? Hast thou no where to walk or play thee, but at the brink of hell? "Must not the flesh be crucified with its affections and lusts?" Gal. v. 24. Must it not be tamed and mortified, or thy soul condemned? Rom. viii. 13; 1 Cor. ix. 27. "Run not,

therefore, as at uncertainty; fight not as one that beats the air," 1 Cor. ix. 26: seeing this must be done, or thou art undone, delay and dally with sin no longer. Let this be the day; resolve, and resist it with thy might. It must be *now* or *never*. When death comes, it is too late. It will be then no reward to leave thy sin, which thou canst keep no longer; no part of holiness or happiness that thou art not drunk, or proud, or lustful in the grave or hell. As thou art wise, therefore, know and take thy time.

8. Art thou in a declined, lapsed state, decayed in grace? Hast thou lost thy first desires and love? Do thy first works, and do them with thy might. Delay not, but remember from whence thou art fallen, and what thou hast lost by it, and into how sad a case thy folly and negligence have brought thee; say, "I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now," Hos. ii. 7. Cry out with Job, "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me!" Job xxix. 2-5. Return while thou hast day, lest the night surprise thee: loiter and delay no more; thou hast lost by it already; thou art far behindhand. Bestir thee therefore with all thy might.

9. Art thou in the darkness of uncertainty concerning thy conversion, and thy everlasting state? Dost thou not know whether thou be in a state of life or death? and what should become of thee, if this were the day or hour of thy change? If thou art careful about it, and inquirest, and usest the means that God hath appointed thee for assurance, I have then no more to say to thee now, but wait on God, and thou shalt not be disappointed or ashamed; thou shalt have assurance in due time, or be saved before thou wouldst believe thou shouldst be saved. Be patient and obedient, and the light of Christ will shine upon thee, and yet thou shalt see the days of peace. But if thou art careless in thy uncertainty, and mindest not so great a business, be awakened, and call thy soul to its account; search and examine thy heart and life; read, and consider, and take advice of faithful guides. Canst thou carelessly sleep, and laugh, and sport, and follow thy lesser business as if thy salvation were made sure, when thou knowest not where thou must dwell for ever? "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith; prove yourselves; know ye not your own selves, that Christ is in you except you are reprobates," 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "Give all diligence (in time) to make your calling and election sure," 2 Pet. i. 10. In the grave and hell there is no making sure of heaven: you are then past inquiries and self-examinations, in order to any recovery or hope. Another kind of trial will finally resolve you. Up, therefore, and diligently ply the work; it must be *now* or *never*.

10. In all the duties of thy profession, of piety, justice, or charity, to God, thyself, or others, up and be doing with thy might. Art thou seeking to inflame thy soul with love to God? Plunge thyself in the ocean of his love; admire his mercies; gaze upon the representations of his transcendent goodness; O taste and see that the Lord is gracious! Remember that he must be loved with all thy heart, and soul, and might. Canst thou pour out thy love upon a creature, and give but a few barren drops to God?

When thou art fearing him, let his fear command thy soul, and conquer all the fear of man.

When thou art trusting him, do it without distrust,

and cast all thy care and thyself upon him: trust him as a creature should trust his God, and the members of Christ should trust their Head and dear Redeemer.

When thou art making mention of his great and dreadful name, O do it with reverence, and awe, and admiration; and take not the name of God in vain.

When thou art reading his word, let the majesty of the author, and the greatness of the matter, and gravity of the style, possess thee with an obedient fear. Love it, and let it be sweeter to thee than the honeycomb, and preciouser than thousands of gold and silver. Resolve to do what there thou findest to be the will of God. When thou art praying in secret, or in thy family, do it with thy might; cry mightily to God as a soul under sin, and wants, and danger, that is stepping into an endless life, should do. Let the reverence and the fervour of thy prayers show that it is God himself that thou art speaking to; that it is heaven itself that thou art praying for; hell itself that thou art praying to be saved from. Wilt thou be dull and senseless on such an errand to the living God? Remember what lieth upon thy failing or prevailing, and that it must be *now or never*.

Art thou a preacher of the gospel, and takest charge of the souls of men? "Take heed to thyself and to the whole flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made thee an overseer, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," Acts xx. 28. Let not the blood of souls, and the blood that purchased them, be required at thy hands, Ezek. iii. 18, 20. "Thou art charged before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, that thou preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine," 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. "Teach every man, and exhort every man," Col. i. 28; "even night and day with tears," Acts xx. 31. "Save men with fear, pulling them out of the fire," Jude 23. "Cry aloud; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell them of their transgressions," Isa. lviii. 1. Yet thou art alive, and they are alive; yet thou hast a tongue, and they have ears: the final sentence hath not yet cut off their hopes. Preach, therefore, and preach with all thy might. Exhort them privately and personally with all the seriousness thou canst; quickly, or it will be too late; prudently, or Satan will overreach thee; fervently, or thy words are like to be disregarded. Remember when thou lookest them in the faces, when thou beholdest the assemblies, that they must be converted or condemned, sanctified on earth, or tormented in hell; and that this is the day: it must be *now or never*.

In a word: apply this quickening precept to all the duties of the christian course. Be religious, and just, and charitable in good earnest, if you would be taken for such when you look for the reward. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling," Phil. ii. 12. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter and shall not be able," Matt. vii. 13; Luke xii. 24. "Many run, but few receive the prize; so run that you may obtain," 1 Cor. ix. 24. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 18. Let the doting world deride your diligence, and set themselves to hinder and afflict you: it will be but a little while before experience change their minds, and make them sing another song. Follow Christ fully: ply your work and lose no time. The Judge is coming. Let not words, nor any thing that man can do, prevail with you to sit

down, or stop you in a journey of such importance. Please God, though flesh, and friends, and all the world should be displeased. Whatever come of your reputation, or estates, or liberties, or lives, be sure you look to life eternal; and cast not that on any hazard, for a withering flower, or a pleasant dream, or a picture of commodity, or any vanity that the deceiver can present. "For what shall it profit you to win the whole world and lose your soul?" Matt. xvi. 26; or to have been honoured and obeyed on earth, when you are under the wrath of God in hell? or that your flesh was once provided with variety of delights, when it is turned to rottenness, and must be raised to torments? Hold on therefore in faith, and holiness, and hope, though earth and hell should rage against you, though all the world, by force or flattery, should do the worst they can to hinder you. This is your trial; your warfare is the resisting of deceit, and of all that would tempt you to consent to the means of your own destruction. Consent not, and you conquer; conquer, and you are crowned. The combat is all about your wills; yield, and you have lost the day. If the prating of ungodly fools, or the contemptuous jeers of hardened sinners, or the frowns of unsanctified superiors, could prevail against the Spirit of Christ, and the workings of an enlightened mind, then what man would be saved? You deserve damnation, if you will run into it to avoid a mock, or the loss of any thing that man can take from you. You are unmeet for heaven, if you can part with it to save your purses. "Fear not them that can kill the body, and after that have no more than they can do: but fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell," Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 4, 5. Obey God, though all the world forbid you. No power can save you from his justice; and none of them can deprive you of his reward. Though you lose your heads, you shall save your crowns; you no way save you lives so certainly, as by such losing them. "One thing is necessary," Matt. x. 39; do that with speed, and care, and diligence, which must be done, or you are lost for ever. They that are now against your much and earnest praying, will shortly cry as loud themselves in vain. When it is too late, how fervently will they beg for mercy, that now deride you for valuing and seeking it in time! But "then they shall call upon God, but he will not answer; they shall seek him early, but shall not find him: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of his counsel, but despised all his reproof," Prov. i. 24, to the end.

Up, therefore, and work with all thy might. Let unbelievers trifle, that know not that the righteous God stands over them, and know not that they are now to work for everlasting, and know not that heaven or hell is at the end. Let them delay, and laugh, and play, and dream away their time, that are drunk with prosperity, and mad with fleshly lusts and pleasures, and have lost their reason in the cares, and delusions, and vain-glory of the world. But shall it be so with thee whose eyes are opened, who seest the God, the heaven, the hell, which they do but hear of as unlikely things? Wilt thou live awake, as they that are asleep? Wilt thou do in the daylight, as they do in the dark? Shall free-men live as Satan's slaves? Shall the living lie as still and useless as the dead? "Work then while it is day, for the night is coming when no man can work," John ix. 4.

It is not the works of the Mosical law, nor works that are conceived for their proper value to deserve any thing at the hands of God, that I am all this while persuading you to: but it is the works pre-

scribed you by Christ in the gospel, according to which you shall be shortly judged to joy or misery, by Christ himself, that will call you to account. These must be done with all your might.

Object. But (you will say perhaps) alas, what might have we? We have no sufficiency of ourselves; without Christ we can do nothing! And this we find when it comes to the trial.

Ans. 1. It is not a might that is originally thine own, that I am calling thee to exercise; but that which thou hast already received from God, and that which he is ready to bestow. Use well but all the might thou hast, and thou shalt find thy labour is not vain. Even the strength of nature, and of common grace, are talents which thou must improve.

2. Art thou willing to use the might thou hast, and to have more, and use it if thou hadst it? If thou art, thou hast then the strength of Christ: thou standest not and workest not by thine own strength; his promise is engaged to thee, and his strength is sufficient for thee. But if thou art not willing, thou art without excuse; when thou hadst heaven and hell set open in the word of God to make thee willing, God will distinguish thy wilfulness from unwilling weakness.

3. There is more power in all of you than you use, or than you are well aware of. It wanteth but awakening to bring it into act. Do you not find, in your repentings, that the change is more in your will than in your power? and in the awakening of your will and reason into act, than in the addition of mere abilities? and that therefore you befool yourselves for your sins and your neglects, and wonder that you had no more use of your understandings? Let but a storm at sea, or violent sickness, or approaching death, rouse up and waken the powers which you have, and you will find there was much more asleep in you than you used.

I shall therefore next endeavour to awaken your abilities, or tell you how you should awaken them.

When your souls are drowsy, and you are forgetting your God and your latter end, and matters of eternity have little force and savour with you; when you grow lazy and superficial, and religion seems a lifeless thing, and you do your duty as it were in vain, or against your wills; when you can lose your time, and delay repentance; and friends, and profit, and reputation, and pleasure can be heard against the word of God, and take you off; when you do all by the halves, and languish in your christian course, as near to death; stir up your souls with the urgency of such questions as these:

Quest. 1. Can I do no more than this for God? who gave me all; who serveth all; who seeth me in my duties and my sins? When he puts me purposely on the trial, what I can do for his sake and service, can I do no more? Can I love him no more? and obey, and watch, and work no more?

Quest. 2. Can I do no more than this for Christ? for him that did so much for me; that lived so exactly; obeyed so perfectly; walked so inoffensively and meekly; despising all the baits, and honours, and riches of the world? that loved me to the death; and offered me freely all his benefits, and would bring me to eternal glory? Are these careless, cold, and dull endeavours my best return for all this mercy?

Quest. 3. Can I do no more, when my salvation is the prize? when heaven or hell depend much on it? when I know this beforehand, and may see in the glass of the holy Scriptures what is prepared for the diligent and the negligent, and what work there is and will be for ever in heaven and hell on these accounts? Could I not do more, if my house were

on fire, or my estate, or life, or friend in danger, than I do for my salvation?

Quest. 4. Can I do no more for the souls of men, when they are undone for ever if they be not speedily delivered? Is this my love and compassion to my neighbour, my servant, friend, or child?

Quest. 5. Can I do no more for the church of God? for the public good? for the peace and welfare of the nation and our posterity? in suppressing sin? in praying for deliverance? or in promoting works of public benefit?

Quest. 6. Can I do no more, that have loitered so long? and go no faster, that have slept till the evening of my days, when diligence must be the discovery of my repentance?

Quest. 7. Can I do no more, that know not now but I am doing my last? that see how fast my time makes haste, and know I must be quickly gone? that know it must be *now* or *never*; and that this is all the time I shall have, on which an endless life dependeth?

Quest. 8. Can I do no better, when I know beforehand what different aspects diligence and negligence will have, to the awakened soul, in the review? what a comfort it will be at death and judgment, to be able to say, I did my best, or loitered not away the time I had? and what a vexatious, and heart-disquieting thing it will then be, to look back on time as irrecoverably lost, and on a life of trial as cast away upon impertinences, while the work that we lived for lay undone? Shall I now by trifling prepare such gripping and tormenting thoughts, for my awakened conscience?

Quest. 9. Can I do no more, when I am sure I cannot do too much, and am sure there is nothing else to be preferred? And that it is this I live for; and that life is for action, and disposseth thereunto (and holy life for holy action); and that it is better not live, than not attain the ends of living; when I have so many and unwearied enemies; when sloth is my danger, and the advantage of my enemy; when I know that resolution and vigorous diligence is so necessary, that all is lost without it? Will temptations be resisted, and self-denied, and concupiscence mortified, and fleshly desires tamed and subdued, and sin cast out, and a holy communion with heaven maintained, with idleness and sloth? Will families be well ordered, and church, or city, or country well governed; will the careless sinners that I am bound to help, be converted, and saved, with sitting still, and with some heartless, cold endeavours?

Quest. 10. Can I do no more that have so much help? That have mercies of all sorts encouraging me, and creatures attending me; that have health to enable me, or affliction to remember and excite me, that have such a Master, such a work, such a reward, as better cannot be desired; who is less excusable for neglect than I?

Quest. 11. Could I do no more, if I were sure that my salvation lay on this one duty; that according to this prayer, it should go with me for ever? or if the soul of my child, or servant, or neighbour must speed for ever, as my endeavours speed with them now for their conversion? For aught I know it may be thus.

Quest. 12. Would I have God to come with the spur rod? How do I complain when affliction is upon me! And will I neither endure it, nor be quickened without it? Is it not better mend my pace and work on easier terms?

I would not have distressed souls to use these considerations merely to disquiet themselves for their infirmities, and so live in heaviness and self-vexation, because they cannot be as good as they desire, or do

as much and as well as they should do: it is not despair that will mend the matter, but make it worse. But I would wish the lazy, slothful soul, to plead these questions with itself, and try whether they have no quickening power, if closely urged, and seriously considered.

Believe it, sirs, it is the deceitfulness of prosperity that keeps up the reputation of a slothful life, and makes holy diligence seem unnecessary. When affliction comes, awakened reason is ashamed of this, and seeth it as an odious thing.

By this time you may see, what difference there is between the judgment of God, and of the world, and what to think of the understandings of those men (be they high or low, learned or unlearned) that hate or oppose this holy diligence. God bids us love, and seek, and serve him, with all our heart, and soul, and might: and these men call them zealots, and precisians, and puritans, that endeavour it; though, alas, they fall exceeding short, when they have done their best. It is one of the most wonderful monstrosities and deformities that ever befell the nature of man, that men, that learned men, that men that in other things are wise, should seriously think that the utmost diligence to obey the Lord and save our souls, is needless, and that ever they should take it for a crime, and make it a matter of reproach; that the serious, diligent obeying of God's laws, should be the matter of the common disdain and hatred of the world; that no men are more generally abhorred, and tossed up and down by impatient men; that great and small, the rulers and vulgar rabble, in most places of the earth cannot endure them. To think how the first man that ever was born into the world, did hate his own brother till he had proceeded to murder him, because he served God better than himself, "because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous," 1 John iii. 12. And how constantly this horrid, unnatural madness hath succeeded and raged in the world from Cain until this day! It is not in vain that the Holy Ghost addeth, in the next words, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," 1 John iii. 13, implying that we are apt to marvel at it, as I confess I have oft and greatly done. Methinks, it is so wonderful a plague and stain in nature, that it doth very much to confirm me of the truth of Scripture, of the doctrine of man's fall and original sin, and the necessity of a Reconciler, and of renewing grace.

Distracted, miserable souls! is it not enough for you to refuse your own salvation, but you must be angry with all that will not imitate you! Is it not mad enough, and bad enough, to choose damnation, but you must be offended with all that are not of your mind? If you will not believe God, that without regeneration, conversion, holiness, and a heavenly, spiritual life, there is no salvation to be hoped for, (John iii. 3, 5, 6; Matt. xviii. 3; Heb. xii. 14; Rom. viii. 9, 13; 2 Cor. v. 17,) must we all be unbelievers with you? If you will laugh at hell till you are in it, must we do so too? If God and glory seem less worth to you than your fleshly pleasure for a time, must we renounce our christianity, and our reason, for fear of differing from you? If you dare differ from your Maker, and the Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost, and all the prophets, apostles, and evangelists, and all that ever came to heaven, might not we be bold to differ from you? If you will needs be ungodly, and choose your everlasting woe, be patient with them that have more understanding, and dare not be so hardy as to leap after you into the unquenchable fire: mock not at holiness if you have no mind of it. Hinder not them that "strive

to enter in at the strait gate," if you refrain yourselves. Be not so desirous of company in hell; it will prove no comfort to you, or abatement of your pain.

But because you have the faces to contradict the God of truth, and to reproach that work which he commandeth, and to say, What needs so much ado? when he bids us do it with all our might; I will briefly tell you what you are doing, and show you the ugly face of the scorner, and the filthy hearts of the enemies of holiness, that, if it may be, you may loathe yourselves.

1. These enemies of holy diligence, deny God with their works and lives, and are practical atheists; and it seems are so near of kin to that "wicked one," (see John iii. 12,) that they would have all others to do so too. And then how soon would earth be turned into hell! The case is plain: if God deserve not to be loved and served with all thy heart, and soul, and might, he is not God. And if thy wealth, or honour, or flesh, or friend deserveth more of thy love, and care, and diligence than God, then that is thy god that deserveth best. See now what these deriders of purity and obedience do think of God, and of the world.

2. These Cainites do blaspheme the Governor of the world: when he hath given laws to the creatures that he made of nothing, these wretches deride and hate men for obeying them. If God have not commanded that which you oppose, contradict it, and spare not: I would you were much more against that pretended religion which he commandeth not. But if he have commanded it, and yet you dare revile them as too pure and precise that would obey it, what do you but charge the King of saints with making laws that are not to be obeyed? which must needs imply that they are foolish, or bad, though made by the most Wise and Good.

3. These enemies of holiness oppose the practice of the very first principles of all religion: for, "He that cometh to God, must believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6. And it is diligent seeking him that they hate and set themselves against.

4. Do not they judge heaven to be less worth than earth, when they will do less for it, and would have others to do so too?

5. They would have us all unchristian and unman ourselves, as if there were no life to come; as if our reason and all our faculties were given us in vain. For if they are not given us for greater matters than all the honours and pleasures of the world, they are in vain, or worse; and the life of man is but a dream and misery. Were not a beast less miserable, if this were all?

6. How base a price do these Cainites set on the immortal soul of man, that think it not worth so much ado, as the careful obedience of the laws of Christ! nor worth so much as they do themselves for their filthy sins and perishing flesh! but would have us so mad as to sell heaven and our souls for a little sinful sloth and ease.

7. These enemies of holiness would have men take their mercies for their hurt, and their greatest blessings for a burden or a plague, and to run into hell to be delivered from them. Why, man, dost thou know what holiness is? and what it is to have access to God? I tell thee it is the foretaste of heaven on earth. It is the highest glory, and sweetest delight, and chiefest commodity to the soul. And art thou afraid of having too much of this? What! thou that hast none, (which should make thee tremble,) art thou afraid of having too much? Thou that never fearest too much money,

nor too much honour, nor too much health, art thou afraid of too much spiritual health and holiness? What shall be thy desire, if thou loathe and fly from thy felicity?

8. You that are loyal subjects, take heed of these ungodly scorners; for by consequence they would tempt you to despise your king, and make a mock at the obeying of his commands and laws. For if a man persuade you to despise a judge, he implieth that you may despise a constable. No king is so great in comparison of God, as a fly or worm is to that king. He therefore that would relax the laws of God, and make it seem a needless thing to obey him diligently and exactly, implieth that obedience to any of the sons of men is much more needless.

And you that are children or servants, take heed of the doctrine of these men. Masters, admit it not into your families. If he be worthy to be scorned as a puritan or precisian that is careful to please and obey the Lord, what scorn do your children or servants deserve, if they will be obedient and pleasing to such as you!

9. All you that are poor tradesmen, take heed of the consequences of the Cainites' scorn, lest it make you give over the labours of your calling, and turn yourselves and families into beggary. For if heaven be not worth your greatest labour, your bodies are not worth the least.

10. These Cainites speak against the awakened consciences, and the confessions of all the world. Whatsoever they may say in the dream of their blind presumption and security, at last, when death hath opened their eyes, they all cry, Oh that we had been saints! "Oh that we might die the death of the righteous, and that our last end might be as his!" Oh that we had spent that time, and care, and labour for our souls, which we spent on that which now is gall to our remembrance! And yet these men will take no warning, but now oppose and deride that course that all the world do wish at last they had been as zealous for as any.

11. The enemy himself hath a conscience within him, that either grudgeth against his malicious impiety, and witnesseth that he abuseth them that are far better than himself, or at least will shortly call him to a reckoning, and tell him better what he did, and make him change his face and tune, and wish himself in the case of those that he did oppose.

12. To conclude, the Cainite is of that wicked one, 1 John iii. 12, of his father the devil, John viii. 42, 44; and is his walking, speaking instrument on earth, saying what he himself would say: he is the open enemy of God: for who are his enemies, but the enemies of holiness, of his laws, of our obedience, of his image, and of his saints? And how will Christ deal at last with his enemies? Luke xix. 27. Oh that they knew, that foreseeing, they might escape! This is the true, the ugly picture of a Cainite, or enemy of a holy life, that reproacheth serious diligence as a precise and needless thing, when God commandeth us, and death, and the grave, and eternity admonish us to do his work with all our might. "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you," Psal. l. 22.

But of all the opposers of serious holiness in the world, there are none more inexcusable and deplorably miserable, than those that profess themselves ministers of Christ. Would one believe that had not known them, that there are such men in the world? Alas, there are too many. Though education, and the laws of the land, engage them to preach true doctrine, yet are they false teachers in the application. For they never well learned the holy and

heavenly doctrine which they preach, nor digested it, or received the power and impress of it upon their hearts; and therefore, retaining their natural corruptions, impiety, and enmity to the life, and power, and practice of that doctrine, they indirectly destroy what directly they would seem to build; and preach both for God and against him, for Christ and the Holy Spirit and against them, for godliness and against it, both in the same sermon. In general, they must needs speak for the word of God, and a holy life; but when they come to the particulars, they secretly reproach it, and condemn the parts, while they commend the whole. In general, they speak well of religious, godly, holy people; but when they meet with them, they hate them, and make them precisians, "a sect that is every where spoken against, pestilent fellows, and movers of sedition," as the apostles were accused, Acts xxiv. 5; xxviii. 22, and any thing that malice can invent to make them odious. And what they cannot prove, they will closely intimate, in the false application of their doctrines, describing them so as may induce the hearers to believe that they are a company of self-conceited hypocrites, factious, proud, disobedient, turbulent, peevish, affecting singularity, desiring to engross the reputation of godliness to themselves, but secretly as bad as others. And when they have thus represented them to the ignorant sort of people, they have made the way of godliness odious, and sufficiently furnished miserable souls with prejudice and dislike; so that because the persons are thus made hateful to them, all serious diligence for heaven, all tenderness of conscience, and fear of sinning, all heavenly discourse, and serious preaching, reading, or praying, are also made odious for their sakes; for hearing so ill of the persons, and seeing that these are the things wherein they differ from others, they reduce their judgment of their practices to their foresettled judgment of the persons. When their diligence in their families, in prayer and instructions, in reading and fruitful improvement of the Lord's day, or any other actions of strictness and holy industry, are mentioned, these ungodly ministers are ready to blot them with some open calumnies, or secret reproaches, or words of suspicion, to vindicate their own unholy lives, and make people believe that serious piety is faction and hypocrisy. The black tincture of their minds, and the design and drift of their preaching, may be perceived in the jeers, girds, and slanderous intimations against the most diligent servants of the Lord. The controverted truths that such maintain, they represent as errors; their unavoidable errors they represent as heresy; their duties they represent as faults; and their human frailties as enormous crimes: they feign them to be guilty of the things that never entered into their thoughts; and if some that have professed godliness, be guilty of greater crimes, they would make men believe that the rest are such, and that the family of Christ is to be judged of by a Judas; and the scope is to intimate that either their profession is culpable, or needless, and less commendable. Regeneration they would make to be but the entrance into the church by baptism; and any further conversion, than the leaving off some gross sins, and taking up some heartless forms of duty, to be but a fancy or unnecessary thing: and they would draw poor people to believe, that if they be born again sacramentally of water, they may be saved, though they be not born again by the renewing of the Holy Spirit. Being strangers themselves to the mystery of regeneration, and to the life of faith and a heavenly conversation, and to the loving and serving God with all their soul and might; they first endeavour to quiet them-

selves with a belief that these are but fancies or unnecessary, and then to deceive the people with that by which they have first deceived themselves.

And it is worthy your observation, what it is in religion that these formal hypocrites are against. There are scarce any words so sound or holy, but they can bear with them, if they be but deprived of their life; nor scarce any duty, if it be but mortified, but they can endure. But it is the spirit and life of all religion which they cannot bear. As a body differeth from a carcass, not by the parts, but by the life; so there is a certain life in preaching, and prayer, and all other acts of worship, which is perceived by several sorts of hearers. The godly perceive it to their edification and delight; for here it is that they are quickened and encouraged. Life begetteth life, as fire kindleth fire. The ungodly often perceive it to their vexation, if not to their conviction and conversion: this life in preaching, praying, discipline, reproof, and conference, is it which biteth, and galleth, and disquieteth their consciences. And this they kick and rail against: this is the thing that will not let them sleep quietly in their sin and misery; but is calling and jogging them to awake, and will not let them sin in peace, but will either convert them, or torment them before the time. It is the life of religion that the hypocrite wants; and the life that he is most against. A painted fire burneth not: a dead lion biteth not: the carcass of an enemy is not formidable. Let the words of that sermon that most offendeth them, be separated from the life, and put into a homily, and said or read in a formal, drowsy, or a school-boy's tone, and they can bear it and commend it. Let the same words of prayer which now they like not, be said over as a lifeless, customary form, and they can like it well. I speak not against the use of forms, but the abuse of them; not against the body, but the carcass. Let forms themselves be used by a spiritual, serious man, in a spiritual, serious manner, with the interposition of any quickening exhortations, or occasional passages, that tend to keep them awake and attentive, and make them feel what you mean and are about, and you shall see they love not such animated forms. It is the living christian, and lively worship, and serious, spiritual religion, which they hate: kill it, and they can bear it. Let the picture of my enemy be nearer and comelier than his person was, and I can endure it in my bed-chamber, better than himself in the meanest dress. It is the living christians that in all parts of the world are chiefly persecuted. Let them be once dead, and dead-hearted hypocrites themselves will honour them, especially at a sufficient distance: they will destroy the living saints, and keep holy-days for the dead ones. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. xxiii. 29—33. The dog that will not meddle with the dead creature, will pursue the living; and when he sees it stir no more, will leave it. Christianity without seriousness is not christianity, and therefore not liable to the hatred of its enemies as such. Say any thing, and do any thing, how strict soever, if you will but act it as a player on the stage, or do it coldly, slightly, and as if you were but in jest, you may have their approbation. But it is

this life, and seriousness, and worshipping God in spirit and truth, that convinceth them that they themselves are lifeless, and therefore troubleth their deceitful peace, and therefore must not have their friendship. If it were the mere bulk of duty that they are weary of, how comes it to pass that a papist at his psalter, beads, and mass-books, can spend more hours without much weariness or opposition, than we can do in serious worship? Turn all but into words and beads, and canonical hours and days, and shows and ceremony, and you may be as religious as you will, and be righteous overmuch, and few will hate, or reproach, or persecute you among them, as too precise or strict. But living christians and worship come among them like fire, that burneth them, and makes them smart, with "a word that is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart," Heb. iv. 12.

And the enmity of the Cainites may teach the christian what he should be, and wherein his excellency lieth. It is life and seriousness that your enemies hate; and therefore it is life and seriousness that you must above all maintain, though dead-hearted hypocrites never so much oppose and contradict you.

O sirs, they are no trifles, but the greatest things, that God hath set before you in his word, and called you out to prosecute and possess: and your time of seeking them is short; and therefore you have no time for trifles, nor any to lose in idleness and sloth. And of all men, preachers should be most sensible of this. If they were not against serious holiness in others, it is double wickedness for such as they to be against it in themselves. It is great things that they have to study and to speak of; and such as call for the greatest seriousness, and reverence, and gravity in the speaker, and condemn all trifling in matter or in manner. A man that is sent of Christ to run for an immortal crown, or to direct others in such a race, to save his own or other men's souls from endless misery, should be ashamed to fill up his time with trifles, or to be slight and cold about such great and weighty things: all the heart, and soul, and might, is little enough for matters of such unspeakable importance. When I hear preachers or people spend their time in little, impertinent, fruitless things, that do but divert them from the great business of their lives, or to dally with the greatest matters, rather than to use them, and treat of them with a seriousness suitable to their importance, I oft think of the words of Seneca the serious moralist, as shaming the hypocrisy of such trifling preachers and professors of the christian faith; *Verba copiosa componis, et interrogans vincula nectis, et dicis, Acuta sunt ista! Nihil acutius arista; et in quo est utilis? Quædam inutilia, et inefficacia ipsa subtilitas reddit*: that is, You compose copious words, and tie hard knots by curious questions; and you say, Oh these are acute things! What is more acute than the peal of corn? and yet what is it good for? Subtlety itself makes some things unprofitable and uneffectual.

Istæ ineptiæ poetis relinquuntur, quibus aures oblectare propositum est et dulcem fabulam nectere. Sed qui ingenia sanare, et fidem in rebus humanis retinere, ac memoriam officiorum animis ingerere volunt, seria loquantur, et magnis viribus rem agant; that is, Leave these toys or fooleries to poets, whose business is to delight the ear, and to compose a pleasant fable. But they that mean to heal men's understandings, and retain credibility among men, and to bring into men's minds the remembrance of their duties, must

speak seriously, and do their business with all their might.

Demens omnibus merito videret—He would justly by all be taken for a madman, that when the town expecteth to be stormed by the enemies, and others are busy at work for their defence, will sit idle, proposing some curious questions.—*Nunquid tibi demens videtur, si istis impendere operam, et nunc obsideor? quid agam? mors me sequitur, vita fugit; adversus hæc me doce aliquid: effice ut ego mortem non timeam, et vita me non effugiat.* And shall not I be taken for a madman, if I should busy myself about such things, that am now besieged? What shall I do? Death pursueth me: life flieth from me: teach me something against these: make death not dreadful to me, or life not to fly from me. *Si multum esset ætatis, parce dispensandum erat, ut sufficeret necessariis: nunc quæ dementia est, supervacua discere in tanta temporis egestate!* If we had much time, we should sparingly lay it out; that it might suffice for necessary things: but now what a madness is it, to learn things needless or superfluous in so great a scarcity of time! *Metire ergo ætatem tuam: tam multa non capit.* Measure thy age: it is not enough for so many things. *Relinque istum ludum literarum philosophis. Rem magnificam! ad syllabas vocant qui animum minuta discendo dimittunt et conterunt, et id agunt, ut philosophia potius difficilis quam magna videatur: Socrates, qui totam philosophiam revocavit ad mores, hanc summam dixit esse sapientiam, bona malique distinguere.* Leave this learned play to philosophers: a gallant business! They call us to syllables, and debase and depress the mind by learning such little, trivial things, and make philosophy rather to seem a matter of difficulty than great. Socrates, that revoked all philosophy to manners, did call this the highest wisdom, to distinguish good and evil.

Did a Seneca see by the light of nature, so much of the necessity of seriousness and diligence about the matters of the soul; and so much of the madness of spending words and time on trifles? And yet shall there be found a man among professed christians, and among the preachers of faith and holiness, that plead for trifling, and scorn at seriousness, and account them moderate and wise that a heathen brands as toyish and distracted?

What is it that cloudeth the glory of christianity, and keepeth so great a part of the world in heathenism and infidelity, but this, that among christians there are so few that are christians indeed? And those few are so obscured by the multitude of formal, trifling hypocrites, that christianity is measured and judged of by the lives of those that are no christians? Religion is a thing to be demonstrated, and honoured, and commended by practice: words alone are ineffectual to represent its excellency to so blind a world, that must know by feeling, having lost their sight. In our professed faith we mount unto the heavens, and leave poor unbelievers wallowing in the dirt. Oh what a transcendent, unconceivable glory do we profess to expect with God unto eternity, and what manner of persons should they be, in all holy conversation and godliness, that look for such a life as this! How basely should they esteem those transitory things, that are the food and felicity of the sensual world! How patiently should they undergo contempt and scorn, and whatsoever man can inflict upon them! How studiously should they devote and refer all their time, and strength, and wealth, and interest, to this their glorious, blessed end! How seriously should they speak of, and how industriously should they seek, such sure, such near, such endless joys! Did professed christians more exactly conform their hearts and lives to their pro-

fession and holy rule, their lives would confute the reproaches of their enemies, and command a reverent and awful estimation from the observers; and do more to convince the unbelieving world of the truth and dignity of the christian faith, than all the words of the most subtle disputants. Christianity being an affecting practical science, must practically and affectionately be declared, according to its nature: arguments do but paint it out; and pictures do no more make known its excellency, than the picture of meat and drink makes known its sweetness. When a doctrine so holy is visibly exemplified, and liveth, and walketh, and worketh in serious christians before the world; either this or nothing will convince them, and constrain them to glorify our Lord, and say, that God is among us, or in us of a truth, Matt. v. 16; 1 Cor. xiv. 25. But it is unchristian lives that darkeneth the glory of the christian faith. When men that profess such glorious hopes, shall be as sordidly earthly, and sensual, and ambitious, and impotent, and impatient as other men, they seem but fantastical dissemblers.

And yet shall there be found such a perfidious wretch under the heavens of God, as a professed minister of Christ, that shall subtly or openly labour to make an exact, and holy, and heavenly conversation a matter of reproach and scorn; and that, under pretence of reproving the sins of hypocrites and schismatics, shall make the exactest conformity to the christian rule, and faithfullest obedience to the almighty Sovereign, to seem to be but hypocrisy or self-conceitdness, or needless trouble, if not the way of sedition, and public trouble, and turning all things upside down? that cannot reprove sin, without malicious, insinuating slanders or suspicions against the holy law, and holy life, that are most contrary to sin, as life to death, as health to sickness, and as light to darkness?

For any man, especially any professed christian, any where to oppose or scorn at godliness, is a dreadful sign, as well as a heinous sin; but for a preacher of godliness to oppose and scorn at godliness, and that in the pulpit, while he pretendeth to promote it, and plead for it in the name of Christ, is a sin that should strike the heart of man with horror to conceive of.

Though I cannot subscribe myself to that passage in the second part of the tenth Homily, Tom. 2. p. 150, (however I very much love and honour the Book of Homilies,) yet for their sakes that not only can subscribe to it, but would have all kept out of the ministry that cannot, and that take it for that doctrine of the church of England which they will believe and preach, I will recite it to the terror of the guilty, not to drive to despair, but to awake them, or to shame them for their opposition, to the ways of godliness.

Expounding Psalm i. 1, "Blessed is the man that hath not walked after the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful," having showed who are the "ungodly" and the "sinners," it addeth these words:

"The third sort he calleth scornors; that is, a sort of men whose hearts are so stuffed with malice, that they are not contented to dwell in sin, and to lead their lives in all kind of wickedness, but also they do contemn and scorn in others all godliness, true religion, all honesty and virtue. Of the two first sorts of men, I will not say but they may take repentance, and be converted unto God. Of the third sort, I think I may without danger of God's judgment pronounce, that never any yet were converted unto God by repentance, but continued still in their abominable wickedness, heaping up to

themselves damnation against the day of God's inevitable judgment."

Though I dare not say, but some such have repented, yet let the scornors that believe this remember, that they subscribe the sentence of their own condemnation.

Though I look upon this sort of the enemies of holiness as those that are as unlikely to be recovered and saved, as almost any people in the world, except apostates and malicious blasphemers of the Holy Ghost, yet in compassion to the people and themselves, I shall plead the cause of God with their consciences, and try what light can do with their understandings, and the terrors of the Lord with their hardened hearts.

1. A preacher of the gospel should much excel the people in understanding; and therefore this sin is greater in them than other men. What means, what light do they sin against! Either thou knowest the necessity of striving for salvation with the greatest diligence, or thou dost not. If not, what a sin and shame is it to undertake the sacred office of the ministry, while thou knowest not the things that are necessary to salvation, and that which every infant in the faith doth know! But if thou dost know it, how dost thou make shift maliciously to oppose it, without feeling the beginnings of hell upon thy conscience? When it is thy work to read the Scriptures, and meditate on them, dost thou not read thy doom, and meditate terror? How canst thou choose but perceive that the scope of the word of God is contrary to the bent of thy affections and suggestions? Yea, what is more evident by the light of nature, than that God and our salvation cannot be regarded with too much holy seriousness, exactness, and industry? Should not the best things be best loved; and the greatest matters have our greatest care? And is there any thing to be compared with God and our eternal state? Oh what overwhelming subjects are these to a sober and considerate mind! What toys are all things in comparison of them! And yet dost thou make light of them, and also teach men so to do; as if there were something else that better deserved men's greatest care and diligence than they? What! a preacher, and not a believer? or a believer, and yet not see enough in the matters of eternity to engage all our powers of soul and body against all the world that should stand in competition?

2. Is it not sinful and terrible enough, to be thyself in a carnal, unrenewed state, Rom. i. 13; and to be without the Spirit and life of Christ, ver. 9; but thou must be so cruel as to make others miserable also? "But to the wicked, saith God, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?" Psal. l. 16, 17. "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach the same, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 19.

3. What an aggravation is it of thy impiety and soul-murder, that thou art bound by office to teach men that life of holiness which thou opposest; and to persuade them to that with all thy might, which thou endeavourest closely and cunningly to disgrace! And wilt thou be a traitor to Christ in the name of a Messenger and Preacher of the gospel? Wilt thou engage thyself to promote his interest, and to use all thy skill and power to build men up in holiness and obedience; and when thou hast done this, wilt thou disgrace and hinder it? Dost thou take

on thee to go on the message of Christ, and then speak against him? We do not find that Judas dealt thus with him; when he sent him as he did other preachers, we read not that he preached against him. O let not my soul be numbered with such men in the day of the Lord! It will be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for the refusers of the word and grace of Christ. What then will be the doom of the opposers? and above all, of those treacherous opposers, that pretend themselves to propagate and promote them?

If the wit and malice of Satan's instruments were sharpened against the ways and servants of the Lord, it belongs to you to plead Christ's cause, and shame these absurd, unreasonable gainsayers, and stop the mouth of impious contradiction: and will you join with gainsayers, and secretly or openly say as they? Who should confound the deriders of a holy life but you? Who should lay open the excellences of Christ, the glory of heaven, the terrors of the Lord, and all other obligations to the most serious religiousness, but you that have undertaken it as your calling and employment? If any man in the parish were so atheistical and brutish, as to think God unworthy of our dearest love, our most exact obedience, and most laborious service, who should display this atheist's folly, but you that are doubly (as christians, and ministers) obliged to defend the honour of your Lord? If any of the people should fall into such a dream or dotage, as to question the necessity of our utmost diligence in our preparations for eternal life, who should awake them by lifting up their voices as a trumpet, and help to recover their understandings, but you that are the watchmen, and know their blood will be required at your hands, if you give them not loud and timely warning? If any subtle, malicious servant of the devil, should plead against the necessity of holiness, and dissuade the people from serving God with all their might, who should be ready to confirm the weak, and strengthen and encourage them that are thus assaulted, and help to keep up their zeal and forwardness, but you that are leaders in the army of the Lord? Is it not a holy God that you are engaged to serve? and a holy church in which you have your station? and a communion of saints in which you have undertaken to administer the holy things of God? Have you not read what was done to Nadab and Abihu, when Moses told Aaron, "This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before the people I will be glorified," Lev. x. 3. Is it not a holy law and gospel which you publish? You have undertaken to warn the slothful, the sensual, the worldly, and the profane, "that they strive to enter in at the strait gate, and seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," Luke xiii. 24; Matt. vi. 33; "and to give diligence to make sure their calling and election," 2 Pet. i. 10; and to "give all diligence in adding virtue to their faith," &c. 2 Pet. i. 5; and "with all diligence to keep their hearts," Prov. iv. 23. And are you the men that would quench their zeal, and destroy the holy diligence which you should preach? The Lord touch your hearts, and recover you in time, or how woeful will it be with such hardened hypocrites, that in the light, and in his family and livery, and under his standard and colours, dare prove traitors and enemies to the Lord.

4. And what an addition is it to your guilt, that you speak against God in his own name? By office you are to deliver his message, and speak to the people in his name, and in his stead, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. And dare you before the sun, and under the

heavens of God, and in his hearing, persuade men that the most holy God is against holiness? and the King of saints is an adversary to sanctity? and that he that made his holy law, is against the most exact obeying of it? Dare you prefix a Thus saith the Lord, to so impious a speech as It is in vain to serve the Lord? What needs there so much ado for your salvation? Dare you go to men as from the Lord, and say, You are too careful and diligent in his service? Less ado may serve the turn. What need this fervour and redeeming time? This is but puritanism or preciseness. It is better to do as the most, and venture your souls without so much ado. Who could at last hold up his face, or stand before the dreadful tribunal, that should be found in the guilt of such a crime? What! to put God into the similitude of Satan, and describe the Most Holy as the enemy of holiness! and make him plead against himself, and disgrace his own image, and dissuade men from that which he himself hath made of necessity to their salvation! What viler blasphemy can be uttered?

5. And it aggravateth your sin, that your relation obligeth you to the most tender affections to your people. And yet that you should seduce them to damnation. For the nurse to poison them, for the parents to cut the children's throats, is worse than for an enemy to do it. If the devil, our professed enemy, should himself appear to us, and say, Prepare not so seriously for death; be not so strict, and diligent, and holy; it were not in many respects so bad as for you to do it, that should help to save us from his snares. You that profess yourselves their fathers; that should travail in birth till Christ be formed in your people's hearts; that should love your people as your own bowels, and tender the weak, and pity the wicked, and stick at no labour, suffering, or cost, that might advance their holiness, and further their salvation; for you to tempt men into a careless life, and turn them out of the holy way, is an aggravated cruelty. It is worse for the shepherd to destroy us than the wolf. Read Ezek. xxxiii. xxxiv.

6. Are you not ashamed thus to contradict yourselves? What can you find to preach from the word of God, that tendeth not to this holy diligence which you are against? How can you make shift to preach an hour, and not acquaint men with the duty and necessity of seeking God with all their might? Do you not tell them, that "except they be converted and new born, they shall not enter into the kingdom of God," John iii. 3, 5; Matt. xviii. 2; and "that without holiness none shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14; and "that if they live after the flesh they shall die," Rom. viii. 13; and "that except their righteousness exceed the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 20; and will you in your application, or private discourses, unsay all this again, and give God and yourselves the lie? and let people see, that the pulpit is to you but as a stage, and that you believe not what you speak?

7. Consider that your place and calling maketh you the most successful servants of the devil, and so the most bloody murderers of souls, while you give your judgment against a strict and heavenly life. For a drunkard in an ale-house to mock the minister, and rail at serious religion, is less regarded by sober men, and small advantage to his master's cause; nay, the wickedness of his life is so great a shame to his judgment, that it inclineth many to think well of those that he speaks against. But when a man that pretendeth to learning and understanding, and to be himself a pastor of the church, and preacher of the

mysteries of Christ, shall make them odious that are most careful of their souls, and most exact in pleasing God, and shall make all serious diligence for heaven to seem but intemperate zeal and self-conceitness; and shall describe a saint as if the formal, lifeless hypocrite, that giveth God but the leaveings of the world, and never set his heart on heaven, were indeed the man; what a snare is here for the perdition of the ignorant! They that are naturally averse from holiness, and are easily persuaded to think that to be unnecessary or bad, which seems so much above them and against them, will be much confirmed in their mistakes and misery, when they hear their teachers speak without them, the same that Satan by his suggestions doth within them. This turneth a trembling sinner into a hardened scorner. He that before went under the daily correction of his conscience, for neglecting God, and omitting holy duties, and living to the flesh, grows bold and fearless, when he hears the preacher disgrace the stricter, purer way. By that time he hath heard awhile the fear of God derided as preciseness, and a tender conscience reproached as scrupulous, foolish thing, his conscience grows more pliable to his lusts, and hath little more to say against them. When God's own professed ministers, that should be wiser and better than the people, are against this zeal and industry for heaven, the people will soon think, that at least it is tolerable in them. And they will sooner learn to deride a saint from a sermon, or discourse of a preacher or a learned man, than from the scorns or talk of hundreds of the ignorant. And wilt thou teach them to hate godliness, who hast undertaken before the righteous God to teach them to practise it? He that dispraiseth it, though under other names, and representeth it as odious, though masked with the title of some odious vice, doth indeed endeavour to make men hate it. And what a terrible account wilt thou have to make, when the seduction and transgression of all these sinners shall be charged upon thee; when Christ shall say to the haters, deriders, and opposers of his holy ways and servants, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me!" How durst you scorn the image of your Maker, and hate the saints whose communion you professed to believe; and deride or oppose that serious holiness, without which you had no hope of being saved? If then the sinners become your accusers, and say, Lord, we thought it had been but unnecessary preciseness, and that serious christians had been but self-conceited, factious hypocrites, and that lip-service with a common worldly life, might have served the turn. We heard our preachers represent such strict and zealous men, as turbulent, seditious, and refractory, as odious, and not as imitable. Their application was against them. Their discourse derided them. Of them we learnt it. We thought they were wiser and better than we. Of whom should we learn but of our teachers? Woe to the teachers that ever they were born, that must be then found guilty of this crime!

If Adam's excuse was Eve's accusation, "The woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat," and the woman's excuse did charge the serpent, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat," Gen. iii. 12, 13, (though it freed not the excusers,) how will it load you, when your people shall say, The teachers that we thought thou gavest us, did teach us, and go before us in setting against this holy diligence; and we did but learn of them, and follow them!

8. Are not the people backward enough to the serving of God with all their might, unless you

hinder them? Is not the corrupted heart of lapsed man averse enough to the matters of salvation, but you must make them worse? If you had to do with the best and holiest person in the world, that walketh with God in the most heavenly conversation, he would tell you that his dull and backward heart hath no need of clogs, and pull-backs, and discouragements, but of all the help that can be afforded him, to quicken him up to greater diligence. The most zealous lament that they are so cold. The most heavenly lament that they are so earthly and so strange to heaven. The most laborious lament that they are so slothful, and the fruitfulest believers that they are so unprofitable; and those that are most watchful of their words and deeds, that they are so careless; and those that most diligently redeem their time, lament it that they lose so much; and those that walk most accurately and exactly, that they are so loose, and keep no closer to the rule. And yet darrest thou increase the backwardness of the ungodly? Will not their carnal interest and lust serve them to keep them from a holy life? Is not Satan strong enough of himself? Will not the common distaste of godliness in the world, sufficiently prejudice and avert them without thy help? Do you see your people so forward to do too much for heaven, that you must pull them back? Cannot souls be damned without your furtherance? or is it a desirable work, and will it pay for your cost and labour? The way is up-hill; the best of us are weak, and frequently ready to sit down! A thousand impediments are cast before us by Satan and the world, to make us linger till the time is past, and many a charm of pleasure and diversion, to make us sleep till the door be shut. And ministers are sent to keep us walking, and take us by the hand, and lead us on, and remove impediments. And shall they set in with the enemy, and be our chiefest hinderers? O treacherous guides! O miserable helps! are not our dark understandings, our earthly, dull, and backward hearts, our passions and troubled affections, our appetites and sensual inclinations, our natural strangeness and averseness to God, and heaven, and holiness, enough to hinder us without you? Are not all the temptations of the devil, the allurements of the flesh and world, the impediments of poverty and riches, of flattery and of frowns, of friends and foes, in our callings, and in our divertisements, are not all these enough to cool and dull us, and keep us from serving God too much, and being too careful and diligent for our souls, but preachers themselves must be our impediments and snares? Now the Lord deliver our souls from such impediments, and his church from such unhappy guides!

9. Consider whom thou imitatest in this. Is it Christ or Satan? Christ calleth men to strive, to labour, to seek first, to watch, to pray always, and not wax faint, Luke xii. 24; John vi. 27; Matt. vi. 33; xxv. 13; Luke xviii. 1. The apostles call men to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; to be a peculiar people zealous of good works; to pray continually; to be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of him that hath called us, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9; 1 Thess. v. 17; Tit. ii. 14; Rom. xii. 11. "To fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life," 1 Tim. vi. 12. "To serve God acceptably, (being as a consuming fire,) with reverence and godly fear," Heb. xii. 28, 29. "To be stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58. And dare you gainsay the Lord and his apostles, and

concur with Satan and the Pharisees and enemies of Christ?

10. You do your worst to make the sacred office of the ministry to become contemptible, as Eli's sons did. Poor people that cannot sufficiently distinguish the doctrine from the application, the office from the person, the use from the abuse, will be tempted to run from the ordinances of God, and think the worse of others for your sakes, and suspect all their food, because you mix such poison in it. And the more holy and necessary the office and work is, the greater is your sin in corrupting it or making it suspected or abhorred.

Consider soberly of these things, and then go on and speak against a life of holy diligence if you dare.

I know you will say, It is not godliness, but singularity, or humour, or disobedience, or hypocrisy, or faction, that you oppose; and perhaps you will instance in some that are guilty of some of these, or seem so at the least.

But, 1. I do here solemnly profess that I hate these crimes as well as you; and that it is not any part of my intention to plead for intemperance, disobedience in lawful things, for schism, or faction, or any irregularity. And this I here put in against those that are disposed to misunderstanding, and misreport us, and leave it as on record to prove them slanderers, that shall accuse me of defending any such thing. And I do protest against those on the other side, that will fetch encouragement for any transgression, from my necessary plea for the holy industry and vigilancy of believers. And, moreover, I do profess that it is only the opposers of holiness that I mean in this defence, and have not the least intent to intimate that any others are guilty of that crime that are not. But having premised this protestation, to prevent mistakes and false reports, I answer now to the guilty.

2. If it be crimes only that you are against, deliver yourself so, as may not lay reproach or suspicion on godliness, which is most opposite to all crimes. Cannot you preach against divisions, disobedience, or any other sin, without any scornful intimations or reflections against men's diligent serving of the Lord?

3. Why do you not commend those that are not liable to your accusations, and encourage them in holiness, and draw others to imitate them? And why do you not commend the good, where you commend the evil that is commixt?

4. Shall health and life be made a scorn, because there are few but have some distemper or disease? Shall christianity and holiness be secretly reproached, because all christians have some fault to be accused of? If men be faulty, you should persuade them to be more strict and diligent, and not less. It is for want of watchfulness and strictness that they sin. Nothing is more contrary to their faults than holiness. There is no other way for their full reformation. And therefore all true humbled christians are ready to confess their faultiness themselves; but so far are they from thinking the worse of piety for it, that it is one great reason that moveth them to go on, and to read, and hear, and pray, and meditate, and do so much, that they may get more strength against their faults. Must they think ill of food, and physic, and exercise, because they are infirm? All faithful ministers tell their people plainly of their sins (so far as they are acquainted with them) as well as you. But they do it not in a way reproachful to their holy diligence. They do not, therefore, call them off from godliness, nor tempt them to be less in the use of means, but more, by how much their need is greater. A holy heart, and a malignant heart, will show their difference in the reproving of

the same fault. The one layeth all the odium on the vice, and honoureth the holy obedience of the saints. The other fasteneth his sting upon the godly, and under pretence of dishonouring their faults, doth seek to fasten the dishonour on their holiness. And those that are so minded, will never want occasion or pretence for the worst that Satan would have them say. The church will never be without some hypocrites and scandals, nor the best without some faults and passions, nor the holiest action without some mixture of human frailty and infirmity; nor will the very goodness and holiness of the action be free from plausible calumnies and scorns, while there is the wit and venom of the serpent in the heads and hearts of wicked men.

How easy is it to put a name of ignominy upon every person, and every duty! To charge any man with hypocrisy, or pride. To take the wisest man for self-conceited, because he is not of the accuser's mind. To call our obedience to God by the name of disobedience unto man, when man forbids it, as they used the three witnesses, Dan. iii. and Daniel himself for praying in his house, Dan. vi. though they confessed they had nothing else against him. To call God's truth by the name of heresy, and heresy by the name of truth. To charge all with schism that dare not subject their souls to the usurpation and arrogant impositions of the sons of pride, that have neither authority nor ability to govern us, as the papists deal by the greatest part of the christian world. To lay snares for men's consciences, and then accuse them for falling into those snares. To make new articles of faith, till they have transcended the capacity of divine and rational belief, and then condemn us for not believing them. To make laws for the church, unnecessary in their own opinion, and sinful in other men's, and command things which they know that others think the Lord forbids, and then load them with the sufferings and reproaches of the disobedient, turbulent, heretical, schismatical, or seditious. To call men factious, if they will not be of their faction; and sectaries, if they will not unreasonably subject their souls to them, and join with an imperious sect against the catholic unity and simplicity. All which the Romanists practise upon the church of Christ. How easy, but how unreasonable, and yet how irresistible, is all this! How easy is it to call a meeting of sober christians, for prayer and mutual edification, such as that was, Acts xii. 12, by the name of a factious, schismatical conventicle; and a meeting of drunkards, or gamblers, by a more gentle, less disgraceful name! To say a man becomes a preacher, when he modestly reproveth another for his sins, or charitably exhorteth him in order to his salvation, or giveth any necessary plain instruction to his family, for whom he must give account. Believe it, it will be a poor excuse to any man, that becomes an enemy to the diligence of a saint, that he could thus cloak his malice, and clothe a saint with the visor of a hypocrite, and the rags of any odious sect.

If the Pharisees were to be believed, it was not they, but Christ, that was the hypocrite; nor was it the Son of God, but an enemy to Caesar, and a blasphemer, that they put to death. But will not Christ know his sheep, though he find them torn, in a wolf's skin? You say it is turbulent precisians that you strike; but what if Christ find but one of the least of his brethren bleeding by it? It is but hypocrites or schismatics that you reproach; but if Christ find a humble, serious christian suffering by your abuse, and you to answer it, I would not be in your coats for all the greatness and honour that you shall have before your everlasting shame. If Tertullus accuse

a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition, and Christ find a holy, laborious apostle in bonds and suffering by it, it is not his names that will excuse him, and make an apostle or persecution to be another thing.

To return to the endangered flocks: Look upwards, sirs, and think whether heaven be worth your labour! Look downwards, and think whether earth be more worthy of it! Lay up your treasures where you must dwell for ever. If that be here, then scrape, and flatter, and get all that you can. But if it be not here, but in another life, then hearken to your Lord, and lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, and there let your very hearts be set, Matt. vi. 20, 21. And upon the peril of everlasting misery, hearken not to any man that will tempt you from a diligent, holy life. It is a serious business, deal seriously in it; and be not laughed or mocked out of heaven, by the flouts of a distracted, sensual atheist. If any of them will pretend sobriety and wisdom, and undertake to prove that God should not be loved and served, and your salvation sought with all your might, and with greater care and diligence than any earthly thing, procure me a sober conference with that man, and try whether I prove him to be a befooled servant of the devil, and a mischievous enemy of your salvation and his own. Oh that we might have but sober debates, instead of jeers, and scorns, and railing, with this sort of men! How quickly should we show you that they must renounce the Scripture, and renounce christianity, and (if that be nothing with them) that they must renounce God, and renounce right reason, and unman themselves, if they will renounce a holy, heavenly life, and blame them that make it their principal business in the world to prepare for the world to come.

But if they will not be entreated to such a sober conference, will you that hear them (if you care what becomes of you) but come to us, and hear what we can say for a holy life, before you hearken to them; and let your souls have fair play, and show that you have so much love to yourselves, as not to cast away salvation at the derision of a fool, before you have heard the other side.

If I make not good the strictest law of God Almighty, against the most subtle cavils of any of the instruments of Satan, then tell me that infidels or epicures are in the right. Compare their words with the words of God; consider well but that one text, 2 Pet. iii. 11, and tell me whether it suit with their opinions; "Seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all manner of holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God!" Did these words but sink into your hearts, the next time you heard any man reproach a holy, heavenly life, it would perhaps make you think of the words of Paul to such another: "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Acts xiii. 10.

And if holiness be evil spoken of by them that never tried it, what wonder? Christ hath foretold us that it must be so. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you," Matt. v. 11, 12. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you," &c. John xv. 19, 20. "They think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speak-

ing evil of you, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and dead. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, and of God, resteth upon you. On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified," 1 Pet. iv. 4, 5, 14. Seneca himself oft telleth us, that among the heathens virtue was a derision, so far is the nature of man degenerated. The question is not what you are called or taken to be, but what you are. *Intus teipsum considera*, (inquit Sen.) *non qualis sis aliis credas; plerumque boni inepti, et inertes vocantur. Mihi contingat iste derisus. Aequo animo audienda sunt imperitorum convitia, et ad honesta vadendi contemnendus est iste contemptus*; that is, Inwardly consider of thyself, and judge not what thou art by the words of others. For the most part good men are called fools and dullards. Let me be so derided. The reproaches of the ignorant (or unskilful) must be patiently heard, and this contempt of one that followeth virtue, must be contemned. Yea, it is the highest honour to be content to be accounted bad, that we may not be so; and the greatest trial whether we be indeed sincere, or to be put to it, to be either accounted hypocrites, or to be such. Methinks I can scarce too oft recite that excellent saying of Seneca, Epist. 72, *Nemo plus videtur æstimare virtutem, nemo magis illi esse devotus, quam qui boni viri famam perdidit ne conscientiam perderet*. No man seems to set a higher price on virtue, no man seems to be more devoted to it, than he that hath lost the reputation of being a good man, lest he should lose his conscience.

But perhaps you will ask, May not a man be righteous over-much? as is intimated, Eccles. vii. 16.

I answer, it is making a man's self over wise or righteous, that is there reproved. And no doubt but, 1. Many take on them, or make themselves, more wise and righteous than they are; that is, are hypocrites. 2. As righteousness is taken materially and in common estimation, so a man may be too righteous. He may be too rigorous, which is called justice; and too much in grief, or fear, or trouble; and too much in any outward act that goeth under the name of duty. But it is not then truly and formally duty and righteousness, but sin; as to fast to the disabling the body for God's service; to pray when we should hear; to hear when we should be about some greater work of mercy or necessity; to neglect our outward labour and calling on pretence of religion; to set up sacrifice against or before mercy; to sorrow when we should rejoice; to meditate, and fear, and grieve, beyond what the brain can bear, till it distract us; this is called, being righteous over-much. As also to make us a religion of our own inventions, and to overdo with will-worship and the traditions of men, as the Pharisees and papists. But indeed this is not righteousness, but sin. To be formally over-much righteous, is a contradiction and impossible. For to go beyond the rule is unrighteousness. And to do too much is to go beyond the rule. Unless you dare imagine, that God hath erred, and the rule itself is over strict, and law is unrighteous. But then "how shall God judge the world?" saith the apostle, Rom. iii. 6. "Shall not the Judge of all the world do righteously?" Gen. xviii. 25. Nay, how then should he be God?

And is there any thing now left but ignorance or wickedness to stand up against thy speedy diligence? Away then with thy delays and slothfulness; if thou wilt serve God with all thy might, let it be seen. If thou wilt be a christian indeed, let deeds declare it. Christianity is not a dead opinion. If really thou live in hope of heaven, such hopes

will make thee stir for the attainment. Why standest thou idle, when thou art born for work, and all thy faculties are given thee for work, and thou art redeemed for work? (for evangelical work). If thou be sanctified, thou hast the Spirit of Christ, a quickening, working principle, within thee. Which way canst thou look, that thou mayst see that which would shame a slothful soul, and fire a cold and frozen heart, and call thee up to a speedy industry? What quickening words shalt thou find in Scripture, if thou wilt but bring thy heart thither, as one that is willing to be quickened! What powerful commands, what promises, what threatenings, what holy examples of exceeding diligence of Christ and his apostles! See how the godly about thee are at work, though the world oppose them and deride them! How earnestly they pray! how carefully they walk! how sadly they complain that they are no better! And hast thou not an immortal soul to save or lose as well as they? See what a stir the proud, ambitious person makes for less than nothing! what a stir the covetous and the voluptuous make for a sweetened draught of mortal poison! And shall we be idle that are engaged for heaven? Is it reason that we should do less for God and our salvation, than they do for sinful pleasure to damnation? You cannot mock them out of their pride or covetousness: and shall they mock thee out of thy religion, and thy hopes of heaven? All the commands, and promises, and threatenings of God, the most powerful preaching, that, as it were, sets open heaven and hell to them, doth not prevail with fleshly men, to leave the most sordid and unmanly sin; and shall the words or frowns of creeping dust prevail with thee against the work for which thou livest in the world, when thou hast still at hand unanswerable arguments from God, from thyself, from heaven and hell, to put thee on? Were it but for thy life, or the life of thy children, friend, yea, or enemy; or for the quenching of a fire in thy house, or in the town, wouldst thou not stir and do thy best? And wilt thou be idle when eternal life lies on it? Let Satan bawl against thee by his instruments; let senseless sinners talk awhile of they know not what, till God hath made them change their note; let what will be the consequent to thy flesh; these are not matters for a man much to observe, that is engaged for an endless life. Oh what are these to the things that thou art called to prosecute! Hold on then, christians, in the work that you have begun. Do it prudently, and do it universally. Take it together, both works of piety, justice, and charity; but do it now without delay, and do it seriously with your might. I know not what cloud of darkness hath seized on those men's minds that speak against this, or what deadly damp hath seized on their hearts that hath so benumbed and unmanned them. For my own part, though I have long lived in a sense of the preciousness of time, and have not been wholly idle in the world; yet when I have the deepest thoughts of the great, everlasting consequences of my work, and of the uncertainty and shortness of my time, I am even amazed to think that my heart can be so slow and senseless, as to do no more in such a case. The Lord knows, and my accusing, wounded conscience knows, that my slothfulness is so much my shame and admiration, that I am astonished to think that my resolutions are no stronger, my affections no livelier, and my labour and diligence no greater, when God is the commander, and his love the encourager, and his wrath the spur, and heaven or hell must be the issue. Oh what lives should all of us live, that have things of such unspeakable consequence on our hands, if our

hearts were not almost dead within us! Let who will speak against such a life, it shall be my daily grief and moan, that I am so dull, and do so little. I know that our works do not profit the Almighty, nor bear any proportion with his reward; nor can they stand in his sight, but as accepted in the Lord our righteousness, and perfumed by the odour of his merits. But I know they are necessary, and they are sweet. Without the holy employment of our faculties, this life will be but a burden or a dream, and the next an unexpressible misery. Oh, therefore, that I had more of the love of God, that my soul could get but nearer to him, and swifter move upward by faith and love! Oh that I had more of that holy life, and active diligence, which the serpentine, Cainish nature doth abhor, though I had with it the scorns of all about me, and though they made me, as they once did better men, as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things! I Cor. xiv. 13. Oh that I had more of this derided diligence, and holy converse with the Lord, though my name were cast out as an evil-doer, Luke vi. 22; and I were spit at and buffeted by those that do now but secretly reproach! Might I nearly follow Christ in holiness, why should I grudge to bear his cross, and to be used as he was used? Matt. xxvi. 27; Luke xviii. 32. Knowing that "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; and the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us," Rom. viii. 17, 18.

If when we have done all, we are but unprofitable servants, and must say we have done but our duty, Luke xvii. 10, have we not all more need of monitors to humble us for doing so much less than our duty, than to be reprehended for being too diligent and exact?

I again protest, that it is not any works of supererogation, or human invention, superstition, or self-appointment, that I am defending, but only the accurate obeying of the laws of God, and the utmost diligence in such obedience, for the obtaining of everlasting life. Either God hath commanded these works of holiness, justice, and charity, or not. If he have not, then I have done, and yield the cause; it is only what he hath commanded that I plead for. Oh that before you either speak against any holy duty, or yourselves neglect it, you would but come to us, and soberly join in searching the holy Scriptures, to see whether it be required there or not; and resolve but to obey it, if we prove it thence; and if it be but a matter of human imposition, we leave you to yourselves, and should desire that you may be much left to yourselves in such things; and that you place not too much of your religion therein. But if indeed it be commanded in the word of God, I beseech you, as you are christians, and as you are men, remember that whenever you blame or scorn a holy duty, it is God himself that you blame or scorn. If it be naught, it is long of him that did command it: the subject must obey. Should not such worms as we obey the infinite God that made us? If it be a fault to obey, it is a duty to rebel, or disobey; and that must be because that God hath no authority to command, and that must be because he is not God. See whether you bring your opposition to a holy life. And dare you stand to this? Dare you as openly mock God for making these strict and holy laws, as you do men for obeying them? None but a professed atheist dare.

Alas, sirs, it is nothing but intoxicating prosperity, and sensual delights, and worldly diversions, that turn your brains, and leave you not the sober use of reason, that makes you think well of ungodly sloth-

fulness, and makes you think so contemptuously or senselessly of a heavenly life. I tell you, (and remember another day that you were told of it,) that there is not the boldest infidel in the world, nor the bitterest enemy to holiness in this assembly, but shortly would wish they had rather been saints in rags, with all the scorn and cruelty that malice can inflict on such, than to have braved it out in pride and gallantry, with the neglect of the great, everlasting things. I tell you again, there is not an ungodly wretch that heareth me, but ere long would give a world if he were owner of a holy heart and life, that he had spent his days in holy, watchful preparations for his change, which he spent for that which will deceive him and forsake him.

Methinks I even see how you will passionately rage against yourselves, and tear your hearts with self-revenge, (if grace prevent it not by a more safe repentance), when you think too late how you lived on earth, and what golden times of grace you lost, and vilified all that would not lose them as foolishly as you. If repentance unto life made Paul so call himself foolish, disobedient, deceived, and exceeding mad, (Tit. iii. 3; Acts xxvi. 11,) you may imagine how tormenting repentance will make you call yourselves too late.

O sirs, you cannot now conceive, while you sit here in health, and ease, and honour, what different thoughts will then possess you of a holy and unholiness! How mad you will think them that had but one life's time of preparation for eternal life, and desperately neglected it! and how sensible you will then be of the wisdom of believers, that knew their time, and used it while they had it. Now "wisdom is justified of all her children;" but then how sensibly will it be justified of all its enemies! Oh with what gripes will undone souls look back on a life of mercy and opportunities, thus basely undervalued, and slept away in dreaming idleness, and fooled away for things of nought.

The language of that damned rich man, Luke xvi. may help you in your predictions. Oh how will you wonder at yourselves that ever you could be so blind and senseless as to be no more affected with the warnings of the Lord, and with the forethoughts of everlasting joy or misery! To have but one small part of time to do all that ever must be done by you for eternity, and say all that ever you must say for your own or others' souls, and that this was spent in worse than nothing! To have but one uncertain life, in which you must run the race that wins or loseth heaven for ever; and that you should be tempted by a thing of nought, to lose that one irrevocable opportunity, or to sit still or run another way, when you should have been making haste with all your might! O sirs, the thoughts of this will be other kind of thoughts another day, than now you feel them; you cannot now think how the thoughts of this will then affect you. That you had a time in which you might have prayed, with promise of acceptance, and had no hearts to take that time! That Christ was offered you as well as he was offered them that entertained him; that you were called on and warned as well as they, but obstinately despised and neglected all! That life and death were set before you, and the everlasting joys were offered to your choice, against the charms of sinful pleasures, and you might have freely had them if you would, and were told that holiness was the only way, and that it must be *now* or *never*, and yet that you chose your own destruction! These thoughts will be part of hell to the ungodly. They will wonder that reason could be so unreasonable; and they that had the common wit of man in other matters should be so far beside themselves in

that which is the only thing that it is commendable to be wise for; that such sottish reasonings should prevail with them against the clearest light, and nothing should be preferred before all things, and arguments fetched from chaff and dung, should conquer those that were fetched from heaven! Oh what heart-rending thoughts will these be, when eternity shall afford them leisure for an impartial review! Yea, that they should deceive others also with such a gross deceit, and scorn at all that would not be as mad as they; that being drunken with the world's delusion, they should abuse all that were truly sober; that the one thing needful should seem to them a needless thing; that their tongues should plead for these delusions of their wicked hearts, and they should be enemies to those that would not be enemies to God, and to themselves, and cast away their time and souls as they did! They will wonder with self-indignation, what could bewitch them into so great unreasonableness, below a man, against the light of nature, as well as of supernatural revelation.

Honourable and beloved hearers, I beseech you do not take it ill, that I speak so much of these matters that are so unpleasant and unwelcome to unbelieving, careless, carnal hearts; it is, that I may prevent all this in time, by the awakenings of true repentance; and oh that this might be the success! that I might hear by your penitent confessions, and see by your universal, speedy reformations, that God hath so great mercy for you, and that these persuasions might be the means of so much happiness to you, and comfort unto me! However, this assembly shall be witnesses that you were warned; and conscience shall be witness, that if you waste the rest of your days in the pleasures and vanities of this deceitful world, it was not because you could have no better, and were not called to higher things; that if you yet stand idle, it is not because you could not be hired; for in the name of Christ I have called you into his vineyard, and told you of your work and wages, and shamed your excuses and objections this day. Come away then speedily from the snares of sinners, and the company of deceived, hardened men, and cast away the works of darkness. Heaven is before you! Death is at hand! The eternal God hath sent to call you! Mercy doth yet stretch forth its arms! You have staid too long, and abused patience too much already: stay no longer! O now please God, and comfort us, and save yourselves by resolving that this shall be the day; and faithfully performing of this your resolution. Up and be doing: believe, repent, desire, obey, and do all this with all your might. Love him that you must love for ever, and love him with all your soul and might: seek that which is truly worth a seeking, and will pay for all your cost and pains; and seek it first with all your might; remembering still it must be *now or never*.

Before I conclude, I have two messages yet to deliver to the servants of the Lord: the one is of encouragement; the other of direction.

I know that many of you have a threefold trouble, which requireth a threefold comfort and encouragement.

One is, that you have done so little of your work; but lost so much of your time already: another is, that you are so opposed and hindered. And the greatest of all is, that you are yet so dull and slow; the cure of which must be the matter of my directions.

1. For the first: That you have lost your time, must be the matter of your humiliation: but that all is not lost, before you see your sin and duty; but yet the patience and mercy of the Lord are attend-

ing you, and continuing your hope; this is the matter of your comfort and encouragement. Repent, therefore, that you came no sooner home; but rejoice that you are come home at last; and now be more diligent in redeeming your time, in remembrance of the time already lost: and though it must be your grief that your Master hath been deprived of so much of his service, and others of so much good which you should have done them, and that time is lost that cannot be recalled; yet it is your comfort, that your own reward may be equal with them that have borne the burden and heat of the day; for many that are last (in the time of their coming in) shall be first (in receiving the reward). This is the meaning of that parable in Matt. xx. which was spoken to encourage them that had stood out too long, and to rebuke the envy and high expectations of them that came in sooner; and it is no whit contradictory to those passages in Matt. xxv. which intimate a different degree of glory to be given to them that have different degrees of grace upon their industrious improvement. The one parable (Matt. xx.) shows that men shall not be rewarded differently for their longer or shorter continuance in the work, but that those that come in late, and yet are found with equal holiness, shall be rewarded equally with the first; and more, if their holiness be more; which the second parable expresseth, declaring God's purpose to give them the greatest glory, that have improved their holiness to the greatest measure. Oh, therefore, that the sense of your former unkindness might provoke you the more resolvedly to give up yourselves in fervent love and full obedience: and then you will find that your time is redeemed, though it cannot be recalled; and that mercy hath secured your full reward. Oh what an unspeakable mercy is this; that if yet you will devote yourselves entirely to Christ, and serve him with your might the little time that yet remains, he will take it as if you had come in at the first hour of the day!

2. And as for the opposition and hinderances in your way, they are no other than what your Lord foretold. He hath gone before you, and conquered much more than ever you will encounter from without (though he had not a body of sin to conquer; and in that respect the conquest of his Spirit in his members, hath the pre-eminence of his personal conquest). He hath bid you be of good cheer, because he hath overcome the world. If you will not take up your cross and follow him, you cannot be his disciples, John xvi. 33; Luke xv. 27, 33. Would you be soldiers on condition you may not fight, or fight and yet have no opposition? Follow the Captain of your salvation; if mocking, or buffeting, or spitting in his face, or hanging him upon a cross, or piercing his side, would have made him give up the work of your redemption, you had been left to utter desperation. The opposition that is conquerable, should serve but to excite your courage and resolution in a case of such necessity, where you must prevail or perish. Have you God himself on your side, (Rom. viii. 31,) and Christ your Captain, and the Spirit of Christ to give you courage, and the promise to invite you, and heaven before you, hell behind you, and the examples of such an army of conquering believers; and shall the scorns or threats of a crawling worm prevail against all these for your discouragement? You are not afraid lest any man should pull down the sun, or dry up the sea, or overturn the earth; and are you afraid that man should conquer God, Rom. viii. 37, or take you out of the hands of Christ? John x. 28, 29. Mark how they used David: "Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather themselves together, they

hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul." But what, did he therefore fear, or fly from God? No; "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God will I praise his word; in God have I put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me," Psal. lvi. 3-6. "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation," Isa. li. 7, 8. You deserve to be shut out of heaven, if you will not bear the breath of a fool's derision for it.

3. But (saith the self-accusing soul) I am convinced that I ought to be laborious for my salvation, and that all this is too little that I can do; but I am dull, and cold, and negligent in all: I am far from doing it with my might: I hear, and read, and pray as if I did it not, and as if I were half asleep, or my heart were away upon somewhat else. I fear I am but a lazy hypocrite.

Ans. I shall first speak to thy doubt, and then to direct thee against thy sin.

And first, you must be resolved whether your sloth be such as is predominant, or mortified; such as proveth that you are dead in sin, or only such as proveth you but diseased and infirm.

And to know this, you must distinguish, 1. Between the dullness and coldness of the affections, and the unresolvedness and disobedience of the soul. 2. Between a slothfulness that keepeth men from a godly life in a life of wickedness; and that which only keepeth them from some particular act of duty, or abateth the degree of their sincere affection and obedience. 3. Between that sloth that is the vicious habit of the will, and that which is the effect of age, or sickness, or melancholy, or other distemper of the body.

And so the case lieth plain before you. 1. If it be not only your affections that are dull, but your will through sloth is unresolved; and this not only in a temptation to the abatement of some degrees, and the neglect of some particular duty, but against a holy life, and against the forsaking of your reigning sin; and this be not only through some bodily distemper, disabling your reason, but from the vicious habit of your wills; then is your sloth a mortal sign, and proves you in a graceless state: but if the sloth which you complain of be only dullness of your affections, and the backwardness of your wills to some high degrees, or particular duties, and the effect of some bodily distemper, or the weakness of your spiritual life, while your wills are habitually resolved for God and a holy life, against a worldly, fleshly life; this is your infirmity, and a sin to be lamented, but not a mark of death and gracelessness.

You will have a backward, slothful heart to strive with while you live; but bless God that you are offended with it, and would fain be delivered from it. This was Paul's evidence, Rom. vii. 24. You will have flesh, and flesh will plead for its interest, and will be striving against the Spirit; but bless God that you have also the Spirit to strive against the flesh. Be thankful that you have life to feel your sickness, though you languish under it, and cannot work as healthful men; and that you are in the way to heaven, though you go not so fast as you should and would.

2. But yet, though you have life, it is so grievous to be diseased and languish under such an infirmity as sloth, that I advise you to stir up yourselves to the utmost, and give not way to a lazy temper: and

that you may serve the Lord with all your might, I recommend these few directions to your observation.

Direct. 1. When you would be quickened up to seriousness and diligence, have ready at hand such quickening considerations as are here before propounded to you; and set them before you, and labour to work them upon your hearts. Powerful truths would have some power upon your souls, if you will but soberly apply your reason to them, and plead them with yourselves, as you would do with another in any of your reproofs or exhortations.

Direct. 2. Take heed lest any worldly design or interest, or any lusts or sensual delight, divert your minds from God and duty. For all the powers of your soul will languish, when you should set them on work on spiritual things, and your hearts will be abroad, when you should be wholly taken up with God, if once they be entangled with worldly things. Watch therefore over them in your callings, lest the creature steal too deep into your affections: for if you be alive to the world, you will be in that measure dead to God.

Direct. 3. If it be possible, live under a lively ministry, that when your hearts go cold and dull unto the assemblies, they may come warm and quickened home. Life cherisheth life as fire kindleth fire. The word and ordinances of God "are quick, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart," Heb. iv. 12; and therefore it may do much to make you feel. Many a thousand hath it pricked at the heart, and sent them home alive, that before were dead, Acts ii. 37. Much more may you expect, that it should excite the principle which you have already.

Direct. 4. If it may be, converse with lively, active, stirring christians: but especially have one such for a bosom friend, that will warm you when you are cold, and help to awake you when you drop asleep, and will not comply with you in a declining, lazy, and unprofitable course. "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken," Eccles. iv. 9-12.

Direct. 5. Put not away from you the day of death. Look not for long life. It is the life to come that must be the life of all your duties here, and distant things do lose their force. Set death, and judgment, and eternal life continually as near at hand: live in a watchful expectation of your change: do all as dying men, and as passing to receive the recompence of endless joy or woe; and this will quicken you to this end: go often to the house of mourning, and be not unseasonably or immoderately in the house of mirth. When you observe what is the end of all men, the heart will be made better by it, Eccles. vii. 2-6. But excess of carnal mirth doth infatuate men, and destroy their wisdom, seriousness, and sobriety. Keep always a sense of the brevity of life, and of the preciousness of time, and remember that it is posting on whether you work or play. Methinks if you forget any of the rest, this one consideration that we have in hand, should make you bestir you with your might, that it must be *now or never*.

I shall only add two needful cautions, lest while we cure one disease, we cause another (as knowing that corrupted nature is used to run from extreme into extreme).

1. Desire and labour more for a high estimation of things spiritual and eternal, and a fixed resolution, and an even and diligent endeavour, than for passionate feelings and affections. For these latter are more unconstant in the best, and depend much on the temper of the body, and are not of so great necessity as the former, though excellent in a just degree and season. (For it is possible that passion even about good things may be too much; when estimation, resolution, and regular endeavours cannot.)

2. Be suspicious when you have the warmest and liveliest affections, lest your judgment should be perverted by following, when they should lead. It is very common for zeal and strong affections, even to that which is good, to occasion the mistakes of the understanding, and make men look all on one side, and think they can never go far enough from some particular sins, till ignorantly they are carried into some perhaps as great on the other hand. Be warned by the sad experience of these times to suspect your judgments in the fervour of your affections.

And observing these cautions, let nothing abate your zeal and diligence; but whatever duty is set before you, do it with your might; for it must be *now or never*.

Though I know that the enmity to a holy, heavenly life is so radicated in corrupted nature, that all that I have said is necessary and too little; yet some I know will think it strange that I should intimate that any that preach the gospel are guilty of any measure of this sin, and will think that I intend by it to reflect upon some parties above the rest. But again I profess, that it is no party but the devil's party and the ungodly party that I mean. And it is hard if you will not believe me concerning my own sense. Nor is it my desire that any of the odiousness of schism, sedition, rebellion, or disobedience to authority, should be so much as diminished by any man's profession of godliness. No, I beseech you, by how much the more godly you are, by so much the more you will detest all these; godliness tendeth to shame and condemn these odious sins, and not to be a cloak for them, or any extenuation; nay, what can more aggravate them, than that they should be found in the professors of godliness? I again profess that I have no design but to plead for serious diligence in the religion which we are all agreed in, and to stop the mouths of those that wickedly speak against it.

But, alas, it is too evident that I have too many to speak to, that are not innocent; why else doth Scripture tell us that such there will be still to the end of the world? and that there are some that preach Christ of strife and envy, to add affliction to the bonds of the afflicted? And how came holy Mr. Bolton to find so much work for these rebukes so lately in his time, as in his books you find? And can we already forget what abundance of antinomian teachers were among us, that turned out the very doctrine of practical diligence, and cried it down as a setting up ourselves and our own works, and as injurious to free grace; and under pretence of exalting Christ, did set up a heartless, lifeless doctrine, that tended to turn out the life of christianity, and take men off their necessary diligence, as a legal, dangerous thing?

And what ordinance of God hath not been cast out by preachers themselves, upon religious pretences, family duties, catechising, singing of psalms, baptism, the Lord's supper, and which not? And if all these were down, wherein should the practice of religion consist? And what abundance of pamphlets had we that laboured to make the orthodox, faithful ministry a very scorn, and deride them for their faithful ser-

vice of God, and their faithfulness to their superiors in opposition to their unrighteous ways? I am loth to blot my papers and trouble your ears with the names of the Martinmar-priests, and a multitude of such others, which I mean.

And let no papist, or any enemy of our church, reproach us because such enemies to holiness are found among us. Can it be expected that our church should be better than the family of Adam, that had a Cain? or of Noah, that had a Ham? or of Christ, that had a Judas? And are there not far more enemies to serious godliness among the papists themselves, than among us? One instance out of the Life of Philip Neri, the father of the Oratorians, I will put into the preface, because it is too long to be here inserted. There is no place, no rank of men in the world, where some of the enemies of a holy life are not to be found, even among those that profess the same religion in doctrinals, with those whom they oppose. Christ and the devil have their several armies; and if once the devil disband his soldiers, and have none to oppose a holy life, then tell me that it is a needless thing to defend it and to confute them. But I am listed under Christ, and will never give over pleading for him, till his adversaries give over pleading against him, and his cause, as long as he continueth my liberty and duty. And blessed be the Lord, that if a hypocritical preacher be found among us, that secretly or openly disgraceth a diligent, holy life, there are more able, holy, faithful ones to confute him, both by doctrine and by their lives, than are to be found in any other kingdom in the world proportionably, that ever I could hear of. And that the faithful disciples are so many, and the Judases so few, how great a blessing is it to this land, and how great an honour to his Majesty's government, and to the church in his dominions! The Lord teach this sinful nation to be thankful, and pardon their ingratitude, and never deprive them of this forfeited mercy. The Lord teach them to hearken to the friends, and not to the enemies, of holiness, and never to receive a wound at the heart of their religion, however they hear their smaller differences about things circumstantial.

And now I should conclude, I am loth to end, for fear lest I have not prevailed with you. What are you now resolved to do, from this day forward? It is work that we have been speaking of, and necessary work of endless consequence, which must be done, and quickly done, and thoroughly done. Are you not convinced that it is so? that ploughing and sowing are not more necessary to your harvest, than the work of holiness in this day of grace is necessary to your salvation? You are blind if you see not this; you are dead if you feel it not: what then will you do? For God's sake, and for your own sake, stand not demurring till time be gone. It is all that the devil desireth, if he can but find you one thing or other to be thinking, and talking, and doing about, to keep you from this till time be gone; and then he that kept you from seeing and feeling, will help you to see and feel your calamity; then the devil will make you feel that which preachers could not make you feel; and he will make you think of that, and lay it close enough to your hearts, which we could not get you to lay to heart. Now we study and preach to you in hope; but then (alas, it breaks our hearts to think of it) we have done with you for ever, because all hope is gone. Then the devil may challenge a minister, Now do thy worst to bring this sinner to repentance: now call to him to consider, and believe, and come to Christ: now offer him mercy, and entreat him to accept it: now cry to him to take heed of sin and temptations, that he come

not to this place of torments: now tell him of the beauty or necessity of holiness, and call upon him to turn and live: now do thy worst to rescue him from my power, and save his soul. Alas, poor sinners! will you stop your ears, and go on in sin, and damn yourselves, and break our hearts to foresee that day! Must we see the devil go away with such a prey, and shall we not rescue your captivated souls, because you will not hear, you will not stir, you will not consent! O hear the God of heaven, if you will not hear us, who calleth to you, Return and live! O hear him that shed his blood for souls, and tendereth you now salvation by his blood! O hear, without any more delay, before all is gone, and you are gone, and he that now deceiveth you torment you! Yet hold on a little longer in a carnal, earthly, unsanctified state, and it is too late to hope, or pray, or strive for your salvation: yet a little longer, and mercy will have done with you for ever; and Christ will never invite you more, nor ever offer to cleanse you by his blood, or sanctify you by his Spirit! Yet a little longer, and you shall never hear a sermon more, and never more be troubled with those preachers that were in good sadness with you, and longed once for your conversion and salvation! O sleepy, dead-hearted sinners, what should I do to show you how near you stand to eternity, and what is now doing in the world that you are going to, and how these things are thought on there? What should I do to make you know how time is valued, how sin and holiness are esteemed in the world where you must live for ever? What should I do to make you know those things to-day, which I will not thank you to know when you are gone hence? Oh that the Lord would open your eyes in time! Could I but make you know these things as believers should know them, I say not, as those that see them, nor yet as dreamers that do not regard them, but as those that believe that they must shortly see them; what a joyful hour's work should I esteem this! How happy would it be to you and me, if every word were accompanied with tears! If I followed you home and begged your consideration on my bare knees, or as a beggar begs an alms at your doors; if this sermon cost me as many censures or slanders as ever sermon did; I should not think it too dear, if I could but help you to such a sight of the things we speak of, that you might truly understand them as they are; and that you had but a true, awakened apprehension of the shortness of your day, of the nearness of eternity, and of the endless consequence of your present work, and what holy labour and sinful loitering will be thought of in the world to come for ever! But when we see you sin, and trifle, and no more regard your endless life, and see also what haste your time is making, and yet cannot make you understand these things; when we know ourselves as sure as we speak to you, that you will shortly be astonished at the review of your present sloth and folly; and when we know that these matters are not thought of in another world, as they are among the sleepy or the Bedlam sinners here; and yet know not how to make you know it, whom it doth so exceedingly much concern, this amazeth us, and almost breaks our hearts! Yea, when we tell you of things that are past doubt, and can be no further matter of controversy, that men have sold their understandings, and betrayed their reason to their sordid lusts, and yet we cannot get reasonable men to know that which they cannot choose but know; to know that seriously and practically which always hath a witness in their breasts, and which none but the profligate dare deny; I tell you, sinners, this, even this, is worse than a prison to us: it is you that are our persecutors; it is

you that are the daily sorrow of our hearts; it is you that disappoint us of our hopes, and make us lose so much of the labour of our lives! And if all others did as some do by us, alas, how sad an employment should we have; and how little would it trouble us to be silenced and laid aside! If we were sick of the ambitious or covetous thirst, we should then say that it is they that deny us wealth and honour that disappoint us. But if we are christians, this is not our case, but it is the thirst after your conversion and salvation that affecteth us: and therefore it is you, even you that linger in your sins, and delay repentance, and forget your home, and neglect your souls; it is you that disappoint, and you that are our afflictors: and as much as you think you befriend us when you plead our cause against men of violence and rage, it is you that shall answer for the loss of our time, and labour, and hope, and for the grieving of your teachers' hearts.

Sinners, whatever the devil and raging passion may say against a holy life, God and your own consciences shall be our witnesses, that we desired nothing unreasonable or unnecessary at your hands. I know it is the master-piece of the devil's craft, when he cannot keep all religion in contempt, to raise up a dust of controversy in the world about names, and forms, and circumstances in religion, that he may keep men busily striving about these, while religion itself is neglected or unknown; and that he may make men believe that they have some religion, because they are for one side or other in these controversies; and especially that he may entice men to number the substantial of religion itself, among these lesser, doubtful points, and make sinners believe that it is but the precise opinion of one party that they reject, while they reject the serious practice of all true religion. And so the devil gets more by these petty quarrels and controversies, occasioned by contentious, empty men, than he could have done by the open opposition of infidels, heathens, or the profane: so that neither I nor any man, that opinionative men have a mind to quarrel with, can tell how to exhort you to the very practice of christianity itself, but you are presently casting your thoughts upon some points wherein we are reported to differ from you, or remembering some clamours of malicious men, that prejudice against the person of the speaker may keep your souls from profiting to salvation by the doctrine which even yourselves profess.

If this be the case of any one of you, I do not mean your consciences shall so escape the power or evidence of the truth. Dost thou talk of our differences about forms and ceremonies? Alas, man, what is that to the message which we come about to thee? What is that to the business that we are preaching of? The question that I am putting to you, is not whether you will be for this form of church government, or for that, for a ceremony, or against it; but it is, whether you will hearken in time to God and conscience, and be as busy to provide for heaven, as ever you have been to provide for earth? And whether you will set yourselves to do the work that you are created and redeemed for? This is the business that I am sent to call you to. What say you? Will you do it, and do it seriously without delay? You shall not be able to say that I called you to a party, a faction, or some opinion of my own, or laid your salvation upon some doubtful controversy. No, sinner, thy conscience shall have no such shift for its deceit: it is godliness, serious and practical godliness, that thou art called to. It is nothing but what all christians in the world, both papists, and Greeks, and protestants, and all the parties among those that are true christians, are

agreed in the profession of. That I may not leave thee in any darkness which I can deliver thee from, I will tell thee distinctly, though succinctly, what it is that thou art thus importuned to; and tell me then, whether it be that which any christian can make doubt of.

1. That which I entreat of thee, is but to live as one that verily believeth there is a God, and that this God is the Creator, the Lord, and Ruler of the world: and that it is incomparably more of our business to understand and obey his laws, and as faithful subjects to be conformed to them, than to observe or be conformed to the laws of man: and to live as men that do believe that this God is Almighty, and the greatest of men are less than crawling worms to him; and that he is infinitely wise, and the wisdom of man is foolishness to him; and that he is infinitely good and amiable, and the best of creatures is dung and filth in comparison of him; and that his love is the only felicity of man, and that none are happy but those that do enjoy it, and none that do enjoy it can be miserable; and that riches, and honour, and fleshly delights are brutish vanities in comparison of the eternal love of God. Live but as men that heartily believe all this, and I have that I come for. And is any of this matter of controversy or doubt? Not among christians, I am sure; not among wise men. It is no doubt to those in heaven, nor to those in hell, nor to those that have not lost their understandings upon earth. Live then according to these truths.

2. Live as men that verily believe that mankind is fallen into sin and misery; and that all men are corrupted, and under the condemnation of the law of God, till they are delivered, pardoned, reconciled to God, and made new creatures by a renewing, restoring, sanctifying change. Live but as men that believe that this cure must be wrought, and this great restoring change must be made upon ourselves, if it be not done already. Live as men that have so great a work to look after. And is this a matter of any doubt or controversy? Sure it is not to a christian: and methinks it should not be to any man else that knoweth himself, any more than to a man in a dropsy, whether he be diseased, when he feels the thirst and sees the swelling. Did you but know what cures and changes are necessarily to be made upon your diseased, miserable souls, if you care what becomes of them, you would soon see cause to look about you.

3. Live: but as men that verily believe that you are redeemed by the Son of God, who hath suffered for your sins, and brought you the tidings of pardon and salvation, which you may have if you will give up yourselves to him who is the Physician of souls, to be healed by him. Live as men that believe that the infinite love of God revealed to lost mankind in the Redeemer, doth bind you to love him with all our hearts, and serve him with all our restored faculties, and to work as those that have the greatest thankfulness to show, as well as the greatest mercies to receive, and misery to escape; and as those that believe that if sinners that without Christ had no hope, shall now love their sins and refuse to leave them, and to repent and be converted, and unthankfully reject the mercy of salvation so dearly bought, and so freely offered them, their damnation will be doubled as their sin is doubled. Live but as men that have such redemption to admire, such mercy to entertain, and such a salvation to attain, and that are sure they can never escape if they continue to neglect so great salvation, Heb. ii. 3: and is there any controversy among christians in any of this? There is not, certainly.

4. Live but as men that believe that the Holy

Ghost is given by Jesus Christ to convert, to quicken, to sanctify all that he will save; and that except you be born again of the Spirit, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven; and that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, John iii. 5, 6; Rom. viii. 9: and that without this no patching or mending of your lives by any common principles will serve the turn for your salvation, or make you acceptable to God, Heb. xi. 6. Live as men that believe that this Spirit is given by the hearing of the word of God, and must be prayed for, and obeyed, and not resisted, quenched, and grieved. And is there any controversy among christians in any of this? Ask those that make a mock at holiness, sanctification, and the Spirit, whether they be not baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost, and profess to believe in him as their Sanctifier, as well as in the Son their Redeemer? And then ask them whether it be not a thing that should make even a devil to tremble to come so near the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as to mock at his office and sanctifying work, and at the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord! Heb. xii. 14; and this after they are baptized, and profess to believe in the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier.

5. Live but as men that believe that sin is the greatest evil, the thing which the holy God abhorreth. And then you will never make a mock of it, as Solomon saith the foolish do, Prov. xiv. 9; nor say, What harm is in it?

6. Live but as men that believe no sin is pardoned without repentance; and that repentance is the loathing and forsaking of sin; and that if it be true, it will not suffer you to live wilfully in any gross sin, nor to desire to keep the least infirmity, nor to be loth to know your unknown sins.

7. Live as those that believe that you are to be members of the holy catholic church, and therein to hold the communion of saints. And then you will know that it is not as a member of any sect or party, but as a holy member of this holy church, that you must be saved; and that it is the name of a christian which is more honourable than the name of any division or subdivision among christians, whether Greek, or papist, or protestant, or prelatist, or presbyterian, or independent, or anabaptist. It is easy to be any one of these parties; but to be a christian, which all pretend to, is not so easy. It is easy to have a burning zeal for any divided party or cause; but the zeal for the christian religion is not so easy to be kindled or kept alive; but requireth as much diligence to maintain it, as dividing zeal requireth to quench it. It is easy to love a party as a party; but to keep up catholic charity to all christians, and to live in that holy love and converse which is requisite to a communion of saints, is not so easy. Satan and corrupted nature befriend the love and zeal of faction, which is confined to a party on a controverted cause; but they are enemies to the love of saints, and to the zeal for holiness, and to the catholic charity, which is from the Spirit of Christ. You see I call you not to division, not to side with sects; but to live as members of a holy catholic church, which consisteth of all that are holy in the world; and to live as those that believe the communion of saints.

8. Live as those that believe that there is a life everlasting, where the sanctified shall live in endless joy, and the unsanctified in endless punishment and woe. Live but as men that verily believe a heaven and a hell, and a day of judgment, in which all the actions of this life must be revised, and all men judged to their endless state. Believe these things heartily, and then think a holy diligence needless if you can. Then be of the mind of the deriders and

enemies of godliness if you can. If one sight of heaven or hell would serve without any more ado, instead of other arguments, to confute all the cavils of the distracted world, and to justify the most diligent saints in the judgment of those that now abhor them, why should not a sound belief of the same thing in its measure do the same?

9. Live but as those that believe this life is given us as the only time to make preparation for eternal life; and that all that ever shall be done for your salvation, must be now, just now, before your time is ended. Live as those that know (and need not faith to tell them) that this time is short, and almost at an end already, and stayeth for no man, but as a post doth haste away. It will not stay while you are trimming you, or sporting you. It will not stay while you are taking up in stage-plays, in compliments, in idle visits, or any impertinent, needless things. It will not tarry while you spend yet the other year, or month, or day, in your worldliness, or ambition, or in your lusts and sensual delights, and put off your repentance to another time. O sirs, for the Lord's sake, do but live as men that must shortly be buried in the grave, and their souls appear before the Lord, and as men that have but this little time, to do all for their everlasting life, that ever must be done. O live as men that are sure to die, and are not sure to live till to-morrow. And let not the noise of pleasure or worldly business, or the chat or scorns of miserable fools, bear down your reason, and make you live as if you knew not what you know, or as if there were any doubt about these things. Who is the man, and what is his name, that dare contradict them, and can make it good? O do not sin against your knowledge. Do not stand still and see your glass running, and time making such haste, and yet make no more haste yourselves, than if you were not concerned in it. Do not, O do not slumber when time and judgment never slumber, nor sit still when you have so much to do, and know all that is now left undone must be undone for ever! Alas! sirs, how many questions of exceeding weight have you yet to be resolved in? Whether you are truly sanctified? whether your sins be pardoned? whether you shall be saved when you die! whether you are ready to leave this world, and enter upon another? I tell you, the answering of these and many more such questions, is a matter of no small difficulty or concernment. And all these must be done in this little and uncertain time. It must be *now or never*. Live but as men that believe and consider these certain unquestionable things.

10. Lastly. Will you but live as men that believe that the world and the flesh are the deadly enemies of your salvation. And that believe, that if any man love the world, (so far) the love of the Father is not in him, 1 John ii. 15, 16. And as men that believe, that if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live, Rom. viii. 13. And that those that are in Christ Jesus, and are freed from condemnation, are such as walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. And that we must make no provision for the flesh to satisfy the will or lusts thereof, and must not walk in gluttony and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in strife and envying; but must have our hearts where our treasure is, Rom. viii. 1; xiii. 10, 13; Matt. vi. 21; and converse in heaven, Phil. iii. 18—20; and being risen with Christ, must seek the things that are above, and set our affections on them, and not on the things that are on earth, Col. iii. 1—3.

Sirs, will you say that any of this is our singular opinion, or matter of controversy and doubt? Are

not all christians agreed in it? Do you not, your own selves, profess that you believe it? Live then but as those that do believe it, and condemn not yourselves in the things that you confess.

I tell thee, if now thou wilt refuse to live according to these common acknowledged truths, thou shalt never be able to say before the Lord, that men's controversy about a ceremony, or church government, or the manner of worship, were the things that hindered thee. But all sorts and sects shall be witnesses against thee, and condemn thee; for they all agreed in these things; even the bloodiest sect, that imprison, and torment, and kill others for their differences in smaller matters, are yet agreed, with those that they persecute and murder, about these things: papists are agreed in them, and protestants are agreed in them: all the sects that are now quarrelling among us, and in the world, are agreed in them, who are but meet for the name of christians. All these will be ready to bear witness against the profane, the sensual, the slothful neglecter of God and his salvation, and to say, we all confessed, notwithstanding our other differences, that all these things were certain truths, and that men's lives should be ordered according unto these.

But if yet you pretend controversy to cover your malignity or ungodliness, I will go a little further, and tell you that in the matter as well as in the principles, it is things that we are all agreed in, which I call you to, and which the ungodly do refuse. I will briefly name them.

1. One part of your work which we urge you to do with all your might, is seriously and soberly to consider often of all these truths before mentioned, which you say you do believe. And is it any controversy with reasonable men, whether they should use their reason? or with believers, whether they should consider and lay to heart the weight and use of the things which they believe?

2. Another part of your work is, to love God with all your soul and might; and to make him your delight, and to seek first his kingdom, and the righteousness thereof; and to set your affections on the things above, and to live on earth as the heirs of heaven. And is there any controversy among protestants, papists, or any about this?

3. Another part of your work is, to see the honouring of God in the world, the promoting of his kingdom and government in yourselves and others, the doing of his will, and obeying of his laws. And is there any controversy in this?

4. Another part of your work is, to mortify the flesh, and reject its conceits, and desires, and lusts, which resist the aforesaid obedience to God; and to cast out the inordinate love and care of worldly things; to refuse the counsels, the commands, the will, the enticements, and persuasions of men, which contradict the commands and will of God; and to forsake all that you have in the world rather than forsake your dear Redeemer, and hazard your salvation by any wilful sin: to take up your cross and follow Christ through a life of suffering to glory. I know there is difficulty enough in all this, and that flesh will repine against it and abhor it. But is there any controversy about it among any true believers? Is not all this the express command of God, and necessary to salvation?

5. Another part of your work is to avoid temptations, and fly from the occasions and appearances of evil; and not only to avoid that which is directly evil itself, but that also which would draw you into evil (as far as you can); and to keep as far as may be from the brink of hell and danger, and to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,

nor be companions with them, but reprove them, and mourn for the unclean and wicked conversation of the world. This is it that we treat of you; and is there any matter of controversy in all this?

6. Another part of the work which we call you to, is, to redeem this little time that is allotted you. To make the best of it, and improve it to the greatest furtherance of your salvation. To lose none of it upon unprofitable things. To spend it in those works which will comfort you most when time is gone. If it will be more comfortable to you in the day of judgment, that you have spent your time in plays, and sports, and idleness, and worldly cares, and pleasures, than in serving God, and preparing for another life, then hold on, and do so to the end. But if it will not, then do what you would hear of, seeing you must hear of it. Spend none of your time in idleness and unfruitful things, till you have no better and more necessary things to spend it in, and till you have time to spare from more important work. This is our request to you, that you would not lose one hour of your precious time, but spend it as those that have lost too much, and have but a little more to spend in preparation for eternity. And is this any schismatical or factious notion? Is there any thing controvertible, or which any christian can speak against, in any of this?

7. Another part of your work is, to search the Scripture as that which containeth your directions for eternal life, John v. 39. To love the word of God more than thousands of gold and silver, and prefer it before your necessary food, Psal. cxix. 72; Job xxxiii. 12; and to meditate in it day and night, as that which is your pleasure and delight, Psal. i. 2, and as that which is able to make you wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15, and to build you up, and give you an inheritance among the sanctified, Acts xx. 32. That you lay up the word of God in your hearts, and teach them diligently to your children, and talk of them when you sit in your houses, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up, Deut. vi. 6, 7; xi. 18, 19, that so you and your households may serve the Lord, Josh. xxiv. 15. This is the work that we call you to. And is there any thing that a christian can make a controversy of in all this? Is there any thing that protestants are not agreed of?

8. Another part of your work is, that you guard your tongues, and take not the name of God in vain, and speak no reproaches or slanders against your brethren; and that no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouths, but that which is good to the use of edifying, and that it may minister grace unto the hearers, Eph. iv. 29; and that fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness be not once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks, Eph. v. 3, 4. And is there any thing of doubt or controversy in this?

9. Another part of the work which we persuade you to, is, to pray continually, 1 Thess. v. 17, and not to wax faint, Luke xviii. 1; to be fervent and importunate with God, as those that know the greatness of their necessity, Luke xviii. 6, 7; James v. 15. That you pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, Eph. vi. 18; and in every thing by prayer and supplication to make known your requests to God, Phil. iv. 6. That you pray for kings and all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. And is there any thing in all this that any christian can deny?

10. Lastly, the work we call you to, is, to love your neighbours as yourselves, and to do to others

as you would have them (*arbitrio sano*) do to you. To scorn, deride, molest, imprison, slander, or hurt no man, till you would be so used yourselves on the like occasion. To rejoice in other men's profit and reputation as your own. To envy none, to hate no man, to wrong none in their persons, estates, or names. To preserve the chastity, honour, and estate of your neighbour as your own. To love your enemies, and forgive them that wrong you, and pray for them that hate, and hurt, and persecute you. This is your work. And is there any thing of faction, schism, or controversy in this? No: you shall shortly be convinced, that the differences and controversies of believers, and the many opinions about religion, were a wretched, hypocritical pretence for your neglect and contempt of the substance of religion, about which there was no difference, but all parties were agreed in the confession of the truth, however hypocrites would not live according to their own professions.

But perhaps you will say, that there is such difference in the manner yet among them that agree in the principles and the matter, that you know not which way God is to be worshipped.

I answer, 1. Do you practise as aforesaid, according to the principles and matter agreed on, or not? If you do not, it is but gross hypocrisy to pretend disagreements in the manner, as an excuse for your contempt or omission of the matter, which all agree in. Forsooth, your families shall be prayerless, and you will make a jest of serious prayer, because some pray on a book, and some without, and some that are wisest, think that either way is lawful. Will God be deceived by such silly reasonings as these?

2. But this shall not hide the nakedness of your impiety. Will you also, in the manner of your obedience, but go so far as all christians are agreed in? I will briefly then give you some particular instances.

1. The work of God must be done with reverence, in his fear; not like the common works of men, with a common, careless frame of mind. God will be "sanctified of all that draw near him," Lev. x. 3. He will be served as God, and not as man. He will not be prayed to with a regardless mind, as those do that can divide their tongues from their hearts, and say over some customary words, while they think of something else. It is a dreadful thing for dust to speak to God Almighty; and a dangerous thing to speak to him as slightly and regardlessly, as if we were talking to one of our companions. It becometh a believer to have more of the fear of God upon his heart, in his ordinary converse in the world, than hypocrites and formalists have in their most solemn prayers. Knowest thou the difference between God and man? Put then such a difference between God and man in thy addresses as his Majesty requireth. And see also that thy family compose themselves to a reverent behaviour when they join with thee in the worshipping of God. What have you to say now against this reverent manner of behaviour? Is there any thing controvertible in this?

2. It is also requisite that you be serious and sober in all the service you perform to God. Do it not ludicrously, and with half a heart. Be as much more fervent and serious in seeking God and your salvation, than you are in seeking worldly things, as God and your salvation is better than any thing in the world. Or if that be beyond your reach, (though else there is reason for it,) at least let the greatest things have the greatest power upon your hearts. You cannot pray more fervently for heaven than heaven deserveth. O let but the excellency and greatness of your work appear in the serious manner

of your performance. I hope you cannot say that this is any point of controversy, unless it be a controversy whether a man should be a hypocrite, or be serious in the religion which he doth profess.

3. It is requisite that your service of God be performed understandingly, Psal. xlvii. 7; 1 Cor. xiv. 15. God delighteth not in the blind devotion of men that know not what they do. Prayers not understood are indeed no prayers; for no man's desire goeth further than his knowledge. And he expresseth not his desires that knoweth not what he expresseth himself. Nor can he expect the concurrence of another man's desire, that speaketh what another understandeth not. The word that is not understood cannot sink into the heart and sanctify it; or if it be not well and soundly understood, it is easily stole away by the tempter, Matt. xiii. 19, 23. If understanding be necessary in our common conversations, much more in our holy addresses to the Almighty, Prov. xvii. 27. "A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit; but God hath no pleasure in fools or in their sacrifices," Eccles. v. 1, 4, nor is pleased with a parrot-like lip-service which is not understood. He saith in detestation of the hypocrites, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me," Matt. xv. 8, 9. I hope then when we call you to serve God in judgment and with understanding, we call you to nothing that a christian should make question of.

4. "God is a Spirit, and they that serve him must serve him in spirit and in truth," John iv. 24. "The Father seeketh such to worship him," ver. 23. He calleth for the heart; he looketh for the inward desires of the soul; he converseth with minds that are abstracted from vanity, and are seriously taken up in attending him, and are intent upon the work they do. The carcass of a prayer, separated from the life of it, stinketh before the holy God. As he will be loved, so will he be served, "with all the heart, and soul, and might." And do we call you then to any thing that is doubtful, when we call you to the spiritual worshipping of God?

5. Yet we maintain that the body hath its part in the service of God as well as the soul; and the body must express the inward reverence and devotion of the soul; though not in a way of hypocritical ostentation, yet in a way of serious adoration. The bowing of the knee, the uncovering of the head, and reverent deportment, and whatsoever nature, or common use, and holy institution hath made an expression of holy affections, and a decent and grave behaviour of ourselves, should be carefully observed in the presence of the Most High, and the holy things of God more reverently to be respected than the presence of any mortal man. And the rather, because that a grave, and reverent, and holy manner of deportment in God's worship, reflecteth upon the heart, and helpeth us in our inward and spiritual devotion; and it helpeth the beholders, and awakeneth them to reverent thoughts of God and holy things, which a regardless and common manner of deportment would extinguish. And it is no dishonour to reverent behaviour, that it is the use of hypocrites, but rather an honour to it; for it is something that is good that the hypocrite useth for the cloak of his secret emptiness or evil. If there were nothing good in reverent behaviour before God, it would not serve the hypocrite's turn. As it is a commendation to long prayer, that the Pharisees made it their pretence for the devouring of widows' houses. And those that call them hypocrites, that are much in holy exercises and speeches, should consider that if holy exercises and speeches were not good, they

were not fit for the hypocrite's design; evil will not be a fit cloak for evil; that which the hypocrite thinks necessary to the covering of his sin, we must think more necessary to the cure of our sin and the saving of our souls. The way to avoid hypocrisy, is not by running into impiety and profaneness; we must do more than the hypocrite, and not less, else he will rise up in judgment against you and condemn you, if he would do more to seem good, than you would do to be good, and to please your Maker; if a Pharisee will pray longer to colour his oppression, than you will do to attain salvation. The mischief of hypocrisy is, that the soul of religion is wanting, while the corpse is present. And will you cast away both soul and body, both inside and outside, in opposition to hypocrisy? If others do seem to love God when they do not, will you therefore not so much as seem to do it? So here about reverence in the service of God; the hypocrite should not exceed the sincere in any thing that is truly good. This is the manner of God's service that I persuade you to, and to no other. And is there any thing of controversy in this? Prefer but the spiritual part, and know but what that meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," that so you may not condemn the innocent, and you shall never say that we will be more backward than you to decency and reverent behaviour in God's service.

6. God will be served in purity and holiness, with cleansed hearts and hands, and not with such as remain defiled with the guilt of any wilful sin. He abhorreth the sacrifice of the wicked and disobedient. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, his prayers are abominable," Prov. xxviii. 9; xv. 8; xxi. 27; Isa. i. 13; Eccles. v. 1—4. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord," (to oppressing, wicked men,) Isa. i. 11. "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with it; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting," &c. ver. 12, 13. "And when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord," ver. 16—18.

To play the glutton, or drunkard, or filthy fornicator in the day-time, and then to come to God at night, as if it were to make him amends by a hypocritical prayer; to blaspheme God's name, and oppose his rule, yea, oppose his kingdom and government in yourselves and others, and to do your own will, and hate and scorn them that do his will, and study his will that they may do it, and then to pray that God's name may be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will be done, is an abusing God, and not serving or pleasing him. Live according to your prayers, and let your lives show as well as your words what it is that you desire. This is the service of God that we call you to: and can you say that there is any thing convertible in all this? Are there any men of any party among christians, or sober infidels, that dare contradict it?

7. God will be served entirely and universally, in all his commands; and with all your faculties; in works of piety, justice, and charity, which must never be separated. You must not pretend your charity against duties of piety; for God is to be

preferred in your estimation, love, and service; and all that is done for man must be done for his sake. You must not set up duties of piety against duties of justice, charity, and sobriety: it is not true piety that will not bring forth these. God must be loved above all, and our neighbour as ourselves; and these two sorts of love are inseparable. Do all the good you can to all while you have opportunity; "especially to them of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 10. What good you would hear of in the day of your accounts, that do now, speedily, diligently, and sincerely, according to your power. Say not, I may come to want myself, but "cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days: give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth," Eccles. xi. 1, 2; and whether all may not quickly be taken from thee: and then thou wilt wish thou hadst done good with it while thou hadst it, and lent it to the Lord, and trusted him with thy remainder, who intrusted thee with his blessings; and hadst made thee friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when all fail they might receive thee into the everlasting habitations. Drop not now and then a scant and grudging alms, as if thou wert a loser by it, and God must be beholden to thee; but believe that the greatest gain is to thyself; and look after such bargains, and do good as readily, and gladly, and liberally, as one that verily expecteth a full reward in heaven. This is part of the service of God that we exhort you to, even to visit, and relieve, and love Christ in his members and brethren, Matt. xxv. And is there any thing of doubt or controversy in all this?

8. Moreover, God will be served with love, and willingness, and delight: it is the most gainful, honourable, and pleasant work in the world, which he hath appointed you, and not a toilsome task or slavery; and therefore it is not a melancholy, pining, troublesome course of life that we persuade you to, under the name of godliness; but it is to rejoice in the Lord, and to live in the joyful expectations of eternal life, and in the sense and assurance of the love of God. If you could show us any probability of a more pleasant and joyful life on earth, than that which serious holiness doth afford, I should be glad with all my heart to hearken to you. I am ready to tell you what is the ground of our comforts, which faith revealeth: if you will come, and soberly debate the case, and show us the matter and ground of your comforts, which you have or hope for in any other way; if yours prove greater, and better, and surer than the joys of faith, we will hearken to you, and be of your mind and side.

The matter of the joys of a believer is that all his sins are pardoned; that God is reconciled to him in Christ; that he hath the promise of God, that all things, even the greatest sufferings, shall work together for his good; that he is always in the love, and care, and hands of God; that he hath leave to draw near him by holy prayer, and open his heart to him in all his straits and wants; that he may solace himself in his praise and thanksgiving, and in other parts of holy worship; that he may read and hear his holy word, the sure discovery of the will of God, and revelation of the things unseen, and the charter of his inheritance; that he may exercise his soul in the serious believing thoughts of the love of God, revealed in the wonderful work of our redemption, and of the person, and office, and grace of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; and that he may love that God that hath so wonderfully loved him; that he hath the Spirit of God to quicken and actuate his soul, to supply his spiritual defects, and kill his sins, and

help him to believe, to love, to rejoice, to pray. That this Spirit is God's seal upon him, and the earnest of everlasting life; that death shall not kill his hopes, nor end his happiness, but that his felicity and fullest joy beginneth, when that of worldlings hath an end, and their endless misery begins; that he is delivered from everlasting torment by the redemption of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit; that angels will attend his departing soul into the presence of his Father; that he shall be with his glorified Redeemer and behold his glory; that his body shall be raised to everlasting life; that he shall be justified by Christ from all the accusations of the devil, and all the slanders of the malicious world; that he shall live with God in endless glory, and see and enjoy the glory of his Creator, and shall never more be troubled with enemies, with sin or sorrow, but among his holy ones shall perfectly and most joyfully love and praise the Lord for ever.

These are the matter of a believer's joy: these, purchased by Christ, revealed in his word, sealed by his miracles, his blood, his sacraments, and his Spirit, are our comfort. This is the religion, the labour that we invite you to: it is not to despair, nor to some dry, unprofitable toil, nor to self-troubling, grieving, miserable melancholy, nor to costly sacrifices, or idle ceremonies, or irrational service, such as the heathens offered to their idols; it is not to cast away all mirth and comfort, and to turn unsociable, and morose, and sour; but it is to the greatest joys that the world alloweth, and nature is here capable of, and reason can discern and own: it is to begin a truly merry, sociable life: it is to fly from fear and sorrow, in flying from sin and hell, and from the consuming wrath of God: it is to the foretastes of everlasting joys, and to the beginnings of eternal life. This is the labour, the religion, which we would have you follow with all your might.

If you have better things to seek, and follow, and find, let us see them, that we may be as wise as you. If you have not, for your souls' sake, make not choice of vanity, which will deceive you in the day of your necessity.

But you must not think to make us believe that a great house, or a horse, or a whore, or a feast, or a flatterer, or fine clothes, or any childish toys or brutish filthiness, are more comfortable things than Christ and everlasting life; or that it is sweeter and better to love a harlot, or lands, or money, than to love God, and grace, and glory; nor that any thing that will go no further than the grave with you, is as good as that which will endure to eternity; nor that any pleasure which a dog or swine hath, is equal to the delights of the angels of heaven. If you would have us of your mind, you must not be of this mind, nor persuade us to such horrible things as these. But we profess to you and all the world that we are not so in love with sorrows or sourness, nor so fallen out with joy and pleasure, as to choose a life of miserable sadness, or refuse a life of true delight. If we could hear from any man, or find by the most diligent inquiry, that there is a more full, and sweet, and rational, and satisfactory, and durable delight to be had in any other way than that of serious faith and holiness, which Christ in Scripture hath revealed to us, we are like enough to hearken after it.

But can the distracted, sensual world believe that it is sweeter and happier to ruffle it out in fleshly gallantry and sport, and to rage against the godly for a while till the vengeance of God lay hold upon them, and give them their reward, than to live in the love of God, and wait in patience for the perform-

ance of God's promise of everlasting joy? Oh what a thing is fleshly passion, and raging sensuality, and blind unbelief! The Lord have mercy upon deluded sinners! The devil's business is to turn the world into a Bedlam; and alas, how strangely hath he prevailed! that so many men can take their greatest misery for their happiness, and the only happiness for an intolerable life! yea, and be so angry with all that are not of their mind, and will not set as much by filth and foolery, and as little by God and glory, as they! Like the nobleman that was lunatic, or mad by fits, and whenever he was mad, he would swear all were mad that said not as he said, and would make all his servants be sent to Bedlam that would not imitate him, and there they must lie as madmen till their lord was recovered from his madness. So are God's servants used and talked of in the world, as if they were beside themselves, as long as the world is uncured of its madness. As the man is, so is his judgment, and such is his relish, and desire, and delight. When I was a child, I had far more desire to fill my pin box, than now I have to fill my purse, and accounted it a greater treasure, and had much more delight and contentment in it. And, alas, we may remember since we were strangers to the relish of heavenly things, that we found more pleasure in that of which we are now ashamed, than we did in the most high and excellent things. Let us therefore pity and pray for those that are distempered with the same disease.

I have been longer on this than I thought to have been, because men think that we call them from all mirth, and joy, and pleasure, to a sour, heavy, melancholy life, when we call them to a serious diligence for their salvation. As if levity and folly were the only friends to pleasure, and it were only to be found in childish, worthless, transitory things. And as if the greatest everlasting happiness were no matter of true delight; nor seriousness, nor diligence, a friend to joy.

9. Moreover, as to the manner; God will be served with absolute self-resignation, without exceptions, limitations, or reserves: not with the leavings of the flesh, nor with a proviso that you may not suffer by your religion, or be poor, or despised, or abused by the world: but with self-denial you must lay down all the flesh's interest at his feet; and you must take up your cross, and follow a suffering Christ to glory. You must serve him as those that are wholly his, and not your own, and have nothing but what is his, and therefore nothing to be excepted, reserved, or saved from him; but must be content that you and all your interest be in his hands, and saved by him, if saved at all. I know these terms seem hard to flesh and blood; (and should heaven be the crown and reward to them that have undergone no trial for it?) but here is nothing but what is past all controversy, and all christians do confess is the word of Christ.

10. Lastly, God will be served resolutely and constantly; if you will reign, you must conquer and endure to the end. Opposition you must expect; and overcome it, if you would not be overcome. It is not good beginnings that will serve turn, unless you also persevere, and fight out the good fight of faith, and finish your course, and patiently wait to the last breath, for the crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge will give the conquerors; when the unbelieving world shall say of all their delight and hope, It is past and gone, we shall never see or taste it more, but must now taste of that endless wrath of God which we were treasuring up, when we should have worked out our salvation.

Well, sirs, I have all this while been describing to

you, both as to the principles, the matter, and the manner, what that religion and service of God is, in which you must labour with all your might; that you may see that it is no factious or private opinions or practices that we call you to do; and that your consciences may no longer be deluded with the pretences of men's different opinions in religion; and that the names of prelatical, presbyterian, puritan, papist, or any other sounding in your ears, may not so distract and dote you, as to make you forget the name of christian, which you have all undertaken, nor what the christian religion is. You see now that it is nothing (no, not a syllable or tittle) which all sober christians are not agreed in, that we persuade you to do as the work of your religion; and therefore I tell you again here, before that God that shall be your judge, and that conscience that shall be as a thousand witnesses, that if you will go on in ungodly, worldly lives, and refuse the serious diligence of christians in this religion which yourselves profess, it shall be so far from being any excuse or ease to you, that there were hypocrites, or heretics, or schismatics, or different opinions in religion in the world, that this very thing shall aggravate your sin and condemnation, that all these hypocrites, schismatics, or different parties in the church, did agree in the confession of all these things, and yet for all that you would not practise them; no, nor practise what yourselves confessed; all these parties or sects shall rise up against the sensual and profane, ungodly sinner, and say, Though we are ignorant or doubtful of many other things, yet we are all agreed in these; we gave our concurrent testimony of them; we tempted no man to doubt of these, or to deny them. If you will err more than a hypocrite or a schismatic, and be far worse than those that are such, or you account such, and think to excuse it because they erred in lesser things, it is as if the devil should excuse his sin, by saying, Lord, thy saints did none of them love thee as they should, and hypocrites did but seem to love thee, and therefore I thought I might hate thee and set against thy ways.

But (saith the ungodly sensualist) I will never believe that God delighteth in long and earnest prayers; or that he is moved by the passions or the words of men; and therefore I take this but for babbling, which you call the serious diligence of believers, in their serving God.

To this impious objection, I return these several answers.

1. Suppose this were true as you imagine, what is this to you that serve God no way at all with any serious diligence? that live in sensuality, and wilful disobedience to his laws, and do more for your bodies than for your souls, and for temporal things than for eternal?

2. Who do you think is likeliest to understand God's mind, and what is pleasing to him; himself or you? Is any thing more plainly commanded in God's word, than praying with frequency, fervency, and importunity? Luke xviii. 1-7; 1 Thess. v. 17; James v. 16. And will you tell God that he hath but dissembled with you, and told you that he is pleased with that which is not pleasing to him?

3. And what is the reason of your unbelief? Forsooth, because God is not moved with human words or passions. I grant he is not. But what of that? Hath prayer no other use but to move God? It is enough, 1. That it moveth us, and fitteth us to receive his mercies. 2. And that God hath made it necessary to the effect, and a means or condition without which he will not give the blessing. Do you think (if you judge but by natural reason) that

a person is as fit for a mercy that knoweth not the want or worth of it, and would not be thankful for it if he had it, as one that valueth it, and is disposed to thankfulness and improvement? And do not you know that holy prayer is nothing but the actuating of holy desires, and the exercise of all those graces which are suited to the due estimation and improvement of the mercy? And is it not the way when we would draw the boat to the bank, to lay hold of the bank and pull, as if we would draw it to the boat? If God be not moved and drawn to us, it is enough that we are moved and drawn to God; and withal that God may give us his own blessings, to whom and upon what terms he please, and that he hath assured us he will give them but to those that value, desire, and seek them, and that with faith, and fervency, and importunity.

And yet I may add, that God is so far above us, as that his incomprehensible essence and blessed nature is very little known to us; and therefore though we know and confess that he hath no human passions nor imperfections, yet if he assume to himself the title of such a thing as love, desire, joy, or wrath, we must in reason believe, that though these are not in God as they are in man with any imperfection; yet there is something in God that cannot fitly be represented to man, nor be understood by man, than by the images of such expressions as God himself is pleased to use.

3. But I beseech you hearken to nature itself. Doth it not teach all rational creatures in necessity to pray to God? A storm will teach the profaneest seaman to pray, and that with continuance and fervency. The mariners could say to Jonah in their danger, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God; if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." And they themselves "cried every man unto his god," Jonah i. 5, 6. When thou comest to die, and seest there is no more delay, nor any more hope from the pleasures of sin, or from any of thy old companions or old deceits, then tell me whether nature teach thee not to cry, and cry mightily for pardon, and mercy, and help to God? Then we shall hear thee crying, O mercy, mercy, Lord, upon a miserable sinner, though now thou wilt not believe that prayer doth any good.

I will say no more to thee of this; if nature be not conquered, and grace have not forsaken thee, thou wilt be taught at home to answer this objection. Sure thou canst not easily so far conquer reason, as to believe that there is no God. And if thou believe that there is a God, thou canst not believe that he is not to be worshipped, and that with the greatest seriousness and diligence. Nor that he is not the giver of all that thou dost want. Or that the Governor of the world regardeth not the dispositions and actions of his subjects, but will equally reward the good and bad, and give to all alike, and have no respect to men's preparations for his reward. What heathen that believeth that there is a God, doth not believe that prayer to him is a necessary part of his worship?

Object. But is not your strict observation of the Lord's day a controverted thing?

Ans. In this also I will strip thee of this excuse. 1. Spend the Lord's day but according to the common principles of christianity and reason, and it shall suffice: spend it but as one that loveth God better than any thing in the world, and that taketh more pleasure in his service than in sin and vanity: spend it but as the necessities of thy own soul and thy family's require; as one that is glad of so honourable, gainful, and delightful an employment, as the public and private worshipping of God, and

the serious contemplation of the life to come; as one that knoweth the need and benefit of having stated times for the service of God, and what would come of all religion if the time were left to each one's will. Spend it as men that put a just difference between the common business of this world, and the things that concern your endless state; and that have considered the proportion of one day in seven, in reference to this different consequence of the work: spend it as men that have lost as much time as you have done, and have need to make the best of the little that is left; and that are behindhand so far in the matters of your salvation, and have need to work with all your might, and should be gladder of the helps of such a day, than of thousands of gold and silver: spend it as those that believe that we owe God as much service as the Jews did: spend it as the ancient christians spent it, that were wont to stay together almost from morning till night in public worship and communion: spend it as the king's declaration requireth, which saith, Our purpose and resolution is, and shall be, to take care that the Lord's day be applied to holy exercises, wit out unnecessary divertisements.

2. And if yet there be any doubt in this, I refer you to the judgment of the church of England, expressed in the Homily "of the Time and Place of Prayer." And for the time, the name, the antiquity, and authority, and the work itself, I desire you but to receive what is there delivered, not by any factious persons, but by the church. Do this, and we are agreed and satisfied. And I make it my request to the reader, to peruse both parts of that Homily, that he may know how far the church of England is from the loose conceits of the enemies of godliness: and if also you will read over the Homilies "against the Peril of Idolatry," you will the fuller know the judgment of the church about the manner of God's worship. (Indeed the whole book is such as the people should be acquainted with.)

I have done my part to open to you the necessity of SERIOUS DILIGENCE, and to call up the sluggish souls of sinners to mind the work of their salvation, and to do it SPEEDILY, and with all their MIGHT; I must now leave the success to God and you. What use you will make of it, and what you will be and do for the time to come, is a matter that more concerneth yourselves than me. If long speaking, or multitude of words, were the way to prevail with you, I should willingly speak here while my strength would endure, and lengthen out my exhortations yet sevenfold. But that is not the way: a little wearieth you: you love long feasts, and long visits, and plays, and sports, much better than long sermons, or books, or prayers. But it is no small grief to us, to leave you in a case of such importance, without some considerable hopes of your deliverance.

Sirs, the matter is now laid before you, and much in your own hands: it will not be so long! What will you now do? Have I convinced you now, that God and your salvation are to be sought with all your might? If I have not, it is not for want of evidence in what is said, but for want of willingness in yourselves to know the truth: I have proved to you that it is a matter out of controversy, unless your lusts, and passions, and carnal interest will make a controversy of it. I beseech you, tell me if you be of any religion at all, why are you not strict, and serious, and diligent, and mortified, and heavenly in that religion that you are of? Sure, you will not so far shame your own religion, whatever it be, as to say that your religion is not for mortification, holiness,

heavenliness, self-denial; or that your religion alloweth you to be ambitious, covetous, gluttonous, drunken, to curse, and swear, and whore, and rail, and oppress the innocent: it is not religion, but diabolical, serpentine malignity that is for any of this.

It is wonderful to think, that learned men, and gentlemen, and men that pretend to reason and ingenuity, can quietly betray their souls to the devil upon such silly grounds, and do the evil that they have no more to say for, and neglect that duty that they have no more to say against, when they know they must do it NOW or NEVER! That while they confess that there is a God, and a life to come, a heaven and a hell, and that this is purposely given us for preparation for eternity; while they confess that God is most wise, and holy, and good, and just, and that sin is the greatest evil, and that the word of God is true, they can yet make shift to quiet themselves in an unholy, sensual, careless life: and that while they honour the apostles, and martyrs, and saints that are dead and gone, they hate their successors and imitators, and the lives that they lived, and are inclined to make more martyrs by their malicious cruelty.

Alas, all this comes from the want of a sound belief of the things which they never saw; and the distance of those things, and the power of passion, and sensual objects and inclinations, that hurry them away after present vanities, conquer reason, and rob them of their humanity; and by the noise of the company of sensual sinners, that harden and deafen one another; and by the just judgment of God forsaking those that would not know him, and leaving them to the blindness and hardness of their hearts. But is there no remedy? O Thou, the Fountain of mercy and relief, vouchsafe these miserable sinners a remedy! O Thou, the Saviour of lost mankind, have mercy upon these sinners in the depth of their security, presumption, and misery! O Thou, the Illuminator and Sanctifier of souls, apply the remedy so dearly purchased! We are constrained oft to fear lest it be much long of us, that should more seriously preach the awakening truths of God unto men's hearts. And verily our consciences cannot but accuse us, that when we are most lively and serious, alas, we seem but almost to trifle, considering on what a message we come, and of what transcendent things we speak. But Satan hath got his advantage upon our hearts, that should be instrumental to kindle theirs, as well as on theirs that should receive the truth. Oh that we could thirst more after their salvation! Oh that we could pray harder for it, and entreat them more earnestly, as those that were loth to take a denial from God or man! I must confess to you all with shame and sorrow, that I am even amazed to think of the hardness of my own heart, that melteth no more in compassion to the miserable, and is no more earnest and importunate with sinners, when I am upon such a subject as this; and am telling them that it must be NOW or NEVER; and when the messenger of death within, and the fame of men's displeasure from without, doth tell me how likely it is that my time shall be but short, and that if I will say any thing that may reach the hearts of sinners, for aught I know, it must be NOW or NEVER. Oh what an obstinate, what a lamentable disease is this insensibility and hardness of heart! If I were sure this were the last sermon that ever I should preach, I find now my heart would show its sluggishness, and rob poor souls of the serious fervour which is suitable to the subject and their case, and needful to the desired success.

But yet, poor sleepy sinners, hear us: though we speak not to you as men would do that had seen

heaven and hell, and were themselves in a perfectly awakened frame, yet hear us while we speak to you the words of truth, with some seriousness and compassionate desire of your salvation. O look up to your God! Look out unto eternity; look inwardly upon your souls; look wisely upon your short and hasty time; and then bethink you how the little remnant of your time should be employed; and what it is that most concerneth you to despatch and secure before you die. Now you have sermons, and books, and warnings. It will not be so long. Preachers must have done. God threateneth them, and death threateneth them, and men threaten them, and it is you, it is you that are most severely threatened, and that are called on by God's warnings. "If any man have an ear to hear, let him hear." Now you have abundance of private helps, you have abundance of understanding, gracious companions; you have the Lord's days to spend in holy exercises, for the edification and solace of your souls; you have choice of sound and serious books; and blessed be God, you have the protection of a christian and a protestant king and magistracy. Oh what invaluable mercies are all these! O know your time, and use these with industry; and improve this harvest for your souls! For it will not be thus always. It must be NOW or NEVER.

You have yet time and leave to pray and cry to God in hope. Yet, if you have hearts and tongues, he hath a hearing ear. The Spirit of grace is ready to assist you. It will not be thus always. The time is coming when the loudest cries will do no good. O pray, pray, pray, poor needy, miserable sinners, for it must be NOW or NEVER.

You have yet health and strength, and bodies fit to serve your souls. It will not be so always. Languishing, and pains, and death are coming. O use your health and strength for God; for it must be NOW or NEVER.

Yet there are some stirrings of conviction in your consciences. You find that all is not well with you; and you have some thoughts or purposes to repent and be new creatures. There is some hope in this, that yet God hath not quite forsaken you. O trifle not, and stifle not the convictions of your consciences, but hearken to the witness of God within you. It must be NOW or NEVER.

Would you not be loth to be left to the despairing case of many poor distressed souls, that cry out, Oh it is now too late! I fear my day of grace is past; God will not hear me now if I should call upon him; he hath forsaken me, and given me over to myself. It is too late to repent, too late to pray, too late to think of a new life; all is too late. This case is sad. But yet many of these are in a safer and better case than they imagine, and are but frightened by the tempter, and it is not too late, while they cry out, It is too late. But if you are left to cry in hell, It is too late, alas! how long, and how doleful a cry and lamentation will it be!

O consider, poor sinner, that God knoweth the time and season of thy mercies. He giveth the spring and harvest in their season, and all his mercies in their seasons, and wilt thou not know thy time and season, for love, and duty, and thanks to him?

Consider that God, who hath commanded thee thy work, hath also appointed thee thy time. And this is his appointed time. To-day, therefore, hearken to his voice, and see that thou harden not thy heart. He that bids thee "repent and work out thy salvation with fear and trembling," doth also bid thee do it *now*. Obey him in the time, if thou wilt be indeed obedient. He best understandeth the fittest

time. One would think to men that have lost so much already, and loitered so long, and are so lamentably behindhand, and stand so near the bar of God, and their everlasting state, there should be no need to say any more, to persuade them to be up and doing. I shall add but this: you are never like to have a better time. Take this, or the work will grow more difficult, more doubtful; if, through the just judgment of God, it become not desperate. If all this will not serve, but still you will loiter till time be gone, what can your poor friends do but lament your misery? The Lord knows, if we knew what words, what pains, what cost would tend to your awakening, and conversion,

and salvation, we should be glad to submit to it; and we hope we should not think our labours, or liberties, or our lives too dear to promote so blessed and so necessary a work. But if, when all is done that we can do, you will leave us nothing but our tears and moans for self-destroyers, the sin is yours, and the suffering shall be yours. If I can do no more, I shall leave this upon record, that we took our time to tell you home, that SERIOUS DILIGENCE is necessary to your salvation; and that "God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6; and that this was your day, your only day. It must be NOW or NEVER.

DIRECTIONS AND PERSUASIONS

TO A

SOUND CONVERSION.

FOR

PREVENTION OF THAT DECEIT AND DAMNATION OF SOULS, AND THOSE SCANDALS, HERESIES, AND DESPERATE APOSTASIES THAT ARE CONSEQUENTS OF A COUNTERFEIT OR SUPERFICIAL CHANGE.

It is a weight so unconceivable that dependeth on the soundness of conversion and sanctification, that our care and diligence cannot be too great to make it sure. As the professed atheist, heathens, and infidels without, so the self-deceiving hypocrites within the church, do wilfully cast away themselves for ever, by neglecting such a business of everlasting consequence, when they have time, and warnings, and assistance to despatch it. Multitudes live like brutes or atheists, forgetting that they are born in sin and misery, and settled in it by wilful custom, and must be converted or condemned. These know not (many of them) what need they have of a conversion, nor what conversion or sanctification is. And some that have been preachers of the gospel, have been so lamentably ignorant in so great a matter, that they have persuaded the poor deluded people that it is only the gross and heinous sinners that need conversion; branding them with the name of puritans, that will not take a dead profession, joined with civility, for true sanctification; and promise salvation to those, that Christ hath with many asseverations professed shall not enter into the kingdom of God. Others that confess that a thorough sanctification is a necessary thing, do delude their souls with something that is like it. Hence is the misery and dishonour of the church. Holiness itself is disgraced by the sins of them that are unholy, because they pretend to that which they have not. Hence it is, that we have thousands that call themselves christians, that live a worldly, fleshly life, and some of them hating the way of godliness, and yet think they are converted, because they are sorry when they have sinned, and wish when it is past that they had not done it, and cry God mercy for it, and confess that they are sinners; and this they take for true repentance: when sin was never mortified in their souls, nor their hearts ever brought to hate it and forsake it; but when they have had the profit and pleasure of sin, they are sorry for the danger, but never regenerate and made new creatures by the Spirit of Christ. Hence also it is, that we have such abundance of mere opinionists, that take themselves for religious people. Because they have changed their opinions, and their parties, and can prate contentiously against those that are not of their mind, and join themselves with those that seem to be the strictest, they take themselves to be truly sanctified: and this makes such gadding from one opinion to another, and such censuring, reviling, and divisions, upon that account, because their religion is most in their opinions, and hath not mortified their carnal, selfish inclinations and passions, nor brought them to a holy, heavenly mind. Hence also it is, that we have so many sensual, scandalous professors, that seem to be religious, but bridle not their tongues, their appetites, or their lusts, but are railers, or backbiters, or tipplers, or gluttons, or filthy and lascivious, or some way scandalous to their holy profession, because they are strangers to a thorough conversion, but take up with the counterfeit of a superficial change. Hence also we have so many worldlings, that think themselves religious men; that make Christ but a servant to their worldly interest, and seek heaven but for a reserve, when earth forsakes them, and have something in this world that is so dear to them that they cannot forsake it for the hopes of glory; but give up themselves to Christ, with secret exceptions and reserves for their prosperity in the world: and all because they never knew a sound conversion, which should have rooted out of their hearts this worldly interest, and delivered them up entirely and absolutely to Christ. Hence also it is that we have so few professors that can lay by their pride, and bear disesteem or injury, and love their enemies, and bless them that curse them, yea, or love their godly friends that cross them, or dishonour them. And so few that can deny themselves in their honour, or any considerable thing, for the sake of Christ, and in obedience and conformity to his will. And all because they never had that saving change, that takes down self, and sets up Christ as Sovereign in the soul. And hence also it is that we have in this age so many dreadful instances of apostasy: so many reproaching the Scripture, that once they thought had converted them, and the way of holiness, that once they did profess; and denying the Lord himself that bought them; and all because they formerly took up

with a superficial, counterfeit conversion. Oh how commonly, and how lamentably, doth this misery appear among professors, in their unsavoury discourse, their strife and envy on religious pretences, their dead formality, their passionate divisions, or their selfish, proud, and earthly minds ! A thorough conversion would have cured all this, at least as to the dominion of it.

Having therefore in my "Call to the Unconverted" endeavoured to awaken careless souls, and persuade the obstinate to turn and live, I have here spoken to them that seem to be about the work, and given them some directions and persuasions, to prevent their perishing in the birth, and so to prevent that hypocrisy which else they are like to be formed into, and the deceit of their hearts, the error of their lives, and the misery at their death, which is like to follow. That they live not as those that flatter God with their mouths, and "lie unto him with their tongues, because their heart is not right with him, neither are they steadfast in his covenant," Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37. Lest denying deep entertainment and rooting to the seed of life, or choking it by the radiated, predominant love and cares of the world, they wither when the heat of persecution shall break forth, Matt. xiii. 20—22: and lest building on the sands, they fall when the winds and storms arise, and their fall be great, Matt. vii. 26, 27: and so "they go out from us, that they may be made manifest that they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us," 1 John ii. 19. Look therefore to this great, important business, "and give all diligence to make your calling and election sure," 2 Pet. i. 10. And trust not your hearts too easily, or too confidently; "but turn to the Lord with all your hearts," Joel ii. 12. Cleave to him resolutely, or with purpose of heart, Acts xi. 23: and see that you sell all and buy the pearl, Matt. xiii. 46; and stick not at the price, but absolutely resign yourselves to Christ, and turn to him, as Zaccheus and other primitive converts did, surrendering all that you have unto his will, Luke xix. 8, 9. Leave not any root of bitterness behind; make no exceptions, or reserves; but deny yourselves: forsake all, and follow him that hath led you this self-denying way; and trust to his blood, and merits, and promise, for a treasure in heaven; and then you are his disciples, and true christians indeed, Luke xiv. 18, 24, 25, 33. Reader, if thou heartily make this covenant and keep it, thou shalt find that Christ will not deceive thee, when the world deceiveth them that choose it, in their greatest extremity; but if thou draw back, and think these terms too hard, remember that everlasting life was offered thee, and remember why and for what thou didst reject it. And if in this life-time thou wilt have thy good things, expect to be tormented when the believing, self-denying souls are comforted, Luke xvi. 25.

R. B.

May 29, 1658.

DIRECTIONS TO SINNERS THAT ARE PURPOSED TO TURN, AND ARE UNDER THE WORK OF CONVERSION: THAT IT MISCARRY NOT.

THE first and greatest matter in the seeking after the salvation of our souls, is, to be sure that we lay the foundation well, and that the work of conversion be thoroughly wrought. To this end I have already used many persuasions with the unconverted to return, as thinking all further directions vain, till we have persuaded men to a consent and willingness to practise them. And in the end of that discourse I added a few directions for the use of such as are willing to be converted. But because I know that this is a matter of exceeding consequence, I dare not thus leave it, before I have added some further directions, to prevent the miscarrying of this work where it is begun. And lest I should lose my labour, through the unpreparedness of the reader, I shall first give you some preparing considerations, which may awaken you to the practice of the directions which I shall give you.

1. Consider first, that half-conversions are the undoing of many thousand souls. If you are but like Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 28, "almost persuaded to be christians," you will be but almost saved. Many a thousand that are now past help, have had the word come near them, and cast them into a fear, and make some stir and trouble in their souls, awakening their consciences, and forcing them to some good purposes and promises, yea, and bringing them to the performance of a half-reformation; but this is not it that will serve your turn. Many have been so much changed, as not to be far from the kingdom of God, that yet came short of it, Mark xii. 34. There is no promise in Scripture that you shall be pardoned if you almost repent and believe; or be saved, if you

be almost sanctified and obedient; but on the contrary, the Lord hath plainly resolved, that you must turn or die, though you almost turn; and repent, or perish, though you almost repent; and that you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, without conversion and a new birth, though you came never so near it. God hath resolved upon the terms of your salvation; and it is in vain to hope for salvation upon any other terms. God will not change nor come down to your terms: it is you that must change and come quite over to his terms, or you are lost for ever. If you come never so near them, you are but lost men if you come not up to them. The Lord well knew what he did, when he made his covenant and law, and he imposed nothing on the sons of men but what his infinite wisdom told him it was fit for him to impose; and he will not now compound with sinners, and take less than he requireth; that is, less than the pre-eminency in their hearts; nor will he ever come down to any lower terms with you, than those which he propoundeth to you in his gospel. And therefore, poor sinners, as you love your souls, do not stand dodging and halving with God; but give up yourselves entirely to him; and do not stop at the beginnings of a conversion, but go through with it, till you are become new creatures indeed, or you are undone when you have done all. A half, unsound convert will as certainly perish as a drunkard or a whore-monger, though his torment may not be so great.

2. Consider also, that if you do not go through with the work when you are upon it, you may perhaps make it more difficult than it was before ever you meddled with it, and make it a very doubtful

case whether ever it will be done. As it is with a wound or other sore, if you tamper with it with salves that are not agreeable to it, or are disorderly applied; or if you skin it over before it be searched to the bottom, it must be opened again, and will cost you double pain before it be cured. Or as I have seen it with some that have had a bone broken, or out of joint, and it hath been set amiss at first: oh what torments were the poor creatures fain to undergo, in having it broken, or stretched and set again! which might have been spared, if it had been thoroughly done at first. So, if you will be shrinking and drawing back, and favouring your flesh, and will not go to the quick, you will make your conversion much more difficult; you must be brought to it again, and fetch your groans yet deeper than before; and weep over all your former tears: your doubts will be multiplied; your fears and sorrows will be increased; and all will go sorer with you than at first. Oh what a case will you be in, when your sores must be lanced a second time, and your bones, as it were, broken again! Then you will wish you had gone through with it at the first.

Yea, perhaps you may put God to it to fetch you in by some sharp affliction, and send out so boisterous and churlish a messenger to call you home as may make you wish you had hearkened to a more gentle call: when the sheep will straggle, the dog must be sent to fright them home. Many a foolish sinner makes light of the gentle invitations of grace, and they stand hovering between their sins and Christ; and sometimes they have a mind to turn, and the next temptation they are off again, and then they come on again coldly and with half a heart; and thus they stand trifling with the God of heaven till he is fain to take another course with them, and resolves to use some sharper means: and when he layeth them under his rod, and they can neither fly from nor resist him, but see that their lives and souls are at his mercy, then they begin to look about them, and see their folly, and change their minds. You can tarry, and delay, and dally with the dreadful God, in the time of your prosperity, and we may ask you over and over whether you will turn before we can have a hearty answer; but what will you do when God shall begin to frown, and when he takes you in hand by his irresistible power, and lets loose upon you the terrors of his wrath? Will you then make as light of his mercy as you do now? Have you not read, Dan. v. 6, how small an apparition of his anger did make a carousing king look pale, and his joints to tremble in the midst of his joviality? A Manasseh will bethink himself and come in when he is laid in irons, though he could set light by God before, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13. If Jonah will run away from God, he can send a boisterous messenger to arrest him, and cast him as it were into the belly of hell, and make him cry for mercy to him that he disobeyed. So if you will stand trifling with God, and will not by fair means be persuaded to yield and come away, you may shortly look to hear from him in another manner; for he hath a voice that will make the proudest face look pale, and the stubbornest heart to tremble. If an idle, stubborn child will not learn nor be ruled, the master or parent will teach him with the rod, and give him a lash, and ask him, Will you yet learn? and another lash, and ask him, What say you now, will you yet obey? So will God do by you, if he love you, and mean to save you: when he hath taken away your wealth, your friends, your children, will you then hearken to him or will you not? When you lie groaning on your couch, and all your parts are overwhelmed with pains, and death begins

to lay hands upon you, and bids you now come and answer for your rebellions and delays before the living God, what will you do then? Will you turn or not? Oh the lamentable folly of sinners, that put themselves to so much sorrow and great calamity for themselves! When sickness comes, and death draws near, you beg, and cry, and groan, and promise: when you feel the rod, what Christians will you then be? And why not without so much ado? You then think God deals somewhat hardly with you: and why will you not turn then by gentler means? You might spare yourselves much of this misery if you would; and you will not. Is it a seemly thing for a man to be driven to heaven by scourges? Is God so bad a master, and heaven so bad a place, that you will not turn to them, and mind them, and seek them, till there be no remedy, and you are, as it were, driven to it against your will? Is the world such an inheritance, and sin so good a thing, and the flesh or devil so good a master, that you will not leave them till you are whipped away? What a shameful, unreasonable course is this!

Well, sirs, the case is plain before you. Turn you must at one time or other, or be the firebrands of hell. And seeing it is a thing that must be done, were it not best for you to take the easiest and the surest way to do it? Why, this is the easiest and the surest way; even to strike while the iron is hot, before it cool again; and to go through with it when God doth move you and persuade you: if you love your flesh itself, do not put him to take up the rod, and fetch you home by stripes and terrors.

But that is not the worst; for it will sorely hazard the work itself, and consequently your salvation, if you do not go through with it at the first attempt. I know there is many a one that hath been converted and saved, after many purposes, and promises, and half-conversions. But yet I must tell you, that this is a very dangerous course: for you do not know when you grieve the Spirit of grace, and set so light by mercy when it is offered you, whether that Spirit may not utterly forsake you, and leave you to your own ungodly wills, and let you take your lusts and pleasures, and say, Let this wretch be filthy still; let him keep his drunkenness, his companions, his worldliness, and the curse of God with them, till he have tried what it is that they will do for him: let him follow his own conceits, and the pride and obstinacy of his own heart, till he find whether they will bring him: let him serve the flesh and the world, till he understand whether God or they be the better master. Seeing he will not be wise on earth, let him learn in hell, and let torments teach him, seeing mercy might not teach him. O poor soul! what a case art thou in, if this should once be the resolution of God!

Moreover, you may easily know that the longer you stay, the more leisure you give the devil to assault you, and to try one way when he cannot prevail by another, and to strengthen his temptations: like a foolish soldier, that will stand still to be shot at, rather than assault the enemy.

And the longer you delay, the more your sin gets strength and rooting. If you cannot bend a twig, how will you be able to bend it when it is a tree? If you cannot pluck up a tender plant, are you likely to pluck up a sturdy oak? Custom gives strength and root to vices. A blackamoor may as well change his skin, or a leopard his spots, as those that are accustomed to do evil, can learn to do well, Jer. xiii. 23.

If you stick at conversion as a difficult matter today, it will be more difficult to-morrow, or the next month, and the next year, than it is now.

Yea, the very resistance of the Spirit doth harden

the heart, and the delays and triflings of the soul do bring it to an insensibility and boldness in sin, and drive away the fear of God from the heart. Now it may be you are somewhat awakened, and begin to see that you must turn or die; but if you trifle and delay, this light may be gone, and leave you in greater darkness than before; and the voice that now awakeneth you, may be silent and leave you to fall asleep again.

Moreover, you know that you are uncertain of the continuance of the gospel. You know not whether you shall have such lively, serious preachers as you now have, nor you know not whether you shall have such godly neighbours and company to encourage you and help you in the work. God will remove them one after another to himself, and then you will have fewer prayers for you, and fewer warnings, and good examples, and perhaps be left wholly to the company of deceived, ungodly fools, that will do nothing but hinder and discourage you from conversion. And you are not sure that religion will continue in that reputation as now it is in. The times may turn, before you turn; and godliness may become a scorn again, and, it may be, a matter of suffering, and may cost you your lives to live as the servants of Christ must do. And therefore if you stop at it now as a difficult thing, when you have all the helps and encouragements that you can expect, and the way to heaven is made so fair; and when magistrates, and ministers, and neighbours are ready to encourage and help you; what will you do in times of persecution and discouragement? If you cannot turn when you have all these helps and means, what will you do when they are taken from you? If you cannot row with the stream, how will you row against it? If you dare not set to sea, when you have wind, and tide, and sunshine, what will you do in storms and tempests, when all is against you? Oh what would some of your forefathers have given to have seen the days that you see! How glad would many a thousand in other countries of the world be, to have but the helps to heaven that you have! Never look to have the way fairer and easier while you live. If you think heaven is offered you at too dear a rate now, you may even let it go, and try whether hell be better; for the next offer is like to be upon harder terms rather than easier. If you cannot now find in your hearts to turn and live a holy life, what would you have done in the days of the apostles, or ancient christians? And, what would you have done in Spain or Italy, where it would cost you your lives? He that will not be converted now, but thinks the terms of grace too hard, is so impious a despiser of Christ and heaven, that it is no wonder if God resolve that he shall never taste of the salvation that was offered him, Luke xiv. 24.

Moreover, you know upon what uncertainties you hold your lives; you have no assurance of them for an hour, but you are sure that they are passing away whilst you delay. And will you trifle then in a work that must be done? What a case are you in, if death find you unconverted! The heart of man is not able now to conceive the misery of your case. How dare you venture to live another day in an unconverted state, lest death should find you so? Are you not afraid when you lie down at night, and afraid when you go out of your doors in the morning, lest death surprise you before you are converted? If you be not it is long of your deadness and presumption.

And I would fain hear what it is that should thus stop you. What are you afraid of? Is God an enemy, that you are loth to come to him? Is the

devil a friend, that you are so loth to leave him? Is sin a paradise? Is holiness a misery? Is it a pleasanter life to love your money, or your lands, or your meat and drink, and lusts, than to love the most blessed God, the Creator of the world, the life of our souls, and our eternal felicity? Is it better to pamper a carcass that must shortly stink as the dung, than to provide for a living, immortal soul? Whether do you think that earth or heaven will be the more glorious and durable felicity?

What is it, sirs, that you stick at, that you make so many delays before you will turn? Is there any difficulty in the point? Do you think it a hard question whether you should turn or not? Why, how can you be so blind? Do you stand pausing upon the business, as if it were a doubt whether God or the world were better, and whether sin or holiness, Christ or death, heaven or hell, were to be preferred? I pray you, consider; can you reasonably think that conversion will do you any harm? Can it bring you into a worse condition than you are in? Sure you cannot fear such a thing: you are in your blood; you are dead in sin; you are children of wrath, while you are unconverted; you are under the curse of the law of God; you are the slaves of the devil; you are the heirs of hell, and under the guilt of all your sins; your life is a continued rebellion against God; you are employed every day in the destroying of yourselves, in kindling the flames that must everlastingly torment you, and laying in fuel for the perpetuating of your misery; and fighting against your friends, that would deliver you, and unthankfully abusing Christ, and grace, and ministers, and friends, that would save your souls. This is the condition that every one of you is in, till you are converted. And can you fear lest conversion would bring you into a worse condition than this? Sirs, these truths are sure and plain; and if yet you stick at it, your error is so palpably gross, that unless you are madmen, I may be bold to say it is a wilful error. And if you love to be deceived, and wilfully choose a lie, you must take that you get by it.

3. Consider further, That half-conversions do often prove an occasion of deluding men's souls, and making them quiet in a miserable state, and so of keeping them from being converted to the last. If you had never done any thing in it, you would more easily be persuaded that your case is bad, and that there is still a necessity of your change. But when you have had some convictions, and troubles of mind, and fears and sorrows, and so have fallen into an outside, partial reformation, and now are persuaded that you are truly converted, when it is no such matter, what a dangerous impediment to your conversion may this prove! And all because you slubber over the work, and cut it off before it reacheth to sincerity, and strive against the workings of the Spirit, and break away from your Physician before he hath done the cure, and would not follow it on to the end. I know that a half-conversion, if it be known to be no more, is much better than none; and doth often prepare men for a saving work. But when this half-conversion is taken to be a true and saving change, as too commonly it is, it proves one of the greatest impediments of salvation. Whenever Christ shall afterwards knock at your door, you will not know him, as thinking he dwells with you already. If you read any books that call on you to be converted, or hear any preachers that call on you to turn, you have this at hand to cozen yourselves with, and frustrate all. You will think, This is not spoken to me; for I am converted already. Oh how quietly do such poor, deluded sinners, daily read and hear their own doom and misery, and never once dream that they are the

men that are meant, and therefore are never dismayed at the matter! This formeth you into a state of hypocrisy, and makes the course of your duties and your lives to be hypocritical. If another man that knows himself to be still unconverted, do but read the threatenings of the word against such, or hear of the terrors of the Lord from a minister, he may be brought to confess that this is his own case, and so to perceive the misery of his condition. But when such as you do read and hear these things, they never trouble you, for you think that they do not touch you: you are Scripture-proof, and sermon-proof; and all by the delusion of your half-conversion. Oh how zealously will such a man cry out against the sins of others! and tell them of their misery, and persuade them to turn, and show them the danger that is near them if they do not: and in the mean time little thinks that this is his own case, and that he speaks all this against his own soul. How will such men applaud a sermon that drives at the conversion of a sinner, and that tells them their misery while they are unconverted! Oh, thinks he, this touched such and such; I am glad that such a man and such a man heard it: and he little thinks that it as nearly touched himself. How smoothly will he go on in any discourse against wicked, unregenerate men, as David heard the parable of Nathan, and it never once entereth into their thoughts, that they speak all this against themselves; till the Judge shall tell them, when it is too late, "Thou art the man." It will turn not only the stream of your thoughts into hypocrisy and self-deceit, but also the stream of your speeches to others; yea, and the current of your prayers, and all the rest of your religious performances. When in confession you should acknowledge and lament an unregenerate, carnal state, you will only confess that you have the infirmities of the saints, and that you have this or that sin, which yet you think is mortified. When you should importunately beg for renewing grace, you will beg only for strengthening grace, or assurance; when you should be labouring to break your hearts, you will be studying to heal them; and will be hearkening after present comforts, when you have more need of godly sorrow. It will fill your mouths in prayer with pharisaical thanksgivings for the mercies of regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, which you never received. Little doth many a soul know what sanctification and the several graces of the Spirit are, that use to give God thanks for them: there is many and many a one that must for ever be in hell, that were used in their prayers to give God thanks for their hopes of glory: and the common cause of all this deceit and misery is, that men do run from under the hands of their Physician, before he ever went to the bottom of their sore, and go away with a half-conversion, and so spend all the rest of their lives in a mere delusion, as verily thinking they are converted, when they are not. How confidently will such receive the Lord's supper, and thrust themselves into the communion of the saints, as if they had as good right as others to be there, till the Lord of the feast shall take them to task, and say, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" and then they will be speechless, Matt. xxii. 12. How many false, deceiving comforts, and perhaps even seeming raptures and assurance, may these have in themselves, as verily thinking their case is good, when, alas, they never yet laid the foundation. Yea, and it is to be observed, that Satan is a friend to the comforts of this kind of men, and therefore will do all that he can to promote them; for he would willingly keep his garrison in peace, Luke xi. 21. And therefore

he may possibly be a comforting spirit to them himself, and imitate the Holy Ghost the Comforter of the saints; and, it may be, give them such raptures as seem higher than those which the Spirit of holiness doth give. He envieth the saints their peace and comfort, because he foresees how durable they will prove; but he can be content that deluded hypocrites may have joy, because their comforts do not weaken but strengthen his kingdom within them, and he knows they are like to endure but for awhile.

And thus you may perceive, how hard it is to convert one of these half-converted men, that have strangled the new creature as it were in the birth, and that are fortified against all the means of grace, by a false conceit that they are sanctified already. See, therefore, that you make sure work, and take not up in the middle, and with halves, but take your present time, and give up your souls to a total change.

4. Consider, If you take up short of a thorough conversion, you lose all your labour, and sufferings, and hopes, as to the matter of your salvation.

And what pity is it that so much should be lost! Alas, to see many of our hearers touch at a sermon, and come to a minister and bewail their sin, and seem to be humbled, and promise to be new men, and yet all this to be lost. How sad a case is this to think of! To see them leave their company and former course of life, and come among the professors of holiness, and all men take them for real converts; and yet all this to be lost, and their souls lost after all. How sad a case is this! If you grow up to the greatest parts for outward duty, and be able to discourse, or pray, or preach, even to the admiration of the hearers; yet if you do not ground this on a thorough conversion, all is but lost, as to your own salvation. If you keep up the highest strain of profession, and get the highest esteem in the church, so that others depend upon you as oracles; yea, if the pope with all his infallibility should canonize you for saints, it were all but lost. If you should keep up the most confident persuasion of your salvation, and hope to go to heaven, to the last hour of your lives; it were all but lost, if you build not all on a thorough conversion. Yea, if you should be taken by persecutors for one of the party to which you join, and should suffer for the cause of religion among them; all were but lost, without a sound conversion, 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.

It is a pitiful case to see some poor, unsanctified souls, how they wander and change from one opinion to another, and from party to party, to find out that which they want within. They turn to this party first, and that party next, and then to another, and then think they are sure in the way to heaven, when they never thoroughly turned to God by Jesus Christ; and therefore are certainly out of the way, whatever party it be that they join with. Some go to the giddy sects, that make the highest pretences to strictness: and some go to Rome, because they think that there they shall have more company, and hear the deluding sound of unity, universality, antiquity, succession, miracles, and such like: and then they think they have hit the way. Alas, poor souls! if God were but nearest and dearest to your hearts, and Christ and his righteousness exalted within you, and your souls unfeignedly turned from your sins, you would be in the certain way to heaven, in what country, or company, or church soever you were; supposing that you believe and do nothing there, which is inconsistent with this life of grace. (Though yet every christian should choose that particular society, if he can, where he may not only be saved, but most certainly saved, and find the greatest helps

and least hinderances, or else where he may do God the greatest service.) But choose what company you will in all the world, the strictest, the most reformed, the most splendid in outward pomp and glory, or of whatever excellency else you can imagine, you will never be saved in it yourselves, as long as your hearts are unconverted. I know the papists have found out many devices, by sacraments, and ceremonies, and the merits of the saints, to patch up the defect of a thorough conversion; but all are mere delusions that pretend to such a thing.

O then, think of this, poor sinner! Hast thou gone so far, and done so much, and shall all be lost because thou wilt not follow it to the end? Hast thou groaned, and wept, and confessed, and bemoaned thine own condition; hast thou prayed, and read, and heard, and fasted, and changed thy company, and much of thy course of life; and shall all this be lost, for want of going to the bottom, and making a thorough work of it? What a loss will this be!

5. Consider also, What an admirable help and advantage it will be to you through the whole course of your lives, if the work of conversion be once thoroughly wrought. I will show you this in some particulars.

(1.) It will be an excellent help to your understandings, against the grosser errors of the world, and will establish you in the truth much more than mere arguments can do; for you will be able to speak for the truth from feeling and experience. He that hath the law written both in his Bible and in his heart, is likely to hold it faster than he that hath it in his Bible alone. But of this I have spoken already, in my "Treatise against Infidelity," part 2.

(2.) If you be but thoroughly converted, you will have that within you which will be a continual help against temptations: you have not only experience of the mischief of sinning, and the folly of those reasons that are brought for its defence; but you have also a new nature, which is against the temptation, as life is against poison: and as it is a great disadvantage to the law of Christ, that it speaks against the nature of the ungodly; so is it a disadvantage to the temptations of the devil, that they would draw a christian against his new nature. You have that within you that will plead more effectually against sensuality, uncharitableness, pride or worldliness, or any the like sin, than learning or reason alone can do. (As in the forecited book I have further manifested.)

(3.) If conversion be thoroughly wrought, you will have within you a continual helper of your graces, and a remembrancer to put you in mind of duty, and a spur to put you on to the performance, and a furtherer of your souls in the performance itself: it is out of this spark and principle within you, that the Holy Ghost doth raise the acts of grace. This is it that the word, and prayer, and conference, and sacraments, and all the means of grace, must work upon. If we see you do amiss, we have hopes that you will hear us; if we plainly reprove you, we may look you should take it in good part: for you have that within you that saith as we say, and is at deadly enmity with the sin which we reprove. If we provoke you to love and to good works, we dare almost promise ourselves that you will obey; for you have that within you that disposeth you to the duty, and preacheth our sermons to you over again. Oh what an advantage it is to our teaching, when you are all taught of God within, as well as by his messengers without! But when we speak to the unconverted, we have little to work upon: we give physic to the dead; we speak all against the

bent of their souls; and every reproof and exhortation to holiness goes against their very natures; and therefore what wonder if we have the smaller hopes to prevail?

(4.) If the work be thoroughly done at first, it will help to resolve many doubts that may be afterwards cast into your minds: you need not be still at a loss, and looking behind you, and questioning your foundation, but may go cheerfully and boldly on. Oh what an excellent encouragement is this! to know that you have hitherto made good your ground, and left all safe and sure behind you, and have nothing to do but to look before you; and press on towards the mark till you lay hold upon the prize: whereas if you be in any great doubt of your conversion, it will be stopping you and discouraging you in all your work; you will be still looking behind you, and saying, What if I should yet be unconverted? When you should cheerfully address yourselves to prayer or sacraments, how sadly will you go, as being utterly uncertain whether you have a saving right to them, or whether God will accept a sacrifice at your hand! When you should grow and go forward, you will have little heart to it, because you know not whether you are yet in the way; and this will damp your life and comfort in every duty, when you must say, I know not whether yet I be thoroughly converted. O therefore stop not the work at first.

(5.) And lastly, If the work be thoroughly done at first you will persevere, when others fall away. You will have rooting in yourselves, entertaining the seed as into depth of earth; and you will have the Holy Ghost within you, and (more than so) engaged for your preservation, and the perfecting of your salvation; when they that received the word as seed upon a rock, and never give it deep entertainment, will wither and fall away in the time of trial: and from them that have not saving grace, shall be taken away even that which they seemed to have, Matt. xiii. 12; xxv. 19.

6. And lastly, consider, If you fall short of a true conversion at the first, the devil will take occasion by it to tempt you at last to utter despair. When you have made many essays and trials, and been about the work again and again, he will persuade you that there is no possibility of accomplishing it. If we convince an open profane person that is unconverted, he may easier see that yet there is hopes of it, but if a man have been half converted, and lived long in a formal, self-deceiving profession of religion, and been taken by himself and others for a godly man, as it is very hard to convince this man that he is unconverted, so when he is convinced of it, he will easily fall into desperation. For Satan will tell him, If thou be yet unconverted after so many confessions and prayers, and after so long a course of religion, what hope canst thou have that it should yet be done? Thou wilt never have better opportunities than thou hast had. If such sermons as thou hast heard could not do it, what hope is there of it? If such books, and such company, and such mercies, and such afflictions have not done it, what hope canst thou have? Canst thou hear any livelier teaching than thou hast heard, or speak any holier words than thou hast spoken? If yet the work be quite undone, it is not forsaking another sin, nor going a step further, that will do it; and therefore never think of it, for there is no hope: dost thou not know how oft thou hast tried in vain? and what canst thou do more? And thus you give advantage to the tempter by your first delays, and taking up in mere preparatories. And therefore I beseech you, as you love your souls, take heed of resisting the Spirit of grace, and breaking off the work before it is tho-

roughly done, but go to the bottom, and follow it on, till it be accomplished in sincerity. And now hoping that upon these considerations you are resolved to do your best, I shall come to the thing which I principally intended; which is to give you certain Directions, which if you will obey, you may be converts and saints indeed.

Direct. I. Lest the work of conversion should miscarry where it seemeth to be begun, or in a hopeful way, I first advise you, To labour after a right understanding of the true nature of christianity, and the meaning of the gospel which is sent for to convert you. You are naturally slaves to the prince of darkness; and live in a state of darkness, and do the works of darkness, and are hasting apace to utter darkness. And it is the light of saving knowledge that must recover you, or there is no recovery. God is the Father of light, and dwelleth in light; Christ is the light of the world; his ministers are also the lights of the world, as under him; and are sent to turn men from darkness to light, by the gospel, which is the light to our feet: and this is to make us children of light, that we may no more do the works of darkness, but may be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4; 1 John i. 5, 9; James i. 17; Matt. v. 14; Acts xxvi. 18; John viii. 12; 2 Pet. i. 19; Eph. v. 8, 13; Col. i. 12. Believe it, darkness is not the way to the celestial glory. Ignorance is your disease, and knowledge must be your cure. I know the ignorant have many excuses, and are apt to think that the case is not so bad with them as we make it to be; and that there is no such need of knowledge, but a man may be saved without it. But this is because they want that knowledge that should show them the misery of their ignorance and the worth of knowledge. Hath not the Scripture plainly told you, that "If the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose minds the god of this world hath blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them," 2 Cor. iii. 4. I know that many that have much knowledge are ungodly; but what of that? Can any man therefore be godly, or be saved, without knowledge? You may have a bad servant that yet is skilful enough in his work, but yet you will not mend the matter, by taking one that hath no skill at all. You may send a man on your errand that knows the way, and yet will not go it, but loiter and deceive you: but what of that? will you therefore think to mend the matter by sending one that knoweth not a step of the way, nor will learn it? Though a man of knowledge may be the servant of the devil, yet no man without knowledge (that hath the use of his reason) can be the servant of God. A man may go to hell with knowledge, but he certainly shall go to hell without it. I do not say that you must all be men of learning, and skilled in the arts, and sciences, and languages; but you must have the knowledge of a christian, though not of a scholar. Can you love or serve a God that you know not? Can you let go friends, and goods, and life, for a glory which you have no knowledge of? Can you make it the principal business of your lives to seek for a heaven whose excellences you know not of? Can you lament your sin and misery, when you are unacquainted with it? Or will you strive against sin as the greatest evil, when you know not the evil of it? Will you believe in a Christ whom you do not know, and trust your souls and all upon him? Will you rest upon a promise, or fear a threatening, or be ruled by a law, which you do not understand? It is not possible to be christians without knowing the substance of christianity; nor is it possible for

you to be saved without knowing the way of salvation.

Labour, therefore, to be well acquainted with the grounds, and reasons, and nature of your religion. The clearer your light is, the warmer and livelier your hearts will be. Illumination is the first part of sanctification. The head is the passage to the heart. Oh if you did but thoroughly know what sin is, and what a life it is to serve the flesh, and what the end of this will prove, with what detestation would you cast it away! If you did thoroughly know what a life of holiness is, how speedily would you choose it! If you did truly know what God is; how infinitely powerful, and wise, and good; how holy, and just, and true; and what title he hath to you, and authority over you; and what an eternal portion he would be to you; how is it possible that you could prefer the dirt of the world before him, or delay any longer to return unto him! If you did but truly know what Christ is, and what he hath done and suffered for you, and what that pardon, and grace, and glory are which he hath purchased for you, and offereth to you, and how sure his promise is by which it is offered, it is not possible that you should refuse to entertain him, or delay to give up your souls unto him. Do you think a man that truly knows what heaven is, and what hell is, can still be in doubt whether he should turn or not? Alas! sirs, if God would but open your eyes, to see where you are, and what you are doing, you would run as for your lives, and quickly change your minds and ways. You would no more stay in your carnal state, than you would stay in a house that were falling down on your heads, or in a ship that you perceived sinking under you, or on the sands when you see the tide coming towards you. If you did but see your chamber full of devils this night, you would not stand to ask whether you should be gone: and sure then if you knew how the devils are about you, how they deceive you, and rule you, and wait to drag you away to hell, you would never stay a night longer willingly in such a state. While men understand not what the gospel means, nor what a minister saith to them, no wonder if they regard them not, but continue in their sin. If you see a bear or a mad dog making towards a man, and tell him of it, and call to him to be gone, if he be a man of another language and do not understand you, he will make never the more haste; but if he understand and believe you, he will away. If people think that ministers are in jest with them, or that they are uncertain of what they say, no marvel if they hear us in jest, or as men that believe not what they hear. But if you knew that your lives lay on it, yea, your everlasting life, would you not regard it and look about you? Now you stand deliberating and questioning the business whether you should turn, and let go sin, or no. But if you show that you must certainly have hell with it, if you keep it, methinks your doubt should quickly be resolved, and you should be loth to give another night's lodging to so chargeable and dangerous a guest. Now when we persuade you to holiness of life, you will demur on it, as if there were some doubtfulness in the matter. But if you knew the nature and end of holiness, you would soon be out of doubt; and if you knew but how much happier you might be with God, you would never stick at the parting with your most delightful sins. As the Jews rejected Christ, and preferred a murderer before him, and cried out, Crucify him, and all because they did not know him, 1 Cor. ii. 8; John viii. 9; i. 10; Acts xiii. 27; so you let Christ knock and call, and offer you salvation, and you stand questioning whether you should obey his

call, and whether you should not prefer your lusts before him; and all because you know him not, nor the grace and glory which he tendereth to you. When men understand not the reasons of God, that should prevail with them, no wonder if they part not with that which is as dear to them as their lives. But when once they know the reasons of christianity, those moving, weighty, undeniable reasons that are fetched from God, and heaven, and hell, they will then stand questioning the matter no longer; but they will resign up all, even life itself. All this I speak of a spiritual, powerful, and a practical knowledge, and not of every swimming opinion and conceit.

Study, therefore, what God is, and what he is to you, and what he would be to you. Study what sin is, and what the damnation is which it deserveth. Study what Christ is, and hath done and suffered for you, and what he is willing to do, if you neglect him not. Study what the world is, and what is the utmost that sin will do for you. Study what the everlasting glory is which you may have with God, if you lose it not by your folly. And study what faith is, and what repentance is, and what love and joy, and a holy and heavenly life, and how little reason you have to be afraid of them. If this understanding have but deeply possessed you, it will bias your hearts, and make you resolved, settled converts.

Whereas, if you seem to turn and scarce know why, and seem to take up a christian life before you are thoroughly possessed with the nature, grounds, and reasons of it, no marvel if you are quickly lost again in the dark, and if every caviller that you meet with can nonplus you, and make you stagger, and call in question all that you have done, and ravel all your work; or if you do but run from one party to another, and follow every one that tells you a fair tale, and never know what to fix upon, nor when you are in the way, and when you are out.

The apprehensions of the mind do move the whole man. Wisdom is the guide and stay of the soul. Sinning is doing foolishly, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. And sinners are fools, Prov. i. 22; Psal. lxxv. 4. Their mirth is but the mirth of fools, and their song the song of fools, Eccl. vii. 4, 5. Yea, the best of their services, while they refuse to hear and obey, is but the sacrifice of fools, Eccl. v. 1. And such are not fit for the house of God; "for God hath no pleasure in fools," Eccl. v. 4. He hath need to have his wits about him, and know what he doth, that will be the servant of the God of heaven, and escape the deceits of a subtle devil, and get to heaven through so many difficulties as are before him. Above all getting, therefore, get wisdom.

Direct. II. If you would not have the work of your conversion miscarry, when you understand what is offered you, then search the Scriptures daily, to see whether those things be so or not.

So did the Bereans, Acts xvii. 11; and the text saith, that, therefore, they believed. We come not to cheat and deceive you; and, therefore, we desire not that you should take anything from us, but what we can prove to you from the word of God to be certainly true. We desire not to lead you in the dark, but by the light to lead you out of darkness; and, therefore, we refuse not to submit all our doctrine to an equal trial. Though we would not have you wrong your souls by an unjust distrust of us, yet would we not desire you to take these great and weighty things merely upon our words; for then your faith will be in man; and then no marvel if it be weak, and uneffectual, and quickly shaken. If you trust a man to-day, you may distrust him tomorrow; and if one man be of greatest credit with you this year, perhaps another of a contrary mind

may be of more credit with you the next year. And, therefore, we desire no further to be believed by you, than is necessary to lead you up to God, and to help you to understand that word which you must believe. Our desire, therefore, is, that you search the Scripture, and try whether the things that we tell you be the truth. The word will never work on you to purpose till you see and hear God in it, and perceive that it is he, and not man only, that speaks to you. When you hear none speaking to you but the minister, no marvel if you dare despise him; for he is a frail and silly man like yourselves: when you think that the doctrine which we preach to you is merely of our own devising, and the conjecture of our own brain, no marvel if you set light by it, and will not let go all that you have, at the persuasion of a preacher. But when you have searched the Scripture, and find that it is the word of the God of heaven, dare you despise it then? When you there find that we said no more than we were commanded, and God that hath spoken this word will stand to it; then sure it will go nearer you, and you will consider of it, and make light of it no more. If we offered you bad wares, we should desire a dark shop; and if our gold were light or bad, we would not call for the balance and the touchstone. But when we are sure the things that we speak are true, we desire nothing more than trial. Beauty and comeliness have no advantage of loathsome deformity, when they are both together in the dark, but the light will show the difference. Error may be a loser by the light; and, therefore, shuns it, John iii. 19—21. But truth is a gainer by it, and therefore seeks it. Let papists hide the Scriptures from the people, and forbid the reading of them in a tongue which they understand, and teach them to speak to God they know not what; we dare not do so, nor do we desire it. Our doctrine will not go off well in the dark; and, therefore, we call you to the law and to the testimony, and desire you to take our words into the light, and see whether they be according to the word of the Lord. Nothing troubleth us more than that we cannot persuade our hearers to this trial. Some of them are so hardened in their sin and misery, that they will not be at so much labour as to open their Bibles, and try whether we say true or not. Some of them will not trouble their minds with the thoughts of it. "God is not in all their thoughts," Psal. x. 4. And some are already too wise to learn; and they will not so long abate their confidence of their former opinions; though, poor souls, their ignorance doth threaten their damnation. And some are so engaged in a sinful party, that their companions will not give them leave to make so much question of the way that they are in; and some will scarce take the Scripture for the rule by which they must try and be tried, but look more to custom, and the will of those in power over them. And most are unwilling to try, because they are unwilling to know the truth, and cannot endure to find themselves miserable, nor see the sin which they would not leave, nor see the duty which they love not to practise. And thus we cannot get them to try whether the things that we teach them be so.

For want of this it is that men deceive themselves, and think their case to be safe when it is miserable, because they will not try it by the word. This makes them rage, and be confident in their folly, Prov. xiv. 16; and laugh and sing at the brink of hell, and swim as merrily down the stream to the devouring gulf as if no evil were near them. This makes them in the depth of misery to have no pity on themselves, and to do so little to escape it; though they have time, and means, and helps at

hand, yet there are not hearts in them to make use of them; yea, they run themselves daily further on the score; and all because we cannot get them to search the Scripture, and try whether sin be so small a matter, and whether this will not be bitterness in the end. Hence it is that they are so easily drawn by a temptation; and that they dislike a holy life, and have base thoughts of them that are most diligent for salvation, and are most precious in the eyes of God; and that they can even deride the way that they should walk in, Prov. i. 22; Psal. i. 2, because they will not search the Scripture, to see what it saith to these matters. The word is a light, and would do much to open their eyes, and win them over to God, if they would but come to it with a desire to know the truth. You think that the ungodly that are rich and great, are in a better condition than a godly man that is poor and despised. And why is this, but because you will not go into the sanctuary, and see in what a slippery place they stand, and what will be the end of these men? Psal. lxxiii. 16, 17, 22. In a word, this is the undoing of millions of souls. They are all their life-time out of the way to heaven, and yet will not be persuaded to ask the way; but they run on and wink, and put it to the venture. Many a thousand are gone out of the world, before they ever spent the quantity of one day in trying by the Scripture whether their state were good, and their way were right. Nay, let their teachers tell them that they must be sanctified and take another course, they will differ from their teachers though they be never so wise or learned; and they will contradict them, and not believe or regard them. And yet we cannot get them to come to us, and put the case to the trial, and let the Scripture be the judge. Would they but do this, they could never sure have such hard thoughts of their teachers, and be offended at their plainest, closest dealing. You would then say, I see now the minister says not this of himself, he speaks but that which God commandeth him; and if he would not deliver the message of the Lord, he were unworthy and unfit to be his ambassador. He were cruel to me if he would not pull me out of the fire, by the plainest, closest means, Jude 23. He hated me if he would not rebuke me, but suffer sin upon me, Lev. xix. 17. If he would please men he should not be the servant of Christ, Gal. i. 10. I know it is no pleasure to him to trouble me, or to provoke me; but it would be his own destruction if he tell me not of my danger, Ezek. iii. 18. And I have no reason to wish him to damn his own soul, and suffer me to do the like by mine; and all for fear of displeasing me in my sin. These would be your thoughts if you would but try our words by the Scripture, and see whether we speak not the mind of God.

And sure it would go somewhat deeper in your hearts, and it would stick by you, and be more before your eyes, when you once understood that it is the word of God.

This then is my request to you, sirs, that the work of your conversion may not miscarry, that you would carry all that you hear to the Scripture, and search there, and see whether it be so or not, that so you may be put out of doubt, and may be at a certainty, and not stand wavering; and that your faith may be resolved into the authority of God, and so the work may be divine, and consequently powerful and prevailing, when the ground and motive are divine. If you be not satisfied in the doctrine which the minister delivereth to you, first search the Scripture yourselves; and if that will not do, go to him, and desire him to show you his grounds for it in the word of God, and join with you in prayer for a right

understanding of it. Do you question whether there be so severe a judgment, and a heaven, and a hell, as ministers tell you? Search the Scripture, in Matt. xxv. and 2 Thess. i. 8-10; John v. 29; Matt. xiii. Do you question whether a man may not be saved without conversion, regeneration, and holiness? Open your Bibles, and see what God saith, John iii. 3, 6; Matt. xviii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 17; Rom. viii. 9; Heb. xii. 14. Do you think a man may be saved without knowledge? Let Scripture judge, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4; John xvii. 3; Hos. iv. 6. Do you think a man may be saved that doth as the most do, and goeth in the common way of the world? Search the Scripture and see, Matt. vii. 13; xx. 16; xxii. 14; Luke xii. 32. Do you think an unhumiliated soul may be saved, that never was contrite and broken-hearted for sin? Try by Isa. lvii. 15; lvi. 2; Psal. li. 17; Luke iv. 18; Matt. xi. 28. Do you think a man can be the servant of God, that liveth a fleshly life, and will keep his sin? Try by Rom. viii. 13; John iii. 12; Ephes. v. 5, 6; 1 John iii. 9, 10. Do you doubt whether it be necessary to make so much ado to be saved, and to be so strict, and make religion our chiefest business? Try by Psal. i. 1-3; 1 Pet. iv. 18; Heb. xii. 14; Luke x. 42; xiii. 24; Eph. v. 15, 16. Do you think a man can be saved that is a worldling, whose heart is more on earth than heaven? Try by 1 John ii. 15; Phil. iii. 19; Col. iii. 1; Luke xiv. 26, 33. Do you doubt whether you should serve God with your families, and instruct them, and pray with them? Try by Josh. xxiv. 15; Deut. vi. 6, 7; Dan. vi. 10, 11; Exod. xx. 10.

Thus if you will in all these weighty matters but go to the Scripture, and see whether it say as your teachers say, you might soon be resolved, and that by the surest authority in the world. If you think that your ministers may be deceived, I hope you will confess that God cannot be deceived. If you think that your ministers are passionate, or self-conceited, or speak out of ill will to you, I hope you dare not say so by the Lord; he owes you no ill will, nor speaks a word but what is most sure. If you think us partial, sure God is impartial. What better judge can you have now, than he that is infallible, and must judge you all at the last? If any papist put it into your head to ask, Who shall be judge of the sense of Scripture? I answer, Who shall be judge of the Judge of all the world? The law is made to judge you, and not to be judged by you. None can be the proper judges of the sense of a law but the maker of it; though others must judge their cases by the law. Your work is to discern it, and understand and obey it; and our work is to help you to understand it; but it is neither our work nor yours to be the proper or absolute judges of it. At least where it speaks plain it needs no judge.

Come then to the word in meekness and humility, with a teachable frame of spirit, and a willingness to know the truth, and a resolution to stand to it, and yield to what shall be revealed to you, and beg of God to show you his will, and lead you into the truth; and you will find that he will be found of them that seek him.

Direct. III. If you would not have the work of your conversion miscarry, my next advice is this:

See that you be much in the serious consideration of the truths which you understand, betwixt God and you in secret.

I have often spoken of this heretofore; but because I apprehend it to be a point of exceeding great concernment, I shall be longer on it again than on the rest.

The greatest matters in the world will not work

much upon him that will not think of them. Consideration opens the ear that was stopped, and the heart that was shut up; it sets the powers of the soul at work, and awakeneth it from the sleep of inactivity and security. The thoughts are the first actings of the soul, that set at work the rest. Thinking on the matters that must make us wise, and do the work of God on the heart, is that which lieth on us to do in order to our conversion. By consideration a sinner makes use of the truth, which before lay by, and therefore could do nothing. By consideration he taketh in the medicine to his soul, which before stood by, and could not work. By consideration a man makes use of his reason, which before was laid asleep, and therefore could not do its work. When the master is from home, the scholars will be at play. When the coachman is asleep, the horses may miss the way, and possibly break his neck and their own. If the ploughman go his way, the oxen will stand still, or make but bad, unhandsome work. So when reason is laid asleep, and out of the way, what may not the appetite do? and what may not the passions do? and what may not temptations do with the soul? A wise man, when he is asleep, hath as little use of his wisdom as a fool. A learned man when he is asleep can hardly dispute with an unlearned man that is awake. A strong man that is never so skilful at his weapons, is scarce able in his sleep to deal with the weakest child that is awake. Why, all the powers of your soul are, as it were, asleep, till consideration awake them, and set them on work. And what the better are you for being men, and having reason, if you have not the use of your reason when you need it? As men are inconsiderate because they are wicked, so they are the more wicked because they are inconsiderate. The keenest sword, the greatest cannon, will do no execution against an enemy, while they lie by and are not used. There is a mighty power in the word of God, and the example of Christ, to pull down strong holds, and conquer the strongest lusts and corruptions. But they will not do this while they are forgotten and neglected. Will heaven entice the man that thinks not of it? Will hell deter the man that thinks not of it? Why is it that all the reasoning in the world will do no more good on a man that is deaf, than if you said nothing, but because the passage to his thoughts and understanding is stopt up? And if you have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not, and wilfully cast it out of your thoughts, what good can any thing do to you that is spoken? It is not holding your meat in your mouth that will nourish you, if you will not let it down; not taking it into your stomach, if you will not keep it, but presently cast it up again; but it must be kept till it be digested and distributed. So it is not the most excellent truths in the world that will change your hearts, if you let them not down to your hearts, and keep them not there by meditation, till they are digested and turned into spiritual life. The plaster must be laid upon the sore if you would be cured. The wound and sickness is at your heart; and if you will not take in the word to your heart, where the sickness is, I know not how you should expect a cure. The soul will not be charmed into holiness by the bare hearing or saying over a few good words; as wizards use to cure diseases, or seem to cure them. It must be truth at the heart that must change the heart. And if you will not think on it, and think on it again, how can you expect it should come at your hearts?

You say you would gladly have Christ and grace, and are ready to lay the blame on God, because he doth not give it you, and say, We cannot convert

ourselves: but would you have the Spirit come in, while you hold the door against him? He knocks, and desireth you to open and let him in, and you wish him to come in; but you bolt the door, and no entreaty will procure you to open it. It is consideration of the saving doctrine of the gospel that openeth the heart, and giveth it entertainment. Set yourselves therefore on purpose to this work, and open the doors of your heart which are now shut, and let the King of glory come in. Who will believe that you love the light, when you shut the windows, and draw the curtains? If you will set yourselves to consider of the truth, the windows of your soul will be set open, and then the light will certainly come in. Now you read over whole chapters, and hear sermon after sermon, and either they never stir you, or at least it is but a little for a fit, like a man that hath a little warmed him at the fire in the winter, and when he goes from it is colder than before: but if you would but set yourselves to consider of what you hear or read, one line of a chapter, or one sentence of a sermon, would lay you in tears, or make you groan, or at least do more than now is done. Satan hath garrisoned the heart of every carnal man; and consideration is the principal means to cast him out. If by considering of the terrible threatenings of the word, you would discharge these cannons of God against them, what a battery would it make in the corruptions of your souls! Our God is a consuming fire, and the fire of hell is threatened in his law, as the wages of sin: by serious consideration you may, as it were, fetch fire from God and from his word, and set fire to the very gates of Satan's garrison, and fire him out of many of his holds.

But because this is so needful a point, I shall be so large upon it, as, I. To tell you some of those things that you should consider of. II. To tell you in what manner you should do it. And, III. To give you some motives to put you on.

I. The first thing that I would have you oft to think on, is, The nature of that God with whom ye have to do. Consider, that if he be the most wise, it is all the reason in the world that he should rule you. If he be good, and infinitely good, there is all the reason in the world that you should love him; and there is no show of reason that you should love the world or sin before him. If he be faithful and true, his threatenings must be feared, and his promises must not be distrusted; and there is no reason that you should make any question of his word. If he be holy, then holiness must needs be most excellent, and those that are the holiest must needs be the best, because they are like to God; and then he must be an enemy to sin, and to all that are unholy, because they are contrary to his nature. Consider that he is almighty, and there is no resisting him, or standing out against him; in the twink of an eye can he snatch thy guilty soul from thy body, and cast it where sin is better known. A word of his mouth can set all the world against thee, and set thine own conscience against thee too; a frown of his face can turn thee into hell; and if he be thine enemy, it is no matter who is thy friend; for all the world cannot save thee, if he do but condemn thee. They are blessed whom he blesseth, and they are cursed indeed whom he curseth. He was from eternity, and thou art but as it were of yesterday: thy being is from him; thy life is always in his hands, thou canst not live an hour without him, thou canst not fetch a breath without him, nor think a thought, nor speak a word, nor stir a foot or hand without him; thou mayst better live without bread, or drink, or fire, or air, or earth, or water, than without him. All the world is before him but as the drop of a

bucket, or a little sand or dust that should be laid in balance with all the earth. Hadst thou but compassed about this lower world, and seen all the nations of it, and its wonderful furniture, and seen the great deeps of the mighty ocean, and the abundance of creatures that be in all; oh what thoughts then wouldst thou have of God! But if thou hadst been above the stars, and seen the sun in all its glory, and seen the frame and course of those higher orbs, and seen the blessed, glorious angels, and all the inhabitants of the higher world, oh then what thoughts of God wouldst thou entertain! Oh but if it were possible that thou hadst seen his glory, or seen but his back parts as Moses did, or seen him in Christ the now glorified Redeemer, what apprehensions wouldst thou have of him then! Then how wouldst thou abhor the name of sin, and how weary wouldst thou be of the pleasantest life that sensuality could afford thee! Then thou wouldst quickly know that no love can be great enough, and no praises can be high enough, and no service can be holy and good enough for such a God: then you would soon know, that this is not a God to be neglected, or dallied with; nor a God to be resisted, nor provoked by the wilful breaking of his laws. It is eternal life to know this God, (John xvii. 3,) and for want of knowing him it is that sin aboundeth in the world. This maketh holiness so scarce and lean: men worship they care not how, because they worship they know not whom. O therefore dwell on the meditations of the Almighty. So far as he doth possess thy mind, there will be no place for sin and vanity. One would think if I should set you no further task, and tell you of no other matters for meditation, this one should be enough; for this one is in a manner all. What will not the due knowledge of God do upon the soul? That is the best christian, and the most happy man, that knoweth most of him; and that is the most vile and miserable wretch, that is furthest from him, and strangest to him; it is the character of the fool of fools, to have a heart whose disposition and practice saith, "There is no God," Psalm xiv. 1; that is, to be so affected and employed in their hearts, as if there were no God, and when God is not in all his thoughts, Psalm x. 4. It was better with man when he had less knowledge for himself, and fewer thoughts for himself, and more of God. And there is no way to restore us to sound understanding, and to perfect our knowledge, but to turn our eye upon God again; for in knowing him, we know all that is worth the knowing. Take hold then of the blessed God in thy meditations, and fill thy thoughts with him, and dwell upon those thoughts. Remember he is always with thee, and wherever thou art, or whatever thou art doing, most certainly he seeth thee. As sure as thou art there, the Lord is there. He knows thy thoughts, he hears thy words, he sees all thy ways. And is such a God as this to be provoked or despised? Were it not better to provoke and despise all the world? Is his favour to be slighted? Were it not better to lose the favour of all the world? Consider of this!

2. Another thing that I would have you oft think of, is, What end you were made for, and what business it is that you came for into the world. You may well think that God made you not in vain; and that he made you for no lower end, than for himself; and that he would never have made you, nor so long preserved you, if he had not cared what you do. He would never have endued you with a reasonable and immortal soul, but for some high, and noble, and immortal end. Surely it was that you might be happy in knowing him, that he made you capable of knowing him; for he made nothing in vain. It is

useful for a horse to know his pasture, and provender, and work, and perhaps his master: but he need not know whether there be a God; and accordingly he is qualified. But it is sure man's chief concernment to know that there is a God, and what he is, and how to serve him, and what he is and will be to us; or else we should never have been capable of such things. And he would never have made you capable of loving him, but that you should be exercised and made happy in that love. The frame, and faculties, and capacity of your souls, and the scope of Scripture, do all declare, that you were sent into this world, to seek after God, and to love him, and obey him, and rejoice in him in your measure; and to prepare for a life of nearer communion, where you may enjoy him and praise him in the highest perfection. Consider with yourselves, whether a life of sin be that which you were made for; or whether God sent you hither to break his laws, and follow your own lusts. And whether the satisfying of your flesh, and the gathering a little worldly wealth, and the feathering of a nest which you must so quickly leave, be like to be the business that you were sent about into the world.

3. The next thing that I would have you consider of, is, How you have answered the ends of your creation, and how you have done the business that you came into the world to do. Look back upon the drift of your hearts and lives; read over the most ancient records of your consciences, and see what you have been, and what you have been doing in the world till now. Have you spent your days in seeking after God, and your estates and strength in faithful serving him? Have you lived all this time in the admiration of his excellences, and the fervent love of him, and delightful remembrance of him, and the zealous worship of him? If you have done this, you had not need of a conversion. But consider, have you not forgotten what business you had in the world, and little minded the world that you should have prepared for, and lived as if you knew not him that made you, or why he made you? Was sport and merriment the end that you were created for? Was ease and idleness, or eating, or drinking, or vain discourses, or recreation, the business that you came into the world about? Was living to the flesh, and scraping up riches, or gaping after the esteem of men, the work that God sent you hither to do? Was this it that he preserved you for, and daily gave you in provision for? What! was it to forget him, and slight him, and turn him out of your hearts, and rob him of his service and honour; and to set up your flesh in his stead, and give that to it that was due to him? Bethink you what you have done, and whether you have done the work that you were sent to do, or not.

4. The next thing you should use to consider of, is, How grievously you have sinned, and what a case it is that your sin hath brought you into. If you take but an impartial view of your lives, you may see how far you have missed your marks, and how far you have been from what you should have been; and how little you have done of that which was your business. And oh what abundance of aggravations have your sins! which I shall pass over now, because I must mention them under another head. It is not only some actually out-breakings against the bent of your heart and life, but your very heart was false and gone from God, and set in you to do evil.

Oh the time that you have lost; the means and helps that you have neglected; the motions that you have resisted; the swarms of evil thoughts that have filled your imaginations; the streams of vain and idle words that have flowed from your mouth;

the works of darkness, in public and in secret, that God hath seen you in! And all this while, how empty were you in inward holiness, and how barren of good works, to God or man! What have you done with all your talents, and how little or nothing hath God had of all!

And now consider what a case you are in, while you remain unconverted. You have made yourselves the sinks of sin, the slaves of Satan and the flesh, and are skilful in nothing but doing evil; if you be called to prayer, or holy meditation, your hearts are against it, and you are not used to it, and therefore you know not how to do it to any purpose. But to think the thoughts of lust, or covetousness, or hatred, or malice, or revenge, this you can do without any toil. To speak of the world, or of your sports and pleasures, or against those that you bear ill will to, this you can do without any study. You are such as are spoken of Jer. iv. 22, "My people is foolish, they have not known me: they are sottish children, and they have no understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." You are grown strangers to the God that made you, in whose love and service you should live, and find your chief delights. Your hearts are hardened, and you are dead in your sins: the guilt of the sins of your lives is still upon you; you can neither look into your hearts or lives, nor not on one day of your lives, or the best hour that you have spent, but you must see the ugly face of sin, which deserveth condemnation. You have made God your enemy that should have been your only felicity: and yet you are always at his mercy, and in his hands. Little do you know how long his patience will yet endure to you; or what hour he will call away your souls: and if death come, alas! what a case will it find you in! How lamentably unready are you to meet him! How unready to appear before the dreadful God whom you have offended! and what a terrible appearance do you think that will be to you! Most certainly if you die before you are converted, you will not be from among the devils and damned souls an hour. The law hath cursed you already, and the execution will be answerable, if you die in your sins. And thus you may see the gain of sin, and what it is that you have been doing all this while for your own souls; and what a case it is that you have brought yourselves into; and what need you have speedily to look about you.

5. The next step of your consideration should be this; Bethink yourselves what a blessed condition you might be in, if by conversion you were but recovered from this misery, and brought home to God. This moved the heart of the prodigal son to return; Luke xv. 16, 17, "When he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" He that had not husks to feed on with the swine, considered the plenty that he had forsaken at home. The poorest member of the household of Christ, is in a better condition than the greatest king on earth, that is unconverted. You might have lived another kind of life than you have done, for safety, and benefit, and true content, if you would have turned your minds and life to God. Were you but converted, you would be the living members of Christ, and his precious benefits would be yours; his blood would cleanse you from all your sins, and they would be all freely forgiven you; God would be reconciled to you, and become your Friend, yea, your Father and your God; and will take you for his household servants, and adopted children: the Holy Ghost would dwell in you, and guide your understandings, and show you that which flesh and blood

cannot reveal, and bring you into acquaintance with the mysteries of God; he will be a Spirit of light and life within you, and work your hearts yet more to God, and give you yet stronger inclinations and affections to the things above. He will help you when you are weak, and quicken you where you are dull, and be your remembrancer when you are forgetful of necessary things: he will help you in prayer, both for matter and for manner, and help you in meditation and conference, and other duties: he will warn you of your danger, and strengthen you against temptations, and cause you to overcome; and if you fall, he will cause you to rise again: he will be an indwelling comforter to you, and so effectually speak peace to you in the midst of your disquietness, that by speaking it, he will create it in you; and in the multitude of your thoughts within you, his comforts will delight your souls. Oh what a life might you live, if Christ by his Spirit did once live in you! You may easily conjecture how tender Christ would be of his own members, how dearly he would love them, how constantly he would watch over them, how plentifully he would provide for them, and how safely he would preserve them. And if you should come into a rougher way, he would lead you out: afflictions should never be laid on you but for your good; and continue no longer than your need continueth them, and be taken off at last to your satisfaction and contentment. Indeed your life would be a life of mercies; and that which is but a common mercy to common men would be a special mercy to you, as coming from your Father's love, and furthering your salvation, and hinting out to you your everlasting mercies. You could not open your eyes, but you would see that which may encourage and comfort you; all the works of God which you behold, would show you his majesty, his love, and power, and lead you to himself. You could not open your Bible, but you would find in it the blessed lines of love: oh what good it would do you, to read there the blessed attributes of your God! to look upon his name! to peruse the description of his most perfect nature! What good would it do you to read of the nature, and incarnation, and life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension, and intercession, and return of your blessed Redeemer! What good would it do you to find those holy rules which your new nature is agreeable to, and to read over the law that is written in your hearts, and read the curse from which you are delivered! What life and joy would your souls receive from the many, and full, and free promises of grace! Were you once but truly sanctified and made new, your condition would be often comfortable, but always safe; and when you were in the greatest fears and perplexities, you would still be fast in the arms of Christ; and what a life would that be, to have daily access to God in prayer; to have leave in all your wants and danger, to seek to him with a promise of hearing and success; that you may be sure of much more from him, than a child can from the tenderest father, or a wife from the most loving husband upon the earth. What a life would it be, when you may always think on God as your felicity, and fetch your highest delights from him, from whom the ungodly have their greatest terrors? And it is no contemptible part of your benefits that you may live among his people, and in their special love, and have a special communion with them, and interest in their prayers, and may possess among them the privileges of the saints and the ordinances of God; that instead of idle talk, and the unprofitable fellowship of the children and works of darkness, you may join with the church of God in his praises, and feed with

them at his table, on the body and blood of Christ, and then have conveyances of renewed grace and a renewed pardon sealed to your souls: but how long should I stay, if I should tell you but one half of the blessings of a sanctified and spiritual state! In a word, God would be yours, Christ would be yours, the Holy Ghost would be yours, all things would be yours; the whole world would have some relation to your welfare; devils would be subdued to you, and cast out of your souls; sin would be both pardoned and overcome; angels would be ministering spirits unto you for your good; the promises of Scripture would be yours; and everlasting glory would at last be yours; and while you staid on earth, you might comfort yourselves as oft as you would, with the believing foresight of that unconceivable, unspeakable, endless felicity.

O sirs, what a treasure have I here expressed in a few words! What hearts would you have if you were but possessed, lively and sensible, of all that is contained in this leaf or two! You would not envy the greatest prince on earth his glory, nor change states with any man that was a stranger to these things. Did you but use to consider of the state of the saints, how could you keep off, and stay with sin, and make so many delays in turning unto God? Sure this consideration might turn the scales.

6. The next part of your meditation should be, Of the gracious and wonderful work of our redemption, and the means and remedies which are provided for our souls, and the terms on which salvation may be obtained.

For all the sins that you have committed, you are not given over to despair; the Lord hath not left you without a remedy; your conversion and salvation is not a thing impossible. Nay, so much is done by Christ already, that it is brought upon reasonable terms even to your hands. A new and living way is consecrated for us by Christ through the veil of his flesh, and by his blood we may have boldness to enter into the holiest, Heb. x. 19, 20. He hath borne your burden; and offereth you instead of it his burden, which is light, Matt. xi. 28. He hath removed the impossibility, and nailed to his cross the hand-writing that was against you, Col. ii. 14, 15; and instead of it offereth you his easy yoke. He hath spoiled the principalities and powers that had captivated you, and openly triumphed over them on the cross. You are not left under the care of making satisfaction to God for your own sins; but only of accepting the Redeemer that hath satisfied. This much I dare confidently say to you all, without extending his benefits too far. It would be for want of faith in you, and not for want of satisfaction by the Redeemer, if any of you perish. And how free are his offers! how full are his promises! You are conditionally all pardoned and justified already, as is legible under the hand of God. And the condition which is imposed on you is not some meritorious or mercenary work, but the accepting of the benefit freely given, according to its nature, use, and ends. This is the faith by which you may be justified. These are the terms on which you may be saved. And which is more, the Lord hath provided means, even excellent, and plentiful, and powerful means, for the furthering of your souls in the performance of this condition, and helping you to believe, and repent, that you may live; and if the Spirit make not these means effectual, and adjoin not his special grace, and after this you remain unconverted, it will not be long of him, but of yourselves. So that you may perceive how hopeful a case you are yet in, by the blood of your Redeemer. If you destroy not your own hopes, and make not

your case desperate by wilful impenitency and refusal of free grace, how fair are you yet for heaven! and what happy advantages have you for salvation! It is brought even to your doors; it is thrust as it were into your hands; the Redeemer hath done so much for you all, as to bring your salvation to the choice of your own wills; and if you be his chosen ones, he will also make you willing. You have precepts to believe, you are threatened if you will not believe; you have promise upon promise, and Christ himself offereth you pardon, and life, and salvation with him, if you are but truly and heartily willing. You have God himself condescending to beseech you to accept them; and ambassadors entreating you in his name and stead, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. You have ordinances fitted to your necessities; both reading, and preaching, and sacraments, and prayer. You have store of plain and powerful books; you have the godly about you, most desirous to assist you, that would be glad to see or hear of your conversion; you have the sight of the wicked, that are wallowing in their own dung, and the dirt of the world, to make you hate such beastly ways. You have reason and conscience within you to consider of these matters, and set them home, and apply them to yourselves; you have time and strength to do all this, if you will not abuse it, and provoke God to take it from you for your negligence. You have mercies of many sorts, outward and inward, to win upon you, and encourage you in the work. And sometimes afflictions to remember you, and awaken you, and spur you on; the devil and all your enemies are so far disabled, that they cannot destroy you against your wills, nor keep you from Christ, but by your own consents. The angels in heaven are ready to help you, and would even rejoice at your conversion. This is your case, and these are your helps and encouragements, you are not shut up under desperation. God never told you, It is in vain to think of conversion: it is too late; if any have told you so, it was the devil, and not God; and one would think that such considerations as these should drive the nail to the head, and be effectual to move you to resolve and turn.

7. The last thing that I would set before you to be considered, is, What is like to be the end of it, if after all this you should die unconverted.

O sirs, your hearts are not able now to conceive of it, nor the tongue of any mortal man to utter it. But so much of it we can certainly utter, as one would think should make your hearts to tremble. You have seen, it may be, a dying man, in what pangs and agonies he parteth with his soul: and you have seen, it is like, the corpse that was left there behind, and seen it laid in the common earth. But you see not what became of the soul, nor what an appearance it made in another world, nor what company did attend it, nor what a place or state it passed into. O sirs, when the hour is at hand that this must be your own case, it will awaken you to other kind of affections, than you have or can have at the reading of these words. It is wonderful that a little distance should make us so insensible of that change which we are all certain will come to pass; and yet through the folly and deadness of our hearts it is so; but they are other kind of thoughts of these weighty matters, which we shall have the next hour after death, than the liveliest affections beforehand can afford us.

The misery was great that the Redeemer did find you in, and which you deserved by your sin against the law of the Creator. But if you be found unconverted at last, your punishment will be much sorer, and your case far worse than it was before. The

Redeemer's law or gospel hath its peculiar threatening, which differeth from the law of the mere Creator in several respects; even (1.) In the nature of the punishment, which will be torments of conscience for the neglect of a Redeemer, and recovering grace, which you should never have felt if you had never been redeemed. (2.) And in the degree of the punishment, which will be far sorer, Heb. x. 29. And (3.) In the remedilessness of it, the sentence being irreversible and peremptory. The first law indeed provided no remedy, but did not exclude remedy, nor make it impossible; but the law of Christ doth positively and expressly exclude all remedy, and leave the soul that goeth unconverted out of the body, to utter desperation, and misery without help or hope of the end. But I shall not stand now to describe to you the terrors of judgment or of hell, because I have done it already in other books, which I desire you to fetch the rest of this meditation from; that is, my "Treatise of Judgment," and the beginning of my third part of my "Book of Rest."

II. Having told you what should be the matter of your consideration, I shall next tell you (but briefly) in what manner you should perform it. And here I shall not stand to prescribe you any long or exact method for meditation, both because it agreeth not with my present resolved brevity, and because the persons that I now deal with, are not capable of observing such rules; and if any desire such helps, they may transfer the directions which are given on another subject in my "Book of Rest," to the subject now in hand.

1. Do not stay till such thoughts will come of themselves into your minds, but set yourselves purposely to consider of these matters. Take some time to call your souls to an account concerning their present state, and their preparations for eternity. If a heathen Seneca could call himself every night to an account for the evil committed, and the good omitted, in the day past, as he professeth that he ordinarily did; why may not even an unconverted man, that hath the helps which are now among us, bethink himself of the state of his soul? But I know that a carnal heart is exceeding backward to serious consideration, and is loth to be troubled with such thoughts as these; and the devil will do what he can to hinder it, by himself and others; but yet if men would but do what they may do, it might be better with them than it is. Will you but now and then purposely withdraw yourselves from company into some secret place, and there set the Lord before your eyes, and call your souls to a strict account about the matters that I have mentioned even now, and make it your business to exercise your reason upon them; and as you purposely go to church to hear, so purposely set yourselves to this duty of consideration as a necessary thing?

2. When you are upon it, labour to awaken your souls, and to be very serious in all your thoughts; and do not think of the matters of salvation, as you would do of an ordinary trivial business, which you do not much regard or care how it goes. But remember that your life lieth on it, even your everlasting life: and therefore call up the most earnest of your thoughts, and rouse up all the powers of your souls, and suffer them not to draw back, but command them to the work; and then set the seven points that I mentioned even now before you; and as you think of them, labour to be affected with them, in some measure, according to their exceeding weight. As Moses said to Israel, Deut. xxxii. 46, "Set your hearts to all the words which I testify among you this day; which you shall command your chil-

dren to do, &c. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life." And as Christ said, Luke ix. 44, "Let these sayings sink into your ears;" so I say to you, let the matters which you think of go to your hearts, and sink down to the quick of your affections.

And if your hearts would slip away from the work, and other thoughts would creep into your mind, and you are weary of these considerations before they have done their work, see that you give not way to this laziness, or unwillingness, but remember it is a work that must be done, and therefore hold your thoughts upon it, till your hearts are stirred and warmed within you.

And if, after all, you cannot awake them to seriousness and sensibility, put two or three such awakening questions as these to yourselves.

1. *Quest.* What if it were but the case of my body, or state, or name, should I not earnestly consider of it? If one do but wrong me, how easily can I think of it, and how tenderly do I feel it, and can scarce forget it! If my good name be blemished, and I be but disgraced, I can think of it night and day. If I lose but a beast, or have any cross in the world, or decay in my estate, I can think of it with sensibility. If I lose a child or a friend, I can feel it as well as think on it. If my health be decayed, and my life in danger, I am in good earnest in thinking of this. And should I not be as serious in the matters of everlasting life? Should I not think of it, and soberly and earnestly think on it, when body and soul do lie at the stake, and when it concerneth my everlasting joy or torment?

2. *Quest.* What if I had but heard the Son of God himself calling on me to repent, and be converted, and seconding his commands with that earnest expression, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear;" would it not have brought me to some serious thoughts of my state? Why this he hath done in his word, and doth it by his ambassadors, and why then should I not consider it?

3. *Quest.* If I did but know that death were at my back, and ready to arrest me, and that I should be in another world before this day sevensnight, I should then begin to bethink me in good sadness: and why do I not so now, when I have no hold of my life an hour, and when I am sure that shortly that time will come?

4. *Quest.* If my eyes were but open to see that which I pretend to believe, and which is certainly true; even to see a glimpse of the majesty of the Lord, to see the saints in joy and glory, to see the damned souls in misery; and if I heard their lamentations; would not this even force my heart to consideration? Oh then how earnestly should I think of these things! And why should I not do so now, when they are as sure as if I saw them, and when I must see them ere it be long?

Many more such awakening questions are at hand, but I give you but these brief touches on the things that are most common and obvious, that the most ignorant may be able to make some use of them. With such thoughts as these, you must bring on your backward hearts, and shake them out of their insensibility, and awaken them to the work.

III. When you have brought your hearts to be serious, be sure that you drive on your considerations to a resolution. Break not off in the middle, or before you bring the matter to an issue; but let all be done in order to practice. When you have been thinking of the excellences of God and the world to come, and comparing them with all the delights on earth; put the question then to your hearts, and say, What sayst thou now, O my soul; which of

these is the better for thee, which is the more desirable, and which of them shouldst thou prefer? Resolve then, and make thy choice according to the light and convictions which thou hast received. When you are thinking of the reasons that should move you to be converted, ask yourselves, Whether these reasons be not clear, and what you have to say against them; and whether any thing that can be said to the contrary, can prove it better for you to be as you are, and to remain unconverted. Ask yourselves, Is my judgment resolved, or is it not? And if it be, (as sure it must be, if you be not beside yourselves,) then write it down under your hands, or at least in your hearts: I do here confess before the Lord, that his commands are just, his motions are reasonable, his offers are exceeding merciful: I am satisfied that it is best for me to turn to him speedily, and with all my heart: I confess before him that I have no reason to the contrary, that deserves to be owned and called reason: this is my own judgment; of this I am convinced: if I turn not after this, the light that is in me, and the judgment that now I possess, must needs be a witness against my soul. If you would but thus drive on the case to a resolution of your judgments, you would have a great advantage for the resolving of your wills, which is the next thing that you must proceed to: and therefore next ask yourselves, Why should I not now resolve, and fixedly resolve, to turn without any more delay? Is not the case plain before me? What reason have I to stand questioning the matter any longer, and to be unwilling to be happy? Shall I provoke God by dallying with him, and hazard my soul by lingering out my time in such a miserable state? No, by the grace of God I will return; even this hour, without any more delay. Thus drive on all your considerations to resolution. (But of this I have more to say anon.)

By this time you may see of what necessity this duty of consideration is, and how it must be performed, that it may further your conversion: but because it is a matter of so great necessity, I am loth to leave it thus, till I have done what I can to persuade you to the practice of it. To which end I entreat you to think of these following motives.

1. Consideration is a duty that you may perform if you will. You cannot say that is wholly out of your power; so that you are left unexcusable, if you will not be persuaded to it. You say you cannot convert yourselves; but cannot you set yourselves to consider of your ways, and bethink you of those truths that must be the instruments of your conversion? Your thoughts are partly at the command of your will: you can turn them up and down from one thing to another. Even an unsanctified minister, that hath no saving relish of spiritual things, can think of them, and spend most of his time in thinking of them, that he may preach them to others: and why cannot you then turn your thoughts to them for yourselves? You can think of house, and land, and friends, and trading, and of any thing that alleth you, or any thing that you want, or any thing that you love or think would do you good: and why cannot you think of your sin and danger, of God, and of his word and works, of the state of your souls, and of everlasting life? Are you not able to go sometimes by yourselves, and consider of these matters? Are you not able when you are alone in your beds, or as you travel in the way, or at your labour, to bethink how things stand with your souls? Why are you not able? what is it that could hinder you, if you were but willing?

2. Yea further, Consideration is so cheap a remedy, that if you will not use this, you despise your souls:

yea, and you despise the Lord himself, and the everlasting things which you are called to consider of. A man that is in danger of losing his estate, or health, or life, and will not so much as bethink him of a remedy, doth sure set light by them, and lose them by his contempt. A man that had but his house on fire, and would not so much as think how to quench it, doth deserve that it should be burnt. If your parents, or children, or friends were in distress, if you would not so much as think of them, it were a sign you did not set much by them. Why, sirs, are not your souls worth the thinking on? Is not God, is not your Redeemer, worth the thinking on? And you will hypocritically pretend that you love God above all, when you will not so much as seriously think of him. How can you show greater contempt of any thing, than to cast it out of your minds as unworthy to be thought on? And how can you more plainly show that you despise God and heaven, than by such a course as this? If it be not worth the thinking on, it is worth nothing.

3. Consider that God doth not set so light by your salvation. He thought it worth a great deal more. Must Christ think it worth his bloody sufferings, and with such a life of labour and sorrow, and will not you judge it worth your serious considerations? If he had not thought on it, and thought again, how miserable should we have remained! Ministers also must think on it, and study how to save your souls; and should you not study how to save your own? Must another man make it the business of his life to think how to do you good, that you may be saved, and are you not as much bound to do good to yourselves? Yea, all that fear God about you, are bound to study to do you good; and should you not bethink you then of the things that concern your own good?

4. Moreover, what have you your reason for, but to consider; and wherein do you differ from the beasts, so much as in your reason? If you have reason, and will not use it, you brutify yourselves; you live like madmen; for what is madness, but a loss of the use of reason? And do you think it a small thing to deface so noble a creature as man, and to turn yourselves into beasts and madmen? Do you think that God will not call you to account for your reason, how you have used it? Doubtless he gave it you for a higher employment, than to enable you to plough, and sow, and follow your trades, and provide for your flesh. If this were all that a man did exceed a beast in, what a silly, wretched wight were man! Yea, so much more miserable than beasts, as his knowledge begets more care, and sorrow, and fear, than theirs. What matter is it for having reason at all, if it be not that we may use it for the matters of God, and eternal life?

5. Moreover, your soul is an active principle, which will be working one way or other; your thoughts will be going on one thing or other; and therefore the bare consideration is no great labour to you. And if you must lay out your thoughts on something, is it not better lay them out on these things, than on any other? Have you any better matters to think on than these? Have you any greater matters, or matters of greater necessity, to think of? You cannot sure imagine it; at least you will not say so for shame. This makes your inconsiderateness an unexcusable sin. If thinking were toil to you, it were another matter. But when you must think of something, why not of God, and your eternal state, and the way to heaven, as well as of other matters? Will you rather throw away your thoughts, than God shall have them? If a man command his servant that is lame, to go on his business, the refuser hath a good excuse; I cannot go,

or not without a great pain and danger: but if he have a son or a servant that is so wanton that he cannot stand on his legs, but spends his time in running up and down, and dancing, and leaping, this person hath no excuse, if he will refuse to go on his master's or his father's errand; but will gad about on his pleasure all day, and will not go a few steps when he is bidden; especially if it were for his own life or welfare. So when you have thoughts that will not be kept idle, but will be gadding abroad through the world, and yet you will not think of God, and the matters of your peace, what wilfulness is this! If you should ask one that hath it not, for meat, or drink, or money, they might well deny you. But if you ask these of one that hath abundance, and knows not what to do with them, but would throw them down the channel rather than you should have them, what would you think of such a one? especially if it were your servant or your child, that owed you much more? Thus do you by God and your own souls. You have thoughts enough and to spare, you know not what to do with them; and yet rather than you will spend one hour in a day or a week in serious thoughts of the state of your souls and the life to come, you will cast them away upon news, and tales, and other folk's business that do not concern you; yea, you will cast them down the sink of covetousness, and malice, and lust, and wantonness, and make them servants to the devil and the flesh. If you have a brook running by your land, you will endeavour to turn it over your ground, that seeing it must run, it may as well run that way where it may do good, as run in vain: so when your thoughts must run, is it not better that you turn them to your own hearts and states, to prepare for the world that you are ready to step into, than to let them run in vain? If you see a man go into a wine-cellar (though it be his own) and pull out all the spigots, and let all the wine run about the cellar, and suffer nobody to catch it, or be the better for it, what would you conceive of the wisdom and charity of that man? Your thoughts are a thing more precious than wine, and such a thing as should not be split; and yet is not this your every day's practice? You are before him that knows your thoughts: deny it if you can. What hour of the day can a man come to you and find your thoughts altogether idle? What minute of an hour can a man come and ask you what are you now thinking on, and you can truly say, Nothing? I know as long as you are awake, you are always thinking of something, (and perhaps when you are asleep,) and what is it on? This body shall have a thought, and that body a thought; every word you hear, and every wrong that is done you, and almost every thing you look upon, shall have a thought; and God and your own salvation shall have none: that is, you will lose them, and let them run in waste; but you will do no good with them, nor take in any profit by them to yourselves.

6. Have you any thing that better deserves your consideration, than God and your salvation? Certainly God hath more right to your thoughts than any thing else that you can place them on. Your flesh, your friends, your worldly business, are neither so honourable, so necessary, or so profitable subjects, as God and heaven are. As there is more profit to be got by the tillage of fruitful land, than barren heath; or by digging in a mine of gold, than in a clay-pit; so is there more pleasure and profit to be gotten in one hour's serious thoughts of your salvation, than in thinking all your life-time of the world.

7. At least, methinks you should consider, how disproportionably and unequally you lay out your

thoughts. Cannot you spare God the tenth, no, nor the hundredth part of them? Look back upon your lives, and trace your thoughts from day to day, and tell me how many hours in a week, in a month, in a year, you have spent in serious thoughts of the state of your souls, and of the life to come? Is it one hour of a hundred, of a thousand, of ten thousand, with some of you that is thus spent? Nay, I have very great cause to fear that there are some, yea, that there are many, yea, that there is far the greatest number, that never spent one hour since they were born, in withdrawing themselves purposely from all other business, and soberly and in good sadness bethinking themselves what case they are in, what evidence they have of their salvation, or how they must be justified at the bar of God; no, nor what business they have in the world, and to what end they were made, and how they have done the work that they were made for. Ah! sirs, doth conscience justify you in this? or rather will it not torment you one day to remember it? What! did thy land, and livings, worldly matters, deserve all thy thoughts, and did not the saving of thy soul deserve some of them? Did thy lusts, and sports, and wantonness deserve all, and did not God deserve some of them? Was it not worth now and then an hour's time, no, nor one hour's study in all thy life, to bethink thee in good sadness how to make sure of a life of endless joy and glory, and how to escape the flames of hell? This is not an equal distribution of thy thoughts, as thou wilt confess at last in the horror of thy soul.

8. It is the end of your present time and warnings, that you may consider and prepare for your everlasting state. What have you to do on earth but to consider how to get well to heaven? Oh that you did but know what a mercy it is, before you enter upon an endless life, to have but time to bethink you of it, and to make your election sure! If you were to be called away suddenly, this night, and the angel of the Lord should say to any of you, Prepare, for within this hour thou must die, and appear before the living God: then would you not cry out, O, not so suddenly, Lord! Let me have a little more time to consider of my condition: let me have one month longer, to bethink me of the case of my soul, and make sure that I am justified from the guilt of my sins. Let me have one day more at least to prepare for my everlasting state; for alas, I am yet unready. Would not these be your cries, if God should call you presently away? And yet now you have time, you will not consider of these matters and prepare.

9. Moreover, is it not time for you to consider your ways, when God doth consider them? If he would forget them, or did not regard them, you might regard them the less yourselves: but be sure of it, he doth observe them, whether you do or not; and he remembereth them though you forget them. Dost thou not know that all the sins of thy life are still on record before the Lord? Saith Job, "Thou numberest my steps; dost thou not watch over my sin? My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity," Job xiv. 16, 17. Do you think that God forgets your sins, as you forget them? Saith the Lord by the prophet Hosea, "They consider not in their hearts, that I remember all their wickedness; now their doings have beset them about, they are before my face," Hosea vii. 2. But you will say, What if God do consider our ways? Why surely then it is not for nothing, but evil is near if not prevented. As the Lord saith in Deut. xxxii. 34, 35, "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in

due time. For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." If God be registering up thy sins, thou hast cause to tremble, to think what that portends: "for in this hardness and impenitency of thy heart, thou art treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 5. As grace is the seed of glory, so sin is the seed of shame, and trouble, and everlasting torment; and though it may seem long before the harvest, you will taste the bitter fruit at last; and whatsoever you have sowed, that shall you reap.

10. Moreover, if any thing ailed you, you look that God should presently consider you; or if you want any thing, you think he should consider your wants: and yet will you not consider of him, and of your own wants? When you are in trouble, you cry to God, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, consider my trouble," Psal. ix. 13. "Consider and hear me, O God," Psal. xiii. 3. When you lie in pain and sickness, you will then cry to God, "Consider mine affliction, and deliver me," Psal. cxix. 153. If you be oppressed or abused, you will groan as the Israelites under their taskmasters, and perhaps cry to God, as the captive people, Lam. i. 11, "See, O Lord, consider; for I am become vile: remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; consider, and behold our reproach," chap. v. 1; ii. 20. And must God consider of you, that will not consider of him, or your own souls? Or may you not rather expect that dreadful answer, which he gives to such regardless sinners, Prov. i. 24—30. And hear your cries, as you hear his counsel; and think of you, as you thought of him.

Nay, more than so; even while you forget him, the Lord doth daily consider you, and supply your wants, and save you from dangers; and should you then cast him out of your thoughts? If he did not think of you, you would quickly feel it to your cost and sorrow.

11. Moreover, the nature of the matter is such, as one would think should force a reasonable creature to consider of it, and often and earnestly to consider. When all these things concur in the matter, he must be a block or a madman that will not consider, (1.) When they are the most excellent, or the greatest things in all the world. (2.) When they are our own matters, or nearly concern us. (3.) When they are the most necessary, and profitable, and delightful things. And (4.) When there is much difficulty in getting them, and danger of losing them. And all these go together in the matter of your salvation.

(1.) If you will not think of God and your souls, of heaven and hell, what then will you think of? All other things in the world are but toys and jesting matters to these. Crowns and kingdoms, lands and lordships, are but chaff and baubles, dirt and dung, to these everlasting things. The acts of renowned kings and conquerors, are but as puppet-plays in comparison of the working out of your salvation. And yet will you not be drawn to the consideration of such astonishing things as these? One would think that the exceeding greatness of the matter should force you to consider it whether you will or no. When smaller objects affect not the senses, yet greater will even force their way. He that hath so hard a skin that he cannot feel a feather, methinks should feel the weight of a millstone; and if he feel not the prick of a pin, methinks he should feel a dagger. He that cannot hear one whisper, methinks should hear a cannon, or a clap of thunder, if he have any such thing as hearing left him. He hath bad eyes that cannot see the sun. One would think so glorious an object as God, should so entice the

eyes of men that they should not look off him. One would think that such matters as heaven and hell should follow thy thoughts which way soever thou goest, so that thou shouldst not be able to look besides them, or to think almost of any thing else, unless with great neglect and disesteem. Oh what a thing is a stony heart, that can forget not only the God that he liveth by, but also the place where he must live for ever! yea, that will not be persuaded to the sober consideration of it for an hour.

(2.) And as these are the greatest matters, so they are your own matters, and therefore one would think you should not need so much ado to bring you to consider them. If it were only other men's matters, I should not wonder at it. But self-love should make you regard your own. In outward matters, all seek their own things, Phil. ii. 21. And have they not more reason to seek their own salvation? It is your own souls, your own danger, your own sin, your own duty, that I persuade you to consider of. It is that God, that Christ, that would be your own; it is that heaven, that blessedness, that may be your own, if you lose it not by neglect; it is that hell, that torment, that will certainly be your own, if you prevent it not. And should not this be thought on? You will think of your own goods, or lands, or riches; of your own families, your own business, your own lives; and why not also of your own salvation?

(3.) Especially, when it is not only your own, but it is the "one thing needful," Luke x. 42. It is that which your life or death, your everlasting joy or torment, lieth on; and therefore must be considered of, or you are utterly undone for ever. Necessity lieth upon you; and woe be to you, if you consider not of these things! It is not so necessary that you eat, or drink, or sleep, or live, as it is necessary that you make sure your everlasting life. And the profit also doth answer the necessity. Buy but this one pearl, and you will be infinite gainers, though you sell all that you have in the world to buy it, Matt. xiii. 44—46. Get God, and get all: make sure of heaven, and then fear no loss, nor want, nor sorrow. If you count not all the world as dung for the winning of Christ, that you may be found in him, possessed of his righteousness, it is because you know neither the world nor Christ, Phil. iii. 7—9. Yea, the delight will also answer the commodity; for "in the presence of God is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore," Psal. xvi. 11. And the forethoughts of them may well make "glad our hearts, and cause our glory to rejoice," Psal. xvi. 8, 9. "For goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," Psal. xxiii. 6. "He shall guide us with his counsel, and afterward receive us into glory," Psal. lxxiii. 24. And lest you should suspect any lack of comfort, he tells you, you shall "enter into the joy of your Lord," Matt. xxv. 23; and that you "shall be with him where he is, to behold his glory," John xvii. 24.

(4.) And yet if all this might be had with a wet finger; if heaven were the portion of worldlings, and sluggards, that trouble not their thoughts much about it, then you might have some excuse for your inconsiderateness. But it is not so; there are difficulties in your way, and they are many and great. What a dark understanding have you to inform! What a dull and backward nature to spur on! What an unreasonable appetite! What raging passions! What violent, rebellious senses to contend with, to master, and to rule! Abundance of adversaries on every hand; a subtle devil, and as malicious as subtle; and as furious and able to do you a mischief,

if God restrain him not. A world of wicked men about you; each one more stiff in error than you are in the truth; and more fast to the devil than you are to God (if his grace do not hold you faster than you will hold yourselves); and therefore they are able to deceive you, than you are to undeceive them: many of them are crafty, and can puzzle such ignorant beginners as you, and put a face of reverence and truth upon damnable errors and pernicious ways; and those that have not wit, have foolish violence, and scorn, and passion, and can drive you towards hell, if they cannot draw you. All these enemies you must conquer, or you are lost. And is it not time for a man in so much danger to consider of them, that he may know how to escape? and for one that is compassed about with such difficulties, to consider how he may well get through them? What abundance of things have you to consider of! of all your life past; of the relations you have borne; and how you have performed the duties of those relations. Of the time you have had; and how you have spent it. Of the means you have had, and what you have received by them. Of the present state of your souls, your sins, your miseries, your hopes, and the duties that are incumbent on you, in order to your recovery. Of the temptations to be encountered with; and the graces that are daily to be exercised and confirmed. Would not a man bethink himself with all possible care, and consider, a hundred times consider, that hath all this to do, or be undone for ever? You have much to know that will not easily be known, and yet must be known; much to do, receive, and suffer, that hath difficulty adjoined with necessity. Were it necessary and not hard, the facility might draw you to make light of it. And were it hard and not necessary, the difficulty might more discourage you than the matter would excite you. But when it must be done, or you must be shut out of heaven, and lie in hell for it world without end, and yet there are so many difficulties in the way, I think it is time to look about you, and seriously consider.

12. To conclude, Consideration would prevent a world of misery, which else would make you consider when it is too late. It must be a principal means of your salvation if ever you be saved. If God have so much mercy for you, he will make you consider; and set your sins in order before you, Psal. l. 21; and set hell-fire before your face, and hold your thoughts on it that you cannot look off. He will set before you a crucified Christ, and tell you, that this your sins have done, and make you think of the reason of his sufferings; and what there is in sin that could require it; and what it is to rebel against the Lord, and run yourselves into the consuming fire. Now your thoughts are gadding abroad the world, and straggling after every trifle, and going away from God; but if ever God will save you, he will overtake your hearts, and fetch them home, and show them that they have somewhat else to think on. If commands will not serve, he will send out his threatenings, and terrors shall come upon you, and pursue your soul as the wind, Job xxxiii. 15. He will fetch you out of the ale-house, and the gaming-house, and take you off the merry pin, and lay that upon your heart that you shall not easily shake off. If you are taken up with the cares of the world, he will show you that you have somewhat else to care for, and drown those cares in greater cares. If you have such giddy, unsettled, vagrant minds, that you cannot call in your thoughts of God, nor hold them with him; he will lay those clogs and bolts upon them at first, that shall restrain them from their idle vagaries; and then he will set upon them such a bias, as shall better order them, and fix them for

the time to come. Men do not use to go to heaven, and never think of it; and to escape hell-fire, and the plague of sin, and the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, and the rage of Satan, and never think on it: nor do they use to mind other matters, and find themselves in heaven, before they ever dreamed of it, or before their hearts were set upon it. No, sirs, if ever God will save you, he will make you consider, and again consider, and perhaps with many a sigh and groan; and bring these things so near your hearts, that you shall not only think on them, but feel them; according to that command, Deut. vi. 6, 7; xi. 18—20. They shall be as written before your eyes; you shall think of them when you lie down, and when you rise up, as if they were written upon the tester of your beds; you shall think of them when you sit at home, when you go abroad, as carrying them still with you, which way soever you go. As before God was not in all your thoughts, so now he will be the sum and end of them all.

And if by your resistance you escape these considerations, believe it, God will bring you to consideration by a severer and more dreadful way. If he do but give your conscience a commission, it will follow you, and bring you to such a consideration as Judas was brought to. If he lay you under his judgments, and speak to you by his rod, and give you a lash with every word, and ask you whether yet you will consider of it; it may bring such things to your thoughts, as you were little troubled with before. If he say but the word, how soon will your soul be required of you! And when you lie in hell and feel the smart, you will then consider of it. Now we cannot beg of you to bestow one hour in sober consideration; but then you shall do it without entreaty; then you will be as a man that hath the stone, or gout, or tooth-ache, that cannot forget it, if he would never so fain. Forget your folly, your obstinacy, and unthankfulness, then, if you can. Forget God's wrath, and the torment which you feel, then, if you can. Now you were so busy that you could not have while to think of the matters of the world to come; but then God will give you leisure; you shall have little else to do; you shall have time enough: when you have thought of these things ten thousand years, you shall still have time enough before you to think of them again. You will not consider now, but, when God hath performed the intents of his heart, in the latter days, you shall perfectly consider it, Jer. xxxiii. 20; xxx. 24. "Oh that you were wise, that you understood this; that you would consider your latter end!" Deut. xxxii. 29.

What brings so many souls to hell, but because they would not consider in time? If you could speak with any of those hopeless souls, and ask them, How came you to this place of torment? they would tell you, Because we did not consider of our case in time; we little thought of this day, though we were told of it: we had a load of sin upon us, and did not consider how we might be relieved: we had Christ and mercy set before us, but we did not consider the worth of them, nor how to be made partakers of them: we had time, but we considered not how to make the best of it: we had the work of our salvation lay upon our hands, but we did not consider how we might accomplish it. Oh had we but considered what now we feel, we might have escaped all this, and have lived with God! These would be the answers of those miserable souls, if you could but ask them the cause of their misery. There is scarce a thief or a murderer hanged at the gallows, but will cry out, Oh if I had but had the wit and grace to have considered this in time, I need not have come to this! There is scarce an unthrift that falls

into beggary, no, nor a man that comes to any mischance, but will say, If I had considered it beforehand, I might have prevented it. Most of the calamities of the world might have been prevented by timely and sober considerations. God himself doth place men's wickedness much in their inconsiderateness, and lays the cause of their destruction upon it. Whence is it that Israel was rebellious to astonishment? Isa. i. 3, "Why, Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Job xxiv. 25—27, "He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead; therefore he knoweth their works, he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed. He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others, because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways." Why do men live so wilfully in sin, but because "they consider not that they do evil?" Eccles. v. 1. How many such hath the world, that God pronounceth a woe to! Isa. v. 11, 12; that drink, and play, and give themselves to their merriments, "but they regard not the work of the Lord; neither consider the operation of his hands. They consider not in their hearts the folly of their ways," Isa. xlv. 18—20. When they see God's judgments, they consider not the meaning of them, and therefore lay them not to heart, Isa. lvii. 1, 2.

And when God calleth men to conversion, or reformation, he useth to call them to consideration as the way to it; Hag. i. 5, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways." The son that shall escape the misery of his father, is he that considereth, and turneth away from his transgressions, considereth, and doth not his forefathers' work, Ezek. xviii. 14, 20. And when he sendeth the prophet to them; (Ezek. xii. 3,) it is but with this encouragement; "Though they are a rebellious house, it may be they will consider." And David professeth, that consideration was the beginning of his conversion; Psal. cxix. 59, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste and delayed not to keep thy statutes."

I know that it is the Lord that must renew and revive a sinful soul; but yet, under God, consideration must do much. Oh could we but persuade our people to consider, it is not sure possible that they could be as they are, or do as they do. Would so many thousands live in ease and quietness under the guilt of so many sins, and the wrath of God, if they did but well consider of it. Durst they live so peaceably in a state of death, and in the slavery of the devil, if they did but well consider of it? Would they do no more to prepare for their speedy appearing before God, and for the escaping of hell-fire, if they did but consider of it? Would they swallow down their cups so greedily, and give up themselves to the world so eagerly, if they did but well consider what they do? Methinks they should not. The cause of sin and the devil is so naught, that I should hope to shame it with the most of the ungodly, if I could but bring them to a serious consideration of it. Oh how the kingdom of Satan would down, if we could but tell how to make them considerate! How fast the devil would lose his servants! what abundance Christ would gain! And how many would be saved, if we could but tell how to make men considerate! And one would think that this should be easily done, seeing man is a self-loving and reasonable creature: but yet to our grief, and great admiration, we cannot bring them to it. I should not doubt, but one sermon, or one sentence of a sermon, might do more good than a hundred do now, if I were but able to persuade the hearers when they come home, to follow it by serious consideration.

But we cannot bring them to it; if our lives lay on it, we could not bring them to it; though we know that their own lives and salvation lieth on it, yet can we not bring them to it. They think and talk of other matters almost as soon as the sermon is done, and they turn loose their thoughts; or if they do read, or hear, or repeat a little, yet cannot we get them to one half-hour's secret and sober consideration of their case. This is the reason why it is so rare a thing to see men thoroughly turn to God. This is much of the use of all God's teachings and afflictions too, but to bring men to sober consideration. God knows that sin hath unmanned us, and lost us the use of our reason, where we have most use for it; and therefore the means and works of God, are to recover us to our reason, and to make us men again: the very graces of his Spirit are to make us to be more reasonable.

And now, before I dismiss this direction, I have a question, and a request to make to thee, whoever thou art that readest these lines. My question is this, Hast thou ever soberly considered of thy ways and laid these greatest matters to heart, or hast thou not? Dost thou ever use to retire into thyself, and spend any time in this needful work? If thou dost not, my request to thee is, that now at last thou wouldst do it without delay. Shall I beg this of thee? Shall the Lord that made thee, that bought thee, that preserveth thee, request this of thee; that thou wouldst sometimes betake thyself into some secret place, and set thyself purposely to this work of consideration, and follow it earnestly and close with thy heart till thou hast made something of it, and brought it to a resolution? Wilt thou then spend a little time in reasoning the case with thyself, and calling thy heart to a strict account, and ask thyself, What is it that I was made for; and what business was I sent into the world about? And how have I despatched it? How have I spent my time, my thoughts, my words; and how shall I answer for them? Am I ready to die, if it were this hour? Am I sure of my salvation? Is my soul converted, and truly sanctified by the Holy Ghost? If not, what reason have I to delay? Why do I not set about it, and speedily resolve? Shall I linger till death come and find me unconverted? Oh then what a sad appearance shall I make before the Lord! And thus follow on the discourse with your hearts. What say you, sirs? Will you here promise me to bestow but some few hours, if it be but on the Lord's day, or when you are private on the way, or in your beds, or in your shops, in these considerations? I beseech you, as ever you will do any thing at my request, deny me not this request. It is nothing that is unreasonable. If I desired one of you to spend an hour in talking with me, you would grant it; yea, or if it were to ride or go for me. And will you not be entreated to spend now and then a little time in thinking of the matters of your own salvation? Deny not this much to yourselves, deny it not to God, if you will deny it me. Should you not be thankful you a few hours, of the place and state that you must live in for ever? Men will build strong where they think to live long; but a tent or a hut will serve a soldier for a few nights. O sirs, everlasting is a long day. In the name of God, let not conscience have such a charge as this against you hereafter: Thou art come to thy long home, to thy endless state, before ever thou spentest the space of an hour in deep, and sad, and serious considerations of it, or in trying thy title to it. Oh what a confounding charge would this be! I am confident I have the witness of your consciences going along with me, and telling you it is but reasonable, yea,

and needful, which I say. If yet you will not do it, and I cannot beg one hour's sober discourse in secret between you and your hearts about these things, then what remedy, but even to leave you to your misery? But I shall tell you in the conclusion, that I have no hope of that soul, that will not be persuaded to this duty of consideration. But if I could persuade you to this reasonable, this cheap, this necessary work, and to follow it close, I should have exceeding great hopes of the salvation of you all. I have told you the truth; consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding, 2 Tim. ii. 7. Or if you put me to conclude in harsher terms, they shall be still the oracles of God: "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you," Psal. l. 22.

And so much for the third direction about consideration, on which I have staid somewhat long, because I apprehend it of exceeding necessity.

Direct. IV. The fourth direction which I shall give you, that the work of your conversion may not miscarry, is this: See that the work of humiliation be thoroughly done, and break not away from the spirit of contrition before he have done with you; and yet see that you mistake not the nature and the ends of the work, and that you drive it not on further than God requireth you.

Here I shall first show you, I. The true nature of humiliation. And,

II. The use and ends of it. And,

III. The mistakes about it, that you must avoid. And,

IV. I shall press on the substance of the direction, and show you the necessity of it.

I. There is a preparatory humiliation that goes before a saving change, which is not to be despised, because it is a drawing nearer unto God, though it be not a faithful closure with him. This preparatory humiliation, which many have that perish, doth chiefly consist in these things following. (1.) It lieth most in the fear of being damned. As it is most in the passions, so most in this of fear. (2.) It consisteth also in some apprehensions of the greatness of our sins, and the wrath of God, that hangs over our heads, and the danger that we are in of being damned for ever. (3.) It consisteth also in some apprehensions of the folly that we are guilty of in sinning, and of some repentings that ever we did it, and some remorse of conscience for it. (4.) Hereto may be joined some passions of sorrow, and this expressed by groans and tears. (5.) And all this may be accompanied with confessions of sin to God and man, and lamentations for our misery, and in some it proceedeth to desperation itself. (6.) And lastly, it may proceed to an indignation against ourselves, and to the taking of a severe revenge on ourselves; yea, more than God would have men take; as Judas did by self-destroying. This desperation, and self-execution, are no parts of the preparatory humiliation; but the excess and error of it, and the entrance upon hell.

2. But there is also a humiliation that is proper to the converted, and which accompanieth salvation, and this containeth in it all that is in the former, and much more; even as the rational soul containeth the sensitive and vegetative, and much more. And this saving humiliation consisteth in these following particulars.

1. It beginneth in the understanding. 2. It is rooted in the will. 3. It worketh in the affections. And, 4. When there is opportunity it sheweth itself in outward expressions and actions.

1. Humiliation in the understanding, consisteth in a low esteem of ourselves, and in a self-abasing, self-

condemning judgment on ourselves; and that in these particulars.

(1.) It consisteth in a deep and solid apprehension of the odiousness of our own sins, habitual and actual, and of ourselves for our sins; and that because they are contrary to the blessed nature and law of God, and so contrary to our own perfection and chief good. (2.) It consisteth also in a solid and fixed apprehension of our own ill-deserving, because of these sins; so that our judgments do subscribe to the equity of the condemning sentence of the law; and we judge ourselves unworthy of the smallest mercy, and worthy of hell-fire. (3.) It consisteth in an apprehension of our undone and miserable condition in ourselves; not only as we are the heirs of torment, but as we are void of the image and Spirit of God, and have lost his favour, and are under his displeasure and enmity by our sin, and have forfeited our part in everlasting glory, and how unable we are to help ourselves.

And, [1.] This is in such a measure, that we truly judge our sin, and ourselves for sin, to be more odious than any thing else could have made us; and our misery by sin in the foresaid particulars, to be greater than any outward calamity in the flesh, and than any worldly loss could have procured us. And this we apprehend by a practical judgment, and not only by a bare, ineffectual speculation. [2.] And the spring of this is some knowledge of God himself, whose majesty is so glorious, and whose wisdom is so infinite; who is so good in himself, and unto us, and whose holy nature is contrary to sin, and who hath an absolute propriety in us, and sovereignty over us. [3.] And also it proceedeth from a knowledge of the true state of man's felicity, which by sin he hath cast away; that it consisteth in the pleasing, and glorifying, and enjoying of God, in loving and delighting in him; and praising him for ever, and having a nature perfectly holy, and fitted hereunto. To see that sin is contrary to this felicity, and hath deprived us of it, is one of the springs of true humiliation. And, [4.] It proceedeth also from a believing knowledge of Christ crucified, whom our sins did put to death, who hath declared in the most lively manner to the world by his cross and sufferings, what sin is, and what it hath done, and what a case we had brought ourselves into. Thus much of saving humiliation consisting in the understanding.

2. The principal seat of this humiliation is in the will, and there it consisteth in these following acts.

(1.) As we think basely of ourselves, so the will hath a fixed displacency against ourselves for our sins, and a kind of loathing of ourselves for all our abominations; as you may read, Ezek. xxxvi. 31; xx. 43; vi. 9. A humble sinner is fallen out with himself, and as he is evil his heart is against himself.

(2.) There is also in the will a deep repenting that ever we sinned, and wronged God, and abused grace, and have brought ourselves to this as we have done; so that the humbled soul could wish that he had spent his days in prison, in beggary, or in bodily misery, so that he had not spent them in sin; and if it were to do again, he would rather choose such a life of shame and calamity in the world, than a life of sin, and would be glad of the exchange.

(3.) A humbled soul is truly willing to grieve for the sins which he hath committed, and to be as deeply sensible of them, and afflicted for them, as God would have him. Even when he cannot shed a tear, yet his will is to shed them. When he cannot feel any deep afflicting of his soul for sin, his hearty desire is, that he might feel it. He doth a hundred times weep in desire, when he doth it not in act.

(4.) A humble soul is truly willing to humble the

flesh itself, by the use of those appointed means by which God would have him bring it in subjection, as by fasting, or abstinence, or mean attire, hard labour, and denying it unnecessary delights. It is a doubt worth the considering, whether any such humbling act must be used, purposely, in revenge on ourselves for sin. To which I answer, that we may do nothing in such revenge that God doth not allow, or that makes our body less fit for his service; for that were to be revenged of God and our souls: but those humbling means which are needful to tame the body, may well be used with this double intention; first and chiefly, as a means for our safety and duty for the time to come; that the flesh may not prevail, and then collaterally we should be the more content that the flesh is put to so much suffering, because it hath been and still is so great an enemy to God and us, and the cause of all our sin and misery; and this is the revenge that is warrantable in the penitent, and some think is meant, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

(5.) As the humbled soul hath base thoughts of himself, so he is willing that others should esteem and think of him accordingly, even as a vile, unworthy sinner, so far as his disgrace may be no wrong to the gospel, or to others, or dishonour to God. His pride is so far taken down, that he can endure to be vilified with some consent; not approving of the sin of any man that doth it maliciously, but consenting to the judgment and rebukes of those that do it truly, and to the judgment of God, even by them that do it maliciously. The humbled soul does not stand defending and unjustly extenuating his sin, and excusing himself, and swelling against the reprover; whatever he may do in a temptation, if this temper were predominant, his pride, and not humility, must be predominant. But he judgeth himself as much as others can justly judge him, and humbly consenteth to be base in men's eyes, till God shall think it meet to raise him, and recover his esteem.

And the root of all this in the will, is, [1.] A love to God whom we have offended. [2.] A hatred of sin that hath offended him, and that hath made us vile. And, [3.] A believing sense of the love and sufferings of Christ, that in his flesh hath condemned sin, Rom. viii. 2, 3. And thus you see what humiliation is in the will, which is the very life and soul of true humiliation.

3. Humiliation also consisteth in the affections; in an unfeigned sorrow for the sin which we have committed, and the corruption that is in sin; and a shame for these sins; and a holy fear of God whom we have offended, and of his judgments which we have deserved; and the hatred of our sins by which we have deserved them. But, as I must further show you anon, it is not the measure, but the sincerity of these passions, by which you must make a judgment of your state; and that will be hardly discerned by the passions themselves, but only by so much of the will as is in them, and therefore the will is the safest to judge by.

4. Humiliation also consisteth expressly in the outward action, when opportunity is offered; and it is not true in the heart, if it refuse to appear without, when God requireth it in your ordinary course. The outward acts of humiliation are these: (1.) A voluntary confession of sin to God, and to men, when God requireth it; and that is, when it is necessary to his honour, to the healing of them that we have endangered, and satisfying the offended; at least in the hearing of men, in such cases as these to confess them openly to God. An unhumbled soul will refuse this for the shame; but the humble will freely take shame to themselves, and warn their brethren, and justify God, and give him the glory:

1 John i. 9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us." Read Mark iii. 6; Lev. v.; xvi. 21; xxvi. 40; Numb. v. 6, 7. James v. 16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." Prov. xxviii. 13, "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Not that any man is to confess his secret sins to others, except in case that he cannot otherwise find relief; nor that a man is to publish those offences of his own, by which he may further dishonour God, and hinder the gospel. But when the sin is open already, and specially when the offence of others, the hardening of the wicked, the satisfaction of the church concerning our repentance, do require our confession and open lamentation, the humble soul both must and will submit to it; but the rotten-hearted, unhumbled hypocrite will confess but in these cases: (1.) When the secrecy of the confession, or the smallness of the fault, or the customariness of such confession, doth make it to be a matter of no great disgrace. (2.) Or when it is so open, that it is in vain to attempt to hide it, and his confession will do nothing to increase the disgrace. (3.) Or when conscience is awakened, or they see they must die, or are forced by some terrible judgment of God. In all these cases the wicked may confess. And so Judas will confess, "I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood;" and Pharaoh will confess, "I and my people have sinned." And a thief on the gallows will confess; and the vilest wretches on their death-bed will confess. But we have more death-bed confessions than voluntary confessions before the church. Nay, so far hath pride and hypocrisy prevailed, and the ancient discipline of the church been neglected, that I think in most countries in England, there are many more that make confessions on the gallows than personally in the congregations.

(2.) Humiliation must be also expressed by all those external means and signs which God, by Scripture or nature, calleth us to. As by tears and groans, so far as we can seasonably procure them. And by fasting, and laying by our worldly pomp and bravery, and using mean, though decent, attire, and by condescending to men of the lower sort, and stooping to the meanest. By humble language and carriage; and by forgiving others on this account, that we are sensible of the greatness of our debts to God. And thus I have briefly showed you the true nature of humiliation, that you may know what it is that I am persuading you to, and which you must submit your hearts unto.

II. When I have told you the use and ends of humiliation, you will see more of the reason of its necessity to yourselves. And first, it is one use of humiliation, to help on the mortification of the flesh, or carnal self, and to annihilate it as it is the idol of the soul. The nature of man's sinful and miserable estate, is, that he is fallen from God to himself; and liveth now to himself, studying, and loving, and pleasing himself, his natural self, above God. And a sinner will let go many outward sins, and be driven from the outworks before he will let go carnal self, and be driven from the castle and strength of sin. There is no part of mortification so necessary and so hard as self-denial; indeed this doth virtually comprehend all the rest, and if this be done, all is done. If it were but his friends, his superfluities, his house, his lands, perhaps a carnal heart might part with it. But to part with his life, his all, his self, this is a hard saying to him, and enough to make him go away sorrowful, as Luke xviii. 22-24. And, therefore, here appeareth the necessity of humiliation.

This layeth all the load on self, and breaketh the heart of the old man, and maketh a man loathe himself, that formerly doted on himself. It layeth this tower of Babel in the dust, and maketh us abhor ourselves in dust and ashes. It setteth the house on fire about our ears, which we both trusted and delighted in; and makes us not only see, but feel, that it is time for us to be gone. Pride is the master-vice in the unsanctified, and it is the part of humiliation to cast it down. Self-seeking is the business of their lives, till humiliation help to turn the stream. And then if you did but see their thoughts, you should see them think most vilely of themselves. And if you do but over-hear their prayers, or complaints, you shall hear them still cry out upon themselves, as their greatest enemies.

2. The next use of humiliation (and implied in this) is, to mortify those sins which carnal self doth live upon, and is maintained by; and to stop all the avenues or passages of its provision. Sin is sweet and dear to all that are unsanctified; but humiliation makes it bitter and base. As the Indians cured the Spanish captain of thirst after gold, by pouring melted gold down his throat; or as children are persuaded from playing with a beehive, when they are once or twice stung by them; or from playing with snappish dogs, when they are bitten by them: so God will teach his children to know what it is to play with sin when they are smarted by it. They will know a nettle from a harmless herb, when they feel the sting. We are so apt to live by sense, that God seeth it needful that our faith have something of sense to help it. When the conscience doth accuse, and the heart is smarting and groaning in pain, and we feel that no shifting or striving will deliver us, then we begin to be wiser than before, and to know what sin is, and what it will do for us. When that which was our delight is become our burden, and a burden too heavy for us to bear, it cureth our delighting in it. When David was watering his couch with his tears, and made them his drink, his sin was not the same thing to him as it was in the committing. Humiliation washeth away the painting of this harlot, and showeth her in her deformity. It unmasketh sin, which had got the vizard of virtue, or of a small matter, or harmless thing. It unmasketh Satan, who was transformed into a friend, or an angel of light, and showeth him, as we say, with his cloven feet and horns. How hard is it to cure a worldling of the love of money! But when God hath laid such a load of it on his conscience, that makes him groan, and cry for help, he hath then enough of it. When he feels those words in James v. 1—4, and he begins to weep and howl for the miseries that are coming on him, and he sees the stink of his corrupted riches, and the canker of his gold and silver doth begin to eat his flesh as fire, and his idol is but a witness against him, then he is better able to judge of it than he was before. The wanton thinks he hath a happy life, when the harlot's lips do drop as the honey-comb. But when he perceiveth her end is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword, and that her feet go down to death, and her steps take hold on hell, and he lieth in sorrow, complaining of his folly, (Prov. v. 2—5, 11, 12), he is then of a more rectified judgment than he was. Manasseh humbled in irons, is not the same as he was upon the throne. Though grace did more to it than his fetters, yet were they some way serviceable to that end. Humiliation openeth the door of the heart, and telleth you what sin is to the quick; and letteth in the words of life, which passed no further than the ear or brain. It is a tiring work to talk to

dead men, that have lost their feeling; especially when it is an effective and practical doctrine, which we must deliver to them, which is lost if it be not felt and practised. Till humiliation comes, we speak to dead men, or at least to men that are fast asleep. How many sermons have I heard that, one would think, should have turned men's hearts within them, and made them cry out against their sins, with sorrow and shame in the face of the congregation, and never meddle with them more! when yet the hearers have scarce been moved by them, but gone away as they came, as if they knew not what the preachers said, because their hearts were all the while asleep within them. But a humbled soul is an awakened soul. It will regard what is said to it; especially when they perceive that it cometh from the Lord, and concerneth their salvation. It is a great encouragement to us, to speak to a man that hath ears, and life, and feeling; that will meet the word with an appetite, and take it with some relish, and let down the food that is put into their mouth. The will is the chiefest fort of sin. If we can there get in upon it, we may do something. But if it keep the heart, and we can get no nearer it than the ear or the brain, there will no good be done. Now humiliation openeth us a passage to the heart, that we may assault sin in its strength. When I tell you of the abominable nature of sin, that causeth the death of Christ, and causeth hell, and tell you that it is better to run into the fire than to commit the least sin wilfully, though it be such as the world makes nothing of; another man may hear all this, and superficially believe it, and say it is true, but it is the humbled soul that feeleth what I say. What a stir have we with a drunkard, or worldling, or any other sensual sinner, in persuading him to cast away his sins with detestation; and all to little purpose! Sometimes he will, and sometimes he must needs be tasting them again; and thus he stands dallying, because the word hath not mastered his heart. But when God comes in upon the soul as with a tempest, and throweth open the doors, and, as it were, thundereth and lighteneth in the conscience; and layeth hold upon the sinner, and shaketh him all in pieces by his terrors, and asketh him, Is sinning good for thee? Is a fleshly, careless life so good? Thou wretched worm! thou foolish piece of clay! darest thou thus abuse me to my face? Dost thou not know that I look on? Is this the work that I made thee for, and that I feed and preserve thee, and continue thee alive for? Away with thy sin, without any more ado, or I will have thy soul away, and deliver thee to the tormentors. This wakeneth him out of his dalliance and delays; and makes him see that God is in good earnest with him, and therefore he must be so with God. If a physician have a patient that is addicted to his appetite, who hath the gout or stone, or other disease, and he forbid him wine, or strong drink, or such meats as he desireth, as long as he feels himself at ease he will be venturing on them, and will not be curbed by the words of the physician; but when the fit is on him, and he feels the torment, then he will be ruled. Pain will teach him more effectually than words could do. When he feeleth what is hurtful to him, and feeleth that it always makes him sick, it will restrain him more than hearing of it could do. So when humiliation doth break your hearts, and make you feel that you are sick of sin, and filleth your soul with smart and sorrow, then you will be the more willing that God should destroy it in you. When it lieth so heavy on you, that you are unable to look up, and makes you go to God with groans and tears, and cry, O Lord, be merciful to me a sinner! when you are fain to go

to ministers for ease to your consciences, and fill their ears with accusations of yourselves, and open even your odious, shameful sins; then you will be content to let them go. Now there is no talking to you of mortification, and the resolute rejecting of your sins; the precepts of the gospel are too strict for you to submit to. But a broken heart would change your minds. The healthful ploughman saith, Give me that which I love. These physicians would bring us all to their rules, that they may get money by us. I never mean to follow their directions. But when sickness is upon him, and he hath tried all his own skill in vain, and pain giveth him no rest, then send for the physician, and then he will do any thing, and take any thing whatever he will give him, so that he may but be eased and recovered. So when your hearts are whole and unhumiliated, these preachers and Scriptures are too strict for you; you must have that which you love. Self-conceited, precise ministers must have leave to talk; but you will never believe that God is of their mind, or will damn men for taking that which they have a mind of. Oh but when these sins are as swords in your hearts, and you begin to feel what ministers told you of, then you will be of another mind. Away then with this sin, there is nothing so odious, so hurtful, so intolerable. Oh that you could be rid of it, whatever it cost you! Then he will be your best friend that can tell you how to kill it, and be free from it; and he that would draw you out, would be as Satan himself to you, Matt. xvi. 22, 33; Gal. i. 8, 9. Humiliation diggeth so deep, that it undermineth sin, and the fortress of the devil; and when the foundation is rooted up, it will soon be overthrown. When the murderers of Christ were pricked to the heart, they then cry out for counsel to the apostles, Acts ii. 37. When a murderer of the saints is stricken blindfold to the earth, and the Spirit withal doth humble his soul, he will then cry out, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 37. When a cruel jailer that scourged the servants of Christ, is by an earthquake brought to a heart-quake, he will then cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30.

And here comes in the usefulness of afflictions; even because they are so great advantages to humiliation. Men will be brought to some reason by extremities. When they lie a dying, a man may talk to them, and they will not so proudly fly in his face, or make a scorn at the word of the Lord, as in their prosperity they did. God will be more regarded when he pleadeth with them with the rod in his hand. Stripes are the best logic and rhetoric for a fool. When sin hath captivated their reason to their flesh, the arguments to convince them may be such as the flesh is capable of perceiving. We may long tell a beast of dangers and discommodities, before we can persuade him from that which he loves. Sensuality doth brutify men in too great a measure; and so far as they are brutish, it is not the clearest reasons that will prevail; and if God did not maintain in corrupted man some remnants of free reason, we might preach to beasts as hopefully as to men. But afflictions tend to weaken the enemy that doth captivate them; as prosperity by accident tends to strengthen him. The flesh understandeth the language of the rod better than the language of reason, or of the word of God.

And as the sensible part of our humiliation promoteth mortification; so the rational and voluntary humiliation, which is proper to the sanctified, is a principal part of mortification itself. And thus you may see that it is necessary that we be thoroughly humbled, that sin may be thoroughly killed in us.

3. Another use of humiliation is to fit the soul for

a meet entertainment of further grace, and that both for the honour of Christ and grace, and for our own welfare.

(1.) In respect of Christ, it is equal that he should dwell in such souls only as are fit to entertain him. Neither his person nor his business are such as can suit with the unhumiliated heart. Till humiliation make a sinner feel his sin and misery, it is not possible that Christ as Christ should be heartily welcome to him, or received in that sort as his honour doth expect. Who cares for the physician that feels no sickness, and fears not death? He may pass by the doors of such a man, and he will not call him in; but when pain and fears of death are on him, he will send, and seek, and bid him welcome. Will any man fly to Christ for succour that feeleth not his wants and danger? Will they hold on him, as the only refuge of their souls, and cleave to him as their only hope, that feel no great need of him? Will they lie at his feet, and beg for mercy, that feel themselves well enough without him? When men do but hear of sin and misery, and superficially believe it, they may coldly look after Christ and grace; and feel the worth of the latter, in such a manner as they feel the weight of the former. But never is Christ valued and sought after as Christ, till sorrow hath taught us how to value him: nor is he entertained in the necessary honour of a Redeemer, till humiliation throw open all the doors: no man can seek him with his whole heart, that seeks him not with a broken heart.

And it is certain that Christ will come on no lower terms into the soul. Though he come to do us good, yet he will have the honour of doing it: though he come to heal us, and not for any need he hath of us, yet he will have the welcome that is due to a physician. He comes to save us, but he will be honoured in our salvation. He inviteth all to the marriage supper, and even compelleth them to come in; but he expecteth that they bring a wedding garment, and come not in a garb that will dishonour his house. Though his grace be free, yet he will not expose it to contempt, but will have the fulness and freeness of it glorified. Though he came not to redeem himself, but us, yet he came to be glorified in the work of our redemption. He hath no grace so free, as to save them that will not esteem it, and give him thanks for it. And therefore though faith is enough to accept the gift, yet must it be a thankful faith that will magnify the giver, and a humble faith that will feel the worth of it, and an obedient faith that will answer the ends of it. And therefore that faith which is the condition of our justification, is fitted as well to the honour of the giver, as the commodity of the receiver. And as reason telleth us that it should be so, so christian ingenuity consenteth that it be so. The soul that is truly united to Christ, and partaketh of his nature, doth think its own receiving greatest where the honour of Christ is greatest; and it cannot take pleasure in the thoughts of such a kind of grace as should dishonour the Lord of grace himself. As Christ is solicitous for the saving of the soul, so he makes the soul solicitous of the right entertainment of him that saveth it. And therefore though his blood, and not his teaching or his government, was the ransom of our souls; yet he is resolved to justify none by his blood, but on the condition of that faith which is a hearty consent to his teaching and dominion. It is not in the application or bestowing of Christ's benefits, as it was in the purchasing of them: when he came to ransom us, he consented to be a sufferer, and gave his cheeks to the smiter, and submitted to reproach; he endured the cross, despising the shame, and being

reviled, he reviled not, but prayed for his persecutors : but when he comes by his saving grace into the soul, he will not there be entertained with contempt ; for in the flesh he came on purpose to be humbled, but in the Spirit he comes to be exalted : in the flesh he came to condemn the sin that reigned in our flesh, (Rom. viii. 3,) and so was made sin for us, that is, a sacrifice for sin, 2 Cor. v. 21 ; but in the Spirit he comes to conquer our flesh, and by the law of his quickening Spirit, to free us from the law of sin and death ; both that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, and also that there might be no condemnation to us, " who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1, 2, 4. The kingdom of Christ was not worldly ; for if it had been worldly, he would have sought to establish it by strength of arms and fighting, which are worldly means, John xviii. 36. But his kingdom is within us ; it is a spiritual kingdom ; and therefore though in the world he was used with contempt, as a fool, and as a sinner, and a man of sorrows ; yet within us he will be used with honour and reverence, as a King and absolute Lord. It was the hour of the executioner and the power of darkness, when he was in his suffering ; but it is the hour of his triumph and marriage, and the prevailing power of the heavenly light, when he cometh by saving grace into the soul. On the cross he was as a sinner, and stood in our place, and bore what was our due, and not his own ; but in the soul he is the conqueror of sin, and cometh to take possession of his own, and doth the work that belongeth to him in his dignity ; and therefore he will there be acknowledged and honoured. On the cross he was pulling down the kingdom of Satan, and setting up his own, but in the preparatory purchase ; but in the soul he doth both by immediate execution. On the cross, sin and Satan had their full blow at him ; but when he entereth the soul, he hath his blow at them, and ceaseth not till he have destroyed them. In purchasing he expended his own ; but in converting he takes possession of that which he purchased. In a word, he came into the world in flesh for his undertaken humiliation ; but he comes into the soul by his Spirit, for his deserved exaltation ; and therefore though he endured to be spit upon in the flesh, he will not endure to be slighted in the soul. And as in the world he was scorned with the title of a king, and crowned with thorns, and clothed in such kingly robes as might make him the fitter object for their reproach ; so when his Spirit entereth into the soul, he will be there enthroned in our most reverent, subjective, and deepest esteem, and crowned with our highest love and thankfulness, and bowed to with the tenders of obedience, and our praise. The cross shall there be the portion of his enemies, and the crown and sceptre shall be his ; and as all were preferred before him on earth, even Barabbas himself, so all things shall be put under him in the sanctified soul, and he shall be preferred before all.

This is the end of humiliation, to make ready the heart for a fuller entertainment of the Lord that bought it ; and to prepare the way before him, and fit the soul to be the temple of his Spirit. A humbled soul would never have put him off with excuses from oxen, and farms, and wives, as Luke xiv. and Matt. xxii. but the unhumbled will make light of him.

And, (2.) As Christ himself will be honourably received, or not at all, so must the mercies and graces which he offereth. He will not apply his blood and righteousness to them that care not for it. He will not pardon such a mass of iniquities, and remove such mountains as lie upon the soul, for them that feel not the necessity of such a mercy. He will not

take men from the power of the devil, and the drudgery of sin, and the suburbs of hell, and make them his members and the sons of God, and the heirs of heaven, that have not learned the value of these benefits, but set more by their very sin and misery, and the trifles of the world. Christ doth not despise his blood, his Spirit, his covenant, his pardon, nor his heavenly inheritance, and therefore he will give them to none that do despise them, till he teacheth them better to know their worth. Do you think it would stand with the wisdom of Christ, to give such unspeakable blessings as these to men that have not hearts to value them ? Why, it is more to give a man justification and adoption, than to give him all this visible world ; the sun, the moon, the firmament, and the earth. And should these be given to one that cares not for them ? Why, by this means God should miss of his ends ; he should not have the love, the honour, or the thanks that he intended by his gift. It is necessary therefore that the soul be thoroughly humbled, that pardon may be received as pardon, and grace as grace, and not set light by.

And, (3.) As this is necessary for the honour both of Christ and grace, so also it is necessary for our own benefit and consolation. The mercy cannot indeed be ours, if humiliation do not make us capable of it. These cordials must be taken into an empty stomach, and not be drowned in phlegm and filth. A man on the gallows will be glad of a pardon ; but a stander-by, that thinks he is innocent, would not regard it, but take it for an accusation. There is no great sweetness in the name of a Redeemer to an unhumbled soul. It sets not by the Spirit ; the gospel is no gospel to it ; the tidings of salvation are not so glad to such a one, as the tidings of riches or worldly delights would be. As it is the preparation of the stomach that maketh our meat sweet to us, and the coarsest fare is pleasanter to the sound, than sweetmeats to the sick ; so if we were not emptied of ourselves, and vile and lost in our own apprehensions, and if contrition did not quicken our appetites, the Lord himself, and all the miracles of saving grace, would be but as things of nought in our eyes, and we should be weary to hear or think of them. But oh what an inestimable treasure is Christ to the humbled soul ! What life is in his promises ! What sweetness in every passage of his grace, and what a feast in his unmeasurable love !

(4.) Another use of humiliation, implied in the former, is, that it is necessary to bring men to yield to the terms of the covenant of grace. Nature holds fast its fleshly pleasures, and lives by feeling and upon present things, and knows not how to live upon invisibles by a life of faith. And this is the life that all must live, that will live in Christ ; and therefore he calleth them to the forsaking of all ; the crucifying the world and flesh, the denying of themselves, if they will be his disciples. But oh how loth is nature to part with all, and make a full resignation unto Christ ! but fain it would make sure of present things, for fear lest the promises of heaven should but deceive them, and then they would have heaven at last as a reserve. And on these terms it is that hypocrites are religious, and thus it is that they deceive their souls. But when the heart is truly broken, it will then stand no longer on such terms with Christ, but yield up all : it will then no longer condition with him, but stand to his conditions, and thankfully accept them. Any thing will then serve, with Christ, and grace, and the hopes of glory.

(5.) Another use of humiliation is, to fit us for the retaining and improving of grace, when we have received it. The proverb is, " Lightly come, lightly go." If God should give the pardon of sin to the

unhumbled, how soon would it be cast away ! And how easily would such be hearkening to temptation, and returning to their vomit ! The burnt child, we say, dreads the fire. When sin hath killed you once, and broken your hearts, you will think the worse of it while you live. And when a temptation comes, you will think of your former smart. Is not this it that cost me so many groans, and laid me in the dust, and had almost damned me ? and shall I go to it again ? Was I so hardly recovered by a miracle of mercy ? and shall I run again into the misery that I was saved from ? Had I not sorrow, and fear, and care enough, but I must go back again for more, and renew my trouble ? Thus the remembrance of your sorrows will be a continual preservative to you. And a contrite spirit that is emptied of itself, and is taught the worth of Christ and mercy, will not only hold them fast, but will know how to use them, in thankfulness to God and benefit to himself.

(6.) Another use of humiliation is, to fit the soul for its approach to God himself, from whom it had revolted. As it becometh not any creature to approach the God of heaven, but in reverential humility, so it becometh not any sinner to approach him, but in contrite humility : who can come out of such wickedness and misery, and not bring along the sense of it on his heart ? It becometh not a prodigal to meet his father as confidently and boldly, as if he had never departed from him ; but to say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," Luke xv. 18. It is not ingenious for a guilty soul, or one that is snatched as a brand out of the fire, to look towards God with a brazen face, but with shame and sorrow to hang down the head, and smite upon the breast, and say, "O Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." "For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble," 1 Pet. v. 5 ; James iv. 6. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he regard unto the lowly ; but the proud he knoweth afar off," Psal. cxxxviii. 6. "For thus saith the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I will dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones," Isa. lvii. 15. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word," Isa. lxvi. 2. "The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit," Psal. xxxiv. 18. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," Psal. li. 17. There is no turning to God, unless we "loathe ourselves for all our abominations," Ezek. xvi. 63.

The nearer we approach him, the more we must "abhor ourselves in dust and ashes," Job xlii. 6. He will not embrace a sinner in his dung ; but will first wash and cleanse him, Isa. i. 16. Conversion must make us humble, and as little children, that are teachable, and look not after great matters in the world, or else there is no entering the kingdom of God, Matt. xviii. 3, 4. And thus you see the uses and necessity of humiliation.

III. By what hath been already said, you may perceive what mistakes are carefully to be avoided about your humiliation, and with what caution it must be sought.

I. One error that you must take heed of, is, that you take not humiliation for an indifferent thing, or for such an apurtenance of faith as may be spared : think not an unhumbled soul, while such, can be sanctified. Some carnal hearts conceive, that it is

only more heinous sinners that must be contrite and broken-hearted ; and that this is not necessary to them that have been brought up civilly or religiously from their youth. But it is as possible to be saved without faith, as without repentance, and that special humiliation which I described to you before, it is part of your sanctification.

2. Another mistake to be carefully avoided is, the placing of your humiliation, either only, or principally, in the passionate part, or in the outward expression of those passions. I mean, either in pinching grief, and sorrow of heart, or else in tears. But you must remember that the life of it is, as was said before, in the judgment and the will. It is not the measure of passionate sorrow and anguish that will best show the measure of your sincere humiliation ; much less is it your tears or outward expressions. But it is your low esteem of yourselves, and contentedness to be vile in the eyes of others ; and your displacency with yourselves, and willingness to mourn and weep for sin as much as God would have you, with the rest of the acts of the judgment and will before described.

Two great dangers are here before you to be avoided. First, some there be that have terrible pangs of sorrow, and are ready to tear their own hair, yea, to make away themselves, as Judas, in the horror of their consciences ; and these may seem to have true humiliation, and yet have none. And some can weep abundantly at a sermon or in a prayer, or in mentioning their sin to others ; and therefore think that they are truly humbled ; and yet it may be nothing so. For if at the same time their hearts are in love with sin, or had rather keep it than let it go, or have not an habitual hatred to it, and a predominant, superlative love to God, their humiliation is no saving work. That which is in the passions and tears, may be even forced against your wills ; and it signifieth scarce so much as a common grace, where you are not willing of it. Many a one can weep through a passionate, womanish, tender nature, and yet not only remain unhumbled, but be proud in a very high degree. How many such do we ordinarily see ; especially women, that can weep more at a duty or conference, than some that are truly broken-hearted could do in all their lives ; and yet be so far from being vile in their own eyes, and willing to be so in the eyes of others, that they will hate, and reproach, and rail at those that charge them with the faults which they seemed to lament ; or at least that charge them with disgraceful sins ; and they will excuse and mince their sins, and make a small matter of them, and love none so well as those that have the highest thoughts of them. So that pride doth ordinarily reign in their hearts, and break out in their words and lives, and make them hate the faithfullest reprovers, and live in contention with any that dishonour them, for all the tears that come from their eyes. Judge not therefore by passions or tears alone, but by the judgment and the will, as is aforesaid.

2. Another sort there are much better and happier than the former, that yet to their great trouble are mistaken in this point ; and that is, they that think they have no true humiliation because they find not such pangs of sorrow, and freedom of tears, as others have, whenas their hearts are contrite, even when they cannot weep a tear. Tell me but this ; are you vile in your own eyes, because you are guilty of sin, and that against the Lord whom you chiefly love ? Do you loathe your sins because of your abominations, and could you heartily wish, that you had been suffering when you were sinning ? And if it were to do again, would you choose to suffer

rather than to sin? Have you a desire to grieve when you cannot passionately grieve, and a desire to weep when you cannot weep? Can you quietly bear it, when you are vilified by others, because you know yourselves to be so vile? And are you thankful to a plain reproof, though he tell you of the most disgraceful sin? Do you think meanly of your own sayings and doings, and think better of others, where there is any ground, than of yourselves? Do you justify God's afflictions, and men's true rebukes, and think yourselves unworthy of the communion of the saints, or to see their faces, and unworthy to live on the face of the earth? Yea, would you justify if he should condemn you? This is the state of a humbled soul. Find but this, and you need not doubt of God's acceptance though you were unable to shed a tear. There is more humiliation in a base esteem of ourselves, than in a thousand tears; and more in a will or desire to weep for sin, than in tears, that come through force of terror, or moisture of the brain, or passionate tenderness of nature. If the will be right you need not fear. It is he that most hateth sin, and is hardest drawn to it, that is truest humbled for it. He that will lament it to-day and commit it to-morrow, is far less humbled and penitent than he that would not be drawn to it with the hopes of all the pleasures of the world, nor commit it if it were to save his life.

3. To avoid this, some run into the contrary mistake, and think that sorrow and tears are unnecessary, and that they may repent as well without them as with them; and they lay all in some dull, uneffectual wishes, and so they think the heart is changed. But certainly God made not the affections in vain. It cannot be that any man can have a sanctified will, but his affections will hold some correspondence with it, and be commanded by it. Though we cannot mourn in that measure as we desire, yet some sorrow there will be wherever the heart is truly changed; and apparently this sorrow will be the greatest. No man can heartily believe that sin is the greatest evil to his soul, and not be grieved for it. And indeed our liveliest affections should be exercised about these weightiest things. It is a shame to see a man mourn for a friend, and whine under a cross that toucheth but the flesh, and yet be so insensible of the plague of sin, and the anger of the Lord, and to laugh and jest with such mountains on his soul. Though grief and tears be not the heart, or principal part of our humiliation, yet are they to be looked after as our duty; yea, sorrow in some measure is of absolute necessity, and the want of tears is no good sign in them that have tears for other things. Indeed the sense of our folly and unkindness should be so great, that it should even turn our hearts into sorrow, and melt them in our breasts, and draw forth streams of tears from our eyes; and if we cannot bring ourselves to this, we must yet lament the hardness of our hearts, and not excuse it.

4. In the next place you are hence informed, how to answer that question, Whether it be possible for a man to be humbled and repent too much? That part of humiliation which consisteth in the acts of the understanding and the will, cannot be too much as to the intention of the act; and if it be too much as to the objective extent, then, as it is misguided, so it changeth its nature, and ceaseth to be the thing that it was before. A man may think worse of himself than he is, by thinking falsely of himself, as that he is guilty of the sin which he is not guilty of; but this is not the same thing with true humiliation. But to have too clear an apprehension of the evil of his sin and his own vileness, this he need not fear. And in the will it is more clear: no man can be too

willing to be rid of sin in God's time and way; nor be too much averse from it, as it is against the Lord. But then the other part of humiliation, which consisteth in the depth of sorrow, or in tears, may possibly be too much; though I know very few that are guilty of it, or need to fear it; because the common case of the world is to be stupid, and hard-hearted; and most of the godly are lamentably insensible. But yet some few there are, that have need of this advice, that they strive not for too great a measure of grief. Let your hearts be against sin as much as is possible; but yet let there be some limits in your grief and tears. And this counsel is necessary to these sorts of people. 1. To melancholy people, that are in danger of being distracted, and made unreasonable and useless, by over-much sorrow. Their thoughts will be fixing, and musing, and sad, and dark, and full of fears, and either make things worse than they are, or else be deeper affected with them than their heads can bear. 2. And this is the case of some weak-spirited women, that are not melancholy; but yet by natural weakness of their brains, and strength of their passions, are unable to endure those serious, deep, affecting apprehensions which others may desire; but the depth of their sensibility, and greatness of their passion, doth presently endanger the crazing of their brains, and quickly cast them into melancholy, or worse.

And this is a very heavy affliction, where it comes, both to the persons themselves, and those about them. To be deprived of the use of reason, is one of the greatest corporal calamities in this life. And it is matter of offence and dishonour to the gospel in the eyes of the ungodly that understand not the case. When they see any languish in unmeasurable sorrow, or fall into distraction, it is a grievous temptation to them to fly from religion, and avoid godly sorrow, and all serious thoughts of heavenly things; and it occasioneth the foolish scorners to say, that religion makes men mad; and that this humiliation and conversion which we call them to, is the way to bring them out of their wits. So that by reason of the grief of the godly, and the hardening of the ungodly, the case is so sad that it requir-eth our greatest care to avoid it.

Quest. But if it be so dangerous to sorrow either too little or too much, what shall a poor sinner do in such a strait? And how shall he know when to restrain his sorrows?

Ans. It is but very few in the world that have cause to fear excess of this kind of sorrow. The common case of men is to be blockish, and worldly sorrow doth cast more into melancholy and distraction than godly sorrow; but for those few that are in danger of excess, I shall first tell you how to discern it, and then how to remedy it.

1. When your sorrow is greater than your brains can bear, without apparent danger of distraction, or a melancholy disturbance and diminution of your understanding, then it is certainly too much, and to be restrained. For if you overthrow your reason, you will be a reproach to religion, and you will be fit for nothing that is truly good, either to your own edification or the service of God.

2. If you be in any grievous disease, which sorrow would increase to the hazard of your life, you have reason to restrain it: though you may not forbear repenting, or carefulness of your salvation, yet the passion of grief you must moderate and abate.

3. When sorrow is so great as to discompose your mind, or enfeeble your body, so as to unfit you for the service of God, and make you more unable to do good, or receive good, you have reason then to moderate and restrain it.

4. When the greatness of your sorrow doth overmatch the necessary measure of your love, or joy, or thanks, and keep out these, and takes up more of your spirit than its part, having no room for greater duties, then it is excessive and to be restrained. There are some that will strive and struggle with their hearts, to wring out a few tears, and increase their sorrow, that yet make little conscience of other affections, and will not strive half so much to increase their faith, and love, and joy.

5. When your sorrow, by the greatness of it, doth draw you into temptation, either to despair, or think hardly of God and his service, or to undervalue his grace and the satisfaction of Christ, as if it were too scant, and insufficient for you, you have then cause to moderate and restrain it.

6. When your sorrow is unseasonable, and will needs thrust in at those times when you are called to thankfulness and joy, you have then cause to moderate and restrain it at that season. Not that we should wholly lay by sorrow in any day of joy and thanksgiving, unless we could lay by all our sin in the duties of that day; nor should we wholly lay by spiritual comfort and delight, in days of greatest humiliation. For as our state is here mixed of grace and sin, so must all our duties be mixed of joy and sorrow. It is only in heaven where we must have unmixed joys, and only in hell that there are unmixed sorrows; or at least, not in any state of grace. But yet for all that, there are seasons now, when one of these must be more eminently exercised, and the other in a lower measure. As in times of calamity, and after a fall, we are called out so much to humiliation, that comfort should but moderate our sorrows, and the exercise of it be veiled for that time; so in times of special mercies from the Lord, we may be called out to exercise our thanks, and praise, and joy so eminently, that sorrow should but keep us humble, and be, as it were, serviceable to our joys. When grace and mercy are most eminent, then joy and praise should be predominant (which is through the most of a christian's life, that walketh uprightly and carefully with God); and when sin and judgments are most eminent, sorrow must be then predominant, as being a necessary means to solid joy. And therefore, ordinarily, a sinner that is but in the work of conversion, and newly coming to God from a rebellious state, must entertain more sorrow, and let out himself more to groans and tears, than afterwards when he is brought to reconciliation with God, and walketh in integrity.

Quest. But when is it that my sorrow is too short, and I should labour to increase it?

Ans. 1. When there is no apparent danger of the last-mentioned evils, that is, of destroying your bodies, distracting your brains, discomposing your minds, and drowning other graces and duties, and the rest; then you have little cause to be afraid of an excess.

2. When you have not smart enough to cause you to value the love of Christ, and highly prize his blood, and the effects of it, and hunger and thirst after him and his righteousness, and earnestly beg for the pardon of your sin; you have cause to desire then more sorrow. If you feel no great need of Christ, but pass by him as lightly as the full stomach by his food, as if you could do well enough without him; you may be sure then you have need to be broken more. If you set not so much by the love of God that you would part with any thing in the world to enjoy it, and would think no terms too dear for heaven; you have need to lie under the sense of your sin and misery a little longer, and to beseech the Lord to save you from that heart of stone. When you can hear of the

love and sufferings of your Redeemer, without any warmth of love to him again, and can read or hear the promise of grace, and offers of Christ, and eternal life, without any considerable joy, or thankfulness, it is time for you then to beg of God a tender heart.

3. When you make many pauses in the work of your conversion, and are sometimes in a good mind and then again at a stand, as if you were yet unresolved whether to turn or no: when you stick at Christ's terms of denying yourselves, and crucifying the flesh, and forsaking all for the hopes of glory, and think these sayings somewhat hard, and are considering of the matter whether you should yield to them or not, or are secretly reserving somewhat to yourselves; this certainly shows that you are not yet sufficiently humbled, or else you would never stand trifling thus with God. He must yet set your sins in order before you, and hold you awhile over the fire of hell, and ring your consciences such a peal, as shall make you yield and resolve your doubts, and teach you not to dally with your Maker. If Pharaoh himself be off and on with God, and sometimes he will let Israel go, and then again he will not; God will follow him with plague after plague, till he make him yield, and glad to drive or hasten them away. And even where he deals in ways of grace, he maketh so much use of sorrows, as to make men yield the sooner to his terms, and glad to have mercy on such terms, if they were harder.

4. When you are heartless and dull under the ordinances of God, and Scripture hath little life or sweetness to you, and you are almost indifferent whether you call upon God in secret or no, and whether you go to the congregation, and hear the word, and join in God's praises and the communion of the saints; and you have no great relish in holy conference, or any ordinance, but do them almost merely for custom, or to please your consciences, and not for any great need you feel of them, or good you find by them; this shows for certain you want some more of the rod and spur; your hearts be not awakened and broken sufficiently, but God must take you in hand again.

5. When you can be mindless of God, and of the life to come, and forget both your sins and Saviour's blood, and set out your thoughts almost continually upon worldly vanities or common things, as if you were overgrown the need of Christ; this shows that the stone is yet in your hearts, and that God must keep you to a harder diet to mend your appetites, and make you feel your sin and misery, till it call off your thoughts from things that less concern you, and teach you to mind your everlasting state. If you begin to forget yourselves and him, it is time for you to have a remembrancer.

6. When you begin to taste more sweetness in the creature, and be more tickled with applause and honour, and pleased more with a full estate, and more impatient with poverty, or wants, or wrongs from men, and crosses in the world; and when you are set upon a thriving course, and are eager to grow rich, and fall in love with money; when you drown yourselves in worldly cares and business, and are cumbered about many things, through your own choice; this shows indeed that you are dangerously unhumbled; and if God have mercy for you, he will bring you low, and make your riches gall and wormwood to you, and abate your appetite, and teach you to know that one thing is needful; and to be more eager after the food that perisheth not, and hereafter to choose the better part, Luke x. 41, 42; John vi. 27.

7. When you can return to play with the occasions of sin, or look upon it with a reconcilable mind, as if you had yet some mind on it, and could almost find

in your heart to be doing with it again; when you begin to have a mind of your old company and courses, or begin to draw as near it as you dare, and are gazing upon the bait, and tasting of the forbidden thing, and can scarce tell how to deny your fancies, your appetites, your senses, your desires; this shows that you want some wakening work: God must yet read you another lecture in the black book, and set you to spell those lines of blood which it seems you have forgotten; and kindle a little of that fire in your consciences, which else you would run into, till you feel and understand, whether it be good playing with sin, and the wrath of God, and the everlasting fire.

8. When you begin to be indifferent as to your communion with God, and think not much whether he accept you, and manifest his love to you, or not, but can huddle up your prayers, and look no more after them, or what becomes of them, and use ordinances, and seldom inquire of the success; when you can spare the spiritual consolations of the saints, and fetch little of your comforts from Christ or heaven; but from your friends, and health, and prosperity, and accommodations; and perhaps can be as merry in carnal company, when you say and do as they, as if you were considering of the love of Christ, this shows that the threatenings went not deep enough. Sorrow hath yet another part to play: you must be taught better to know your home, and to take more pleasure in your Father, and your Husband, and your brethren, and your inheritance, than in strangers, or enemies to God and you.

9. When you begin to grow wanton with ordinances or other mercies, and instead of thankful receiving them, and feeding on them, you pick quarrels with them, and nothing will please you; either the minister is too weak, or he is too curious, or too formal; you must have it this way or that way; either you must have more of a form, or no form, in this gesture, or that order, and something or other is still amiss: this shows that you want humbling, and that you are fitter for the rod than for meat. If God do but open you a door into your hearts, and show you the monsters and emptiness that are there, you will see, that the fault lay somewhere else than in the minister, or the ordinances: if it were in them, it was more in you. The cause of your loathing, and quarrelling with the world, was the fulness of your own stomach; and God must give you a vomit or purge, that shall make your hearts ache before it hath done working, and then your appetites will be mended, and your wantonness will cease; and that will be sweet to you which before you slighted.

10. When you begin to be leavened with pride, and think highly of yourselves, and have good conceits of your own parts and performances, and would be noted, and taken for somebody among the godly, and you cannot endure to be overlooked or passed by; when you think meanly of other men's parts and duties in comparison of yours, and think yourselves as wise as your teachers, and begin to hear them as judges with a magisterial spirit, and think you could do as well as this yourselves; when you are finding fault with that which should nourish you, and in every sermon you are most noting the defects, and think that this you could have mended; when you itch to be teachers yourselves, and think yourselves fitter to preach than to learn, to rule than to be ruled, to answer than to ask for resolution; when you think so well of yourselves, that the church is not pure or good enough for your company, though Christ disowneth it not, and they force you not to sin; when you grow censorious, and aggravate the faults of others, and extenuate their graces, and can

see a mote in another's eye, but will discern none of their graces, if they be not as high as mountains; and none can pass for godly with you, but those of the most eminent magnitude: when you are itching after novelties in religion, and setting your wisdom against the present or ancient church; and affecting singularity, because you will be of no common way: when you cannot hear this minister, nor that minister, though the ministers of Christ; and you are harping upon that, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate;" as if Christ had called you to come out of the church, when he called you to come out of the company of infidels: all this cries aloud for further humiliation; you have a tympany that must be pricked, to let out the wind that puffs you up: if you be not for perdition, and to be forsaken, and given over to yourselves, you must be fetched over again, and humbled with a witness. When God hath turned your inside outward, and showed you that you are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and that you are empty nothings, who thought so well of yourselves; he will then make you stoop to those that you despised, and think yourselves unworthy of the communion of those that before you thought unworthy of yours. He will make you think you are unworthy to hear those ministers that you turned your back upon; and he will take down your teaching, talking vein, and make you glad again to be learners: in a word, he will by conversion make you as little children, or you shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And this spiritual pride is a most lamentable disease, and the issue usually is exceeding sad. For with many, it is the forerunner of damnable apostasy, and God gives them over to their own conceits, and the wisdom which they so esteem, till it have led them to perdition. And those that are cured, are many of them cured by the saddest way of any men in the world. For it is usual with God to let them alone, till they have run themselves into some abominable error, or fallen into some shameful, scandalous sin, till they are made a hissing and by-word among men; that shame and confusion may bring them to their wits, and they may learn to know what it was that they were proud of, and see that they were but silly worms.

And thus I have showed you when you must seek after deeper humiliation, and may conclude that you are not humbled enough. Yea, and when a greater measure is of some necessity to your souls.

Quest. Well, but yet you have not told us what course a poor sinner should take in such a strait, when he knows not whether his humiliation, as to the affectionate part, be too little or too much.

Ans. 1. You may partly discern yourselves by what is said, whether you have need of more or less humiliation, if you can but try your hearts by these signs. 2. But yet I would advise, and earnestly persuade you, in cases of difficulty, to betake yourselves to some able, faithful minister for resolution. If you feel sorrow seize so deep upon your spirits, that it distempereth you, or threateneth your understanding, or your health, especially if you are either passionate women, or melancholy persons; stay not then any longer, lest delay do that which easily cannot be undone, but go and open your case and crave advice. This is a principal use of pastors, that you should have them at hand, to advise with in the diseases and dangers of your souls, as you do with physicians, in the diseases and dangers of the body. Lay by all sinful bashfulness, and trust not yourselves any longer with your own skill, but go to them that God hath set in office over you for such uses as these, and tell them your case; this is God's

way, and he will bless his own ordinance: melancholy and passionate, distempered persons are not fit judges of their own condition. In this case you must distrust your own understanding, and be not self-conceited, and stick not obstinately to every fancy that comes into your heads, but in the sense of your weakness rely upon the guidance of your faithful overseers, till your distempers are overcome, and you are made more capable of discerning for yourselves.

5. You are further here to be informed, that it is not for itself that sorrow and tears are so desirable, but as they are expressions of a gracious temper of the will, and as they help on the ends that humiliation is appointed to. And therefore you may hence learn in what sort you must seek after it. (1.) You must not place the chief part of your religion in it, as if it were a life of mere sorrow that we are called to by the gospel. But you must make it a servant to your faith, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and other graces. As the use of the needle is but to make way for the thread, and then it is the thread and not the needle that makes the seam; so much of our sorrow is but to prepare for faith and love, and these are they that close the soul with Christ. It is therefore a sore mistake with some, that are very apprehensive of their want of sorrow, but little of their want of faith or love; and that pray and strive to break their hearts, or weep for sin, but not much for those higher graces, which it tendeth to. One must be done, and not the other left undone.

(2.) As tears are the expression of the heart, so those are the most kindly and sincere, which voluntarily flow from the inward feeling of the evil that we lament: if you could weep never so much, merely because you think that tears are in themselves necessary, and had not within the hatred of sin, and sense of its vile and killing nature, this were not true humiliation at all. And if the heart be humbled before the Lord, it is not the want of tears that will cause him to despise it. Some are so backward to weep by nature, that they cannot weep for any outward thing, no, not for the loss of the dearest friend, when yet they would have done ten times more to redeem his life, than some that have tears at will. Groans are as sure expressions of sorrow as tears, with such as these. And the hearty rejection and detestation of sin, is yet a better evidence than either. But where men have naturally a weeping disposition, which they can manifest about crosses in the world, and yet cannot shed a tear for sin, there the case is the more suspicious.

(3.) The principal cause why you must strive for deeper sorrow, is, that you may obtain the ends of that sorrow: that sin may be more odious to you, and more effectually mortified; that self may be taken down, and Christ may be valued, and desired, and exalted; and that you may be fitted for a holy communion with God for the time to come, and saved from pride, and kept in watchfulness.

6. From this that was last said, you have a rule by which you may certainly discern, what measure of humiliation it is that must be had. It must go so deep as to undermine our pride, and so far the heart must needs be broken, as is necessary to break the heart of sin and carnal self. If this be not done, there is nothing done, though you weep out your eyes. You must be brought so low, that the blood of Christ, and the favour of God, may be more precious in your eyes than all the world, and in your very hearts preferred before it; and then you may be sure that your humiliation is sincere, whether you have tears or none.

7. From hence also you may see, that you must

take heed of ascribing to your own humiliation any part of the office and honour of Christ: think not that you can satisfy the justice of the law, or merit any thing of God, by the worth of your sorrows, though you should weep even tears of blood. It is not true humiliation if it consist not in the sense and acknowledgment of your unworthiness, and desert of condemnation, and if it do not lead you to look out for pardon and life from Christ, as being lost and wholly insufficient for yourselves. And therefore it would be a plain contradiction, if true humiliation should be taken as satisfaction or merit, or trusted on instead of Christ.

IV. Having thus far opened the nature and reasons of true humiliation, I conclude with that advice which I principally here intended: Refuse not to be thoroughly and deeply humbled. Be not weary of the humbling workings of the Spirit. Grief is an unwelcome guest to nature; but grace can see reason to bid it welcome. Grace is ingenuous, and cannot look back on so great unkindness, with unwillingness to mourn over it, Zech. xii. 10. There is somewhat of God in godly sorrow, and therefore the soul consenteth to it, and seeketh for it, and calls it in; yea, and is grieved that it can grieve no more. Not that sorrow as sorrow is desirable, but as a necessary consequent of our grievous sinning, and a necessary antecedent of our further recovery: as we may submit to death itself with a cheerful willingness, because it is sanctified to be the passage into glory, how dreadful soever it be to nature in itself; so much more may we submit to humiliation and brokenness of heart with a holy willingness, because it is sanctified to be the entrance into the state of grace. Consider for your satisfaction of these following things.

1. The main brunt of your sorrows will be but in the beginning: and when once you are settled in a holy course, you will find more peace and comfort, than ever you could have had in any other way. I know if you will be meddling with sin again, it will in its measure breed sorrow again; but a godly life is a life of uprightness, and conversion is a departing from sin, and consequently a departing from the cause of sorrow. And can you not bear such a sorrow for a little while?

2. Consider but whence you are coming: is it not out of a state of wrath? And where have you been all this while? Was it not in the power of Satan? And what have you been doing all your lives? Hath it not been the drudgery of sin, and the offending of your Lord, and the destroying of yourselves? And is it meet, is it reasonable, is it ingenuous, for to come out of such a case, without lamentation that you staid in it so long?

3. Consider also, that it is necessary to your own recovery and salvation. Do you think to take so dangerous a surfeit, and then to be cured without a vomit? You will endure for the health of your bodies, the bitterest pills, and loathsomest potions, the shortest diet, and the letting out of your blood, for you know that your life lieth on it, and there is no remedy; and should you not endure for the saving of your souls, the bitterest sorrows, the keenest rebukes, the freest confessions, and the most plentiful tears? Sin will not down at easier rates; self will not be conquered else; the heart of it will not be broken, till your hearts be broken. We know your sorrows merit nothing, and make not God amend for your sins, nor is it for want of sufficiency in the blood of Christ that we require them; but it is part of the fruit of his blood upon your souls. If his blood do not melt and break your hearts, you have no part in him. It becomes you to mourn over him whom you have pierced, Zech.

xii. 10. And this fruit of his blood is a preparative to more. You may as well think of being saved without faith, as without repentance and humiliation.

4. Consider so much as is bitter in it, is of your own preparation; you may thank yourselves for it. Who was it that brought you to this necessity of sorrow? Have you been all your life-time surfeiting of the creature and causing your own disease, and now will you grudge at the trouble of a cure? Whom have you to blame and find fault with but yourselves? Was it not you that sinned? Was it not you that laid in the fuel of sorrows, and sowed the seeds of this bitter fruit, and cherished the cause of trouble in yourselves? God did not do this; it was you yourselves. He doth but undo that which you have been doing. Grudge not therefore at your physician, if you must be purged, and let blood, and dieted strictly, but thank yourselves for it that have made it so necessary.

5. Consider also that you have a wise and tender Physician, that hath known what sorrow and grief is himself, for he was made for you a man of sorrows, Isaiah liii. 3; and therefore can pity those that be in sorrow: he delighteth not in your trouble and grief, but in your cure and after-consolations. And therefore you may be sure that he will deal gently and moderately with you, and lay no more on you than is necessary for your good; nor give you any bitterer a cup than your disease doth require. When he showeth his greatest liking of the contrite, it is that he may revive their hearts; and he professeth withal, that he will not contend for ever, nor be always wroth, lest the spirit should fail before him, and the souls which he hath made, Isa. lvii. 15, 16. He calls to him the weary and heavy-laden, that he may give them ease, Matt. xi. 28. He was sent to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised, Luke iv. 18. When he hath broken your hearts, he will as tenderly bind them up, and as safely heal them as you can reasonably desire. Even his ministers, that labour to break your hearts, and bring you low, even to the dust, have no worse meaning in it than to bring you to Christ, and life, and comfort; and though they are glad to see the weeping eyes of their hearers, and to hear their free confessions and lamentations, yet this is not because they take pleasure in your trouble, but because they foresee the saving fruits of it, and know it to be necessary to your everlasting peace. You may read what their thoughts are in the words of Paul, 2 Cor. vii. 9-11, "Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold, this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge," &c. Indeed, neither Christ nor his ministers have that fond, foolish love to you, and pity of you, as you have to yourselves; they be not so tender of you, as to save you from the sorrow which is needful to the saving of you from hell. But they would not put you to any more than needs; nor have you taste a drop of the vinegar and gall, or shed one tear, but what shall tend to your comfort and salvation.

6. Consider what sorrows they be that these sorrows do prevent, and what those suffer in hell, that avoid this godly sorrow on earth. O sirs, your re-

pentant sorrows are joys to those; yours have hope, but theirs are quickened with desperation; yours are small and but a drop to their ocean; yours are curing, but theirs are tormenting; yours are a father's rod, but theirs are the rack and gallows; yours are mixed with love, but theirs are unmixed, overwhelming them with confusion; yours are short, but theirs are endless. And had you rather sorrow as they do, than as the godly do? Had you rather howl with devils and rebels, than weep with saints and children? Had you rather be broken in hell by torments, than on earth by grace? Is it not an unreasonable thing of you, to make such a stir at the sorrow that must save you, when you remember what it would save you from, and what all must suffer that are not humbled here by grace! Oh, it is another kind of sorrow that others are now enduring. Grudge not at the pricking of a vein, when so many thousands are everlastingly bleeding at the heart.

7. Consider, the more you are rightly humbled, the sweeter will Christ and all his mercies be to you ever after while you live. One taste of the healing love of Christ, will make you bless those sorrows that prepared for it. The same Christ is not equally esteemed even by all that he will save; and had you not rather be emptied yet more of yourselves, that you may be fuller of Christ hereafter? When you do but feel his arms embracing you, and perceive him in that posture as the prodigal's father was, Luke xv. 20, you will thank that sorrow that fitted you for his arms.

8. If you be thoroughly humbled, you will walk the more safely all your days, if other things correspond. It will make you hate the sin you smarted by, and fly the occasions of that which cost you so dear.

9. The sin of pride is one of the most mortal, damning sins in the world; and that which thousands of professors do miscarry by. And humiliation is most directly contrary to this; and therefore must needs be an amiable and necessary thing. It is worth all the sorrow that a hundred men endure here, to be saved from this dangerous sin of pride.

10. A thorough humiliation is usually a sign of the greater exaltation to come after. For "those that humble themselves shall be exalted, and those that exalt themselves shall be brought low," Luke xiv. 11. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, and he shall lift you up," 1 Pet. v. 5. The higher you mean to build, the deeper you will dig to lay the foundation. Your consolations are like to be greater, as your sorrows have been greater. You may be free from those doubts that follow others all their days, lest they were never truly humbled. You need not be still questioning, or pulling up your foundations, as if you were to begin again. It is a sign that you are intended to greater employments (if other things concur). Paul must be laid exceeding low in his conversion, that he might be the fitter as a chosen vessel to bear Christ's name among the gentiles.

Lay all this now together, sirs, and consider what cause you have to cherish the humbling works of grace, and not to quench them. When your hearts begin to be afflicted for sin, go not among foolish and merry companions to drink or laugh it away. Drive it not out of your minds, as unkindly as if it came to do you hurt; but get alone, and consider of the matter, and on your knees in secret beseech the Lord to follow it home, and break your hearts, and make you meet for his healing consolations, and not to leave you in this Red sea, but to bring you through, and put the songs of praise into your mouths.

Direct. V. Having thus directed you about your humiliation, the next direction which I would offer you, that you may not miscarry in the work of conversion, is this: See that you close with the Lord Jesus Christ, understandingly, heartily, and entirely, as he is revealed and offered to you in the gospel. In this your christianity doth consist, upon this your justification and salvation lie. This is the sum of your conversion, and the very heart of the new creature. The rest is all but the preparatives to this, or the fruits of this. Christ is the end and the fulfilling of the law, the substance of the gospel, the way to the Father, the life, the help, the hope of the believer: if you know not him, you know nothing; if you possess not him, you have nothing; and if you are out of him, you can do nothing that hath a promise of salvation. And therefore I shall distinctly (though briefly) tell you what it is to close with Christ, understandingly, heartily, and entirely, as he is offered in the gospel.

And, 1. That you may close with Christ understandingly, you must look to these things. 1. That you understand who Christ is, as in his person and his offices. 2. That you understand the reason of his undertaking. 3. That you understand what it is that he hath done and suffered for us. 4. That you understand the nature and worth of his benefits, and what he will do for you. 5. That you understand the terms on which he conveyeth these benefits to men; and what is the nature, extent, and condition of his promises. And, 6. That you understand the certain truth of all this.

For the first, you must understand that Jesus Christ hath two natures in one person; that he is both God and man: as he is God, of the same substance with his Father, and one in essence with him, the second person in the blessed Trinity; the Word of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, eternal, incomprehensible, and infinite. As man he hath a true human soul and body, as men have; so that his Godhead, his human soul, and his body, are really distinct. This human nature was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary, without man, and born of her, and is so truly united to the Divine nature, as that they are one person: not that the Godhead is turned into the manhood, nor the manhood into the Godhead; but the Godhead hath taken the manhood into personal unity with itself. This was not from eternity, but when man had sinned, and had lost himself, and needed a Redeemer. By reason of his miraculous conception, he was free from all original sin, being holy, harmless, and undefiled. His person and natures were fit for his office; which was to be Mediator between God and man, to make reconciliation, and recover us to God. Had he not been God, but mere man, his dignity would not have been sufficient for such an interposition, nor his obedience or sufferings of any such value, as to be the price of our redemption. Nor could he have borne our burden, or conquered death, and risen again, and overcome the prince of death, the devil; nor have ruled his church, and preserved and sanctified them, and prospered his cause, and subdued his enemies, nor effectually interceded with the Father, nor judged the world, or raised the dead, and done the work of a perfect Saviour. Nor was the angelical nature sufficient for this office. Had he not been man, he had not been near enough to us, to have suffered in our stead, and taught us by his doctrine, and given us his example, nor could he have suffered or died for us; for God cannot die or suffer. As he is God, he is one in nature with the Father; and as he is man, he is one in nature with us; and therefore is fit to mediate for us; and in him we are brought

thus nigh to God. To this office of the Mediator there are many acts belonging, from whence it hath several denominations, of which more anon. So much of Christ's person.

2. The next thing that you must understand, is, the reasons and ends of his undertaking; which though we are not able fully to comprehend, (nor the reason of any of the works of God,) yet must we observe so much as is revealed. And these following ends or reasons of this work, do show themselves clearly in the Scripture, and in the event.

(1.) One is, The demonstration of God's justice, as he is Governor of the world, according to the law of nature. He made man a rational and voluntary agent, capable of good and evil, with desires and hopes of the good, and fears of the evil, and so to be ruled according to his nature. He made for him a law that revealed good and evil, with promises to move him by desire and hope, and with threatenings to drive him by necessary fear. By these engines God resolved to govern mankind. This law was the rule of man's duty, and of his receivings, or of God's judgment. According to this law, the world was to be governed by God. His governing justice consisteth in giving all their due according to his law; at least so far as that the end of the law may be attained, that is, the honour of the lawgiver preserved, transgression made odious by the terror of penalty, and obedience made honourable by its fruits of impunity and reward. Otherwise the law would not have deterred effectually from evil, nor encouraged to good; especially to so much as creatures must go through for the crown of life: and so the law would have been no fit instrument for the government of the world; that is, the law would have been no law. But this the wise and righteous God would not be guilty of, of making a law that was no law, and was unmeet for the ends to which he made it; which was essential to it as a law. There was no way to avoid this intolerable consequent when man had sinned, but strict execution of the law, or by sufficient satisfaction instead of such an execution. The execution would have destroyed the commonwealth, even the whole inferior world, at least the reasonable creature who was the subject. The wisdom, and love, and mercy of God would not give way to this, that the world should be destroyed so soon after it was made, and man left remediless in everlasting misery. Satisfaction therefore must be the remedy: this must be such as might be as fit to procure the ends of the law, as if the law itself had been executed; that is, as if the offenders did all die the death that it did threaten. It must therefore be a public demonstration of justice, and of the odiousness of sin, to the terror and warning of sinners for the future. And this was done by Jesus Christ, when none else in heaven or earth could do it. For it did as fully demonstrate the justice of God, and preserved his honour, and the usefulness of his law and government, that a person so high and glorious, and so dear to him, should suffer so much for sin, as if all the world had suffered for themselves. And thus God "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin," 2 Cor. v. 21. And thus "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13.

(2.) Hereby also God demonstrated the holiness of his nature; how much he hateth sin, and how irreconcilable he is to it, as light to darkness. As the law and judgments of God do proceed from his perfect nature and will, so do they bear the image of that perfection and demonstrate it to the world. This therefore is the nobler end and work of Christ in our redemption, to declare the holiness and per-

fection of God in his nature and will; though the former (the declaring of his governing justice) be the nearer end. If the death of Aaron's two sons were such a declaration, that "he will be sanctified in all that draw near him," Lev. x. 2, 3; if his laws and present judgments do declare him to be "a holy and jealous God, that will not forgive sin, without a valuable consideration or satisfaction," Josh. xxiv. 19; how much more evidently is this declaration in the death of Christ! If the Bethshemites cry out, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" I Sam. vi. 20, upon the death of 50,070 men; how much more may the guilty soul say so, when he thinks on the crucified Son of God! As it is the end of God's execution on transgressors, that "the Lord may be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy may be sanctified in righteousness," Isa. v. 16, so was it his end in the sacrifice of his Son.

(3.) Another end of our redemption by Christ is, the demonstration of the infinite wisdom of God. His wisdom in the preventing the ruin of the created world; that it might not be said that sin and Satan had frustrated him of the glory of his creation, and destroyed it almost as soon as he had made it. Yea, in getting an advantage by the malice of his enemies for the more admirable attainment of the ends of his law, and the glorifying of all his governing attributes. He would not have made man a free agent, and left him in the hand of his own will, and suffered him to sin, if his wisdom had not known how to secure his own interest and honour to the full. And so also in the economy and admirable frame of his gracious sapiential government by Christ, the manifold wisdom of God doth shine, Eph. iii. 9, 10. As the wonderful structure of heaven and earth, and every part of this natural frame, doth gloriously reveal the wisdom of the Creator; so the wonderful contrivance of our redemption by Christ, and the reparation of the world by him, and the moral frame of this evangelical dispensation, doth wonderfully demonstrate the wisdom of the Redeemer. And as the observation of our natures may give us cause to say with David, Psal. cxxxix. 14, "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;" so the observation of our natures and conditions, may well cause us to say, I will praise thee, for I am graciously and wonderfully redeemed; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. As nature may teach us to admire the frame of nature; so grace will teach us to admire the frame of grace, and to see the beauty of its several parts, and much more of the whole, where all the parts are orderly composed.

(4.) Yea, the very power of God is demonstrated in Christ. And therefore he is called, 1 Cor. i. 24, "The power of God, and the wisdom of God;" not only formally, because Christ himself is the wise and powerful God; nor only efficiently, because God doth exercise his power and wisdom by his Son in creation, redemption, and government; but also effectually and objectively, as Christ is the great and most admirable demonstration of the power and wisdom of God in the world.

What work transcendeth the incomprehensible miracle of the incarnation? that God should assume the nature of man into personal union? The creation of the sun is no greater a work of power, than the incarnation and sending of the Son of God, the intellectual sun, the light of the world, that living light "that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world; though yet the darkness comprehendeth not his light," John i. 4, 6, 9. What was he but the living, visible power of God, when he healed all diseases, cast out devils, raised the dead,

and rose from the dead himself, and ascended into glory, and sent down the Holy Spirit on his church, enduing them with power from on high, Acts i. 8; Luke xxiv. 49. When he was on earth he was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil," Acts x. 38. Being dead, "he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead," Rom. i. 4. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive," Eph. iv. 8. Yea, he filled his servants with power, Acts vi. 8; even such as was admired and desired by the ungodly, Acts viii. 19. He being "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they," Heb. i. 3, 4. As Christ therefore in his glorified humanity united to the Godhead, is far more excellent than the angels of God, and more glorious than the sun, so is the power of God more abundantly demonstrated in him, than in the sun, or the angels, or any other creature. The illuminated do know this, "and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe; according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the celestials, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and hath given him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all," Eph. i. 19—23.

Besides this, even in the works of Christ for his church, his calling, and sanctifying, and ruling, and preserving them, his subduing their enemies, and raising them from the dead, and glorifying them with himself, how glorious is the very power of God by his Son! 2 Thess. i. 11; Phil. iii. 10; Eph. iii. 7, 20; 2 Pet. i. 3, 16; 1 Cor. iv. 20; Eph. vi. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 43; 1 Pet. i. 5; and, therefore, his gospel may well be called, "The power of God to salvation," Rom. i. 16; which hath been the instrument of his power in doing such wonderful works in the world, 1 Cor. i. 18; ii. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 7; xiii. 3, 4.

(5.) But the most sweet and conspicuous end of our redemption, was the demonstration of God's love and mercy to mankind, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy prepared unto glory, Rom. ix. 23. Of all God's attributes, there is none shineth more illustriously in the work of our redemption than love and mercy. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us," 1 John iii. 16. By the creation and sustentation of us we perceive the love of God, but more abundantly by our redemption. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him, 1 John iv. 9. O wonderful love, which condescendeth to such rebels, and embraceth such unworthy and polluted sinners, and pitieth them even in their blood! Even after we had sold ourselves to Satan, and cast away the mercies of our creation, and had all come short of the glory of God, and were sentenced to death, and ready for the execution, then did this wonderful love step in, and rescue and recover us. Not staying till we repented and cried for mercy, and cast ourselves at his feet; but seeking us in the wilderness, and finding us before we felt that we were lost,

and being found of us before we sought him, and beginning to love us in the depth of our misery. "Here-in is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 10. Though God love us not in our sin and misery before our conversion, so far as in that state to justify us, and adopt us, and take pleasure in us, or have communion with us in the Spirit, yet doth he so far love us in that state, as to redeem us by the blood of Christ, and tender us his salvation, and to bring in his chosen effectually to entertain his offer. And thus "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given to us; for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, and commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," Rom. v. 6, 8. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend," John xv. 13. What was the Son of God, but Love incarnate? Love born of a virgin, Love coming down from heaven to earth, and walking in flesh among the miserable, seeking and saving that which was lost. Was it not Love that spoke those words of life, those comfortable promises, those necessary precepts, those gracious encouragements, which the gospel doth abound with? Was it not Love itself that went preaching salvation to the sons of death, and deliverance to the captives, and offered to bind up broken hearts? Luke iv. 18. Was it not Love that invited the weary and heavy-laden, Matt. xi. 28; and that sent even to the highways and the hedges to compel men to come in, that his house may be filled, Matt. xxii. 9, 10; Luke xiv. 23. Was it not Love itself, that went up and down healing and doing good; that suffered them for whom he suffered, to scorn him, and spit upon him, and buffet him, and condemn him; that being reviled, reviled not again; that gave his life an offering for sin, and died and prayed for them that murdered him? No wonder if the gospel be it that teacheth us to call God by the name of Love itself, 1 John iv. 8; for it is the gospel that hath most fully revealed him to be so. No wonder if the gospel do so frequently and importunately require us to love one another, and even to lay down our lives for Christ, and for one another, when it hath given us such a ground, and motive, and precedent for our love. He that seeth the true face of redemption, and understandeth and savoureth the gospel, and the grace of Christ, must needs see most cogent reasons for such duties: 1 John iv. 7—12, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us." So 1 John iii. 10, 11, 14, 16—18. No wonder if, by this love, we know that we are translated from death to life; and if by it the children of God be known from the children of the devil, 1 John iii. 10, 11, 14; for love is the very nature and image of our Father. No wonder if this be the new commandment, which had newly such a powerful motive and precedent: and no wonder if it be the great distinguishing character, by which all men shall know that we are the disciples of Christ, John xiii. 35; when he had set us such a copy, and taught us this lesson by such effectual means, writing it out for us in lines of blood, even of his own most precious blood, and shedding it abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

But if we should come down to the particular benefits of Christ's death, and see what love is manifested in them, even in our calling, our justification,

our adoption or sanctification, our preservation, and our everlasting glorification, we should find ourselves in an ocean that hath neither banks nor bottom; and when we have fathomed as far as we can, we must be contented to stand and admire it, and to say with the beloved apostle, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" 1 John iii. 1.

And this is the blessed employment of the saints, which they are called to by the gospel, to live in the participation, and consideration, and admiration of this wondrous love, that "Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, and so being rooted and grounded in love, they may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God," Eph. iii. 17—19. And withal, "to be followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour," Eph. v. 1, 2. "And to love without dissimulation," Rom. xii. 9, 10. "Even from a pure heart fervently," 1 Pet. i. 22. "That we love as brethren, being compassionate, pitiful, and courteous; not rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing; knowing that we are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing," 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9. "And that we keep ourselves in the love of God," Jude 21; "that nothing may be able to separate us from it," Rom. viii. 35—37. And if we thus imitate our heavenly pattern, "the God of love and peace will be with us," 2 Cor. xiii. 11. And thus I have showed you the principal ends of the undertaking of Christ in the work of our redemption, especially as they are attained directly by his cross and resurrection.

(6.) Another end also is apparent in the Scripture; which is the glorifying of God's rewarding justice, together with his mercy in the salvation of his elect. This end he partly attaineth here. (God hath his ends continually.) In this life his servants have much of his mercy; and the beginnings of their reward in the beginning of their salvation; but the fulness is hereafter in their glorification. All his promises he performeth in their seasons. Even in the present pardon of our sins he honoureth his faithfulness and justice, 1 John i. 9. His faithfulness in making good his promise, and his justice in rewarding the performers of the condition, and giving what his promise had made their due; that so men may even here in part "discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not; while they see God's esteem of his people as his jewels, and spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him," Mal. iii. 17, 18. "The King of Zion is just, having salvation," Zech. ix. 8. The righteousness of God is manifested in our justification, Rom. iii. 21; "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," Rom. iii. 22—26.

But it is most eminently at judgment, and in the world to come, that this remunerative justice with mercy will be glorified. "When Christ shall come (purposely) to be glorified in his saints, and to be

admired in all them that believe," (not only in himself, but in them,) and that because they were believers, 2 Thess. i. 10. When "we have fought the good fight, and finished our course, and kept the faith, we shall find that there is laid up for us a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give us, and all that love his appearing at that day," 2 Tim. iv. 8. He will justify and applaud them before all the world, yea, and adjudge them to everlasting life, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. I will make thee ruler over many things;" even because they had been faithful in a little, Luke xix. 17; Matt. xxv. 21, 23. Because they showed their love to him in his members, he will say to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 34-36. He that now commandeth us to say to the righteous, "It shall be well with him," Isa. iii. 10, will in righteousness cause it then to be well with him. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," Matt. xiii. 43. And the righteousness and mercy of their Father shall as conspicuously and gloriously shine in them. For it is a day appointed for the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds," Rom. ii. 5, 6. "The present faith and patience of the saints in all the persecutions and tribulations which they endure, is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that they may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which they suffer. It being a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble us, and to us that are troubled rest with the saints," 2 Thess. i. 5-7. "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness," Psal. xi. 7. "And in righteousness will he judge the world," Acts xvii. 31; Rev. xix. 11. And, therefore, "in the keeping of his word there is a great reward," Psal. xix. 11. Yea, a cup of water given in love to him, shall not be unrewarded, Matt. x. 41, 42. "To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward," Prov. xi. 18. If in this life men are forced to say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth," Psal. lviii. 11; much more when we "receive the reward of the inheritance," Col. iii. 24. This causeth the saints to forsake the pleasures of sin, because they have respect to the recompence of reward, Heb. xi. 29. This is it that maketh them rejoice and be exceeding glad in their persecutions, because that great is their reward in heaven. And therefore it is that they cast not away their confidence, because it hath great recompence of reward, Heb. x. 25. If we let no man beguile us of our reward, Col. ii. 18, and if we look to ourselves that we lose not those things that we have wrought, we shall receive a full reward, 2 John 8. For the Lord hath said, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be," Rev. xxii. 12.

(7.) Another end of Christ's undertaking in this blessed work is, the complacency and glory of God in the love, and praise, and service of his redeemed ones; in some measure here, but in perfection when they are perfected. Sin had made us unserviceable to God; and Christ bringeth us back into a fitness for his service. He disposeth us God-ward by faith and love. And he hath "redeemed us from our iniquity, and purifieth to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. "To which he createth us, that we should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10. And with such sacrifice God is well pleased, Heb. xiii. 16; Phil. iv. 18. "The blood of the

covenant" was therefore shed, "to make us perfect in every good work to do his will, who worketh in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight," Heb. xiii. 20, 21. "And this must be our care, to walk worthy of the Lord in all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work," Col. i. 10. "And then whatsoever we ask, we shall receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight," 1 John iii. 22. See 1 Thess. i.; Heb. xi. 6; Rom. viii. 8; 2 Tim. ii. 4; 1 Cor. vii. 32; Heb. xi. 5.

But principally when we are glorified, and fitted by our perfection for the perfect love and praises of God, then will God perfectly take pleasure in us, and in our love and praise. The glory of the new Jerusalem, and the harmony of everlasting praise and thanksgiving, will be his delight. "He will rejoice over us with joy, he will rest in his love; he will joy over us with singing," Zeph. iii. 17.

(8.) Another end of Christ's undertaking this blessed work is, the everlasting glory of God which shall shine forth in the glorified manhood of the Redeemer, and the everlasting complacency that God will have in him, for his own perfection, and the work that he hath wrought.

Though Christ had no need to suffer for any sin or want of his own, yet was it his personal dignity, dominion, and everlasting glory, as well as our salvation, that was intended by him and by the Father in this work, and which he was to receive as the reward of his performances, Rom. xiv. 7; Phil. ii. 8-10; Matt. xxviii. 18, 19; Heb. i. 3, 4, 6; Eph. i. 22. Nay, if we may make comparisons, this seemeth the highest part of God's end in the sending of his Son. As there is no part of all the works of God to be compared to the person of the Redeemer, so consequently there is none in which the glory of God will shine forth so admirably and illustriously as in Christ. If on earth the heavenly voice bear witness that it was in "him that the Father was well-pleased," (Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5; xii. 18,) which was uttered both at his baptism, and his transfiguration, when his disciples saw a glimpse of his glory; and he was the "chosen servant of God, in whom his soul delighted," Isa. xlii. 1; much more is it apparent, that in his heavenly glory he will be the Father's everlasting pleasure and delight: and in him, and by him, and for the work that he hath wrought, the redeemed in glory will honour him for ever, Rev. v. 9. "He is the head of the body the church, the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell," Col. i. 17-19. And, therefore, in him the glory of God will shine in fulness, and he shall have the pre-eminence in the Father's everlasting love. When Christ prayed, (John xii. 28,) "Father, glorify thy name," he was answered by a voice from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again;" even in the Son that thus desired it. He hath done it on earth, and he will do it again more perfectly in heaven. "He hath glorified the Son, that the Son also may glorify him," John xvii. 1. As he "glorified his Father on earth, and finished the work which he gave him to do," so the Father hath now glorified him with himself, that in his glory he may be yet more glorified, John xvii. 4, 5. In his transfiguration his face did shine as the sun, John xvii. 2. And in his appearance to Paul, his shining light did cast him blindfold and trembling on the earth, Acts ix. 4, 6. It was Stephen's encouragement to the suffering of his martyrdom to see the glory of God, and Jesus standing on God's right hand, Acts vii. 55, 56. When John saw him on the Lord's day

in the Spirit, he beheld his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet like burning brass in the furnace, and his voice was as the sound of many waters, and in his right hand were the stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun that shineth in his strength, Rev. i. 14–16. His voice also did proclaim his glory: “I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death,” ver. 17, 18. It was the Lord of glory that was crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 8. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory, (1 Tim. iii. 16,) where he is glorified with the Father in the praises of the saints, Rev. xii. 13. The glory in the holy mount was great at the giving of the law; but it was no glory to that of the gospel administration, (2 Cor. iii. 7, 10,) much more to that of the glorified Redeemer, who hath overcome, and is set down with the Father in his throne, Rev. iii. 21. Yea, the glory that will be given to God for ever, will be through Jesus Christ, Rom. xvi. 17.

And indeed it is a very great question whether we shall immediately see the essence of God in heaven, or only see him in the glorified Redeemer; and whether Christ will not then be the Mediator of our fruition, as he was here the Mediator of acquisition. But certain we are, that God will be everlastingly pleased and glorified in the person of the Redeemer, as well as in the church which is his body.

(9.) And reductively it may be said to be God’s end in this blessed work, that he may more fully demonstrate his vindictive justice, according to the gospel, or law of the Redeemer, upon them that finally reject his grace, than it would have been manifested on the terms of the law of the creation on Adam and his offspring. Though Christ came not into the world (primarily) to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; yet was it his purpose that unbelievers that love darkness rather than light should fall under the special condemnation, John iii. 18, 19. And that they should not “see life, but the wrath of God should abide upon them,” ver. 36. God would not so much as permit them to reject his salvation, but that he knows how he may be no loser by them: “He suffereth with much patience the vessels of wrath, to make his wrath and power known,” Rom. ix. 22. The mouths of the condemned will be utterly stopped, and they will be left speechless, when they are judged on terms of grace, much more than they would have been if they had been judged only by the first law: when they see Christ and heaven that was offered them, and remember their wilful and obstinate contempt of them, their own consciences and tongues shall justify God, and confess that he is righteous in the dreadfulest of his judgments. “If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall they escape that neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and then was confirmed by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost,” Heb. ii. 3, 4. And “if they escaped not that refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not they escape that turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: for our God is a consuming fire,” Heb. xii. 25, 29. So much of the ends of Christ’s undertaking in our redemption.

In which you may see that there are divers things

which demonstrate the glory of the forementioned attributes of God, in this gospel dispensation. (1.) It shineth forth in the person of the Redeemer as he was on earth, in his nature and wonderful conception, and his perfections. (2.) And it also shineth forth in the actions of his life, overcoming the world and the devil, and perfectly fulfilling the law of God: so that the image of his Father did shine forth in his conversation. (3.) And also in his death and sufferings was the Father glorified, as I showed before. (4.) And also in the most wise and holy frame of those laws by which the grace of the Mediator is conveyed, and the church governed. (5.) And by the image of God, by the impress of those laws on the souls of his saints, and by the holiness of their lives, the glory of God is also demonstrated. (6.) As also by the justifying sentence of the Judge, and the glorious reward bestowed on the faithful. (7.) And by the condemning sentence and execution on the ungodly, in whom vindictive justice will be honoured. (8.) And in the perfection of the individual saints, and their perfect love and praise. (9.) And in the saints as embodied in the heavenly Jerusalem, the glory of which will be the glory of God. (10.) And principally in the blessed person and work of the Redeemer. In all these will God’s glory shine forth for ever.

Quest. But to whom is it that God doth thus demonstrate his glory?

Ans. 1. To the saints in this life, in that degree as is suited to a state of grace, and the condition of a traveller that lives by faith. We are apt to look upward, and long after fuller revelations of the heavenly kingdom and mystery, and marvel that God will not show himself more fully to his saints on earth. Fain we would know more of God and Christ, and the life to come; and it is oft matter of some temptation to us, that God doth not satisfy these desires, but leaveth them in so much darkness that are willing of his light. But this is because we do not consider how much of glory consisteth in the light; and that grace is more in the desires of it than in the possession: and if we should have as much of it as we desire, it were but to bring down heaven to earth. Means must be suited to their ends: God will discover to us so much of his glory as may quicken our desires, and keep alive our hope, and patience, and endeavours; but not so much as shall satisfy us, and answer our expectations: for heaven is not here. We must not carry our home about with us, but travel towards it, that we may reach it at the last.

2. God doth even now demonstrate the glory of his forementioned attributes, in the work of redemption, not only to his saints, but to the angels of heaven. The consideration of this hath often satisfied me, when I have been tempted to wonder at the work of redemption, that God should so far condescend as to be incarnate, and make such glorious discoveries of himself, and yet that so few in the world should take notice of it, and he should have from men so little of the honour that he seemeth by his preparations to expect. But the most part of the world did never once see the glory that shineth to them in the Redeemer. But God hath another world besides this, and other creatures besides man, in all likelihood incomparably more numerous, (perhaps thousands for one,) and certainly more excellent. And though Christ did not assume the nature of angels, and came not to redeem them that needed no Redeemer, yet may the lustre of this work of redemption appear to the angels more clearly than to man; and God may have a thousandfold more glory from them that are but the spectators and admirers, than

from us in our present darkness, that are yet possessors. As we that are here on earth do look upon and admire the glory of the sun, which is as it were in another world, and out of our reach; so the angels much more may gaze upon the glory of the Son of God, admire the Lord in the work of our redemption, though they were not the redeemed ones: so that unto them doth God shine forth by it in his excellences.

Perhaps you will say, That cannot be; because this is but seeing him in a glass; when the angels see him face to face, and immediately behold his blessed essence; or else how can the saints expect that beatifical vision? To which I answer; First, that I am uncertain whether seeing face to face be an immediate intuition of the essence of God, or only such a sight of his glory in those emanations, that are as appropriated to the place or state of bliss. God's essence is every where; but that glory is not every where: and so I know not whether our present knowledge be not called enigmatical, and as in a glass, comparatively to that glory prepared for the saints. But, secondly, I answer that certain I am that God is demonstrated to his angels in the Redeemer, yea, in the church itself, which is the subject of his grace, and that they are both affected and employed about us accordingly. He that spoiled principalities and powers, and openly triumphed over them, and by death overcame him that had the power of death, Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14, and had so much to do against the evil angels as enemies, no doubt is joyfully observed by the good angels. And he that is set so "far above principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named in this world, or that which is to come," Eph. i. 21; and is "gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him," 1 Pet. iii. 22; no doubt is honoured and admired by angels. And indeed it is expressly said, "Let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. i. 6. And what are they all but "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14; and therefore sent forth by Jesus Christ, the Lord of saints. Which makes some think that the title of angels was never given to any of these spirits, till the Mediator's undertaking; and that it was only as they were his deputed messengers, or servants, for the ends of that undertaking. Sure we are, they attended his birth with their acclamations, and his life and sufferings (as far as was meet) with their service, and that they are deputed to bear his servants in their hands, that they dash not their foot against a stone; that they are ascending and descending, and are present with the churches in their holy worship, and that they rejoice at the conversion of one sinner; and that the least of Christ's servants have their angels beholding the face of God; and that the law was given by their disposition or ordination, and they attend the departing souls of believers; and that they contend against evil spirits for our good, and are encamped about us, and that they shall attend the Lord at his coming to judgment, and be his glorious retinue and instruments in the work; and that they are numbered with us, as members of the same heavenly Jerusalem, and that we shall be like or equal to them, Luke ii. 14, 15; Mark iv. 11; Luke xxii. 43; Acts x. 6, 7, 22; Psal. xxxiv. 17; xci. 11; Matt. xiii. 39, 41; xvi. 27; xxiv. 31; xxv. 31; xxvi. 53; Luke xvi. 22; Matt. xviii. 10; 2 Thess. i. 7; Luke xx. 36; Mark xii. 25; Acts vii. 65; Gal. iii. 19; Heb. xii. 22; 2 Pet. ii. 11; Luke xv. 10; John i. 51. Yea, men must be either confessed or denied, owned or disowned, before the

angels, Luke xii. 8, 9. See Rev. xix. 18; iii. 5. But if all this seem not sufficient to persuade you that the angels are so far interested in the affairs of God about the redeemed, as to behold and admire him in this blessed work, take notice of the express affirmations of the Scriptures: 1 Pet. i. 12, "Which things the angels desire to look into." And why, but to see and admire the wisdom, and power, and goodness, and mercy, and justice of God, shining forth in the Redeemer? If this be not plain enough, mark well those words, Eph. iii. 10, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." You see here that the church of the redeemed is that admirable looking-glass, which God hath set up to this very intent, that his angels may in it or by it behold the manifold wisdom of God; yea, and that upon the full revelation of Christ by the gospel, they saw that which did more fully inform and illuminate them. No doubt but the very work of the creation, yea, of this inferior world, that is made for the habitation and use of man, is far better known to angels than to man: for we know but little of what we daily see and use; and consequently it is by angels, more than men, that God is beheld, admired, and glorified in them. And if it be so in these works of creation, we may well say it is so in the works of redemption.

3. But when we are perfected in glory, then we ourselves shall clearly see the glory of this mystery, and of God therein. As it is not till we come to heaven that we shall have the fullest benefits of redemption, so is it not till then, that we shall have the fullest understanding of it, and God have his fullest praises for it. As we are here but sowing the seed of our own glory, which we must reap in the everlasting fruition of God; so God is here but sowing those seeds of his praise and glory, which he will eternally reap by this blessed work. Do not therefore judge of the ends and fruits of Christ's undertakings, by what you see him attain on earth, but by what he shall attain in heaven, when he hath fully seen the travail of his soul to his satisfaction, and hath presented the whole church without spot unto God; and when the glorious marriage of the Lamb with the heavenly Jerusalem is solemnized, and the kingdom delivered up to the Father, Isa. liii. 11; Eph. v. 27; Rev. xix. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 24. It will be another manner of conceiving which we shall have in heaven of this blessed work, when we see the face of our glorified Lord, and fully possess the fruits of his redemption, than this is that we have now by our weak believing. We shall then have another manner of sight of the wisdom, and power, and love, and justice that appear in man in the face of Christ, than now we have.

4. Yea, the tormenting discoveries of the glory of redemption to the condemned rejectors of it, shall also contribute to the glory of God.

You see then that this work hath most glorious ends; which I have mentioned the more largely, both to remove their temptations that are apt to think that it was an unnecessary thing, and the less regardable, and to teach men the true value of it, by showing them the true ends.

For the former, I say, there was no necessity that God should make the world, and reveal his power, and wisdom, and goodness, in this excellent frame, but what did suppose the free-will of God the original cause. Will you therefore say, that the creation is vain; and undervalue God's admirable works, in which he thus revealeth himself to the intellectual creatures? So here; we confess that there could be no necessity of redemption, but what was origin-

ally derived from the will of God (though a necessity *ad finem* there was for the constitution of things, upon supposition of what went before the undertaking). But yet shall we undervalue so glorious a work, in which the divine perfections do so fully reveal themselves to the world?

And I say the more of this, because I do observe that it is the not apprehending the high and excellent ends of redemption, that makes it so much slighted, and consequently tempteth many to infidelity. For the ends and uses do set the value on the means. That is of little worth, that is to little purpose, and doth but little good. If men understood more the ends of redemption, and how much God doth shine forth in the world, in the person, and life, and laws, and works of the Son of God, they would then live in the admiration of it, and be always searching and prying into it, and desire to know nothing but God in Christ crucified, and account all things else but as loss and dung for this excellent knowledge. But, alas! the most do scarce discern any higher ends of Christ, or other use of him, than to save themselves from hell; and for want of faith, and through humiliation, they have but little sense of that: and therefore no wonder if the Redeemer be neglected, and God denied the honour of the work.

So much of this second point, the reasons and ends of Christ's undertaking. I shall purposely be shorter on the rest.

3. The third point to be understood concerning our Redeemer, is, What he hath done and suffered for mankind, and wherein his redeeming work consisted, both as to the general and special part. Should I stand on these at large, I must needs be voluminous; and therefore I shall but briefly recite them for your remembrance.

(1.) The first thing that Christ did for the saving of the world, was his interposing between offending man and the wrath of God; and so preserving the world from that destruction, which the execution of the violated law would have procured: undertaking then to become the seed of the woman, and so to break the serpent's head; and revealing this grace by slow degrees, till the time of his coming.

(2.) And then when the fulness of time was come, he was made man, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary; and so the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men, who beheld his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John i. 14. Thus God was manifested to men in the flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

(3.) And as he was perfectly holy in his nature, without any stain or guilt of original sin; so was he perfectly holy in his life, and never broke the least command of God in thought, word, or deed. Never could any convince him of sin, John viii. 46. He fulfilled the law of nature which all the world was under, and the Mosaic law which the Jews were under, and the special law that was given to himself as Mediator, and was common to no other creature in the world.

And thus he performed these excellent works. (1.) By the fulfilling of all righteousness he pleased the Father, always accomplishing his will; and so did much of the work of a Saviour, in meriting for us, Matt. iii. 15; v. 17; John viii. 22; Matt. xii. 18; xvii. 5; Rom. v. 19. "For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," Heb. vii. 26.

(2.) He hath conquered the tempter that conquered us. And therefore did he purposely yield himself to such sore temptations, Matt. iv.; that his victory

might be glorious, and the second Adam might overcome him that had overcome the first. And thus he hath done much to the rescue of the captivated.

(3.) Hereby also he hath overcome the world, which overcame the first Adam and his posterity; he trampled upon its seeming glory; he neglected and despised its baits and allurements; he went through all its cruel persecutions and oppositions: so that the world now, as well as the devil, are conquered things. By which he hath made way for the victory of his followers, and given them ground of great encouragement; John xvi. 33, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Yea, I may say in a sort, he hath overcome the flesh also. For though Christ had no corrupted flesh as we have to contend with, yet had he a natural and sensitive appetite, which the command of God did forbid him to fulfil. And therefore when innocent nature desired that the cup might pass from him, and abhor death by a simple averseness; yet perfect holiness permitted not this to proceed to a refusal by the comparing intellect, and choosing or refusing will; but saith, "Not my will, but thine be done." And when Christ was hungry and weary, the desire of food and rest by the sensitive appetite was no sin; but when the work of God forbade the fulfilling of such desires, he still denied them.

(4.) Hereby also he hath set us a perfect copy and pattern of obedience, and is become our example, whom we must endeavour to imitate. For he knew that it is the most effectual teaching, to do it by words and deeds together. It is a great help to us, when we do not only hear his voice, but see also which way he hath gone before us. When he saith, "Learn of me," he directs us not only to his words, but to himself, who was "meek and lowly," Matt. xi. 28.

(5.) Moreover Christ received of the Father fullness of the Spirit, and power, for the benefit of the redeemed; that he might be meet to be the Head and treasury of the church, and to shower down the streams of grace upon his members; and when all power was given him in heaven and earth, he might be fitted to the following application of his benefits, and to rule, and support, and defend his people.

(6.) Moreover he was pleased himself to become a preacher of the gospel of salvation, not to all the world, but principally as a minister of the circumcision, that is, the Jews, Rom. xv. 8. He that purchased salvation, condescended also to proclaim it. The preaching of the gospel is a work that Christ thought not himself too good for, sometimes to many, sometimes to one or two, as he had opportunity; often with tears, and always with earnestness and compassion, did he go about doing good, and seeking the lost, and healing the diseased, and calling men to faith and repentance, and offering them the grace and life which he purchased.

(7.) And he was pleased also to seal up his doctrine by his works, casting out devils, healing all diseases, raising the dead, and working divers other miracles, to assure them that he came from God, and did his work, and revealed his will, that so the world might have no excuse for their unbelief; but that they that would not believe upon any other account, might yet believe him for the sake of his works, John iii. 2; Acts ii. 22; Heb. ii. 4; John v. 36; x. 25, 38; xiv. 11, 12; xv. 24.

(8.) Besides all this, he gave up himself to a life of suffering, being despised by his creatures whom he came to redeem, and destitute voluntarily of fleshly pleasures, and of that riches and worldly pro-

vision that might procure it. He was a man of sorrows, afflicted from his youth, persecuted from the cradle; he gave his cheeks to the smiters, and his person to be made the scorn of fools; he was crowned with thorns, spit upon and buffeted; and having sweat water and blood, in his agony in the garden, he was hanged on a cross, where thieves were both his companions and revilers, where they gave him gall and vinegar to drink, pierced his blessed body with a spear, and put him to a shameful, cursed death. But he endured the cross, despising the shame, and gave up himself thus a sacrifice for sin, and bore our transgressions, that we might be healed by his stripes; and having ransomed us by his blood, he was buried as an offender, continuing for a time in the power of the grave, Isa. liii. throughout, Matt. xxvi. xxvii.; Heb. xii. 2. All this he consented to undergo, (though he consented not to the sin of them that did inflict it,) for he laid down his life, it was not taken from him against his will, John x. 17, 18.

(9.) Having thus paid the price of our reconciliation to God, the third day he rose again from the dead, though soldiers watch his grave; because he had foretold them that he would rise on the third day, yet were they soon daunted by the glory of an angel, that came and rolled away the stone. And so Christ made known his divine power and victory, and the finishing of his work: and as by death he overcame him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, Heb. iii. 14, so by his resurrection he triumphed over death itself. For how should the grave detain the innocent, and death overcome the Lord of life? This was the glorious day of triumph; in remembrance of this he appointed the Lord's day to be observed by the church. The resurrection of Christ was the confusion of all the powers of darkness; the great argument to confirm the truth of his doctrine, and prove his Godhead to the unbelieving world.

(10.) Being risen, he more fully revealed his gospel, and sent forth his apostles and disciples, to proclaim the offers of life to the world, and settle the churches in a holy order when they had gathered them, and to ordain such ministers to succeed them, as might carry on his work to the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. And thus he is the faithful Lawgiver to the church.

(11.) When he had abode thus forty days on earth, he ascended up into heaven, while his disciples stood by, and gazed after him, Acts i. 9, 10; and there hath taken possession in our nature, advancing it to the Father's right hand in glory, which was by sin depressed so low in misery. And so he is gone to prepare a place for us, leaving us a certain word of promise that he "will come again, and take us to himself, that where he is there we may be also," John xiv. 2, 3. And as "our life now is hid there with Christ in God, so when he shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 3, 4.

(12.) Being ascended, he manifested his power and his truth in sending down the Holy Ghost upon his disciples, enabling them to do such works as he had done, and such as were necessary to convince the unbelieving world, and to conquer the opposing wisdom and power of the flesh; enabling them to speak in variety of languages, which they had never before learned; as also to understand and powerfully preach the mysteries of the gospel, to confirm their doctrine by miracles, healing the lame, the blind, the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, and conquering the resistance of principalities and powers, in seeming weakness, and in a contemptible garb. Not to speak now of the sanctifying work

of the same Spirit, on them and on the rest of the church.

(13.) Lastly, In this glory Christ intercedeth for us, and is our High Priest in the heavens with God, living for ever, procuring and conveying to us the mercies which we need upon the account of his sacrifice; ruling his church, and preserving them; succeeding his cause and servants; restraining and subduing his enemies and ours; and will perfect his work at the day of his coming to judgment. So much of the works of Christ.

4. The fourth point to be understood concerning our redemption, is, The nature and worth of the benefits that are procured for us. Which though you may gather much from what is said, and the full handling of them would be a larger work than is suitable to my present ends, yet such a brief recital I shall here give you, as my ends require.

In general, we have all from Jesus the Mediator that is worth the having; even all the blessings of this present life, and of the life to come. As we lost our right to all by sin, so we have our restored right by Christ alone, who came to destroy sin and its effects. Had not he interposed, we might have had materially life, and natural faculties, and other things which now are mercies; but not as mercies, but as the requisites to our deserved punishment: even as the devils have their being and natural perfections to sustain them in their sufferings. Nature itself, so far as good, and all natural blessings, are now of grace: and that not only of such grace as they were to Adam, which was mercy without proper merit; but of gospel grace procured by Christ, which is mercy contrary to merit. It is no sounder doctrine to say, that God doth without the merit of his Son bestow our common forfeited mercies, either on the elect or others, than that he giveth us his saving grace without it. As all things are delivered into the hands of Christ, (John xiii. 3,) so none can receive any good but from his hands. To give mercies to men that forfeit them, and deserve misery, is so far to pardon their sin; for to remit the sin, is to remit the punishment. But the Scripture is not acquainted with any pardon of sin, but what is on the account of the merits of Christ. They that deny this mercy of God, in giving even to the ungodly such a measure of forgiveness, do speak against the daily and hourly experience of all the world; and therefore need no other confutation.

More particularly, (1.) Christ having taken the human nature into union with the divine, our nature is thereby unconceivably advanced, and brought nigh to God.

(2.) Having fulfilled the law and offered himself a sacrifice for sin, God's justice, and wisdom, and holiness, and goodness, are admirably demonstrated: and this sacrifice is both satisfactory and meritorious on our behalf, Heb. i. 3; 2 Cor. v. 19; Heb. ix. 26; x. 12.

(3.) The world, and the devil, and death, and the grave, are conquered by him, in preparation to our conquest.

(4.) The Lord Jesus himself being risen, and justified, hath received all power in heaven and earth, Matt. xxviii. 19; and is enabled to do all things that are necessary for his further ends. As the Redeemer he is become Lord of ourselves, and of all we have; and he is made the Sovereign Ruler of all, having full power to relax the law that cursed, and to deal with the world on terms of grace.

(5.) Accordingly he hath kept off the stroke of the rigorous justice of God, and hindered the strict execution of the law of works, and giveth still abundance of forfeited mercies to the sinful world, keeping them

from deserved torments, while he is treating them on terms of life.

(6.) He hath made a universal deed of gift of Christ and life to all the world, on condition that they will but accept the offer, 1 John v. 10—12; John i. 11, 12; iii. 16—19. In this testament, or promise, or act of oblivion, the sins of all the world are conditionally pardoned, and they are conditionally justified and reconciled to God.

(7.) He hath given apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, to proclaim this act of grace to the world, commanding them to go into all the world, and preach this gospel to every creature, and promise salvation to all that by faith will become his true disciples, Mark xvi. 16; Matt. xxviii. 20, 22. So that their promulgation is universal.

(8.) Though his servants have most lamentably neglected their duty, and have not gone abroad in the world, to divulge the gospel according to his will, imagining that this work had been proper to the apostles; and though the nations have sinfully neglected a due inquiry after this blessed light; yet hath he not left himself among them without witness, but hath given them some dawning of the day, or some moonlight in the reflections of evangelical truth, who have not seen the sun itself. Much mercy they have had notwithstanding their transgressions; and while they served devils, they have been provided for by God, "in whom they live, and move, and have their being;" "doing them good, and giving them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness;" and this to teach them, "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of them," Acts xiv. 17; xvii. 27, 28. "And that which may be known of God, is manifest among them, for God hath showed it to them; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse," Rom. i. 19, 20. By experience they may find, that God dealeth not now in rigour of justice, but on terms of grace, and that sin is not now unpardonable; and they should know that the "goodness of God leadeth them to repentance," Rom. ii. 4.

(9.) As the gospel conditionally pardoneth all their sins, and offereth them everlasting life, so it containeth the clearest reasons, and most effectual motives, to persuade them to accept the offer. It affordeth them most excellent precepts, and instructions, and exhortations, and other helps to bring them to a willingness, that salvation may be theirs.

(10.) To which also is added abundance of outward, providential helps, to further the working of the gospel; as seasonable afflictions and mercies of divers sorts.

(11.) And with these is usually concurrent some inward motions, and assistance of the Holy Ghost; as knocking at the door, where he is not yet let in and entertained.

(12.) And by their presence in the visible church, even the ungodly have many benefits in the ordinances, and instructions, and examples of the saints. All these (besides a resurrection) are the common effects of general redemption, and not appropriated to the elect.

Besides which there are others that the elect only do receive. As, (1.) God is pleased by effectual grace to draw them to his Son, and make the gospel successful to their conversion, insuperably teaching and changing them by his Spirit, and causing them to repent, and believe in Christ, and to perform the

conditions of his forementioned promises. That love that brought the Lord on earth, that clothed him with flesh, that lifted him up upon the cross, doth stream forth in his season into the hearts of his elect, and toucheth them with a changing power, and winneth them to his Father and himself, and droppeth into them those heavenly principles which will grow up in them to everlasting life.

(2.) Hereupon the soul believing in Christ is united to him, as a member of his body, even of his true catholic church; and Christ is become the Head, the Husband, the Lord, the Saviour of that soul in a special sort. Christ himself is first given to us in these relations; and from him as our Head, his following benefits are conveyed. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life; for this life is in the Son," 1 John v. 11, 12. He is the vine, and we are the branches, and out of him we can do nothing, John xv. 1, 2, 5. As it was not we that purchased our own salvation, so it is not we, but Christ, that must have the keeping and dispensing of the purchased benefits. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and that he should be the Head over all things to his church," that it might by communication become his fulness, Col. i. 19; Ephes. i. 22, 23. He is our treasury, and from him we must have our continual supplies; for "with him the Father will give us all things," Rom. viii. 32. And thus Christ will "dwell in our hearts by faith," Eph. iii. 17, and set up the kingdom of God within us.

(3.) Hereupon we have the pardon of all our sins; not only as to the temporal punishment, nor only as to the bestowing of temporal mercies, or common helps of creatures, and providences; for this is but a "winking at the days of our ignorance," Acts xvii. 30, in comparison of the pardon which afterward we receive. Nor is it only a conditional or offered pardon; but it is an actual remission of the eternal, and of all the destructive, punishment. And thus we are justified from all that might be charged on us from the law, and accepted, and used as just by God. There is a kind of forgiveness that was promised to the sacrificers, Lev. iv. 20, 26, 31, 35; v. 10, 13, 16, 18; vi. 7; Numb. xv. 28. But as that was upon Christ's account, so it extended not to the pardon of the eternal punishment to any but true believers. He that was once crucified, "is exalted by God's right hand, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31. "Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts xiii. 38, 39. When our eyes are open, and we "are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," we then "receive remission of our sins," Acts xxvi. 18. When we are "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ; in him we have then redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," Col. i. 13, 14. And "blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin," Rom. iv. 7. And now "who shall condemn us? It is God that justifieth us: for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1, 33, 34.

(4.) With this benefit doth concur, our reconciliation to God, and our adoption; by which we are made his sons, and God is pleased to own us as our Father. For being one with Christ the Son of God, we are sons by him. For "to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons

of God, even to them that believe in his name," John i. 12. This is the wonderful love that the Father hath bestowed on those that were his enemies; that they should not only be reconciled to him by the death of his Son, but also be called the sons of God, Rom. v. 10; 1 John iii. 1. For he hath "chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved," Ephes. i. 4-6. Oh what an unspeakable mercy is it to have the blessed God, whom we had so oft offended, to become our reconciled Father in Christ! For it is not an empty title that he assumeth; but he hath more abundant love to us, and tenderness of our welfare, than any title can make us understand.

(5.) And hereupon it doth immediately follow, that we have a right to the blessed inheritance of his sons, and are certain heirs of his heavenly kingdom, Col. i. 12. For if "sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. "Being saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and justified by grace through Jesus Christ, we are made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life," Tit. iii. 5-7. "Being begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us," 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

(6.) Withal, the Holy Ghost is given to us, not only to close us at first with Christ, but to take up his abode in us as his temples, and to be the agent and life of Christ within us, and to do his work, and maintain his interest, and cleanse us of all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and sanctify us throughout, and to strive against and conquer the flesh, and to keep us by divine power through faith unto salvation, 1 Cor. vi. 19; Gal. v. 17, 22; 2 Cor. vi. 1; 1 Pet. i. 5. For "because we are sons, God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6. This Spirit of adoption which we receive doth "bear witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 15, 16. For "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. By this Spirit is the spirit of the world cast out of us; the spirit of pride, and of blindness, and of delusion, and hard-heartedness, and of sensuality, and malice, and hypocrisy are cast out. By this is God's image imprinted on our souls; we are conformed to his blessed will; "we are made partakers of the divine nature, being holy as God is holy," Col. iii. 10; 2 Pet. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 16. Hereby also we are fitted for the service of God, to which before we were undisposed and unfit. Oh what an ease is it to the soul, to be free from so much of the burden of sin! What an honour is it to have the Spirit of God within us, and to have a nature so truly heavenly and divine! How can it go ill with him that hath "God dwelling in him, and that dwells in God?" 1 John iv. 15.

(7.) Another of our precious benefits by Christ is, that we shall be actually employed in the special and nearest service of God that on earth is to be performed. Let diseased souls desire idleness; and swinish sinners take pleasure in the mire, and feed like ravenous beasts on carrion, or as dogs on dung. But the saints will ever rejoice in God, and take it for the most blessed life on earth, when they can do him the greatest service. Let his enemies that hate his service be weary of it, as if it were a toil or drudgery; but his children will desire no sweeter

work. They never think themselves so well as when they are most serviceable to their blessed Lord, though at the greatest cost and labour to the flesh. So sweet is God's service, that the more of it we can do, the more is our pleasure, and honour, and content. Other work spendeth strength, but this increaseth it. Other work must have recreation intermixed, but this is itself the most delightful recreation. Other service is undertaken for the love of the wages, but this is undertaken for the love of the Master and the work, and is wages itself to them that go through with it. For other service is but a means, and that to some inferior end; but this is a means to the everlasting perfection and blessedness of the soul; and such a means as containeth, or presently procureth, somewhat of the end. All the saints are even here "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that they shall show forth the praises of him that hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light: they are a holy priesthood, to offer up a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. Their very bodies are "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, in their reasonable service." What a sweet work is it to live in the daily love of God, in his praises, in the hopes and sweet forethoughts of everlasting joys! The world affordeth not such a Master, nor such a work.

(8.) Another of the precious benefits by Christ is, the liberty of access in all our wants to God by prayer, with a promise to be heard. The flaming sword did keep the way to the tree of life, till Christ had taken it down, and consecrated for us a new and living way, through the vail, which is his flesh. And now we have "boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus; and, therefore, may draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," Heb. x. 19, 20, 22. When worldlings may cry to their Baal in vain, the "righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their (hurtful) troubles." Oh what a mercy is it in our falls, in our distresses, in our dangers, in our wants, to have a God, a faithful, merciful Father, to go to, and make our moan to for relief! What a mercy is it, when our flesh and our hearts do fail us, when friends and worldly things all fail us, to have God for the rock of our hearts, of our portion! Psal. lxxiii. 26. When sickness begins to break these bodies, and earthly delights do all forsake us, and death calls us to come to our endless state, then to have a reconciled Father to go to, and crave his aid, upon the encouragement of a promise, and recommend our souls into his hand as to a faithful Creator, and our surest, dearest Friend; this is a mercy that no man can well value till they come to use it. To know every day, that as oft as ever we come to God, we are always welcome, and that our persons and prayers are pleasing to him through his Son, what a mercy is it! One would think we should live joyfully, if we had but one such promise as this for faith to live upon: "Call upon me in the days of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," Psal. i. 15. " whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son," John xiv. 13, 14. No wonder if they be rich, that have so free access to such a treasure; and if they be safe, that have access to so sure a help. For God is "a very present help in trouble," Psal. xli. 1.

(9.) Another precious benefit is, that we have peace of conscience, or ground for it at the least, in our peace with God; and so may come to assurance of salvation, and may partake of the joy in the Holy Ghost. For in this peace and joy the kingdom of

God doth much consist. When the chief cause of all our fear and sorrow is done away, what then is left to break our peace? When we have no cause to fear the flames of hell, nor the sting of death, or the appearance of our Judge, any further than to move us to make ready, what then should greatly trouble the soul? If God and heaven be not matter of comfort, I know not what is. If we saw a man that had got many kingdoms, to be still sad and dumphish, because he had no more, we would say, he were very ambitious or covetous; and yet he might have reason for it. But if you have the love of God, and a title by promise to the heavenly inheritance, and yet you are discontented, and God and glory is not enough for you, this is most unreasonable.

(10.) Another of our precious benefits by Christ is, our spiritual communion with his church and holy members. We do not only join with them in outward communion, but we unite our desires, and there is a harmony of affections. We are in the main of one mind, and will, and way, and we jointly constitute the body of our Lord. "We are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," Heb. xii. 22—24. We are joined to that body, and have communion with it, which consisteth both of militant and triumphant saints, and of the angels also. "We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord; in whom we also are builded together, for a habitation of God, through the Spirit," Ephes. ii. 19—22. And as in holy concord we serve the Lord, having one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one rule, the word of God; one mind, one heart, one work of holiness and righteousness in the main; one hope, one heaven, the place of our expectations: so have we the fruit of the prayers of each other, and of all the church, and have the honour, the safety, and other benefits of being members of so blessed a society.

Yea, we have in this communion, the whole church obliged, and disposed according to their capacity, to endeavour the good of every member. So that ministers and magistrates, yea, though they were apostles and prophets, Paul or Apollos, all are ours, 1 Cor. iii. 22. Kings have their power for us, and for us they must use it. If we suffer, every member must be as forward to assist us, and if we want, to relieve us, according to their power, as if they suffered with us, 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.

Yea, the angels are our brethren (Rev. xxii. 9) and fellow-servants, yea, "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation," Heb. i. 14; to "encamp about them, and to bear them in their arms," rejoicing to behold their graces and prosperity, as was showed before.

(11.) Another of our precious benefits by Christ, is, that "All things shall work together for our good," Rom. viii. 28. When we are sanctified to God, all things are sanctified to us, to serve us for God, and help us to him. Every creature that we have to do with, is, as it were, another thing to the saints than to other men. They are all wheels in that universal engine of grace, to carry us to salvation. The same things that are common mercies to others, are special to us, as proceeding from a special love, and

being designed to a special use. As flesh-pleasing is the ultimate end of the ungodly, and all things are thereby debased, to be but means to that ignoble end; so the pleasing and fruition of God, is the end of all the saints, and thereby all things that they have to do with, are advanced to the honour of being sanctified means to this most high and noble end: and as they are engaged to use them to this end, and consequently to their own greatest advantage; so God hath engaged himself to bless them in that holy use, and to cause them all by his gracious providence to co-operate to their good. The greatest afflictions, the cruellest persecutions from the most violent enemies, our wants, our weaknesses, and death itself, all must concur to carry on this work. What then should a christian fear, but sin? How honourable and how happy a life may he live, that hath all these assured for his service! And what causeless fears are they that use to afflict the servants of God, concerning their outward troubles and necessities! What do we fear, and groan under, and complain of, but our Father's physic, and the means of our salvation? If this one truth were but believed, and received, and used according to its worth, oh what a life would christians live!

(12.) The last and greatest of our benefits by Christ is, resurrection, and our justification at the bar of God, and our reception into glory. This is the end of all, and therefore containeth all. For this Christ died; for this we are christians; for this we believe, hope, and labour; for this we suffer, and deny ourselves, and renounce this world. Our bodies shall then be spiritual and glorious, no more troubled with infirmities, diseases, or necessities. Our souls shall be both naturally and graciously perfected, both in their faculties and qualities. We shall be brought nigh to God; we shall be numbered with the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, and be members of that blessed society, and companions and equal with the angels of God; we shall for ever behold our glorified Redeemer, and see our own nature united to the Godhead; and we shall have the greatest and nearest intuition and fruition of God, the fullest love to him, and the sweetest rest, content, and delight in him, that our created natures are capable of: we shall everlastingly be employed in this love and delight, and in his praises with all the heavenly host; and the glory of God will shine forth in our glory, and the abundance of his goodness will be communicated to us; and he will be well-pleased with us, with our praises, with all that blessed society, and with our Head: and this will endure to all eternity.

Christians, I have now named, in a few words, those benefits by Christ, which the heart of man is not able to value, in any proportion to their unexpressible worth: I have named that in an hour, which you will enjoy for ever. So much of our benefits by Christ.

5. The fifth point to be understood in the right knowledge of Christ, is, The terms on which he conveyeth his benefits to men, and how we must be made partakers of them.

And these mercies are of two sorts: 1. Common. 2. Proper to them that are heirs of salvation. The common are, 1. Those discoveries of grace, that are made even to heathens in the creatures, and the merciful providences of God. These are absolutely and freely bestowed in some measure on all, but in a greater measure upon some, as pleases the giver. 2. The supernatural or instituted means of revealing Christ and life to the world, and drawing them to a saving consent of faith. These are the gospel written and preached, with other concomitant helps.

The commission Christ hath given to his ambassadors, is to teach this gospel to all the world, even to every (reasonable) creature, without exception or restriction. And it is absolutely and freely given, where it is given. But as to the providential disposal of the event, God causeth it not to be sent to all, but to whom he seeth meet.

The proper or special mercies are of two sorts: (1.) Some are physical inherent qualities, or performed acts. (2.) And some are adherent rights, or relations.

Of the former inherent sort, there are these three degrees: (1.) There is the first special work of vocation, conversion, or regeneration, causing the sinner to repent and believe, and giving him the principle of spiritual life. (2.) There is the bestowing of the indwelling Spirit of God, and progressive sanctification of heart and life, and perseverance with victory. (3.) There is the perfecting of all this, in our glorious perfection in the life to come.

(1.) For the first of these, God hath not promised it conditionally or absolutely to any individual person that hath it not. He hath bound all to repent and believe, but hath not promised to make them do it. (Only he hath revealed that there are certain persons so given to Christ, as that they shall be infallibly drawn to believe.) But he hath appointed certain means for the ungodly, which they are bound to use in order to their conversion; and if they will not use them, they are without excuse. If they will, they have very much encouragement from God, both [1.] In the nature of the means, which are fitted to their ends, and are mighty to bring down all oppositions; and [2.] In the commands and institution of God; whose wisdom and goodness may easily resolve us, that he will not appoint us means in vain, nor set his creatures on fruitless labour: and [3.] Also from the issue; for no man can stand forth and say, Such a one did his best in the use of means, and yet could not attain the end, but fell short of the grace and glory of God.

The diseases of men's souls are wilfulness and blindness; the means of cure are the persuasions, with the revelations of the gospel. Men have two natural powers, of understanding and willing; but they want that right disposition which we call the habit, or moral power, which is no more than to say, They are habitually blind and wilful. It is so far from being unreasonable to teach and persuade men that are under such an impotency as this, that there is nothing in the world that doth more bespeak our teaching and persuasions; for this is the natural and instituted way to cure them, and give them power. What means of overcoming ignorance like teaching? And what means of overcoming habituated wilfulness, like persuasion, added to informing truths? We do not use to reason men out of a natural impotency, nor to persuade them to do that for which they have no faculties or object; but it is the very means of overcoming a moral impotency, and making men willing of the good which they rejected. And with this means doth God set in, and infallibly cause it to be effectual with his chosen. Thus no man cometh to the Son, except the Father draw him; and then for the two following degrees of holiness in our sanctification, and glorious perfection, God hath promised them to those that have this first degree. For the Spirit of holiness is promised to all that truly repent and believe, and salvation to all that are sanctified and persevere. So that the right to these inheritance mercies, being a relation, is conveyed to other rights and relations, of which we are next to speak.

(2.) As the Spirit by the operation of the word

upon the heart conveyeth the foresaid inherent benefits, or qualities and acts, so the promise of grace, indited by Christ and the Spirit, doth as a deed of gift, or testament, or act of oblivion, bestow on us our rights and spiritual relations; and from these they do result, as the immediate instrumental cause. Thus doth he give "power or right to as many as receive him, to become the sons of God," John i. 12. Thus doth he give us pardon, justification, adoption, and our right to further grace and glory. And these promises are conditional; and our repenting and believing in Christ, is the condition. And therefore till conversion do bring us to repent and believe, we have no right to any of these benefits of the promise. And therefore though our repentance and faith be none of the proper cause of our justification, or right; yet the main work, in order to the procurement of these benefits, that is now to be done, is to persuade the sinner to repent and believe; to turn that he may live; for God's act of grace is past already, and the conditional pardon is granted long ago, and will effectually pardon us as soon as we perform the condition, and not before. Till then, we hinder the efficacy of the deed of gift; for unbelief and impenitency are true causes of men's condemnation, though faith and repentance be no proper causes of their salvation.

These promises being conditional, we cannot be assured of our part in the benefits, but by being assured that we perform the condition. By this you may see the nature of presumption; when men say, they believe that which never was promised; or believe that they have right to the blessings that are promised to others, and thus they believe that they shall have the benefits promised, when they perform not the conditions; all this is presuming, and not true believing. If men believe that God is reconciled to them, and will pardon them, and justify them, and save them, when they are unconverted, impenitent, unregenerate men; this is not indeed a believing of God, that hath never made them any such promise, nor ever told them any such matter, but the contrary; but it is a believing the false delusions of the devil and their own hearts. He that will claim any title to Christ, and pardon, and salvation, must have something more to show for it than you; and more than the most of the world have to show; for the most shall be shut out. Every man, therefore, that regardeth his salvation, must seriously ask his soul this question, What have I to show for my title to salvation, more than the most of the world can show? It is not saying, I hope to be saved, that will serve the turn, except I can give a reason of my hope. Thousands that lay claim to salvation shall miss of it, because they have no title to it. And that which you must have to show, is this, A promise or deed of gift on God's part, and the fulfilling of the condition on your part. God saith to all men, "Whosoever repenteth, believeth, or is converted, shall be saved." When you have found that you repent of all your sins, and truly believe, and are converted to God, then, and not till then, you may conclude that you shall be saved.

6. The sixth point to be understood and believed, concerning these benefits of Christ, is, The infallible certainty of them. While men look on the promised glory to come, as on an uncertain thing, they will hardly be drawn to venture and let go the profits and pleasures of the world to attain it; much less to part with life itself. The life of all our christian motion, is the unfeigned belief of the truth of God's word, and specially of the unseen things of the world to come. Such as men's belief of heaven and hell is, such will be the bent of their hearts, and the

course of their lives, and such and such they will be in yielding to sin, or in resisting it, and in all the service they do for God. As all men would take another course, if they did but see heaven and hell with their eyes; so all men would presently throw away their worldly, fleshly pleasures, and turn to God and a holy life, if they did but as thoroughly believe the joys and torments to come, as if they saw them. Flesh and blood can hardly judge of things without the help of sense; and fleshly men take all things to be phantasms or nothings, that are not within the judgment of their senses. They must see it, or feel it, or taste it, or hear it; and believing is a way that hardly satisfies them; though it be God himself that they are to believe. Believing is trusting the credit of another; and we are naturally loth to trust to any but our eyes or other senses. We are so false ourselves, that we are ready to measure God by ourselves; and to think that he is a deceiver, because that we are such. And hence it is that the world is so ungodly that they venture on sin, and will not be at the cost and labour of a heavenly life; because they take the matters of the life to come, to be but uncertainties, and have not so true a belief of them, as might possess them with a deep apprehension of their reality. How should the word profit them, that mix it not with faith, Heb. iv. 2, unless by begetting faith itself? Oh what a change would a sound belief of the Scriptures make in the world! But having spoken so oft of this in other writings, I shall say no more of it now. So much of the knowledge of Christ.

II. I have showed you the first part of this direction, How Christ must be received understandingly; I now come to the second, which is, That he must be received heartily. As God must be beloved, so Christ must be believed in, with all the heart, and soul, and strength; if not with all in a perfect degree, (for that will not be till we come to heaven,) yet with all in a predominant, prevalent degree. There are many convictions, and good meanings, and wishes, and purposes, which may proceed from common grace, and be found in those that never shall be saved: these may be called (analogically) faith, and love, and desire, as those that are found in the truly regenerate; and yet the persons in whom they are found, may not fitly be called believers or lovers of God; because a man is to be denominated from that in him which is predominant, and hath the chief power on his heart. The soul of man is not so simple as to move but one way: its state in this life is to stand between two differing competitors, God and the world, spirit and flesh; and there is no man that is totally given up to either of them. No man is so good and spiritual, that hath not something in him that is bad and carnal; and no man is so fully addicted to God, but the creature hath too much interest in his heart. Nor is there any man so given up to the creature, in whom God hath no manner of interest at all, in his estimation and affections; if he indeed believe that there is a God. At least it is not so with all that are unconverted. Otherwise, 1. What is it that common grace doth, if it no whit dispose them towards God? Certainly it would not else be grace. 2. And if this were not so, then we must say, that no unregenerate man hath any good in him, that is truly moral; for if there be no interest of God in his mind or will, there can be no good in him. But this is contrary to Scripture and experience. It was undoubtedly some moral good, which Christ loved the man for, in Mark x. 21, who was not far from the kingdom of God. 3. Otherwise all men must be equally departed from God, which is contrary to experience. 4. Yea, all men must be as

bad on earth (privately) as in hell; which certainly is false. I may well say, that on earth there is some good in the worst; much more in those that are almost persuaded to be converted christians. Many a thought of the goodness of God, and the necessity of a Saviour, and of the love of Christ, and of the joys of heaven, may be stirring and working in the minds of the unsanctified; but if they take not up the heart for Christ, the person is not a true believer. As the gospel must be believed to be true, so Christ that is offered us in the gospel as good, must be heartily and thankfully accepted accordingly: and the glory, the justification, reconciliation with God, and other benefits procured by him, and offered with him, must be valued and desired above all earthly, fleshly things. If you are convinced that sin is evil, as contrary to God, and hurtful to you, and hereupon have some mind to let it go, and some wishes that Christ would save you from it, and yet still have a love to it that is greater than your dislike; and the bent of your hearts is more for it than against it, and your habitual desires are rather to keep than to leave it: this is not sanctification, nor a saving consent to be saved by Christ. If you have some convictions that holiness is good, as being the image of God, and pleasing to him, and necessary to your salvation, and so should have some mind of holiness on these grounds; yet if you have on the other side a greater averseness to it, because it would deprive you of the pleasures of your sin, and the habitual inclination of your will is more against it than for it; certainly this will not stand with true sanctification, of faith in Christ, to save you from the power of sin by his Spirit. Thousands deceive themselves, by misunderstanding some common passages, that are spoken to comfort afflicted consciences: viz. That the least true desires after grace, do prove the soul to be gracious. This is true, if you speak of the least desires which are predominant in the soul; when our desire is more habitually than our unwillingness, and we thus prefer Christ before all the world, the least of this is an evidence of saving grace. But such desires as are subdued by the contrary desires; and such a will as is accompanied with a greater unwillingness, habitually; and such a faith as is drowned in greater unbelief; these are not evidences of a saving change; nor can you justly gather any special comfort from them. He that hath more unbelief than belief, is not to be called a believer, but an unbeliever; and he that hath more hatred or dislike of God and holiness than love to them, is not to be called godly, but ungodly, nor a lover of God, but a hater of him. I am easily persuaded, that many of you that are ungodly could be contented that God be glorified, if his glory do not cross your carnal interest; and so you desire God's glory even for itself, as that which is absolutely good in itself: but if your fleshly interest be so dear to you, that you will sacrifice God's glory to it, and had rather God were dishonoured than your fleshly interest contradicted, it is your flesh then that is made your god, and your chief end. It is not every wish, or minding of Christ, no, not to save you from sin as sin, that will prove you true believers: nor is it every minding of God, or love to him, no, not as one apprehended by you to be the chiefest good, and desirable for himself, as your end, that will prove indeed that you savingly love him; as long as the contrary mind and will is habitually predominant in you. Such as the very habit and bent of a man's heart is, such indeed is the man. It is possible for a man, even a good man, to have two contrary ends and intentions, yea, ultimate ends; as that which is desired for itself, and referred to

nothing else, is called ultimate; but it is not possible for him to have two principal, predominant ends. So far as we are carnal still, we make the pleasing of our flesh our ultimate end; for doubtless we do not sin only by pleasing the flesh, as a means to God's glory; nor only in the mischoosing of other means; but yet this is none of our principal end, so far as men are truly sanctified. And because that is called a man's mind, or will, which is the chiefest and highest in his mind and will; therefore we use to denominate men from that only which beareth rule in them: and thus we may say with Paul, "It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me." For a disowned act that proceedeth from us, against the bent and habit of our wills, and the course of our lives, from the remnants of a carnal, misguided will, is not it that must denominate the person, nor is so fully ours as the contrary act. And therefore though indeed we sinfully participate of it; yet when the question is, whether believing or unbelief, sinning or obeying, be my work, it is not comparatively to be called mine, which I am much more against than for. So on the other side, if the unsanctified have some transient, superficial, ineffectual acts of desire, or faith, or love to God, which are contrary to the bent and habit of their hearts, this is not theirs, nor imputable to them, so far as hence to give them their denomination. It is not they that do it, but the common workings of the Spirit upon them.

If ever then you would be assured that you are christians, look to the habitual bent of your hearts, and see that you do not only talk of Scripture, and slightly believe it, and speak well of Christ, with some good wishes, and meanings, and purposes; but as you love your souls, see that Christ be received as your dearest Saviour, with thankfulness and greatest love, and as your sovereign Lord, with true subjection; and that he have your superlative estimation and affections, and all things in the world be put under him in your souls. This must be so, if you will have the portion of believers: no faith that is short of this will prove you Christ's disciples indeed, or heirs of the promises made to believers. The voice of Christ that calls to you in the gospel, is, "My son, give me thy heart," Prov. xxiii. 26. Do what thou wilt in ways of duty, and think as highly as thou wilt of thyself, thou art no true believer in Christ's account till thou hast given him thy heart. If he have thy tongue, if he have thy good opinion, nay, if thy body were burnt in his cause, if he had not thy love, thy heart, it were as nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. 3; for thy works and sufferings are so far acceptable (through Christ) as they are testimonies of this, that Christ hath thy heart. If he have not thy heart, he takes it as if he had nothing; and if he have this, he takes it as if he had all. For this is not only preferred by him before all; but also he knows that this commandeth all. If Christ have thy heart, the devil will not have thy tongue and life; the ale-house or a harlot will not have thy body; and the world will not have the principal part of thy life. If Christ have thy heart, it will be heard much in thy conference; it will be seen in thy labours: for that which hath a man's heart will hardly be hid, unless he purposely hide it, which a christian neither can nor ought to do. It would make a man wonder to hear some wretches, that will run from God as fast as they can, and yet face you down that God hath their hearts; that have no mind, so much as to meditate or talk of Christ, or his precious blood, or mysterious redemption, or the glorious kingdom purchased by him, that will be at neither cost nor labour in his service, and yet profess that Christ hath their hearts; that will refuse a

holy, heavenly life, and perhaps make a scorn of it, and maliciously prate against the sanctified, and yet will stand to it that the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier of the elect, hath their hearts. No wonder if those hearts are ill managed, and in a miserable, deceived state, that are so unacquainted with themselves.

Faith entereth at the understanding; but it hath not all its essential parts, and is not the gospel faith indeed, till it hath possessed the will. The heart of faith is wanting, till faith hath taken possession of the heart. For by faith Christ dwelleth in the heart, Eph. iii. 17. And if he dwell not in the heart, he dwells not in the man, in a saving sort. He had some interest in Judas, Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira, as to the head, and perhaps somewhat more in a superficial sort. But Satan entered into the heart of one, and filled the heart of another of them with a lie, and the heart of the third was not right in the sight of God, and therefore he had no part or lot in Christ, but was still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; and all because Christ was not heartily entertained, Acts v. 3; viii. 22, 23. It is in the heart that the word must have its rooting, or else it will wither in time of trial. It is seeking with the whole heart that is the evidence of the blessed, Psal. cxix. 2. And it is a feigned turning when men turn not to God with the whole heart, Jer. iii. 10. This is God's promise concerning his elect, "I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart," Jer. xxiv. 7. See then that the heart be unfeignedly delivered up to Christ; for if Christ have it not, the flesh, the world, and the devil will have it. Your hearts must be a dwelling for one of these masters; choose you whether.

It is the damnation of the most professed christians, that they have nothing for Christ but a good opinion, or a few good words, or outside services, or some slight religiousness on the bye, when the flesh and the world go away with their hearts, and yet they will not know it, nor confess it. Christ will not be an underling or servant to your flesh. Your hearts he hath bought, and he will have, or you are none of his. If he shall have nothing from you but a name, you shall have nothing but the name of his purchased salvation.

III. The last part of the direction yet remains, viz. that you must close with Christ entirely, as well as understandingly and heartily. It is whole Christ that must be received with the whole heart.

For the understanding of this, it must be known, both how and why Christ is offered to us.

As he came into the world to destroy the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8, and to seek and save that which was lost, Luke xix. 19, and by his mediation to reconcile us to God, and bring us up to glory; so two things were to be done for the accomplishment of this; first he was himself to merit our salvation, and pay the price of our redemption on the cross, and in his own person to conquer the world, the devil, and death, and the grave: and then he was by his intercession in the heavens to make application of this, and bestow the benefits thus purchased by him. And because it was he, and not we, that made the purchase, it therefore pleased the Father that the purchased treasure should be put into his hands, and not immediately put into ours. He is become our treasury, and authorized to be our Head: all power is given him in heaven and earth. We have so foully miscarried already, that he will no more trust his honour in our hands, as at first he did. We shall have nothing of pardon, or grace, or glory, but

what we have in and from the Son. "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: he that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life," 1 John v. 11, 12. It is not only the nature and person of Christ that is to be believed in; but it is the person as empowered to certain ends, and clothed with his office, that we must now entertain. Now the office of Christ being for our salvation, and the glory of God, is suited to these happy ends.

And our necessities are principally in these three points. 1. We have the guilt of sin upon us to be pardoned, and the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and the punishment of sin to be removed. 2. We have the corruption of our nature to be healed; the power of sin to be destroyed; the image of God repaired on us, and our hearts and lives to be acted and ordered according to the will of God; and to these ends, temptations to be conquered, and our souls directed, strengthened, and preserved to the end. 3. We must be raised from the grave at the last day; we must be justified in judgment, and possessed of that glory which is the end of our faith. To this, justification, sanctification, and glorification, may the rest be reduced.

Now the office of Christ is suited to these necessities of ours; and as we cannot possibly be saved unless all these necessities be supplied, and these works done for us; so we cannot possibly have these things done but by accepting of Christ, as authorized and empowered, by his office and perfections, to do them.

The glory that God will have by this work, I have before expressed to you at large. He will have his justice, and wisdom, and power, and holiness, and mercy to be demonstrated and honoured by Christ. And therefore Christ hath resolved to give out none of his benefits, but in such manner and ways as may best attain these highest ends.

These several points therefore I must entreat you here to note distinctly. 1. That you must be brought into a special relation to the person of Christ, as clothed with his office, before you can lay claim to his saving benefits. He is the Head, and you must become his spouse; and so of the rest. This is called our uniting to Christ, which must go before our further communion with him. It is the will of God, that you shall never receive his benefits before you receive his Son; (except only those benefits which go before your union with Christ himself, in order to the accomplishing it; as the gospel, the gift of faith to the elect, &c.) you shall never have actual pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, or glory, till you have first saving interest in Christ himself. He is the vine, and we are the branches: we must be planted into him, and live in him, or else we can have nothing further from God, nor do any thing acceptable to God. And therefore the first and great work of faith is to receive and close with the person of Christ, as clothed with his office.

2. Understand and note, that as you shall not have his great benefits before or without his person; so God hath resolved, that you shall not have his special benefits, unless you will take them all together. (I speak of men at age, that are capable of all.) You shall not have pardon and justification, or glory, without sanctification; nor the comforts of Christ, without the guidance and government of Christ. You must have all or none.

3. From hence it follows, that therefore you must receive and close with Christ entirely, in his whole office, as he is to accomplish all these works, or else you cannot be united to him. He will not be divided: you shall not have Christ as a justifier of

you, if you will not have him as a guide, and ruler, and sanctifier of you. He will not be a partial Saviour: if you will not consent that he shall save you from your sins, he will not consent to save you from hell.

4. Understand and note, that Christ will look to his Father's interest and honour, and his own, as well as to your salvation; yea, and before it. And therefore you must not hope for any mercy from him, in any way that is dishonourable to him, or that is inconsistent with his own blessed ends and interest. And therefore do not look for any such grace from him as shall discharge you from your duty, or give you liberty to dishonour or disobey him; nor do not think that you shall have him related to you only for your own ends, but on terms of highest honour to God and your Redeemer. And do not think that your grace is ever the less free, because God's honour is thus preferred; for if you are Christians indeed, you will take God's interest as your own highest interest, and will confess that you could not have your own ends and welfare any other way.

5. Understand and note, also, that as all your mercies are in the hand of Christ, so Christ hath appointed in his gospel a certain way and course of means, in which he will bestow it; and you cannot expect it from him in any other way but his own. As God hath made Christ the way, and no man cometh to the Father but by him, so Christ hath ordained a standing course of means, which are his way for the making over of his benefits; and here you must have them, or go without them.

6. Understand and note, that there are some of Christ's ends and benefits, that the very natural man desires, and some that corrupted nature is against. Now it is therefore the established way of Christ to promise us those which we can desire, on condition that we will also accept of, and submit to, those that we are against. Not but that his grace doth dispose men to the performance of such conditions; but his grace worketh by means: and a conditional promise is his established means to draw men's hearts to the performance of the condition (which well considered, is a sufficient answer to the arguments that are commonly urged against the conditionality of the promise). As the Spirit doth powerfully work within; so he useth that word from without, as his instrument, which worketh sapientially and powerfully to the same work. If a physician have two medicines to give his patient, as necessary for his cure, the one very sweet, and the other bitter; the one which he loves, and the other which he loathes; he will promise him the sweeter, if he will take the bitter one; that by the love of one, he may prevail against the loathing of the other, and may entice it down. He will not promise the bitter one which is loathed, and make the taking of the sweet one the condition: he will not say, I will give thee this alone, on condition thou wilt take the sugar; but contrary, I will give thee the sweeter, if thou wilt take the bitter.

In Christ's ends and works, 1. We naturally are more willing of that which makes for ourselves directly, than of that which makes directly for the honour of God and the Redeemer. We prefer our own ends before God's glory. And, therefore, Christ hath so ordered the condition of his promises, that unless we will take him in his relations of dignity as King and Lord, and will make the glory and pleasing of God our principal end, we shall have none of him, or his saving benefits. For he came not to fulfil our selfish desires, but to fetch us off from ourselves, and recover us to God, that he might have his own. And if we will not have our all in

God, we shall have nothing. 2. And naturally we are willing, as to our own benefits, to be pardoned, and freed from the curse of the law, and the flames of hell, and natural death, and punishment. And, therefore, we are thus far naturally willing of free justification; but we are unwilling to let go the seeming profit, and credit, and pleasure of sin, and to deny the flesh, and forsake the world; and we are averse to the spiritual felicity of the saints, and to the holiness of heart and life, that is the way to it. And, therefore, Christ hath most wisely so ordered it, in the tenor of his promises, that our repentance and faith shall be the condition of our justification and deliverance from death and hell. And this faith is the believing in him, and accepting him entirely in his whole office, to sanctify us, and rule us, as well as to justify us. And thus we must take him wholly, or we shall have none of him. And the accepting him as our Teacher, and Sanctifier, and King, is as much (at least the condition of our justification, and pardon, and deliverance from hell) as the accepting him as a justifier of us is. He that had the power in his own hands, and that made the free promise, or deed of gift, hath put in such conditions, as his own wisdom saw best; and they are such as suit most congruously to all his ends; even the glory of God, in all his attributes, and the Redeemer's glory, and our own, and most full and free salvation. And on his conditions must we have his benefits, or we shall never have them.

7. Lastly, Understand and note, that the means which Christ hath resolved on for teaching and ruling us, ordinarily, are his word, his ministers, and his Spirit; all must be submitted to together, where they may be had, and none of them laid by, by separation. His word is the grammar, or book, as it were, that we must learn; his ministers must teach us this book; and his Spirit (who, in the apostles and prophets, indited and sealed it) must inwardly teach us, by powerful illumination. The word is God's laws; the ministers are his ambassadors, or heralds to proclaim them, and command obedience in his name; and his Spirit must open men's hearts to entertain them. The word is God's seed; the ministers are the husbandmen or servants that sow it; and the Spirit must give the increase, without which our planting and watering will do nothing. He, therefore, that takes Christ for his Master and King, must resolve to be taught and ruled by his established means, even by his word, and ministers, and Spirit conjunct. For he that refuseth and despiseth these, doth refuse and despise Christ; and consequently the Father that sent him, Luke x. 16; 1 Thess. iv. 8. For it was never the meaning of Christ, when he became the Teacher and King of the church, to stay on earth, and personally and visibly to teach them himself; but these three are his means, which all must submit to, that will be his subjects and disciples. And he that despiseth the word, shall be destroyed, Prov. xiii. 13. He that will not have the word, ministry, and Spirit teach him, will not have Christ teach him. And he that refuseth to be ruled by these three, shall be destroyed as a rebel against Christ himself, Luke xix. 27. Still it is supposed that ministers must teach and rule, according to this word.

And the society in which Christ will teach and govern us, is his church. As members, therefore, of the universal church, and in communion with his particular church where we live and have opportunity, we must wait on Christ for his teaching and benefits: for this is his school, where his disciples must diligently attend and learn.

Lay all this together, and this is the sum. The

object of justifying, saving faith, is one only undivided Christ, one in person, but of two natures, God and man; in office, the Mediator between God and man, who hath already done the work of satisfaction and merit, and is authorized further to bestow the benefits. By the gospel grant he hath given himself as Head and Husband, Teacher, King, and Saviour, to all that will entirely and heartily accept him; and with himself he giveth justification by the promise; sanctification by the word, ministry, and Spirit; and final absolution, and everlasting life. If ever then you will have Christ and life, you must accept him in all these essentials of his person and offices, and that to the ends which his redemption was intended for. You must be willing to be sanctified by him, as well as to be justified. You must at once unfeignedly become his disciples, his subjects, his members, if you would become his saved ones. You must consent, that as your Teacher and your Lord, he shall teach and rule your heart and life, by his word, ministers, and Spirit, in communion with his church. No bar or exception must be put in, nor reservation made, against any one of these parts of his office. If you yield not to these parts of his saving work, that tend but to the complete growth, you sin, and deprive yourselves of the benefit; but if you yield not to those that must make you truly sanctified and justified men, you cannot be saved. The essentials of Christ's person and office do constitute him the Christ, and if he be not received in all those essentials, he is not received as Christ.

And thus I have given you the sum of the gospel, and the description of faith and true christianity, in this direction for a right closing with the Lord Jesus Christ. And experience of most that I discourse with, persuades me to think this direction of great necessity, and to entreat you thoroughly to peruse and consider it. I find abundance of ignorant people, that talk much of Christ, but know very little of him; that can scarce tell us whether he be God or man, or which person in the Trinity he is, nor to what end he was incarnated and died, nor what relation he stands in to us, or what use he is of, or what he now is, or what he is engaged to do for us. But if we ask them about their hopes of salvation, they almost overlook the redemption by Christ, and tell us of nothing but God's mercies, and their own good meanings and endeavours. And I am afraid too many professors of piety (do look) almost all, at the natural part of religion, and the mending of their own hearts and lives, (and I would this were better done,) while they forget the supernatural parts, and little are affected with the infinite love of God in Christ. I desire such to consider these things: 1. You overlook the sum of your religion, which is Christ crucified, besides whom Paul desired to know nothing. 2. You overlook the fountain of your own life, and the author of your supplies; and you strive in vain for sanctification, or justification, if you seek them not from a crucified Christ. 3. You leave undone the principal part of your work, and live like moral heathens, while you have the name of christians. Your daily work is to study God in the face of his Son; and to labour with all saints to comprehend the height, and breadth, and length, and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 18, 19. All your graces should be daily quickened, and set a work by the life of faith, in the contemplation of the Redeemer and his blessed work. This is the weight that must set all the wheels a going. You do God no service, that he can accept, if you serve him not in this gospel work, of loving, trusting, and admiring, and praising

him in the Redeemer, and for his redemption. 4. And so you rob God of the principal part of his glory, which you are to give him; which is for his most glorious work of our redemption. I pray you read over again the ends of this work, which I laid down in the beginning of this direction. 5. Moreover, you rob yourselves of your principal comfort, which must all come in by living upon Christ. 6. And you harden the antinomians and libertines, and tempt men to their extremes, that run from us as legalists, and as men that savour not the doctrine of free grace, and are not of a gospel spirit and conversation. I would our great neglect of Christ had not been a snare to these mistaken souls, and a stumbling-block in their way.

O sirs, if a thought of your hearts, if a word of your mouths, have not some relation to Christ, suspect it, yea, reject it. Call it not a sermon or a prayer, nor a duty, that hath nothing of Christ in it. Though the pure Godhead be your principal end, yet there is no way to this end but by Christ; and though love, which is exercised on that end, must animate all your graces and duties, as they are means to that end, yet faith hath love in it, or else it is not the christian faith; and Christ is the object of your faith and love; and your perfect, everlasting love will be animated by Christ. For your love and praise will be to him that was slain, and redeemed us to God by his blood, out of every kindred, tongue, and nation, and made us kings and priests to God. So much for the fifth direction.

Direct. VI. The next direction which I would give you for a thorough conversion, is this: See that the flesh be thoroughly mortified, and your hearts be thoroughly taken off the world, and all its pleasures, and profits, and honours; and that the root of your fleshly interest prevail not at the heart, and that you think not of reconciling God and the world, as if you might secure your interest in both.

This is a very common cause of the deceit and destruction of such as verily think they are converted. It is the very nature and business of true conversion, to turn men's hearts from the flesh and from the world to God, and from an earthly and seeming happiness, to a heavenly, real, everlasting happiness. And when men are affrighted into some kind of religiousness, and yet never learnt to deny themselves, and never mortified their fleshly mind, but the love of this world is still the chiefest principle at their hearts; and so go on in profession of godliness, with a secret reserve that they will look as well as they can to their outward prosperity, what ever become of their religion; and they will have no more to do with the matters of another world, than may stand with their bodily safety in this world; these are the miserable, deluded hypocrites, whose hopes will prove as the giving up of the ghost; whom Christ will disown in their greatest extremities, after all their seeming religiousness. O sirs, look to this as ever you would be happy. It is an easy, it is a common, it is a most dangerous thing, to set upon a course of outward piety, and yet keep the world next your hearts, and take it still as a great part of your felicity, and secretly to love your former lusts, while you seem to be converted. The heart is so deceitful, that you have great cause to watch it narrowly in this point: it will closely cherish the love of the world, and your fleshly pleasures, when it seems to renounce them, and when your tongue can speak contemptuously of them. It was not for nothing Christ would have the first-fruits of his gospel church, (who were to be the example of their successors,) to sell all, and lay it down at the feet of his apostles: and it is his standing rule, that whoever

he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be his disciple, Luke xiv. 33. In estimation, affection, and resolution, it must be forsaken by all that will be saved; and also in practice, whenever God calls us to it. You can have but one happiness; if you will needs have it in this world, in the contenting of your flesh, there is no hope of having it also in another world, in the fruition of God. If you think not God and heaven enough for you, and cannot let go the prosperity of the flesh for them, you must let go all your hopes of them. God will not halve it with the world in your hearts, nor part stakes with the flesh; much less will he be below them, and take their leavings. Heaven will not be theirs, that set not by it more than earth. God will not call that love to him sincere, which is not a superlative love, and able to make you even to hate all those things that would draw away your affections and obedience from him, Luke xiv. 26, 27. There is no talk of serving God and mammon, and compounding you a happiness of earth and heaven. Do therefore as Christ bids you, Luke xiv. 23—30.

Sit down and count what it must cost you, if you will be saved, and on what rates it is that you must follow Christ. Can you voluntarily, for the love of him, and the hope of glory, take up your cross, and follow him in poverty, in losses, in reproaches, through scorns, and scourgings, and prisons, and death? Do you value his loving-kindness better than life? Psal. lxxiii. 3. Can you deny your eyes and appetites their desire? Can you consent to be vile in the eyes of men, and to tame your own flesh, and keep it in subjection, and live a flesh-displeasing life, that having suffered with Christ, you may also be glorified with him? Rom. viii. 17. If you cannot consent to these terms, you cannot be christians, and you cannot be saved. If you must needs be rich, or must be honourable, yea, if you must needs save your estates, or liberties, or lives, it is past all question, you must needs let go Christ and glory; if you must needs have the world, you must needs lose your souls. If you must have your good things here, you must not have them hereafter too, but be tormented when Christ's sufferers are comforted, Luke xvi. 25. These hopes of purveying for the flesh as long as they can, and then of being saved, when they can stay here no longer, are they that have deceived many a thousand to their undoing. It is a strange thing to see how the world doth blind very knowing men, and how unacquainted these hypocrites are with their own hearts. What a confident profession of downright godliness many of them will make, yea, of some extraordinary height in religion, when nothing is so dear to them as their present prosperity, and God hath not near so much interest in them as the flesh! What contrivances some of them make for riches, or rising in the world! And how tender others are of their honour with men; and how tenacious they are of their mammon of unrighteousness; and how much money and great men can do with them! And most of them pamper their flesh, and serve it in a cleanlier way of religiousness, even as much, though not so disgracefully and grossly, as drunkards and whoremongers do in a more discernible sensuality. If the times do but change and countenance any error, how small an argument will make their judgments bend with the times! If truth or duty must cost them dear, oh how they will shift, and stretch, and wriggle, to prove truth to be no truth, and duty to be no duty; and no argument is strong enough to satisfy them, when the flesh doth but say, It is bitter, it is dangerous, it may be my undoing.

It is none of my meaning, that any should need-

lessly run into suffering, or cross their governors and themselves, through a spirit of pride, singularity, and contradiction; but that men should think themselves truly religious, that keep such reserves for their fleshly interest, and show by the very drift of their lives that they are worldlings, and never felt what it was to be crucified to the world, and deny themselves, but are religious on this supposition only, that it may stand with worldly ends, or at least not undo them in the world; this is a lamentable, hypocritical self-deceit; when God hath so plainly said, "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15. Nay, that the neighbourhood and all the country that know them should ring of the worldliness of some, that think themselves good christians; and yet they will not see themselves. What a cheating, blinding thing is the world!

Well, sirs, if you will be christians, count what it must cost you; and if you will be heirs of heaven, away with the world; cast it out of your hearts: and if your hands must yet trade in it, yet trade not for it; use it for God, but enjoy it not for itself. Take yourselves as strangers here; and look on the world as a desolate wilderness, through which, in the communion of the militant saints, you may safely travel on to heaven; but do not make it your home, nor take it for the smallest part of your felicity. To be sanctified without mortification, is a palpable contradiction. Be at a point with all things below, if you will groundedly hope for the heavenly inheritance. But I shall purposely forbear to enlarge this any further, because I have preached and written a treatise on this subject, which I desire you to peruse.

Direct. VII. My next direction is this: If you would be truly converted, be sure that you make an absolute resignation of yourselves and all that you have to God.

This is the very form and life of sanctification. To be sanctified, is to be separated in heart, life, and profession, from all other masters and ends, to God. When the heart that was set upon the world and flesh, is separated from them, and inclined to God by the power of love, and devoted to him, to serve and please him; this is indeed a sanctified heart. And when the life that before was spent in the service of Satan, the world, and the flesh, is now taken off them, and spent, as to the drift and course of it, in the service of God, for the pleasing and glorifying of him, from the impulse of love, this is indeed a holy life. And herein consisteth the very nature of our sanctity. And when a man doth but profess to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and to give up his heart and life unto God, this is a profession of holiness. God is both on the title of creation, preservation, and redemption, our absolute Lord or Owner, and we are not our own, but his; and therefore we must give to God the things that are God's, and glorify him in our souls and bodies, which are his, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. As we are his own, so he will have his own, and be served by his own. Do not imagine that you have any title to yourselves, or propriety in yourselves; but without any more ado, make a full, unreserved, absolute resignation of yourselves, of your understandings, and of your wills, of your bodies, and of your names, and of every pennyworth of your estates, to God, from whom and for whom you have them. Think not that you have power to dispose of yourselves, or of any thing that you have. Ask not flesh and blood, what life you shall lead, or what mind or will you shall be of; but ask God, to whom you do belong. Ask not your carnal selves, what you shall do with any of

your estates; but ask God, and then ask conscience, Which is the way that God would have me use it in? that is, which way may I use it to be most serviceable to God? and that resolve upon. No service that you do to God will prove you sanctified, unless you have heartily and absolutely given up and devoted yourselves to him; and he that gives up himself, must needs give up all that he hath with himself. For he cannot keep it for himself, (ultimately,) when even himself is given up to God. Though you be not bound to give all that you have to the poor, nor all to the church, nor to deny your own bodies or families their due supplies, yet must it all be given up to God, even that which you make use of for yourselves and families; for as you are given up to God yourselves, so you must feed yourselves as his, and clothe yourselves and your families as his, to fit yourselves and them for his service, and not as your own, for the satisfying of your flesh. Thus it is that all comes to be pure to the pure, sanctified to them that are themselves first sanctified; because when you feed yourself, you do but feed a servant of God, that is consecrated to him, and separated from things common and unclean. And even as the tithes and offerings, that were given for the food and maintenance of the priests and Levites, were called the Lord's portion, and holy to the Lord, because they were their portion that were separated to his altar; even so that which is necessary to fit you for God's service, while you use it to that very end, is sanctified in your sanctification, and is holy to God; for all his saints are a holy nation, a royal priesthood, to offer up acceptable sacrifice to him. And thus, "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, you must do all to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x. 31. "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, and therefore to him must be the glory for ever," Rom. xi. 36. God, who is the end of your hearts and lives, must be the end of every action of them, unless you will step out of the way of order, and safety, and holiness. For every action that is not from God, and by God, and for God, is contrary to the nature of true sanctification. If then you would be christians indeed, be heartily willing that God should have his own. Understand what an excellent honour, and privilege, and happiness it is to you, to be his. If his right to you will not move you, let your own necessity and benefit at least move you, to give up yourselves and all that you have to God. Bring your hearts to the bar, and plead the cause of God with them, and convince them of God's title to them, and how sinfully they have robbed him of his own all this while. Have your days and hours, your wealth and interest, been used purposely for God as his own? Oh what abundance be there, that in word and confident profession, do give up themselves and all to God, and yet the use of themselves and all do plainly show that it is no such matter; but they dissembled with God, and yet never knew so much by themselves. How little do they use for God, when they have with seeming devotion resigned all to him! If a lord, or knight, or gentleman of £4000 or £3000 a year, or £400, or £300, were to show the accounts of all his expenses, how much of all this should you find expended for God, when they have acknowledged that all is his? One would think by their lives, that they look to be saved by robbing God, and confessing the robbery, by saying that all is God's while they allow him next to nothing.

The devoted, resigned, sanctified soul hath the true principle of all obedience, and that which will do much to repel all temptations, and carry him through the greatest straits and trials. If I am not

my own, I need not be over-solicitous for myself, but may expect that he that owneth me should care for me; nor do I need to use any sinful shifts for my own preservation. If I have nothing of my own, what need I to sin for the saving of any thing? What need I to venture upon unwarrantable means, to preserve either credit, or goods, or life? It is self, and own, that are the roots of all sin, the heart of the old man, and the seed of hell: nothing else is pleaded against God and our salvation. If the flesh would have you abuse God's creatures, you must remember they are not your own. If the devil would entice you to sin against God, either for the getting or keeping of any creature, it would easily repel the temptation, were you but rightly sensible that nothing is your own: for God hath no need that you should sin to get riches or honours for him. If you are called to let go your houses, or lands, or friends, or lives, or to deliver up your bodies to the flames, did you but rightly take them as none of your own, how easy would it be! You can be content that another man give his goods or life itself to God, whenever God requireth it; but your own you cannot be content to part with, and that because it is your own. But if you had rightly resigned all to God, and took not yourselves or any thing for your own, but looked upon yourselves and all as God's, the greatest works of obedience or suffering would be much more easy to you; and you would have little difficulty or hinderance in your way. Self-denial is but sanctification itself, denominated from the wrong end and principle, which we forsake. And where self is denied and dead, what is there left to draw us from God, or stand up against him, in any part of our lives? So much interest as self hath in you, so much the world and the devil have in you. And nothing is more proper to a miserable hypocrite, than deep reserves of life, or worldly things to themselves, while they seem to give up all to God.

O happy soul, that is wrought to this sincerity by the Spirit of grace, to say unfeignedly, O Lord, I devote and resign myself wholly unto thee; I am not my own, nor desire any further to be, than to be thine: I have nothing that is my own, nor desire to have any thing that shall not be thine. Happy and truly wise is that man, that keeps as constant and faithful a reckoning, how he lays out himself and all that he hath for God, as a faithful steward doth of his receivings and layings-out for his master's use. Every penny that is reserved from God, is the fuel of sin, and a sacrifice to the devil and the flesh; and if it be pardoned to the truly penitent, by the sacrifice of Christ, that is no thanks to us that would else have made it the fuel of hell. God is not so careless of us or his mercies, but that he keeps an exact account of all that we have from him, and will require an account of our improvement of all; not only requiring his own again, but his own with advantage; Matt. xxv. 27. Why else did he give us such leisure and ability to approve it? I can never forget what a sinful thought was once in my mind, which I will venture to confess, because it may possibly be the case of others, that so they may beware. Hearing of some that used to lay by the tenth part of their yearly comings-in for charitable uses, I purposed to do so too, and thought it a fair proportion; but since I have perceived what a vile and wicked thought that was, to offer to cut out a scantling for God, or give him a limited share of his own, or say that so much he shall have, and no more. Though we cannot say that God must have all in any one kind of service only; either only for the church, or only for the poor, or only for public uses; yet must we resolve, that in one way or other he

must have all; and the particular portions to the poor, or church, or other uses, must be assigned by truly sanctified prudence, considering which way it may be most serviceable to God. I must relieve my own family or kindred if they want, but not because they are my own, but because God hath commanded me, and so hath made it a part of my obedience. But if I see where I may do more service to God by relieving a stranger, and that God doth more require it, I must yet prefer them before all the kindred that I have in the world. When the christian pattern was set up by the primitive church, Acts ii.; iv. they sold all, and laid down the whole price at the apostles' feet, which was not distributed to their natural kindred only, but to all the poor christians that had no other relation to them, even as every one had need. And as it is the loving of our spiritual brethren in Christ, that is made the sign of our translation from death to life, so is it the relieving of Christ in these his members, that is, the relieving them because they are his members, that is made the very matter of our cause in the last judgment, and the ground of the sentence of life or death, Matt. xxv. I must provide for my own body, and you must provide for your children, but that is (as I said before) not as I am my own, nor as your children are your own; but as I am a servant of Christ, that must be supported in his service, or as yourselves and yours are put under your care and duty by God. So that I may give it to myself or others, when I can truly say, I do but use it principally for God, and think that the principal service I can do him by it; but I may neither take to myself, nor give to any that are nearest to me, any more than God commandeth, or his service doth require. When you and yours have your daily bread, (which also must be used for him,) you must not go to flesh and blood, but to God, to ask which way you shall dispose of the remainder. This is a strange doctrine to the unsanctified world, but that is because they are unsanctified. And it is a doctrine that a worldly hypocrite is loth to believe and understand; but that is because of carnality and hypocrisy, that always deal with God like Ananias and Sapphira, lying to the Holy Ghost, and giving God but half, (and few so much as half,) when they daily confess that all is from him, and should be his, and pretend to be wholly devoted to him. There are few men so bad, but will spare God something rather than go to hell: but indeed this is not to devote it to God, but to use it for themselves, thinking by their sacrifices to stop the mouth of justice, and to please God by a part, when they have displeased him in the rest. I much fear (and not without apparent cause) that abundance among us, that think themselves christians, do worship and serve God but as some Indians are said to offer sacrifice to the devil, not for any love they have to him or his service, but for fear he should hurt them. And there are few hypocrites but will pretend it is from very love.

O sirs, it is a greater matter to resign and give up yourselves and all you have to God, and heartily to quit all claim to yourselves and all things, than many a thousand self-deluded professors do imagine. Many look at this but as some high, extraordinary strain of piety. And the papists almost appropriate it to a few that live in monastical orders, when indeed the sincerity of this resignation and dedication, is the very sincerity of sanctification itself.

And let me tell you, that the unfeigned convert that attains to this hath not only plucked up the root of sin, (though all of us have too many strings of it left,) not only stopped up the spring of temptation, and got the surest evidence of his uprightness, but

also is got himself into the safest and most comfortable state. For when he hath absolutely resigned himself and all to God, how confidently may he expect that God should accept him, and use him as his own! and how comfortably may he commit himself and his cause, and all good affairs, to God, as knowing that God cannot be negligent and careless of his own! It is an argument that may make us confident of success, when we can say as David, *Psal. cxix. 94*, "I am thine, save me," *Isa. lxiii. 19*. Even Christ himself doth ingratiate his elect with the Father on this account: *John xvii. 6, 9, 10*, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine: and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." And indeed by resigning all to God, it is the more our own; that is, we have unspeakably more of the benefit of it; and so there is no way to make it our own, but by quitting it absolutely up to God. This is the mystery that the world will not learn, but God will teach it all that shall be saved by the Spirit, and by faith: *Matt. xvi. 24—26*, "Then Jesus said to his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me: for whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Methinks, a man that hath time, and strength, and money, should long to be disbursing all for God, that he might put it in the surest hands, and it may be out of danger; yea, that it may be set to the most honest and profitable usury. For when God hath it from the dedication of an upright heart, it is sure; but till God have it, it is in hazard, and all that he hath not is lost, and worse than lost. When it is in our hands, thieves may steal it, bad servants or unadvised children may consume it, and our own thievish flesh may steal it, which is worst of all, and consume it on our lusts: or if our children consume it not, their children may: or if they save it, they may lose it most of all by feeding their pride and fleshly minds by it; but if once it be in God's hands, it is safe. You can make no comfortable account of one penny, nor of one hour's time, unless you can tell God that he had it himself, that you used it for him, or that you live to him in the main, and that the rest is pardoned. Oh that those parents understood this doctrine, that had rather strengthen the fetters and temptations of their children with it, and help them into that state which few are saved in, than to devote and use their estates for God! Though Christ hath told them how hardly the rich are saved, and how few such come to heaven, yet what care is taken to leave their children rich, and how little to further the work of God, or their own accounts, that they may hear the "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of the Lord," *Matt. xxv. 21, 23*.

O sirs, if you would be good husbands, and provident indeed for your souls, see that your hearts prove not false to you in this, and make no secret reserves for yourselves, but that God have yourselves first, and all things with yourselves; as Christ first gives himself to you, and all things with himself, *Rom. viii. 32*. Never think your hearts right, but when they can readily say, "We are not our own," *1 Cor. vi. 19*. Think not that you come aright to God in any duty, if you do not heartily devote yourselves to him, and entreat him to accept you as wholly his, who neither are nor desire to be your own; and entreat him accordingly to use you for himself. Say not that any thing is your own. that

you possess, *Acts iv. 32*, in respect to God, and a communion of charity; though it be your own (as a talent that God doth intrust you with) in respect of men, by a legal propriety.

And then trust God boldly, for you are his own: serve him cheerfully, and draw near him believingly, for you are his own. In poverty, sickness, temptations, and the approach of death, rejoice in him confidently, for you are his own. Into his hands commend your departing spirits, for they are his own. What reason of distrustful fears can you now have? Do you fear lest God will yet hate you? Why remember that "no man ever yet hated his own flesh," *Eph. v. 29*. Nay, for shame, think not the blessed God to be worse than the wicked world; and Christ saith of the world, *John xv. 19*, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own." And will not God then love his own do you think? And if you are willing to be his own, Christ is certainly willing that you should be his own, and will own all that own not themselves, but him. "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out: and when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice," *John x. 3, 4*, "Having loved his own which are in the world, to the end he loved them," *John xiii. 1*.

If you are but truly willing to be his own people, he is certainly willing to be your own Saviour and your own God. Not that you can have such a propriety in him as he hath in you. But in these relations he will be your own; and glory, and help, and salvation shall be yours. And you may well conclude that "God, even our own God, shall bless us," *Psal. lxvii. 6*. There is much comfort may be fetched from that in *Luke xv. 31*, though parables must not be stretched too far: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

And upon this ground it is that we have the greater encouragement, to believe that God accepteth of our very infants themselves; because it is his will that they should be devoted, engaged, and dedicated to him: and that which he would have us dedicate and offer to him, he will surely accept in that relation to which he would have it offered.

I beseech you, therefore, remember what it is to be truly converted; it is to be called from things common and unclean, and separated to God; it is to be brought nigh to him, as the children of his household, that are themselves, and all that they have, in his hands; it is to be taken off yourselves and your own, and to lose yourselves and all you have in God, by the most gainful loss; lest indeed you lose yourselves and all, while you persuade yourselves you save or gain. It is a taking God in Christ for your all, and so being content to have nothing but him and for him. It is a changing of your old master, self, for God, a better master; and your old work, which was self-seeking and pleasing, to self-denial, and to the seeking and pleasing of God. See now that this be done, and that your treacherous hearts hide nothing for themselves, as Rachel, under pretence of necessity, hid her idols, but say, Here I am, to be thine, O Lord, and to do thy will.

More I would have said on this point, but that I have written of it already, in a sermon on *1 Cor. vi. 19, 20*, of the absolute dominion of Christ, and our self-resignation; which I desire you here to peruse, to set this further home.

Direct. VIII. My next advice that the work of conversion may not miscarry, is this: Take heed, lest you mistake a mere change of your opinions, and outward profession and behaviour, for a true saving change.

Wicked opinions must be changed, and so must evil professions and outward practices; but if no more be changed, you are wicked still. I have great cause to fear that this is the most common damning deceit that useth to befall professors of godliness, and that it is the case of most hypocrites in the church. A man may be brought to hold any truth in Scripture as an opinion, and so far be sound and orthodox; and yet never be indeed a sound believer, nor have his heart possessed with the life and power of those sacred truths. It is one thing to have a man's opinion changed, and another thing to have his heart renewed, by the change of his practical estimation, resolutions, and dispositions. It is one thing to turn from loose, profane opinions, to strict opinions; and think the godly are indeed in the right, and that their case and way is safest and best; and it is another thing to be made one of them in newness, spirituality of heart and life. A lively faith differs much from opinion, and that which is in unsanctified men, which we call faith, and is a kind of faith indeed, it is but a mere opinionative faith: I call it an opinionative faith, because it differs from saving faith, much like as opinion doth from knowledge. Merely speculative it is not, for some intention of practice there is; but the practical intention of such persons differs from the predominant intentions of the sanctified, even as their opinionative faith differs from the saving faith.

And it is no wonder if there be abundance of these opinionative believers in the world. For the truths of God have very great evidence, especially some of them; and men are yet men, and consequently reasonable creatures; and, therefore, have some aptitude to discern the evidence of truth. Some truths will compel assent even from the unwilling. Many a thousand ungodly men believe that to be true which they would not have to be true if they could help it; because they do not heartily take it to be good in respect to themselves. Truth as truth, is the natural object of the understanding; though the same truth, as seeming evil to them, may be hated by them that are forced to assent to it. I know that sin hath much blinded men's understandings, and that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, because they are foolishness to him, and must be spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. But though he cannot savingly receive them without the special illumination of the Spirit, nor opinionatively receive them without a common illumination of the Spirit, yet he may have this opinionative conviction, and an answerable reformation, by the common grace of the Spirit, without the special grace. An unsanctified man may have something more than nature in him; and every unregenerate man is not merely or only natural. Many are far convinced, that are far from being savingly converted. I can make you know that you shall die, that you must part with all your wealth and fleshly pleasures, and divers such truths, whether you will or not. And one of these truths doth let in many more that depend upon them. So that as dark as the minds of natural men are, they yet lie open to many wholesome truths.

And as the understanding is thus far open to conviction, so the will itself, which is the heart of the old man, will far sooner yield to the changing of your opinions than to the saving change of heart and life. It is not the bare opinion that your fleshly interest doth fight against, but the power and practice of godliness is it; and opinions, as they lead to these. It is one thing to be of opinion, that conversion is necessary, that sin must be forsaken, and God preferred before all the world; and it is another

thing to be indeed converted, and to forsake sin, and to prefer God before the world. It is a far easier matter to convince a worldling that he should not love the world, than to cure him of his worldly love; and to convince a drunkard that he should leave his drunkenness, and the whoremonger that he should abhor his lusts, than to bring them to do these things, which they are convinced of. It will cost them dear (as the flesh accounts it) to deny themselves, and cast away the sin; but it costeth not so dear to take up the opinion that these things should be done. It will cost them dear to be downright for God, and practically religious; but they can take up an opinion that godliness is the best and necessary course at a cheaper rate. Strict practices pinch the flesh, but strict opinions may stand with its liberty. Oh what abundance of our poor neighbours would go to heaven, that are now in the way to hell, if an opinion that godliness is the wisest course would serve the turn. If instead of conversion God would take up with an opinion that they ought to turn; and if, instead of a holy, heavenly life, God would accept of an opinion, that such are the happiest men that live such a life; and if, instead of temperance, and meekness, and self-denial, and forgiving wrongs, God would accept of an opinion, and confession, that they should be temperate, and meek, and self-denying, and should forbear others, and forgive them; then oh what abundance would be saved, that are now in little hope of salvation! If instead of a diligent life of holiness and good works, it would serve turn to lie still, and be of a good opinion, that men should strive and labour for salvation, and lay out all they have for God, how happy then were our towns and countries, in comparison of what they are!

I am afraid this deceit will be the undoing of many, that they take a change of their opinions for a true conversion. Have not some of you been formerly of the mind, that the best way is to eat and drink, and be merry, and venture your souls, and follow your worldly business, and never trouble yourselves with any deep and searching thoughts about your spiritual state or your salvation? Have you not thought that this diligent godliness is but a needless strictness and preciseness? and have you not since been convinced of your error, and perceived that this is the wisest course, which you before thought to be needless, and thereupon have betaken you to the company of the godly, and set upon a course of outward duties? and now you think that you are made new creatures, and that this is regeneration, and the work is done. I fear lest this be all the conversion that many forward professors are acquainted with; but woe to them that have no more!

And because the face of our present times doth plainly show the commonness and prevalence of this disease, and because it is a matter of so great concernment to you, I shall here give you (but as briefly as I well can) some signs by which a true conversion may be known from this mere opinionative change.

1. The true convert is brought to an unfeigned hatred of the whole body of sin; and especially of those secret or beloved sins, that did most powerfully captivate him before, 1 Cor. vi. 11; Tit. iii. 3, 5; Col. v. 3, 5, 7, 8. But the opinionative convert is still carnal, and unmortified, and inwardly at the heart the interest of the flesh is habitually predominant. He is not brought to an unreconcilable hatred to the great master-sins that ruled him, and lay deepest; but only hath eased the top of his stomach, and cropped off some of the branches of the tree of death. The thorns of worldly desires and cares are

still rooted in his heart; and, therefore, no wonder if they choke the seed of wholesome truth, and there be a greater harvest for the devil than for God, Gal. v. 24; vi. 4, 8; Rom. viii. 5; Matt. xiii. 22.

2. Another sign that follows upon this, is, that the sound convert doth carry on the course of his obedience in a way of self-denial, as living in a continual conflict with his own flesh, and expecting his comfort and salvation to come in upon the conquest. And, therefore, he can suffer for Christ, as well as be found in cheaper obedience; and he dare not, ordinarily, refuse the most costly service. For the spoils of his fleshly desires are his prey, and crown of glorying in the Lord, Luke xiv. 27, 33; Gal. v. 17, 24; 1 Cor. ix. 27; Luke ix. 23, 24; 2 Cor. xii. 9; Gal. vi. 14.

But the opinionative convert still liveth to his carnal self. And, therefore, secretly at least, seeks himself, and layeth hold on present things, as the true convert layeth hold on eternal life. The truths of God being received but into his opinion, do not go deep enough to conquer self, and to take down his great idol, nor make him go through fire and water, and to serve God with the best, and honour him with his substance, much less with his sufferings and death. He hath something that he cannot spare for God, Matt. xiii. 21; Luke xviii. 22—24.

3. The sound convert hath taken God for his portion, and heaven for that sure and full felicity, which he is resolved to venture upon. That is it that he hath set his heart and hopes upon, and thither tends the drift of his life, Col. iii. 1—4; Matt. vi. 20, 21.

But he that is changed only in his opinions, had never such sure apprehensions of the life to come; nor so full a confidence in the promises of God, as to set his heart unfeignedly upon God, and make him truly heavenly-minded. He may have a heavenly tongue, but he hath an earthly heart. A bare opinion, be it never so true, will not raise men's hearts so high, as to make their affections, and the very design and business of their lives, to be heavenly, Phil. iii. 18—20; Rom. xvi. 17, 18; viii. 5.

4. The sound convert hath seen the vileness of himself, in the sinfulness of his heart and life, and the misery thereby deserved; and so is a sincerely humbled, self-accusing man.

But the opinionist is commonly unhumbled, and well-conceited of himself, and a self-justifying Pharisee; unless it be that self-accusing will cost him no disgrace, and he take it up as a custom, or that which may bring him into the repute of being humbled and sincere. For his opinion will not search and pierce his heart, nor batter down his self-exalting thoughts, nor root up the master-sin of pride. These are too great works for an opinionist to perform. And, therefore, you shall hear him more in the excusing of his sin, the magnifying of himself, or the stiff maintaining of his own conceits, than in unfeigned self-abasing, Rom. xii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 19, 20; iii. 18; 2 Cor. x. 12; Luke xvi. 15.

5. The sound convert is so acquainted with the defects, and sins, and necessities of his own soul, that he is much taken up at home, in his studies, and cares, and censures, and his daily work. The acting and strengthening of grace, the subduing of corruption, and his daily walk with God, are much of his employment. Above all keeping, he keeps his heart, as knowing that thence are the issues of life. He cannot have while to spy out the faults of others, and meddle with their affairs, where duty binds him not, as others can do; because he hath so much to do at home, Gal. vi. 3, 4; Prov. iv. 23.

But the opinionist is most employed abroad, and about mere notions and opinions; but he is little

employed in such heart-searching or heart-observing work. His light doth not pierce so deep as to show him his heart, and the work that is there to be necessarily done. As the change is little upon his heart, so his employment is little there. He is little in bemoaning his secret defects and corruptions, and little in keeping his soul's accounts; and little in secret striving with his heart to work it into communion with God, and into a spiritual, lively, fruitful frame. He is forward to aggravate others, and oftentimes severe enough in censuring them. But he is a very gentle censurer of himself, and a patient man with his own corruptions, and puts the best construction upon all that is his own. He hath much labour perhaps in shaping his opinions, but little for the humbling and sanctifying his heart, by the power of the truth.

6. And as the difference lieth thus constantly in the heart, so it is usually manifested by the tongue, Matt. xii. 34. The sound convert is most desirous to discourse of those great and saving truths, which his very heart hath taken in, and which he hath found to be the seed of God for his regeneration, and the instruments of that holy and happy change that is made upon him: he feelth most favour and life in these great and most necessary points, which formed the image of God upon him; and upon these he daily feeds and lives. Read John xvii. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 1—6; ii. 2; Phil. iii. 8—11; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Acts xvi. 22, 23. In these scriptures you may find what points they were that the greatest saints did study and live upon.

But the opinionist is most forward to discourse of mere opinions, and to feed upon the air of notions, and controversies of lesser moment. For one hour's holy, heavenly, experimental, heart-searching discourse, that you shall have from him, you shall have many and many hours' discourse of his opinions. I mean it indifferently of all his opinions. I mean it, I say, of all his opinions, whether true or false. For though falsehoods cannot be fit food for the soul, yet truths, of themselves, also may be made of little service to them. A man may be a mere opinionist that hath true opinions, as well as he that hath false. Almost all the free and zealous discourse of these men, on matters of religion, is about their several sides, and parties, and opinions. If they be set upon a point, especially wherein they seem to themselves to be wiser than others, they have a fire of zeal for it in their breasts, that makes them desirous to be propagating it to others. About the orders and ceremonies of the church; about the forms of prayer, and the accidents of worship; about infant baptism, or other such controversies in religion, is the freest of their discourse.

Yea, you may perceive much of the difference, even in the very manner of their conference. A serious christian, even when he is necessitated to speak of lower controverted points, yet doth it in a spiritual manner, as one that more savoureth higher truths, and makes a holy and heavenly life his end, even in these lower matters; and deals about such controversies in a practical manner, and in order to the growth of holiness.

But the opinionists, even when they speak of the most weighty truths, do speak of them but as opinions; and when they discourse of God, of Christ, of grace, of heaven, it is but as they discourse of a point in philosophy, or little better. They go not through the shell to the kernel; they look after the truth, but they have but little relish of the goodness.

The like may be said of their reading, and hearing of sermons. The sound convert feelth life and spirit in that which is little savoury to the opinionist.

It is one thing in a sermon or text that is pleasant to a true christian, and another thing usually that is most pleasant to the opinionist. The true christian delighteth in, and feedeth on, the inward life of spiritual doctrine, and the good which they offer him; that is, indeed, it is upon God, and Christ himself, that he is feasting his soul in reading and hearing. For this is the soul of all, without which letters and words are but a carcass. But the superficial opinionist is much more taken up, either with the history, or the elegance of speech, or with the rational light of the discourse, still sticking in the bark, and savouring not Christ and the Father in all. As a man that reads the deeds or lease of his own lands, delights in one thing; and a clerk that reads the same, or the like, in a book of precedents, for his learning, delights in another thing. So is it in this case.

7. And hence it follows, that they are several sorts of duties and exercises, usually, that these several sorts of persons are most addicted to. The sound convert is most addicted to those spiritual means, that tend most to the strengthening of his faith, and warming his heart with the love of God, and promoting holiness, and destroying sin; but tend not to furnish him with speculative knowledge and discourse, and to satisfy his fancy, or curious mind. The sound convert is much addicted to prayer, even in secret, and to heavenly meditations, and gracious discourse. But the opinionist is much more addicted to reading histories, or controversies, or dogmatical divinity, or civil and political matters. The sound convert savoureth best those preachers and books, that speak the most weighty, spiritual truths, in the most weighty, spiritual manner, in power, and demonstration of the Spirit. But the opinionist relisheth those preachers and books most, that either speak curiously to please the ear, or exactly and learnedly to please the natural intellect, or that speak for the opinions or party that he is addicted to; but others he hath less mind of.

8. Moreover, the sound christian layeth out most of his zeal, affections, and endeavours, about the great essentials of religion, and that, as I said, in a practical manner. But the opinionist layeth out his zeal upon opinions. Right or wrong, it is but as opinions. Of these he makes his religion; for these he contendeth. He loveth those best that are of his own opinion, though there be nothing of the special image of God upon his soul; or if he love a true christian, it is not so much for his holiness and spirituality, as because he is of his mind in those matters of opinion. Hence it is that he is usually a bitter censurer of those that are not of his opinion, how upright soever they may be; his very esteem of men, and love to them, is partial and factious, to those that are of his mind and sect. A papist will esteem and love men of the popish sect; and an anabaptist will esteem and love men of that sect most; yea, a protestant, if he be an opinionist, doth esteem of men and love them as a sect. Whereas, the true christian, as he is truly catholic, and of the catholic church, which is not confined to papists, no, nor protestants, so he hath truly catholic affections, and loveth a christian as a christian, a godly man as godly; yea, if he saw more serious godliness in one that is not of his opinion in lesser things, yet would he love him more than one that is in such matters of his opinion, that is ungodly, or of more doubtful piety. For as it is God in Christ that he principally loveth, so it is Christ that he admireth in his members; and so much of Christ as he sees in any, so much are his special affections towards them.

9. Ordinarily, the mere opinionist will sacrifice

the very ends of the gospel, and the honour and success of the great fundamental truths of God, to the interest of those opinions which he hath in a singular manner made his own. He will rather hinder the propagation of the common truths, and the conversion of the ignorant, than he will silence his opinions, or suffer them to lose any advantages with the world. Hence it is, that we cannot prevail with the papists to silence awhile the differences between us and them, till we have taught their ignorant (in Ireland, and other barbarous parts) the knowledge of those truths that all are agreed in. Nor can we get many anabaptists, or any such sect, that is engaged in a division, to forbear their opinions, till we have endeavoured to lay the necessary grounds, on which all must build that will be saved. But though it be apparent to the world, that their disputes and contentions do exceedingly harden the ignorant and ungodly against all religion, and hinder their conversion and salvation; yet will they go on in the unseasonable, intemperate bruited of their conceits, and will not be persuaded to agree on those terms, for the managing of differences, as most tend to secure the interest of Christ and his gospel in the main. If an opinionist be for the truth, he is usually without much zeal for it, because that nature doth not befriending the great spiritual truths of the gospel, so much as it doth errors and private conceits. But if he be of erroneous opinions, he is usually very zealous for them. For corrupted nature, and self, and Satan, (and the world oftentimes,) do more befriending these, and furnish him with a zeal for them, and blow the coal. The counterfeit angel of light, is very ordinarily also a spirit of heat, and great activity; not a reviving fire, nor a refining fire, but a consuming fire, devouring christian love, and meekness, and patience, and therewith the church, and truth of God, so far as it can prevail. For lesser matters, that minister questions, such men can lay by that which tends to godly edifying in faith. Yea, that charity, which is the very end of the commandment, out of a "pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. From these they swerve, and turn aside to vain jangling; oftentimes desiring to be teachers of such things, in which they understand not what they say, nor whereof they speak. Consenting not to the wholesome words of Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, they teach otherwise; being proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strife of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth," 1 Tim. i. 4-6; vi. 3-5. Yea, they sometimes take their opinions, or their worldly gain that they often aim at, to be instead of godliness. And think, that to be godly, is to be of their mind and way. They "use to strive about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers, and their vain babblings increase to more ungodliness," 2 Tim. ii. 14, 16.

But the true convert looks principally to the main. He loves every known truth of God; but in their order, and accordingly to their worth and weight. He will not, for his own opinions, wilfully do that which will hazard the main, or hinder the gospel, and the saving of men's souls. Though he will not be false to any truth, yet he will avoid "foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they do gender strife; and the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, and meekly instruct opposers: following righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," 2 Tim. ii. 22-25.

10. Lastly, True converts are steadfast, but opinionists are usually mutable and unconstant. The sound

convert receiveth the greatest truths, and receives the goodness as well as the truth; and takes it not only into the head, but into the heart, and giveth it deep rooting; he closeth with God as his only felicity, and with Christ as his only refuge and Redeemer, and with heaven as the sure, everlasting glory, to which the world is but a mole-hill, or a dungeon. No wonder then if this man be "stedfast, and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that knows his labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58.

But the opinionist either fasteneth on smaller matters, or else holdeth these great matters but as bare opinions, and therefore they have no such interest in his heart, as to establish him against shaking trials and temptations. For two sorts there are of these opinionists: the one sort have no zeal for their own opinions, because they are but opinions; and these are time-servers, and will change, as the king or their landlords change, and fit their opinions to their worldly end. The other sort have a burning zeal for their opinions; and these use to wander from one opinion to another, not able to resist the subtlety of seducers, but are taken with fair and plausible reasonings, not able to see into the heart of the cause. These are as "children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight and cunning craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," Ephes. iv. 14. When with great confidence they have held one sort of opinions awhile, and railed against those that were not of their mind; ere long they will themselves forsake them, and take up another way, and be as confident in that, and take no warning by the experience of their former deceit. And thus they go off from one opinion to another, till at last, finding themselves deceived so oft, some of them cast off all religion, and think there is no certainty to be found in any, suspecting religion when they should have suspected their false hearts: and all this comes to pass because they never received the truth in the love of it, that they might be sanctified and saved by it, 2 Thess. ii. 10—12; nor ever gave it deep entertainment, or took it to heart that it might thoroughly convert them; but as a bare opinion into the brain, to polish their tongues and outsides, and deceive themselves as much as others.

And thus I have showed you the difference between a sound convert and an opinionist, or one that hath but an overly, superficial change, that you may see which of these is your own condition.

To return now to my advice and exhortation, I entreat every person that readeth or heareth these words, to see that they stick not in an opinionative conversion. To which end I further desire you, 1. To consider that it is a higher matter that Christ came into the world for, than to change men's bare opinions; and it is a higher matter that the gospel is intended for, and that ministers are sent to you for. For it is more than a corruption of men's opinions that sin hath brought upon you; and therefore it is a deeper disease that must be cured. The work of Christ by his gospel, is no less, than to fetch you off all that which flesh and blood accounts your happiness, and to unite you to himself, and make you holy as God is holy, and to give you a new nature, and make you as the dwellers or citizens of heaven, while you walk on earth, Phil. iii. 20, 21. And these are greater matters than the changing of a party or opinion. The Holy Ghost himself must dwell in you, and work in you, and employ your soul and life for God, that you may study him, and love him, and live to him here, and live with him for ever. Do but think well of the ends and meaning of

the gospel, and how much greater matters it drives at, and then you will see that there is no taking up with an opinionative religiousness.

2. Keep company, if it be possible, with the most sober, spiritual, and heavenly professors, that will be drawing you to the observation of your own heart and life, and opening to you the riches of the love of Christ, and winning up your affections to God and heaven: and be not the companions of unexperienced wranglers, that have no other religion but a zeal for their opinions, and will endeavour rather to make you like Satan than like God, by possessing your minds with malice and bitter thoughts of your brethren, and employing your tongues in reproaches and vain strivings, and making you firebrands in the places where you live: neither be companions of them that hold the truth no deeper than opinion; for though some such may be useful to you in their places, yet if you have not more edifying familiars, your danger will be very great, lest you should let go the life of religion, and take up with mere notions and formalities as they.

3. When you have considered that every truth of God is a message to your hearts, as well as to your heads, and hath a work of God to do upon them, look after that work; and when you have heard or read a truth, go down into your hearts, and see what it hath done there: and if you find not in your will, and resolutions, and affections, the image and fruits of the truth you have heard, fetch it up again, and ruminate upon it, and do not think you have received it, or done with it, till this be done; yea, take it but as lost, and sinfully rejected, if it have not done you some good at the very heart.

4. Also be sure that you practise all practical truths, upon the first opportunity, as soon as you have heard them. Imprison them not in unrighteousness. Cast them not out in forgetfulness; use not a lecture of divinity as if it were a lesson of music, or a mere philosophical or historical discourse. Read not the doctrine of salvation, and the promise of heaven, and the forewarnings of everlasting misery, as you read a common story, or a groundless conjecture in an almanack; but as a message from God, which tells you where you must dwell for ever, and as a direction sent from heaven, to teach you the way thither. Fall to work then, and practise what you know, if you would be christians indeed. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." For the opinionative hearer seeth but a slight appearance of the truth, as a man that looks on his face in a glass, which he quickly forgets; but he that is a sound believer and practiser, and not only an opinionative, forgetful hearer, is the man that shall "be blessed in his deed," James i. 22—25. Opinion without practice, is building on the sand; but hearing, and sound believing, and doing, is building upon the rock, where the building will stand after all assaults, Matt. vii. 26—28. An opinionist doth but seem to be religious, while he keeps his reigning sins, and therefore his religion is in vain; but the practical religion is the pure and undefiled religion, James i. 26, 27. Hearty obedience will not only show that your religion is deeper than mere opinion, but it will also advance it to a greater purity, and root it more deeply than it was before. A man that hath studied the art of navigation in his closet, may talk of it almost as well as he that hath been at sea; but when he comes to practise it, he will find that he is far to seek; but let this man go to sea, and join practice and experience to his theory, and then he may have a knowledge of the right kind. So, if a man that hath only read over military books, would be a true soldier, or a

man that hath only studied physic, would be a true physician, what better way is there, than to fall to practice? And so you must, if you would have a religion that shall save your souls, and not only a religion that will furnish you with good opinions and expressions.

5. Moreover, if you would get above opinion, be still searching more and more after the evidences of the ancient fundamental truths that you have received; and lay open your hearts to the power of them. Think it not enough that you take the christian religion for true, but labour after a clearer sight of its truth; for you may possibly upon some conjecture take it for a truth, by bare opinion, whenas the sight of fuller evidences, and a full sight of those evidences, might raise you from opinion to a working, saving faith.

6. Lastly, Take heed lest any thing be suffered to keep possession of your hearts, and so to confine the truth to your brain. When the world is kept up in life and power, and is nearest the heart, there is no room for the word there, but it must float upon the top, and swim in your opinion, because it can go no deeper, your lusts and profits having possession before it. The word can never go to the heart with unmortified men, but by casting your idols out of your hearts; nor will it take rooting in you, but by rooting out the world.

O sirs, if you knew the misery of a mere opinionist, you would sure be persuaded now to practise these directions, that may raise you higher. An opinionist is a deceiver of himself, and oft of others; a troubler of the church, if he have any zeal for opinions, and hit (as usually he doth) on the wrong; and when his religion is right, he is wrong himself, being out of the way, even when he is in the right way, because he is not right in that way; for he doth but sit down in it, when he should travel in it. A runner shall not win the prize by being in the right way only, unless he make haste. The knowledge of the opinionist doth but serve to aggravate his sin, and cause him to be beaten with many stripes; but is not of force to sanctify his heart and life, and to save him, James ii. fully shows. Stick not therefore in an opinionative religiousness.

Direct. IX. My next direction that your conversion may prove sound, is this: Acquaint your souls by faith with the glory of the everlasting kingdom, and see that you make it your portion and your end, and from thence let the rest of your endeavours be animated.

No man can be a sound christian, that knoweth not the ends and portion of a christian. There is a great deal of difference between the desires of heaven in a sanctified man and an unsanctified. The believer prizeth it above earth, and had rather be with God than here (though death that stands in the way, may possibly have harder thoughts from him). But to the ungodly, there is nothing seemeth more desirable than this world; and therefore he only chooseth heaven before hell, but not before earth; and therefore shall not have it upon such a choice. We hear of gold and silver mines in the Indies; if you offer a golden mountain there, to an Englishman that hath an estate and family here that are dear unto him, perhaps he will say, I am uncertain whether their golden mountains be not mere fictions to deceive men; and if it be true that there are such things, yet it is a great way thither, and the seas are perilous; and I am well enough already where I am; and therefore let who will go thither for me, I will stay at home as long as I can. But if this man must needs be banished out of England, and had his choice whether he would go to the

golden islands, or to dig in a coal-pit, or live in a wilderness, he would rather choose the better than the worse. So it is with an ungodly man's desires, in respect to this world, and that to come. If he could stay here, in fleshly pleasure for ever, he would; because he looks at heaven as uncertain, and a great way off, and the passage seemeth to him more troublesome and dangerous than it is, and he is where he would be already: but when he sees that there is no staying here for ever, but death will have him away; he had rather go to heaven than to hell, and therefore will be religious as far as the flesh and the world will give him leave, lest he should be cast into hell when he is taken from the earth.

But take an Englishman that is in poverty and reproach, and hath neither house nor land, nor friend to comfort him, and let him have the offer of a golden island, and a person of unquestionable skillfulness and fidelity, that will promise in short time to bring him safe thither; if he believe this person, and can put his trust in him, doubtless he will be gone and follow him over sea and land; and though the passage may somewhat daunt him, yet the promised possession will carry him through all. So is it with the true christian, he is dead to this world, and sees nothing here in which he can be happy; he is burdened and wearied with sin and suffering; he is firmly persuaded of the truth of the gospel; and seeth by faith the world that is to flesh invisible; and believeth in Jesus Christ, who hath promised to convey him safely thither, and therefore he would away: and though he love not death, the stormy passage, yet he will submit to it, having so sure a pilot, because he loves the life which through death he must pass into, and had rather be there than here.

Such as a man's principal end is, such is the man, and such is the course of his life. He that takes this world for his portion, and makes the felicity of it his end, is a carnal, worldly, unsanctified man, whatever good and godly actions may come in upon the bye. It is he, and only he, that is a sanctified believer, who looks on heaven as his only portion, and his sailing through the troublesome seas of this world, of purpose to come to that desired harbour; not loving these seas better than the land of rest, which he is sailing to; but patiently and painfully passing through them, because there is no other way to glory. As it is the desire of the land to which he is sailing, that moveth the mariner or passenger to do all that he doth in his voyage; and the desire of his home or journey's end, that moveth the traveller all the way; and the desire of seeing a perfect building that moveth the builder in every stroke of his work; so it must be the love of God, and the desire of everlasting blessedness, that must be the very engine to move the rest of the affections and endeavours of the saints, and must make men resolve on the necessary labour and patience of believers. Take off this weight, and all the motions of christianity will cease. No man will be at labour and sufferings for nothing, if he can avoid them. It is a life of labour, though sweet to the spirit, yet tedious to the flesh, which christianity doth engage us in; and there is much suffering to be undergone; and this to the very last, and to the denial of ourselves; and if God require it, to the loss of all the comforts of the world: for no less than forsaking all that we have, will serve to make us Christ's disciples. And will any man do this for he knows not what? Will any man forsake all that he hath, unless it be for something better, which may be as sure to him as that he had, and may make him more happy? Look to it, therefore, that you have right and believing thoughts of heaven, and that unfeignedly you take it for your

home and happiness, and look not for any other portion. Till you see so much of the certainty and excellency of everlasting glory, as shall prevail with you to lay out your faithful labour for it, and to be at a point with all this world, as having laid up your treasure and hopes in the world to come, you have no ground to conclude that you are true christian converts.

Seeing, therefore, that it is heaven that is the very reason, the end, the life of all your religion, it follows, that you must necessarily understand somewhat of its excellency, and believe its certainty, and accordingly set your hearts upon it, and make the attainment of it your daily work and business in the world: this is to be a convert indeed.

Remember therefore first, what I told you before, wherein the nature of this blessedness doth consist. I will only name the essentials of it, that your apprehensions may be right, and forbear to say much, as being done already.

1. The first thing considerable in our everlasting blessedness, will be our personal perfection of the whole man; this is in order to the perfection of our everlasting operations and enjoyments. Our bodies shall be no more flesh and blood, nor corruptible, or mortal, or subject to hunger, or pain, or weariness, nor to passions that rebel against the reasonable soul; but they shall be spiritual bodies, and immortal, and incorruptible, and undefiled. Our souls will be perfected in their natural perfections, and in their moral. They shall be of more advanced understanding and comprehensive wisdom than now. Our wills shall attain to perfect rectitude in a perfect conformity to the will of God, and every affection shall be brought to its perfect order and elevation: all sin shall be done away, whether it were in the understanding, will, affections, or the actions. The executive power will be answerable to the rest of the perfections, and to the blessed work which it hath to do: and thus we shall be like the angels of God.

2. The next thing considerable in our blessedness, is our approximation or approach to God: we shall be admitted into the holiest, and brought as near him as our natures are capable of, and we are fit for.

3. Moreover, we shall be members of the new Jerusalem, and receive our glory in communion with that blessed society, and so as members contribute to her glory.

4. And we shall behold, the glorified person of our Redeemer, and he will be glorified on us as the fruits of his victory.

5. And we shall behold the face of the blessed God, and see his wisdom, and power, and glory, and know as we are known. Though we cannot now fully know the manner, yet in that sense as our angels are said to behold the face of God, Matt. xviii. 10, we also shall behold it.

6. We shall also enjoy him in the nearest relation, and by the most raised, vigorous affections of our soul. We shall be filled with his love as full as we can hold, and we shall abound with perfect love to him again: and the joy that is in his presence, which this intuition and everlasting love will afford us, is such as no heart is here able to conceive.

7. Being thus furnished, we shall be employed in his perfect praises, in singing and rejoicing to him with the heavenly host, and magnifying his great and holy name.

8. And in all this will the glory of God shine forth, and he will be admired in his saints, 2 Thess. i. 10, 11. In us it shall appear how abundant he is in power, and wisdom, and goodness, in holiness, faithfulness, and righteousness.

9. And God himself will be well pleased with us,

and with the new Jerusalem, and his glorified Son, and will take complacency in this manifestation and communication of his glory and of himself unto his creatures. And this is his ultimate end, and should be the highest point of ours. The revolution hath now brought all to that centre, which is both the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. His will is the fountain or efficient of all, and it is the ultimate end and perfection of all.

There is no more to add, as to the matter, but that as to the duration, first, we may take it as that which leaves no room for any addition, that all this will be everlasting, leaving not any doubts or fears of a cessation. Abundance of glorious adjuncts of this felicity might be mentioned; but I pass them all by, and do but name these few which are the essential, constitutive parts of our happiness, because I have touched them before, and fuller spoken of them in the "Saints' Rest." Thus much I thought meet to mention here, that you may have somewhat of that in your eye, that I am persuading you to intend and seek; and the rather, because I perceive that many of the godly have not such distinct apprehensions of the constitutive parts of this felicity, as they should have; but much wrong their souls, and God himself, and the glory of their profession, by looking but at some of the parts.

Believe God, sirs, that this is the life that you shall live, if you will take it for your portion, and set your hearts upon it, and follow the conduct of Christ for the obtaining it. Can you be content with heaven alone? Is it enough for you, though you be despised and persecuted in the world? Do you account this for certainty and excellency to be worth all? yea, that all is dross and dung to this? Thus must you do if you will be true converts. For all such are heavenly in their minds and hearts, and in the drift of all their lives and conversations.

Direct. X. My next advice, that you may prove sound converts, is this: Rest not, and count not yourselves truly converted, till God and his holy ways have your very love, and desire, and delight; and take not that for a saving change, when you had rather live a worldly, ungodly life, if it were not for the fear of punishment.

I shall speak but little of this, because I touched upon it before, when I told you that Christ must have your hearts, and because it is but a consecratory of the last, or contained in it. But yet I think it best to present it here distinctly to your consideration, because a slavish kind of religiousness doth deceive so many, and because the life of grace is here expressed. I deny not but holy fear is exceeding useful to us; even a fear of the threatenings and judgments of God. But yet I must tell you, that in fear there is much more that is common to the unsanctified, than there is in love, desire, and delight. Though "the fear of the Lord be the beginning of wisdom," it is love that is the perfection; and that fear is not filial, and of the right strain, if love be not its companion. Fear of punishment shows that you love your natural selves; but it shows not that you love God, and are true-hearted to him. The devils fear and tremble, but they do not love. It is love and not fear that is the bias, the inclination, and (as I may say) the nature of the will of man. By his love it is that you must know what the man is. The philosopher saith, Such as a man is, such is his end; which is all one as to say, Such as a man is, such is his love. You may fear a thing at the same time when you hate it; and it is too common to have some hatred mixed with fear. You may be as much against God and his holy ways, when fear only drives you to some kind of reli-

giousness, as others are that scarce meddle with religion at all. The first thing that God looks at, is what you would do; and the next is, what you do. If you do it, but had rather leave it undone, you lose your reward, and God will take it as if you had not done it: for it was not you that did it, if you did it not from love; but it was fear that dwelleth in you. God takes men's hearty desires and will, instead of the deed, where they have not power to fulfil them: but he never took the bare deed instead of the will. A blockish kind of worship, consisting in outward actions, without the heart, is fit to be given to a wooden god, a senseless idol; but the true and living God abhors it. He is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth; such worshippers he seeketh, and such he will accept, John iv. 23, 24. A beggar will be glad of your alms, though you leave it with an ill will, because he needeth it: but God hath no need of you, nor of your service, and therefore think not that he will accept you on such terms. That people worship God in vain, that draw near him with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, while their heart is far from him, Matt. xv. 8, 9. A man's heart is where his love is, rather than where his fear is. If you should lie still upon your knees, or in the holy assembly; if you should be the strictest observer of the ordinances on the Lord's days, and yet had such hearts in you, as had rather let all these alone, if it were not for fear of punishment; it will all be disregarded, and reckoned to you according to your wills, as if it had never been done by you at all. It is love that must win love, or make you fit for love to entertain. If you give your goods to the poor, or your bodies to be burned in a cause that in itself is good, and yet have not love, it availeth nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3, 5. You will not think your wife hath conjugal affection that loveth another man better than you, and had rather be gone from you, if she could live without you. It is an unnatural son that loves not his father, but had rather be from him than with him. If God called you to a bestial drudgery or slavery, he would then look but for your work, and not care much whether you be willing or unwilling. If your ox draw your plough, and your horse carry his burden, you care not much whether it be willingly or unwillingly. Or if it be an enemy that you have to deal with, you will look for no more than a forced submission, or that he be disabled from doing you hurt. But this is not your case: it is a state of friendship that the gospel calls you to, you must be nigh to God, his children, and the members of his Son, espoused to him in the dearest, strongest bonds: and do you think that it is possible that this should be done without your wills and affections? If you can be content with the portion of a slave and an enemy, then do your task, and deny God your affections: but if you look for the entertainment and portion of a friend, a child, a spouse, you must bring the heart of a friend, and of a child, and of a spouse. Fear may do good by driving you to the use of means, and taking out of your hands the things by which you would do yourselves a mischief: it may prepare you for saving grace, and when you are sanctified, it will prove a necessary servant of love, to keep you in awe, and save you from temptations. But love is the ruling affection in the sanctified, and fear is therefore necessary, because of the present imperfection of love, and because of the variety of temptations that here besets us. Think not therefore that you are savingly renewed, till God have your very hearts. When you do but believe and tremble, it is better than to be unbelieving, and stupid, and secure; but you are not true christians till you believe and love.

We use to fly from that which we fear, and therefore do apprehend it to be evil to us. We avoid the presence and company of those that we are afraid of, but we draw nigh them that we love, and delight in their company. We fear an enemy; we love a friend. We fear the devil naturally, but we do not love him. It is love that is that affection of the soul that entertaineth God as God, even as good; though that love must be accompanied with a filial fear, even a dread and reverence of his majesty and greatness, and a fear of displeasing him. If you should toil out yourselves in religious duties, with a heart that had rather forbear them, if you durst, you have not the hearts of God's children in your breasts. The magistrate can frighten men to the congregation and outward worship. You may lock a man in the church, that had rather be away: and will any man think that this makes him acceptable to God? You may keep a thief from stealing by prison and irons, but this makes him not accepted with God as a true man. You may cure a man of cursing, and swearing, and railing, and idle and ribald talking, even in a minute of an hour, by cutting off his tongue; but will God accept him ever the more, as long as he has a heart that would do it if he could? There are abundance of people at this day that are kept from abusing the Lord's day, and from swearing, and stealing, yea, and from laying violent hands on all about them that are godly, and this by the law of men, and the fear of present punishment. And do you think that these are therefore innocent or acceptable with God? By this account you may make the devil a saint, when he is chained up from doing mischief. You may as well say that a lion is become a lamb, when he is shut up in his den; or that a mastiff dog is become harmless and gentle, when he is muzzled. Believe it, sirs, you are never christians till you see that in God that wins your hearts to him, so that you would not change your Master for any in the world; and till you see that in the hopes of everlasting glory, that you would not change it for any thing else that can be imagined by the heart of man; and till you see that goodness in a heavenly life, that you had rather live it than any life in the world. You are not converted to God indeed, till you had rather live in holiness than in sin, if you had your freest choice; and till you would gladly be the strictest, holiest person that you know in the world; and long after more and more of it, and fain would reach perfection itself: for though we cannot be perfect here, yet no man is upright that desireth not to be perfect. For he that loveth holiness as holiness, must needs love the greatest measure of holiness with the greatest love. This is it that maketh sound converts to be so faithful and constant with God. A man is forward and ready to a work that he loves; when he draws back from it, as if it were a mischief, that hath no mind to do it. A man is hardly kept from the persons, and places, and employments that he loves; but a little will withdraw him from that which he loveth not. Why is it that we have so much ado to take off a drunkard from his companions and his lusts, but because he loves them better than temperance and gracious company? And why can we so hardly draw the lustful wretch from his filthy lusts, or the glutton, or the idle, sensual person from his needless or excessive recreations, but because they love them? And why is it that you cannot draw the worldling from his covetousness, but he parteth with his money almost as hardly as with his blood, but because he loveth it? And therefore what wonder if temptations be resisted, and the fairest baits of the world despised by him, that is truly in love with God? No

wonder if nothing can turn back that man from the way to heaven, that is in love both with heaven and with the way. No wonder if that man stick close to Christ, and never forsake a holy life, that tasteth the sweetness of it, and feels it to do him good, and had rather go that way than any in the world. There is no true christian but can say with David, that "a day in God's courts is better than a thousand; and he had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents (yea, or the palaces) of wickedness." Do but mark those professors that prove apostates, and forsake the way of godliness which they seemed to embrace, and see whether they be not such as either took up some bare opinions and outward duties upon a flash of superficial illumination, or else such as were frightened into a course of religion, and so went on from duty to duty, for fear of being damned, when all the while their hearts were more another way, and they had rather have been excused. These hypocrites are they that are disputing so oft the obligations to their duty, and asking, How do you prove that it is a duty to pray in my family, or a duty to observe the Lord's day, or to come constantly to the congregation, or to use the communion of the godly in private meetings, or to repeat sermons, or sing psalms, and the like? Intimating that they are as birds in a cage, or hens in a pen, that are boring to get out, and had rather be at liberty. If it were not for the fear of the law of God that is upon them, they had rather let all these duties alone, or take them up but now and then at an idle time, when Satan and the flesh will give them leave. If a feast be prepared and spread before them, a good stomach will not stand to ask, How can you prove it my duty to eat? but perhaps the sick that loathe it may do so. If the cup be before the drunkard, he doth not stand on these terms, How do you prove it my duty now to drink this cup and the other cup? No, if he might have but leave, he would drink on, without any questioning whether it be a duty. If the gamester, or the whoremonger, might but be sure that he should escape the punishment, he would never stick at the want of a precept, and ask, Is it my duty? If there were but a gift of twenty pounds a man to be given to all the poor of the town, yea, and to all the people in general, I do not think I should meet with many people in the town that would draw back and say, What word of God commandeth me to take it? or, How can you prove that it is my duty? And why is all this, but because they have an inward love to the thing; and love will carry a man to that which seemeth good for him, without any command or threatening. If these ungodly wretches had one spark of spiritual life within them, and any taste and feeling of the matters that concern their own salvation, instead of asking, How can you prove that I must pray with my family, or that I must keep the Lord's day, or that I must converse with the godly, and live a holy life? they would be readier to say, How can you prove that I may not pray with my family, and that I may not sanctify the Lord's day, and that I may not have communion with the saints in holiness? Seeing so great a mercy is offered to the world, why may not I partake of it as well as others? I can perceive in many that I converse with, the great difference between a heart that loves God and holiness, and a heart that seems religious and honest without such a love. The true convert perceiveth so much sweetness in holy duties, and so much spiritual advantage by them to his soul, that he is loth to be kept back; he cannot spare these ordinances and mercies, no more than he can spare the bread from his mouth, or the clothes from his back, yea, or the

skin from his flesh; no, nor so much. He loveth them, he cannot live without them. At the worst that ever he is at, he had rather be holy than unholy, and live a godly than a fleshly, worldly life. And, therefore, if he had but a bare leave from God, without a command to sanctify the Lord's day, and to live in the holy communion of the saints, he would joyfully take it with many thanks; for he need not be driven to his rest when he is weary, nor to his spiritual food when he is hungry, nor to Christ the refuge of his soul, when the curse and accuser are pursuing him. But the unsanctified hypocrite that never loved God or godliness in his heart, he stands questioning and inquiring for some proof of the necessity of these courses. And if he can but bring himself to hope that God will save him without so much ado, (which by the help of the devil he may easily be brought to hope,) away then goes the duty. If you could not show him that there is a necessity of family prayer, and a necessity of sanctifying the Lord's day, and a necessity of forsaking his tippling and voluptuousness, and a necessity of living a heavenly life, he would quickly resolve of another course; for he had rather do otherwise if he durst. He never was religious from a true predominant love to God and a holy life, but for fear of hell, and for other inferior respects.

Remember this when you have precious opportunities before you of doing or receiving good, and when you see that you have leave to take these opportunities, and yet you draw back, and are questioning, How we can prove it to be your duty? or that you cannot be saved without it? Do not these questions plainly show that you love not the work, and delight not in a holy life; and that you had rather let it alone? Are you not blind if you see not this is in yourselves? Yea, it is plain that you have such an averseness or hatred to God and a holy course of life; that if you did but know what shift to make to escape damnation, you would fly away from God and holiness, and have as little to do with them as you can. Your questions and cavils do plainly declare this wicked enmity and backwardness of your hearts; and consequently show how far you are from true conversion.

Not that I am of their mind that think there is any good which the law of Christ obligeth us not to accept, and which we can refuse without sin and danger to ourselves; for God doth both draw us and drive us at once. But when the threatening and punishment only can prevail with men, and men love not God and godliness for themselves, but had rather have liberty to live as the ungodly, I shall never take one of these for a sanctified man, nor have any hope of the saving of such a soul, how far soever his fears may carry him from his outward sins, or to outward duties; till God shall give him a better conversion than this, I say, I have not the smallest hope of this man's salvation. Then you are God's children, when the honour, the work, the family, the name of your Father are lovely and delightful to you; and when you grieve that there is any remnants of sin in your souls; and when your sins are to you as lameness to the lame, that pains them every step they go, and as sickness to the sick, that makes them groan, and groan again, and long to be rid of it; and when you think those the happiest men on earth that are the most holy, and wish from your hearts that you were such as they, though you had not a house to put your head in: when you look towards God with longing thoughts, and are grieved that your understandings can reach no nearer him, and know no more of him, and that your hearts cannot embrace him with a more burning love: when

you admire the beauty of a meek, a patient, a mortified, spiritual, heavenly mind, and long to have more of this yourself, yea, to be perfect in all holiness and obedience: when your hearts are thus brought over to God, that you had rather have him than any other, and rather live in his family any where, and rather walk in his ways than in any; then are you indeed converted, and never till then, whatever other dispositions you may have.

And now, if that were my business, what abundance of reason might I show you, to make you willing to come over unto God, with love and with delight. Whom else can you love, if he that is love itself seem not lovely to you? All loveliness is in him and from him; the creature hath none of itself, nor for itself: to love a life of sin, is to love the image and service of the devil, and to love that which feeds the flames of hell; what is it then to love this sin so well, as for the love of it to fly from God and godliness? Methinks men at the worst should love that which will do them good, and not prefer that before it which will hurt them. Do sinners indeed believe that God and holiness will do them hurt, and that sin will do them greater good? Is there ever a man so mad, that he dare speak this and stand to it? If indeed you think it best to live in sin, and therefore had rather keep it than leave it, your understandings are befooled, I had almost used Paul's phrase, and said, bewitched, Gal. iii. 1. Will it do you any hurt to leave your beastly, sensual lives, and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ?" This is the doctrine of saving grace, Tit. ii. 11—13. Would it do you any harm to be assured of salvation, and ready to die, and to know that angels shall conduct your departing souls to Christ, and that you shall live in joy with him for ever? or to be employed in those holy works that must prepare you for this day, and help you to this assurance? If God be naught for you, if holiness, and righteousness, and temperance be naught for you, then you may as well say, heaven is naught for you; and therefore you must resolve for sin and hell, and see whether that be good for you. I shall say no more of this point, because I have written of it already, in the conclusion of the "Saints' Rest," which I desire you to peruse.

Direct. XI. The next part of my advice is, If you would not have this saving work miscarry, turn then this present day and hour, without any more delay.

Somewhat I have spoken of this already, and therefore shall say the less. But yet I shall back this direction with such reasons as will certainly convince you, if you be not unreasonable, of the folly of delay, and show you that it concerneth you presently to return. And though my reasons will be numerous, it is not the number, but the strength of them, that I shall urge you principally to consider; and because of the number, I will go over them with the greater brevity.

1. Consider to whom it is that you are commanded to turn; and then tell me whether there can be any reason for delay. It is not to an empty, deceitful creature, but to the faithful, all-sufficient God; to him that is the cause of all things, the strength of the creation, the joy of angels, the felicity of the saints, the sun and shield of all the righteous, and refuge of the distressed, and the glory of the whole world. Of such power, that his word can take down the sun from the firmament, and turn the earth and all things into nothing; for he doth more in giving them their being and continuance. Of such wisdom,

that was never guilty of mistake, and therefore will not mislead you, nor draw you to any thing that is not for the best. Of such goodness, as that evil cannot stand in his sight, and nothing but your evil could make him displeased with you; and it is from nothing but evil that he calleth you to turn. It is not to a malicious enemy, that would do you a mischief, but it is to a gracious God, that is love itself: not to an implacable justice, but to a reconciled Father: not to revenging indignation, but to the embracement of those arms, and the mercy of that compassionate Lord, that is enough to melt the hardest heart, when you find yourself as the poor returning prodigal, Luke xxv. 20, in his bosom, when you deserved to have been under his feet. And will the great and blessed God invite thee to his favour, and wilt thou delay and demur upon the return? The greatest of the angels of heaven are glad of his favour, and value no happiness but the light of his countenance; heaven and earth are supported by him, and nothing can stand without him; how glad would those very devils be of his favour, that tempt thee to neglect his favour! And wilt thou delay to turn to such a God? Why, man, thou art every minute at his mercy; if thou turn not, he can throw thee into hell when he will, more easily than I can throw this book to the ground; and yet dost thou delay? There are all things imaginable in him to draw thee: there is nothing that is good for thee, but it is perfectly in him, where thou mayst have it certain and perpetuated. There is nothing in him to give the least discouragement: let all the devils in hell, and all the enemies of God on earth, say the worst they can against his majesty, and they are not able to find the smallest blemish in his absolute holiness, and wisdom, and goodness: and yet wilt thou delay to turn?

2. Consider also, as to whom, so to what it is that thou must turn. Not to uncleanness, but unto holiness: not to the sensual life of a beast, but to the noble, rational life of a man, and the more noble, heavenly life of a believer: not to an unprofitable, worldly toil, but to the gainfullest employment that ever the sons of men were acquainted with: not to the deceitful drudgery of sin, but to that "godliness which is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. Sirs, do you know what a life of holiness is? You do not know it, if you turn away from it: I am sure if you knew it, you would never fly from it, no, nor endure to live without it. Why, a life of holiness is nothing but a living unto God, to be conversant with him, as the wicked are with the world, and to be devoted to his service, as sensualists are to the flesh. It is to live in the love of God and our Redeemer; and in the foretastes of his everlasting glory, and of his love; and in the sweet forethoughts of that blessed life that shall never end; and in the honest, self-denying course that leadeth to that blessedness. A godly life is nothing else but a sowing the seed of heaven on earth; and a learning in the school of Christ, the songs of praise which we must use before the throne of God; and by suffering, a learning how to triumph and reign with Christ. And is there any thing in this life which you have cause to be afraid of? The sins and weaknesses of the godly are contrary to godliness; and therefore godliness is no more dishonoured by them, than health and life are dishonoured by your sicknesses. As health is never the worse to be liked, but the better, because of the painful grievousness of sickness, so godliness is to be liked the better, because the very failings of the saints are so grievous. If a true believer do but step

out of the way of God, he is wounded, he is out of joint, he is as undone till he come in again; though it was but in one particular. And can you endure to continue strangers to it altogether so long? I know you may find faults in the godly, till they are perfect; but let the most malicious enemy of Christ on earth find any fault in godliness if he can.

Can you delay to come into your Father's family; into the vineyard of the Lord; into the kingdom of God on earth, to be fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; to have the pardon of all your sins, and the sealed promise of everlasting glory? Why, sirs, when you are called on to turn, you are called to the porch of heaven, into the beginning of salvation. And will you delay to accept everlasting life?

3. Consider, also, from what you are called to turn; and then judge whether there be any reason of delay. It is from the devil, your enemy; from the love of a deceitful world; from the seducement of corrupted, brutish flesh; it is from sin, the greatest evil. What is there in sin, that you should delay to part with it? Is there any good in it? Or what hath it ever done for you, that you should love it? Did it ever do you good? Or did it ever do any man good? It is the deadly enemy of Christ and you; that caused his death, and will cause yours, and is working for your damnation, if converting and pardoning grace prevent it not. And are you loth to leave it? It is the cause of all the miseries of the world, of all the sorrow that ever did befall you, and the cause of the damnation of them that perish. And do you delay to part with it?

4. Your delaying shows that you love not God, and that you prefer your sin before him, and that you would never part with it if you might have your will. For if you loved God, you would long to be restored to his favour, and to be near him, and employed in his service and his family. Love is quick and diligent, and will not draw back. And it is a sign also that you are in love with sin; for else, why should you be so loth to leave it? He that would not leave his sin, and turn to God, till the next week, or next month, or year, would never turn if he might have his desire. For that which makes you desirous to stay a day or week longer, doth indeed make you loth to turn at all. And, therefore, it is but hypocrisy to take on you, that you are willing to turn hereafter, if you be not willing to do it now without delay.

5. Consider but what a case you are in while you thus delay. Do you think you stand on dry ground, or in a safe condition? If you knew where you are, you would sit as upon thorns, as long as you are unconverted; you would be as a man that stood up to the knees in the sea, and saw the tide coming towards him, who certainly would think that there is no standing still in such a place. Read what I have said of the state of the unconverted, and in my first "Treatise of Conversion." In a word, you are the drudges of sin, the slaves of the devil, the enemies of God, the abusers of his grace and Spirit, the despisers of Christ, the heirs of hell. And is this a state to stay in an hour? You have all your sin unpardoned; you are under the curse of the law. The wrath of God is upon you; and the fulness of it hangs over your heads. Judgment is coming to pass upon you the dreadful doom; the Lord is at hand; death is at the door, and waits but for the word from the mouth of God, that it may arrest you, and bring you to everlasting misery. And is this a state for a man to stay in?

6. Moreover, your delaying giveth great advantage to the tempter. If you would presently turn

and forsake your sins, and enter into a faithful covenant with God, the devil would be almost out of hope, and the very heart of his temptations would be broken. He would see that now it is too late. There is no getting you out of the arms of Christ. But as long as you delay, you keep him still in heart and hope. He hath time to strengthen his prison and fetters, and to renew his snares. And if one temptation serve not, he hath time to try another and another; as if you would stand as a mark for Satan to shoot at as long as he please. What likelihood is there, that ever so foolish a sinner should be recovered and saved from his sin?

7. Moreover, your delaying is a vile abuse of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, and may so far provoke him, as to leave you to yourself, and then you are past help. If you delight so to trample on your crucified Lord, and will so long put him to it by refusing his grace, and grieving his Spirit, what can you expect, but that he should turn away in wrath, and utterly forsake you, and say, Let him keep his sin, seeing he had rather have it than my grace; let him continue ungodly, seeing he is so loth to be sanctified; let him take his own course, and die in his sin, and repent in hell, seeing he would not repent on earth? You provoke Christ thus to give you up.

8. Consider also, I beseech you, if you ever mean to turn, what it is that you stay for. Do you think to bring down Christ and heaven to lower rates, and to be saved hereafter with less ado? Sure you cannot be so foolish. For God will be still the same, and Christ the same, and his promise hath still the same condition, which he will never change; and godliness will be the same, and as much against your carnal interest hereafter as it is now. When you have looked about you never so long, you will never find a fairer or nearer way; but this same way you must go, or perish. If you cannot leave sin now, how should you leave it then? It will be still as sweet to your flesh as now. Or if one sin grow stale by the decay of nature, another that is worse will spring up in its stead, and though the acts abate, they will all live still at the root; for sin was never mortified by age. So that if ever you will turn, you may best turn now.

9. Yea, more than that, the longer you stay, the harder it will be. If it be hard to-day, it is like to be harder to-morrow. For as the Spirit of Christ is like to forsake you for your wilful delays, so custom will strengthen sin; and custom in sinning will harden your hearts, and make you as past feeling, to work all uncleanness with greediness, Eph. iv. 19. Cannot you crush this serpent when it is but in the spawn, and can you encounter it in its serpentine strength? Cannot you pluck up a tender plant, and can you pluck up an oak or cedar? O sinners! what do you do, to make your recovery so difficult by delay? You are never like to be fairer for heaven, and to find conversion an easier work than now you may do. Will you stay till the work be ten times harder, and yet do you think it so hard already?

10. Consider, also, that sin gets daily victories by your delay. We lay our batteries against it, and preach, and exhort, and pray against it, and it gets a kind of victory over all, as long as we prevail not with you to turn. It conquereth our persuasions and advice; it conquereth all the stirrings of your consciences; it conquereth all your heartless purposes and deceitful promises. And these frequent conquests do strengthen your sin, and weaken your resistance, and leave the matter almost hopeless. Before a physician hath used remedies, he hath more hope of a cure, than when he hath tried all means, and finds that the best medicines do no good,

but the man is still as bad or worse. So when all means have been tried with you, and yet you are unconverted, the case draws towards desperation itself. The very means are disabled more than before; that is, your hearts are unapter to be wrought upon by them. When you have long been under sermons, and reading, and among good examples, and yet you are unconverted, these ordinances lose much of their force with you. Custom will make you slight them, and be dead-hearted under them. And it is these very same means and truths that you have frustrated, that must do the work, or it will never be done. The same plaster must heal you that you have thrown off so oft. And what a sad case is this, that there is no hope left, but in the very same medicine which you have taken so oft in vain!

11. Moreover, age itself hath many inconveniences, and youth hath many great advantages, and, therefore, it is folly to delay. In age the understanding and memory grows dull, and people grow uncapable, and almost unchangeable. We see, by our every day's experience, that men think they should not change when they are old; that opinion or practice that they have been brought up in, they think that they should not then forsake it. To learn when they are old, and to turn when they are old, you see how much they are against it. Besides, how unfit is age to be at that pains that you can undergo! How unfit to begin the holy warfare against the flesh, the world, and the devil! God's way is to list his soldiers as soon as may be, even in their infancy, which they must own as soon as ever they come to age. And the devil would not have it done at all, and, therefore, he would have it put off as long as may be. In infancy he will tell the parents, with the anabaptists, It is too soon to be dedicated to God, and entered into covenant. When they come to their childhood and youthful state, he will then persuade them that it is yet too soon; and when he can no longer persuade them that it is yet too soon, he will then persuade them that it is too late. Oh what a happy thing it is to come unto God betimes, and with the first! What advantage hath youth! They have the vigour of wit, and of body; they be not rooted and hardened in sin, not filled with prejudice and obstinacy against godliness, as others be. Besides, the capacity of serving God, of which anon.

12. You have such times of advantage and encouragement, as few ages of the world have ever seen, and few nations on earth do enjoy at this day. What plain and plentiful teaching have you! What abundance of good examples, and the society of the godly! Private and public helps are common. Godliness is under as little suffering as ever you can expect to see it; yea, it is grown into reputation among us, so that it is an honour to serve God, and a dishonour to neglect it (as well it may). Our rulers countenance the practices of godliness; they proclaim themselves the forward professors and patrons of it, and take this as their glory. And this is not ordinary in the world. Seldom hath the church seen such days on earth. And yet is not the way to heaven fair enough for you? Yet are you not ready to turn to God? When should men make hay, but when the sun shines? Will you delay till this harvest-time be over, and the winter of persecution come again? Can you better turn to God, when a godly life is the common scorn of the country, as it was a while ago; and when every one will be deriding and railing at you? or when it may possibly cost you your lives? Have you sun, and wind, and tide to serve you, and will you stay to set out in storms and darkness?

13. Moreover, your delay doth cast your conversion and salvation upon hazard, yea, upon many and grievous hazards. And is your everlasting happiness a matter to be wilfully hazarded, by causeless and unreasonable delays? (1.) If you delay to-day, you are utterly uncertain of living till to-morrow. If you put by this one motion, you know not whether ever you shall have another. Alas! that ever the heart of man should be so senseless, as to delay, when they know not but it may prove their damnation, and when heaven or hell must certainly follow; that they dare put off a day or hour, when they know not whether ever they shall see another. (2.) And as your life is uncertain, so are the means uncertain by which God useth to do the work. He may remove your teachers, and other helps; and then you will be further off than before. (3.) And if both should continue, yet grace itself is uncertain. You know not whether ever the Spirit of God will put another thought of turning into your hearts; or, at least, whether he will give you hearts to turn.

14. Moreover, the delay of conversion continueth your sin, and so you will daily increase the number, and increase your guilt, and make your souls more abundantly miserable. Are you not deep enough in debt to God already, and have you not sinned enough to answer for upon your souls? Would you fain have one year's sin more, or one day's sin more, to be charged upon you? Oh if you did but know what sin is, it would amaze you to think what a mountain lieth already upon your consciences. One sin unpardoned will sink the stoutest sinner into hell. And you have many a thousand upon your souls already; and would you yet have more? Methinks you should rather look about you, and bethink you how you may get a pardon for all that is past.

15. And as this sin increaseth daily by delay, so consequently the wrath of God increaseth; you will run further into his displeasure; and possibly you may cut down the bough that you stand upon, and hasten even bodily destruction to yourselves. When you live daily upon God, and are kept out of hell by a miracle of his mercy, methinks you should not desire yet longer to provoke him, lest he withdraw his mercy, and let you fall into misery.

16. And do but consider, what will become of you, if you be found in these delays. You are then lost, body and soul, for ever. Now if you had but hearts to know what is good for you, the worst of you might be converted and saved; for God doth freely offer you his grace. But if you die in your delays, in the twink of an eye, you will find yourselves utterly undone for ever. Now there is hope of a change, but when delays have brought you to hell, there is no more change, nor any more hope.

17. Consider, that your very time which you lose by these delays, is an unconceivable loss. When time is gone, what would you then give for one of those years, or days, or hours, which now you foolishly trifle away! O wretched sinners! are there so many thousand souls in hell, that would give a world, if they had it, for one of your days, and yet can you afford to throw them away in worldliness, and sensuality, and loitering delays? I tell you, time is better worth than all the wealth and honours of the world. The day is coming, when you will set by time; when it is gone, you will know what a blessing you made light of. But then all the world cannot call back one day or hour of this precious time, which you can sacrifice now to the service of your flesh, and cast away on unprofitable sinning.

18. Consider, also, that God hath given you no time to spare. He hath not lent you one day or

hour, more than is needful for the work that you have to do, and therefore you have no reason to lose any by your delays. Do you imagine that God would give a man an hour's time for nothing? much less for to abuse him and serve his enemy? No, let me tell you, that if you make your best of every hour, if you should never lose a minute of your lives, you would find all little enough for the work you have to do. I know not how others think of time, but for my part, I am forced daily to say, How swift, how short is time; and how great is our work; and when we have done our best, how slowly goeth it on! Oh precious time! What hearts have they, what lives do those men lead, that think time long; that have time to spare, and pass in idleness!

19. To convince you more, consider, I beseech you, the exceeding greatness of the work you have to do; and tell me then, whether it be time for you to delay. Especially you that are yet unconverted, and strangers to the heavenly nature of the saints, you have far more to do than other men. You have a multitude of headstrong passions to subdue, and abundance of deadly sins to kill, and rooted vices to root up: you have many a false opinion of God and his ways to be plucked up, and the customs of many years' standing to be broken: you have blind minds that must be enlightened with heavenly knowledge; and abundance of spiritual truths that are above the reach of flesh and blood, that you must needs learn and understand: you have much to know, that is hard to be known: you have a dead soul to be made alive, and a hard heart to be melted, and a seared conscience to be softened and made tender, and the guilt of many thousand sins to be pardoned: you have a new heart to get, and a new end to aim at and seek after, and a new life to live; abundance of enemies you have to fight with and overcome; abundance of temptations to resist and conquer; many graces to get, and preserve, and exercise, and increase, and abundance of holy works to do for the service of God, and the good of yourselves and others. Oh what a deal of work doth every one of these words contain; and yet what abundance more might I name! And have you all this to do, and yet will you delay? And they are not indifferent matters that are before you; it is no less than the saving of your souls, and the obtaining the blessed glory of the saints. Necessity is upon you: these are things that must be done, or else woe to you that ever you were born: and yet have you another day to lose? Why sirs, if you had a hundred miles to go in a day or two, upon pain of death, would you delay? Oh think of the work that you have to do, and then judge whether it be not time to stir!

20. And methinks it should exceedingly terrify you to consider, what abundance by such delays do perish; and how few that wilfully delay are ever converted and saved. Many a soul that once had purposes hereafter to repent, is now in misery, where there is no repentance that will do them any good. For my part, though I have known some very few converted when they are old; yet I must needs say, both that they were very few indeed, and that I had reason to believe, that they were such that had sinned before in ignorance, and did not wilfully put off repentance, when they were convinced that they must turn. Though I doubt not but God may convert even these if he please, yet I cannot say that I have ever known many, if any such, to be converted. Sure I am that God's usual time is in childhood or youth, before they have long abused grace, and wilfully delayed to turn when they were convinced. Some considerable time I confess many have before their first convictions and purposes be brought to any

great ripeness of performance; but oh how dangerous is it to delay!

21. Consider, also, either conversion is good or bad for you; either it is needful or unnecessary. If it be bad, and a needless thing, then let it alone for altogether. But if you are convinced that it is good and necessary, is it not better now, than to stay any longer? Is it not the sooner the better? Are you afraid of being safe, or happy too soon? If you are sick, you care not how soon you are well: if you have a bone out, you care not how soon it is set: if you fall into water, you care not how soon you get out: if your house be on fire, you care not how soon it be quenched: if you are but in fears by any doubts, or ill tidings, you care not how soon your fears be over. And yet are you afraid of being too soon out of the power of the devil, and the danger of hell; and of being too soon the sons of God, and the holy, justified heirs of heaven?

22. Consider, also, either you can turn now or not. If you can, and yet will not, you are utterly without excuse. If you cannot to-day, how much less will you be able hereafter, when strength is less, and difficulties greater, and burdens more? Is it not time, therefore, to make out to Christ for strength, and should not the very sense of your disability dissuade you from delay?

23. Consider how long you have staid already, and put God's patience to it by your folly; hath not the devil, the world, and the flesh, had many years' time of your life already? Have you not been long enough swallowing the poison of sin? and long enough been abusing the Lord that made you, and the blood of the Son of God that was shed for you, and the Spirit of grace that hath moved and persuaded you? Are you not yet gone far enough from God, and have you not yet done enough to the damning of yourselves, and casting away everlasting life? O wretched sinners, it is rather time for you to fall down on your faces before the Lord, and with tears and groans, to lament it day and night, that ever you have gone so far in sin, and delayed so long to turn to him as you have done. Sure, if after so many years' rebellion, you are yet so far from lamenting it, that you had rather have more of it, and had rather hold on a little longer, no wonder if God forsake you, and let you alone.

24. Have you any hopes of God's acceptance, and your salvation, or not? If you have such hopes, that when you turn God will pardon all your sins, and give you everlasting life, is it think you an ingenuous thing to desire to offend him yet a little longer, from whom you expect such exceeding mercy and glory as you do? Have you the faces to speak what is in your hearts and practice, and to go to God with such words as these? Lord, I know I cannot have the pardon of one sin, without the blood of Christ, and the riches of thy mercy; nor can I be saved from hell without it; but yet I hope for all this from thy grace. I beseech thee, let me live a little longer in my sins, a little longer let me trample on the blood of Christ, and despise thy commands, and abuse thy mercies; a little longer let me spit in the face of thy goodness, and prefer the flesh and the world before thee, and then pardon me all that ever I did, and take me into glory. Could you for shame put up such a request to God as this? If you could, you are past shame; if not, then do not practise and desire that, which you cannot for shame speak out and request.

25. Moreover, it is an exceeding advantage to you to come in to God betimes, and an exceeding loss that you will suffer by delay, if you were sure to be converted at the last. If you speedily come in, you may have time to learn, and get more understanding

in the matters of God, than else can be expected; for knowledge will not be had but by time and study. You may also have time to get strength of grace, when young beginners can expect no more than an infant's strength; you may grow to be men of parts and abilities, to be useful in the church, and profitable to those about you, when others cannot go or stand, unless they lean on the stronger for support. If you come in betimes, you may do God a great deal of service; which in the evening of the day, you will neither have strength nor time to do. You may have time to get assurance of salvation, and to be ready with comfort when death shall call; when a weakling is like to be perplexed with doubts and fears, and death is like to be terrible, because of their unreadiness.

26. And did you ever consider, who and how many do stay for you while you delay? Do you know who it is that you make to wait your leisure? God himself stands over you with the offers of his mercy, as if he thought it long till you return, saying, "Oh that there were such a heart in them! and when will it once be? How long, ye simple, will ye love simplicity, and scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof," Deut. v. 29; Jer. xiii. 17; Prov. i. 22. And do you think it wise, or safe, or mannerly, for you to make the God of heaven to wait on you, while you are serving his enemy? Can you offer God a baser indignity, than to expect that he should support your lives, and feed you, and preserve you, and patiently forbear you, while you abuse him to his face, and drudge for the flesh, the world, and the devil? Should a worm thus use the Lord that made him? You will not yourselves hold a candle in your hands, while it burns your own fingers; nor will you hold a nettle or a wasp in your hand to sting you; nor will you keep a dog in your house, that is good for nothing but to snarl at you, and bite your children, or worry your sheep; and yet God hath long held up your lives, while instead of light, you have yielded nothing but a stinking snuff; and instead of grapes, you have brought forth nothing but thorns and thistles; and while you have snarled at his children, and his flock, and done the worst you could against him. And would you indeed put God to wait on you thus, while you serve the devil yet one day more? Must God, as it were, hold the drunkard the candle while he reels and spews? Must he draw the curtain, while the filthy wretch doth once more please his fleshly lusts? Marvel not, if he withdraw his supporting mercy, and let such wretches drop into hell.

And it is not God only, but his servants, and creatures, and ordinances, that all are waiting on you. The angels stay for the joy that is due to them upon your conversion. Ministers are studying, and preaching, and praying for you. Godly neighbours are praying and longing for your change. The springs and rivers are flowing for you; the winds blow for you; the sun shines for you; the clouds rain for you; the earth bears fruit for you; the beasts must labour, and suffer, and die for you; all things are doing, and would you stand still, or else do worse? What haste makes the sun about the world, to return in its time to give you light! What haste make other creatures in your service! And yet must you delay? Must God stay, and Christ and the Spirit stay? Must angels stay, must ministers stay, must the godly stay, and the ordinances stay, and all the creatures stay your leisure, while you are abusing God, and your souls, and others, and while you delay, as if it were too soon to turn?

27. Consider, that when you were lost, the Son of God did not delay the work of your redemption. He

presently undertook it, and turned by the stroke of damning justice. In the fulness of time he came and performed what he undertook; he failed not one day of his appointed time. And will you now delay to accept the benefit, and turn to him? Must he make such haste to save you at so dear a rate, and now will you delay to be saved?

28. Moreover, God doth not delay to do you good. You have the day and night in their proper seasons; the sun doth not fail to rise upon you at the appointed time; you have the spring and harvest in their meetest seasons, the former and latter rain in season. When you are in want you have seasonable supplies; and when you are in danger, you have seasonable deliverance: and is it meet or equal that you should refuse to bring forth seasonable fruit, but still be putting off God with your delays?

29. Moreover, when you are in trouble and necessity, you are then in haste for deliverance and relief. Then you think every day a week, till your danger or suffering be past. If you be under the pain of a disease, or in danger of death, or under poverty, oppression, or disgrace, you would have God relieve you without delay; and yet you will not turn to him without delay. Then you are ready to cry out, How long, Lord, how long till deliverance come! But you will not hear God when he crieth to you in your sins. How long will it be ere you turn from your transgressions, when shall it once be? When you are to receive any outward deliverance, you care not how soon, the sooner the better; but when you are to turn to God, and received his grace and title to glory, then you care not how late, as if you had no mind of it. Can you for shame beg of God to hasten your deliverances, when you remember your delays, and still continue to trifle with him, and draw back?

30. Your present prosperity, and worldly delights, are posting away without delay; and should you delay to make sure of better in their stead? Time is going, and health is going, youth is going, yea, life is going; your riches are taking wing, your fleshly pleasures do perish in the very using; your meat and drink is sweet to you little longer than it is in your throat. Shortly you must part with house and lands, with goods and friends, and all your mirth and earthly business will be done. All this you know, and yet will you delay to lay up a durable treasure which you may trust upon, and to provide you a better tenement before you be turned out of this? What will you do for a habitation, for pleasures and contents, when all that you have now is spent and gone, and earth will afford you nothing but a grave? If you could but keep that you have, I should not much wonder, that knowing so little of God and another world, you look not much after it; but when you perceive death knocking at your doors, and see that all your worldly comforts are packing up, and hastening away, methinks if you have your wits and sense about you, you should presently turn, and make sure of heaven, without any more delay.

31. Consider also, whether it be equal, that you should delay your conversion, when you can seasonably despatch your worldly business, and when your flesh would be provided for, you can hearken to it without delay. You have wit enough to sow your seed in season, and will not delay it till the time of harvest: you will reap your corn when it is ripe, and gather your fruit when it is ripe, without delay. You observe the seasons in the course of your labours, day by day, and year by year; you will not lie in bed when you should be at your work, nor delay all night to go to your rest; nor suffer your servants to delay your business; you will know your dinner-time

and supper-time, day by day; if you be sick, you will seek help without delay, lest your disease should grow to be incurable. And yet will you delay your conversion, and the making sure of heaven?

Why sirs, shall these trifles be done without delay, and shall your salvation be put off? In the name of God, sirs, what do you think of? Do you imagine that you can better suffer hell-fire, than hunger or nakedness? or that you can better bear the loss of everlasting joys, than the loss of your commodities and provisions in the world? Sure, if you believe the life to come, you cannot think so. And can you have while for every thing, except that one thing, which all the rest are merely to promote, and in comparison of which they are all but dreams? Can you have while to work, to plough, and sow, and reap, and cannot you have while to prepare for eternal life? Why sirs, if you cannot find time yet to search your hearts, and prepare for death; turn to God, and give over eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and say, I cannot have time for these. You may as wisely say so for these smaller matters, as the greater.

32. Moreover, if men offer you courtesies, and commodities for your bodies, you will not stand delaying, and need so many persuasions to accept them. If your landlord would for nothing renew your lease, if any man would give you houses, or lands, would you delay so long before you would accept them? A beggar at your door will not only thankfully take your alms, without your entreaty and importunity, but will beg for it, and be importunate with you to give it. And yet will you delay to accept the blessed offers of grace, which is a greater thing?

33. Yet consider, that it is God that is the giver, and you that are the miserable beggars and receivers; and therefore it is fitter that you should wait on God, and call on him for his grace, when he seemeth to delay, and not that he should wait on you. He can live without your receiving, but you cannot live without his giving. The beggar must be glad of an alms at any time, and the condemned person of a pardon at any time; but the giver may well expect that his gift be received without delay, or else he may let them go without it.

34. And methinks you should not deal worse with God, when he comes to you as a physician to save your own souls, than you would do with a neighbour or a friend, when it is not for your own good, but for theirs. If your neighbour lay a dying, you would go and visit him without delay: if he fell down in a swoon, you would catch him up without delay: if he fell into the fire or water, you would pluck him out without delay: yea, you would do thus much by a very beast. And yet will you delay when it is not another, but yourselves, that are sinking and drowning, and within a step of death and desperation? If a woman be but in travail, her neighbours will come to her without delay; and yet when their souls are in bondage to sin and Satan, and a state of death, they will let them lie there year after year, and when we desire them to be converted, here is nothing but delays.

35. If yet you perceive not how unreasonably you deal with God and your souls, I beseech you consider whether you do not deal worse with him, than you do with the devil himself. If Satan or his servants persuade you to sin, you delay not so long but you are presently at it. You are ready to follow every tippling companion or gamester that puts up the finger; you are ready to go as they invite you; the very sight of the cup doth presently prevail with the drunkard, and the sight of his filthy mate prevail with the fornicator; and sin can be presently enter-

tained without delay. But when God comes, when Christ calls, when the Spirit moveth, when the minister persuadeth, when conscience is convinced, we can have nothing after all but wishes, and purposes, and promises, with delays. Oh what a stomach hath that man, or what a brain, that will snatch at poison, and swallow dung and dirt with greediness, without any chewing; and when you offer him meat, stands sighing and looking at it, and hardly will be persuaded to put it in his mouth, and if he do, he is chewing it so long, that at last he even spits it out again, and cannot get it down. Thus deal ungodly wretches, between their poisonous sins and the saving means and grace of Christ.

Nay, more than this, so eager are they on their sin, that we are not able to entreat them to delay it. When the passionate man is but provoked, we cannot persuade him to delay his railing language so long as to consider first of the issue. We cannot entreat the drunkard to put off his drunkenness but for one twelve-month, while he trieth another course: all the ministers in the country cannot persuade the worldling to forbear his worldliness, and the proud persons their pride, and the ungodly person his ungodliness, for the space of one month, or week, or day. And yet when God hath a command, and a request to them, to turn to him, and be saved, here they can delay without our entreaty.

36. Consider also, that it is not possible for you to turn too soon; nor will you ever have cause to repent of your speediness. Delay may undo you, but speedy turning can do you no harm. I wonder what hurt you think it can do you, to be quickly reconciled to God! And why then should there be any delay, where it is not possible to be too hasty? Do you think that there is ever a saint in heaven, yea, or on earth either, that is sorry that he staid not longer unconverted? No, you shall never hear of such a repentance from the mouth of any that is indeed converted.

37. But I must tell you on the contrary side, that if ever you be so happy as to be converted, you will repent it, and a hundred times repent it, that you delayed so long before you yielded. Oh how it will grieve you when your hearts are melted with the love of God, and are overcome with the infinite kindness of his pardoning, saving grace; that ever you had the hearts to abuse such a God, and deal so unkindly with him, and stand out so long against that compassion that was seeking your salvation! Oh how it will grieve your hearts to consider, that you have spent so much of your lives in sin, for the devil, and the flesh, and the deceitful world! Oh you would think with yourselves, Was not God more worthy of my youthful days? Had I not been better to have spent it in his service and the work of my salvation? Alas! that I should waste such precious days, and now be so far behindhand as I am! Now I want that faith, that hope, that love, that peace, that assurance, that joy in the Holy Ghost, which I might have had if I had spent those years for God, which I spent in the service of the world and the flesh. Then I might have had the comfort of a well-spent life, and with joy have now looked back upon those days, and seen the good I have done to others, and the honour I had brought to God; whereas I must now look back upon all those years with sorrow, and shame, and anguish of mind. You will think to yourselves then a hundred times, Oh that I had but that time again to spend for God, which I spent for sin, and to use for my soul, which I wasted for my brutish flesh! Believe it, sirs, if ever you be converted, you must look for these repenting sorrows for all your delays (and that is the best that can come

of it). And who would now wilfully make work for sorrow?

38. And I pray you consider, whether it belongs of right to God or you, to determine of the day and hour of your coming in? It is he that must give you the pardon of your sins: and doth it not then belong to him to appoint the time of your receiving it? You cannot have Christ and life without him. It is he that must give you the kingdom of heaven; and is he not worthy then to appoint the time of your conversion, that you may be made partakers of it? But if he say, To-day, dare you say, I will stay till to-morrow?

39. Nay, consider whether God or you be likelier to know the meetest time. Dare you say that you know better when to turn than God doth? I suppose you dare not. And if you dare not say so, for shame let not your practice say so. God saith, "To-day, while it is called to-day, hear my voice, and harden not your hearts." And dare you say, It is better to stay one month longer, or one day longer? God saith, "Behold, this is the accepted time! Behold, this is the day of salvation!" 2 Cor. vi. 2. And will you say, It is time enough to-morrow? Do you know better than God? If your physician do but tell you in a pleurisy, or a fever, you must let blood this day before to-morrow, you will have so much reason as to submit to his understanding, and think that he knows better than you. And cannot you allow as much to the God of wisdom?

40. Consider, also, that the speediness of your conversion when God first calls you, doth make you the more welcome, and is a thing exceeding pleasing to God. Our proverb is, A speedy gift is a double gift. If you ask any thing of a friend, and he give it you presently, and cheerfully at the first asking, you will think you have it with a good will: but if he stand delaying first, and demurring upon it, you will think you have it with an ill will, and that you owe him the smaller thanks. If a very beggar at your door must stay long for an alms, he will think he is the less beholden to you. How much more may God be displeased, when he must stay so long for his own, and that for your benefit! God loveth a cheerful giver, and consequently a cheerful obeyer of his call. And if it be hearty and cheerful, it is the liker to be speedy without such delays.

41. And I would desire you but to do with God as you would be done by. Would you take it well of your children if they should tear all their clothes, and cast their meat to the dogs, and tread it in the dirt, and when you entreat them to give over, they will not regard you? Would you stand month after month, entreating and waiting on them, as God doth on you, in a foolisher course? Or rather, would you not either soundly whip them, or take their meat from them, till hunger teach them to use it better? If your servant will spend the whole day and year in drinking and playing when he should do your work, will you wait on him all the year with entreaties, and pay him at last as if he had served you? And can you expect that God should deal so by you?

42. And consider, I pray you, that your delay is a denial, and so may God interpret it. For the time of your turning is part of the command. He that saith, Turn, saith, Now, even to-day, without delay. He giveth you no longer day. If time be lengthened, and the offer be made again and again, that is more than he promised you, or you could have promised yourselves. His command is, Now, return and live. And if you refuse the time, the present time, you refuse the offer, and forfeit the benefit. And if you knew but what it is to give God a denial in such

a case as this, and what a case you were in if he should turn away in wrath, and never come near you more, you would then be afraid of jesting with his hot displeasure, or dallying with the Lord.

43. Methinks you should remember, that God doth not stay thus on all as he doth on you. Thousands are under burning and despair, and past all remedy, while patience is waiting yet upon you. Can you forget that others are in hell at this very hour, for as small sins as those that you are yet entangled and linger in? Good Lord, what a thing is a senseless heart! That at the same time when millions are in misery for delaying or refusing to be converted, their successors should fiercely venture in their steps. Surely if faith had but opened your ears, to hear the cries of those damned souls, you durst not imitate them by your delays.

44. And I must tell you, that God will not always thus wait on you, and attend you by his patience, as hitherto he hath done. Patience hath his appointed time. And if you outstay that time, you are miserable wretches. I can assure you, sirs, the glass is turned upon you; and when it is run out, you shall never have an hour of patience more. Then God will no more entreat you to be converted. He will not always stand over you with salvation, and say, Oh that this sinner would repent and live! Oh that he would take the mercies that I have provided for him! Do not expect that God should do thus always with you; for it will not be.

45. Your delays do weary the servants of Christ that are employed for your recovery. Ministers will grow weary of preaching to you and persuading you. When we come to men that were never warned before, we come in hopes that they will hear and obey; and this puts life and earnestness into our persuasions. But when we have persuaded men but a few times in vain, and leave them as we found them, our spirits begin to droop and flag. Much more when we have preached and persuaded you many years, and still you are the same, and are but where you were. This dulls a minister's spirit, and makes him preach heavily and coldly, when he is almost out of heart and hope. I do not justify ministers in this, and say, they should do thus. I know they should not; and if they were perfect, they would not. But they are but men, and imperfect themselves; and what man is able to be lively and fervent in his work when people stir not, and he sees no good done on the miserable hearers, as if he had the encouragement of success? Oh when we do but see the hearts of hardened, stubborn sinners relent, and break, and melt before the power of the word; and when we hear them cry out for Christ and mercy, and cry out against themselves for their former folly, and confess their sins, and ask us what they shall do to be saved, and are but willing to be ruled by Christ, the Physician of their souls; this would put life into a preacher that was cold and dull; this would even make a stone to speak. But when we tell men of God's threatenings till they are past believing them, and tell them of God's anger till they seem to be past fearing it, and tell them of the plague of sin till they are past feeling; when, instead of preaching men to faith, and repentance; and fear, and tenderness of heart, we preach them into greater unbelief and carelessness, and dead stupidity; this is enough to dull or break the heart of almost any preacher in the world. What man is able to follow so fruitless a work with liveliness? And then it is you that will have the loss and danger of it; when you have dried the breasts the child may famish. If your preachers could not awake and change you with all their convincing arguments and

fergency, how quietly may you sleep on, when you have flattered them by discouragements. If Satan can either dismount, or make useless these cannons that were wont to batter his garrison, he may then possess your souls in peace. You talk against persecutors that silenced ministers; but O, sirs, it is you that are our greatest persecutors, that refuse and delay to yield to the calls of Christ by our ministry, and make us labour so much in vain. Though it be not vain as to our own souls, yet you make it in vain as to yours. When we have studied till we almost break our brains, and preached till we have quite broke our strength, and we are consumed and worn away with labour and bodily pains that it procureth, then you come after, and make us requital by breaking our hearts by your delays, and refusing to turn and live. Truly, sirs, I must tell you for my own part, that if it had not been for those that gave me better encouragement by their obedience, I should never have held out with you a quarter of this time. If all had profited as little as some, and all had stuck as fast in an unconverted state as some; if the humble, penitent, obedient ones among you had not been my comfort and encouragement under Christ, I had been gone from you many a year ago, I could never have held out till now. Either my corruption would have made me run away with Jonas, or my judgment would have commanded me to shake off the dust off my feet, as a witness against you, and depart. But to what end do I speak all this to you? to what end? Why, to let you see how you abuse both God and man by your delays and disobedience. You cannot possibly do us, that are your teachers, a greater injury or mischief than by thus delaying your own happiness. Are our studies and our labours worth nothing, think you? Are our watchings and waiting worth nothing? Are our prayers, and tears, and groans to be despised? God will not despise them, if you do. Believe it, he will set them all on your score, and you will one day have a heavy reckoning of them, and pay full dear for them. Is it equal dealing with us, that when we are watching for your souls, as men that must know we must give an account, you should rob us of our comfort, and make us do it with sighs and sorrow? Heb. xiii. 17. Yea, that you should undo all that we are doing, and make us lose our labour and hopes. And yet do you not think to pay for this? I tell you again, unconverted sinners, we are wearied with your delays. Many years we have been persuading you but to turn and live, and yet you are returned; you have been convinced long, and thinking on it, and wishing long, and talking of it, and promising long, and yet it is undone, and here is nothing but delays. We see while you delay, death takes away one this week, and another the next week, and you are passing into another world apace; and yet those that are left behind will take no warning, but still delay. We see that Satan delays not while you delay. He is day and night at work against you. If he seem to make a truce with you, it is that he may be doing secretly while you suspect him not. We see that sin delayeth not while you delay. It is working like poison or infection in your bodies, and seizing upon your vital powers; it is every day blinding you more and more; it is hardening your hearts more, and searing up your consciences to bring you past all feeling and hope. And must we stand by and see this miserable work with our people's souls, and all be frustrate, and rejected by themselves, that we do for their deliverance? How long must we stand by with the light in our hands, while you are serving the flesh, and neglecting that which we are sent to call you to? It is not our business to hold

you the candle to play by, or to sleep by, or to sin by; these are works that better agree with the dark. But God sent us to you on another message; even to light you out of your sins to him, that you might be saved. Truly, beloved hearers, I must needs say, that the time seems long, and very long to me, that I have been preaching so many years to you for conversion, and for a holy, heavenly life, even since I first knew you, and that yet so many of you are drowned in sin and ignorance, and are unconverted, when I think your very consciences tell you that it is a thing that must be done. I tell you, all these years do seem to me a long time to wait on you in vain. Blessed be the Lord that it hath not been in vain with some, or else I would scarce preach any more than one other sermon to you, even to bid you farewell. I pray you, deal but fairly with us, and tell us whether ever you will turn or not; if you will not, but are resolved for sin and hell, say so, that we may know the worst; speak out your minds, that we may know what to trust to; for if we once knew you would not turn, we would soon have done with you, and leave you to the justice of God. But if still you say you will turn, when will you do it? You will do it, and you hope you shall; but when? How long would you have us wait yet? Have you not abused us enough? Nay, I must tell you, that you even weary God himself; it is his own expression, Mal. ii. 17; Isa. xliii. 24. "Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities," Isa. i. 14. And I must say to you, as the prophet, "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but you will weary my God also?" Isa. vii. 13. Consider what it is that you do.

46. Consider, also, that you are at a constant unspeakable loss every day and hour that you delay your conversion. Oh how little do you know what you deprive yourselves of every day! If a slave in the galleys, or prison, might live at court as a favourite of the prince, in honour, and delight, and ease, would he delay either years or hours? or would he not rather think with himself, Is it not better to be at ease, and in honour, than to be here? As the prodigal said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" All this while I might be in plenty, and delight. All the while that you live in sin, you might be in the favour of God, in the high and heavenly employments of the saints; you might have the comforts of daily communion with Christ and with the saints; you might be laying up for another world, and might look death in the face with faith and confidence, as one that cannot be conquered by it; you might live as the heirs of heaven on earth. All this, and more than this, you lose by your delays. All the mercies of God are lost upon you. Your food and raiment, your health and wealth, which you set so much by, all is but lost, and worse than lost, for they turn to your greater hurt. All our pains with you, and all the ordinances of God which you possess, and all your time, is lost, and worse. And do you think it, indeed, a wise man's part, to live any longer at such a loss as this, and that wilfully, and for nothing? If you knew your loss you would not think so.

47. Nay more, you are all this while doing that which must be undone again, or you will be undone for ever. You are running from God, but you must come back again, or perish when all is done. You are learning a hundred carnal lessons and false conceits, that must be all unlearned again; you are shutting up your eyes in wilful ignorance, which must be opened again. You must learn the doctrine of Christ, the great Teacher of the church, if you

stay never so long, or else you shall be cut off from his people, Acts iii. 22; vii. 37. When you have been long accustoming yourselves to sin, you must unlearn, and break all those customs again; you are hardening your hearts daily, and they must again be softened. And I must tell you, though a little time and labour may serve to do mischief, yet it is not quickly undone again. You may sooner set your house on fire, than quench it when you have done: you may sooner cut and wound your bodies, than heal them again; and sooner catch a cold, or a disease, than cure it. You may quickly do that which must be longer in undoing. Besides, the cure is accompanied with pain: you must take many a bitter draught, in groans or tears of godly sorrow, for these delays: the wounds that you are now giving your souls, must smart and smart again, before they are searched and healed to the bottom. And what man of wisdom would make himself such work and sorrow? Who would travel on an hour longer, that knows he is out of his way, and must come back again? Would you not think him a madman that would say, I will go on a little further, and then I will turn back?

I know Mr. Bilney the martyr was offended with this comparison, because he thought it was against free grace. But comparisons extend not to every respect: there are two things in your sins to be undone; the one is the guilt, and the other is the habit and power of sin; the first indeed is done away when you are converted, but at the cost of Christ, which should not be made light of; and yet some scars may be left behind, and such twigs of God's rod may fall upon you as shall make you wish you had come sooner in. And for the habit of sin, though conversion break the heart of it, yet will it live and trouble you while you live: and those sins that now you are strengthening by your delays, will be thorns in your sides, and rebels in your country, and find you work as long as you live. And thus I may well say, that you are doing that while you delay, that must be long in undoing, and will not be undone so easily as it is done; and you are going on that way, that must be all trod backward.

48. And methinks if it were but this, it should terrify you from your delays, that it is likely to make your conversion more grievous, if you should have so great mercy from God, as after all to be converted. There are very few escape that are so exceeding long in travail; but if you come to the birth, it is like to be with double pain. For God must send either some grievous affliction to fire and frighten you out of your sins, or else some terrible gripes of conscience that shall make you groan and groan again, in the feeling of your folly. The pangs and throes of conscience, in the work of conversion, are far more grievous in some than in others. Some are even on the rack, and almost brought beside their wits, and the next step to desperation, with horror of soul, and the sense of the wrath of God; so that they lie in doubts and complaints many a year together, and think that they are even forsaken of God. And to delay your conversion, is the way to draw on either this or worse.

49. Consider, also, that delays are contrary to the very nature of the work, and the nature of your souls themselves. If, indeed, you ever mean to turn, it is a work of haste, and violence, and diligence, that you must needs set upon. "You must strive to enter in, for the gate is strait, and the way is narrow, that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able," Luke xiii. 24, 25. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin

to stand without, and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, he shall answer, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity," ver. 27. It is a race that you are to run, and heaven is the prize. "And you know that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize; and therefore you must so run, as that you may win and obtain," 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25. And what is more contrary to this than delay? You are soldiers in fight, and your salvation lieth on the victory; and will you trifle in such a case, when death or life is even at hand? You are travellers to another world, and will you stay till the day is almost past before you will begin your journey? Christianity is a work of that infinite consequence, and requireth such speedy and vigorous despatch, that delay is more unreasonable in this than any thing in all the world.

And besides, your souls are spirits of an excellent, active nature, that will not be kept idle; and therefore delay is unsuitable to their excellency. The best and noblest creatures are most active; the basest are most dull, and unfit for action. The earth will stand still; you may easily keep clods and stones from moving; but fire and winds that are purer things, and the sun, and such nobler, sublimer creatures, you are not able to keep idle for an hour. Who can cause the sun to delay its course? or who can stay the ascending flames? And therefore to your more excellent, immortal souls, and that in a work that must needs be done, how exceeding unsuitable are delays!

50. If all this will not serve turn, let me tell you, that while you are delaying, your judgment doth not delay; and that when it comes, these delays will multiply your misery, and the remembrance of them will be your everlasting torment. Whatever you are thinking of, or whatever you are doing, your dreadful doom is drawing on apace, and misery will overtake you before you are aware. When you are in the ale-house, little thinking of damnation, even then is your damnation coming in haste; when you are drowned in the pleasures or cares of the world, your judgment is still hastening: you may delay, but it will not delay. It is the saying of the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. ii. 3, "Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." You may slumber, and that so carelessly that we cannot awake you, but your damnation slumbereth not, nor hath done of a long time, while you thought it slumbered; and when it comes it will awaken you. As a man that is in a coach on the road, or a boat on the water, whatever he is speaking, or thinking, or doing, he is still going on, and hastening to his journey's end, or going down the stream: so whatever you think, or speak, or do, whether you believe it or mock at it, whether you sleep or wake, whether you remember it or forget it, you are hastening to damnation, and you are every day a day nearer to it than before; and it is but a little while till you shall feel it. "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door!" James v. 9. The Holy Ghost hath told you, "The Lord is at hand," Phil. iv. 5. "The day is at hand;—the time is at hand;—the end of all things is at hand," Rom. xiii. 12; Rev. xxii. 10; 1 Pet. iv. 7. "Behold, saith the Lord, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be," Rev. xxii. 12. And do you, as it were, see the Judge approaching, and damnation hastening on, and yet will you delay?

And withal consider, that when it comes, it will be most sore to such as you; and then what thoughts do you think you shall have of these delays? You

are unable to conceive how it will torment your consciences, when you see that all your hopes are gone, to think what you have brought yourselves to by your trifling; to feel yourselves in remediless misery, and remember how long the remedy was offered you, and you delayed to use it till it was too late. To see that you are shut out of heaven, and remember that you might have had it as well as others, but you lost it by delay. Oh then it will come with horror in your mind, How oft was I persuaded and told of this! how oft had I inward motions to return! how oft was I purposed to be holy, and to give up my heart and life unto God! I was even ready to have yielded; but I still delayed, and now it is too late. Then you shall pay for all your warnings, and all the sermons and motions which you lost.

And now having laid you down no less than fifty moving considerations, if it be possible, to save you from these delays, I conclude with this request to you, whoever you be that read these words: That you would but consider of all these reasons, and then entertain them as they deserve. There is not one of them that you are able to gainsay, much less all of them. If after the reading of all these, you can yet believe that you have reason to delay, your understandings are forsaken of God; but if you are forced to confess that you should not delay, what will you do then? Will you obey God, and your own consciences, or will you not? Will you turn this hour without delay? Take heed of denying it, lest you have never such a motion more. You know not, but God that calls you to it, may be resolved, that it shall be now or never. I do beseech you, yea, as his messenger I charge you in his name, that you delay not an hour longer, but presently be resolved, and make an unchangeable covenant with God; and as ever you would have favour in that day of your distress, delay not now to accept his favour in the day of your visitation. Oh what a blessed family were that, which, upon the reading of this, would presently say, We have done exceeding foolishly in delaying so great a matter so long. Let us agree together to give up ourselves to God, without any more delay. This shall be the day; we will stay no longer. The flesh, and the world, and the devil, have had too much already. It is a wonder of patience that hath borne with us so long. We will abuse the patience of God no longer, but begin to be absolutely his this day. If this may be the effect of these exhortations, you shall have the everlasting blessing; but if still you delay, I hope I am free from the guilt of your blood.

Direct. XII. The last direction that I shall give you, for preventing your miscarriage in the work of conversion, is this: Stop not in weak and wavering purposes and faint attempts; but see that you be groundedly, unreservedly, and habitually (or firmly) resolved.

There are many good thoughts and meanings in the soul before resolution; but you are not truly converted till you are resolved, and thus resolved as is here expressed. Here I shall show you, I. What this resolution is. II. Why it is so necessary. III. I shall urge you to resolve. And, IV. I shall direct you in it.

I. Resolution is the firm or prevalent determination of the will upon deliberation.

In opening this definition, I shall first show you how we are led up to resolution by deliberation; and, 2. What is this determination of the will.

1. There are several steps by which the will doth rise up to resolution, which I shall set before you. And first it is presupposed, that in the state of corrupted nature, the soul is unresolved for God, if not

(in many that are exceeding wicked) resolved against him. At first the sinner doth either resolve to be as he is, or else he hath no resolution to return. But God breaks many a wicked resolution, or else woe to the ungodly; for there were no hope. Many wicked wretches have not only neglected their souls, but also resolved that they would never lead a holy life, nor ever join themselves to the communion of saints, nor ever leave their drunken company, or be so precise, and make so great a matter of sin as the godly do. When we urge them with the plainest words of God, and the most unquestionable reasons, so that they have not a word of sense to speak against it; when we have told them of the command of God, and told them of the certain danger of their souls, they will plainly tell us that they are resolved never to be so precise. When they have nothing else to say, but nonsense, they will put us off with this, That they are resolved to venture their souls without so much ado. But as resolute as they are, God will break and change their resolution, and make them as much resolved of the clean contrary, if ever he will save them. For woe to them that ever they were born if he should take them at their word, and resolve as they resolve!

Now in this case there are many degrees that men go through, before they come to be resolved for God.

1. The first thing usually that befalleth such a soul, is, some further light, which shows him that which before he understood not. 2. This light causeth him to begin to doubt whether all be so well with him as he thought it had been; and whether he were so wise in his former resolutions as he thought himself. 3. When light hath bred these doubtings in his mind, these doubtings breed some fears with him, and he begins to be a little awakened, lest evil be nearer him than he was aware of, and lest the threatenings of God and his ministers should prove true. 4. These fears do drive him to consider of the matter, and to deliberate what he is best to do; to consider whether these things be so or not, and what course he must take if they should prove true. 5. Though sometimes God may bless the very first considerations to be the present means of true conversion, yet that is no usual thing; but ordinarily the first considerations do help the mind to some slight convictions, so that the man begins to see a great deal more than he did before; and so much as puts him now past doubt that he was before mistaken and out of the way. 6. Finding himself in this case, his fears increase, and his grief comes on for his former folly, and he finds himself in a miserable case, and at a loss for a remedy. 7. By thus much he is quickened to a purpose or resolution, to hearken to those that can instruct him, and inquire of them that he thinks are in the right, and to use such means as he is acquainted with, to find out what he must do to be saved. And accordingly he goes among good company, and begins to hear more diligently and sensibly, and to mark and regard what he hears and reads, and also to cry to God, in prayer, for mercy and relief. But all this is but from the natural fear of misery, awakened in him by common preparing grace. 8. In the use of these means of grace, he begins better to understand and relish the doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ, and the nature and necessity of true sanctification by the Holy Ghost. And though sometimes these evangelical illuminations may be special saving works at the very first, yet it is more usual, especially with us that are bred up under the gospel, to have a more superficial common illumination, before the saving light come in. And by this common light, men have

at first but a general glimmering, and confused knowledge of a Saviour, and of redemption, and of mercy to be had by him. And sometimes they have a distinct knowledge of some parts only of the christian faith, and sometimes a distinct knowledge and belief of every article; but only superficial, and not savingly effectual. 9. By this general or superficial knowledge of Christ and mercy, a kind of hope ariseth in the heart, that yet there is a possibility of escape, and a kind of comfort answerable to this hope. 10. These hopes are accompanied with some desires to understand yet more of the mystery of the gospel; and to be made partakers of the saving mercy of which he hath had a confused light. 11. And hereupon there is further kindled in the will a purpose or resolution, to go further on in learning, and inquiring into the will of God, and using his means. And, 12. This purpose is performed, and means are further used. And thus far the soul is but in preparation, and under the common works of grace, and possibly may fall off and perish. The first degree may be so stifled, that it shall not reach unto the second; or the second so stifled, that it shall not reach unto the third; but the most common stop is at the third degree: when men are a little frightened, they will not follow it on to consideration; and they that follow consideration diligently, do usually speed well, and get through all the rest.

But when the soul is brought thus far, if God will save it, he next proceeds to this much more: (1.) He giveth a clearer light into the soul, which giveth a more distinct, or at least a more piercing, convincing, deep, and savoury apprehension of the essentials of christianity, than he ever had before.

Where note, of this special heavenly light, 1. That being usually the consequent of a more common knowledge, therefore most ordinarily the sum of christian doctrine is in some manner known before. 2. That it doth not reveal only some one point of faith alone, and then another, and so on; as if we savingly knew one essential point of faith, when we have no saving knowledge of the rest; for that is a contradiction. But finding all these truths received in the mind before by a common knowledge, the special light comes in upon them all at once; and shows us the anatomy of christianity, or the part of God's image in one frame, as to the essentials. 3. For the understanding of which you must further know, that there is such an inseparable connexion of these truths, and such a dependence of one upon another, that it is not possible to know one of them truly, and not know all. For example, believing in Jesus Christ, is an act so inseparable from the rest, that (if the essentials of christianity be not essential to it) certainly you cannot do this without them. For to believe in Christ, is essentially to believe in him as God and man, two natures in one person, by office, the Mediator, our Redeemer and Saviour, to save us from guilt and sin, from punishment and pollution, and to give us, by the Holy Ghost, a holy nature and life, and to give us the forgiveness of sin and everlasting life, and so to restore us to the mutual love of God here, and fruition of him hereafter; and all this as merited and procured by his death, obedience, resurrection, ascension, and intercession for his church. Whether here be all that is essential to christianity, and absolutely necessary to salvation to be believed, I leave to consideration; but sure I am, that all this is essential to saving, justifying faith. And Christ is not taken as Christ, if he be not thus taken; for the ends thus enter the definition of his relation, as the Redeemer, and Saviour, and Lord.

So that the love of God as our felicity and end, and the belief in Christ as the way, are both together in the same minute of time, whichsoever of them be first in order of nature (which is a question that I dare not here so unseasonably handle).

(2.) Upon this special illumination of the soul, and the special consideration with which it doth concur, the deliberating soul is presently resolved. And in these two acts, which always go together, consisteth the special sanctifying work; even in the illumination and estimation of the understanding, and in the true resolution of the will.

2. The determination of the will is its own free act, performed by its natural self-determining power, procured by the special grace of God (I mean in this special case). It followeth deliberation. While we are unresolved, we deliberate what to resolve upon; that is, we are considering which is best and most eligible, and which not; and as we practically judge, we use to determine and to choose. And when this choice after deliberation is peremptory and full, it is called resolution.

So that my meaning is to let you understand, that when the matter of our faith is set open to the soul, it is not a wavering, fickle purpose, that is a saving closure with it, but it must be a firm resolution. Much less will it ever bring a man to heaven, to be thinking and deliberating what to do, as long as he is unresolved. And now I shall prove the necessity of this.

II. Till you are resolved, you are not converted; and that appeareth by these evidences: 1. If you are not firmly resolved, it is certain that you do not firmly believe; for such as your belief is, such will be the effects of it upon the will. An unsound, opinionative belief, will produce but tottering, languishing purposes; but a firm belief will cause a firm resolution of the will. And if your belief be unsound, you must confess you are unconverted.

2. Moreover, if you do not esteem God above all creatures, and heaven above earth, and Christ and grace above sin, you are certainly unconverted. But if you have such a true estimation, you will certainly have a firm resolution; for you will resolve for that which you highly esteem.

3. If God have not your firm resolution, he hath not indeed your heart and will; for to give God your hearts and wills, is principally by firm resolving for him; and if God have not your hearts, you are surely unconverted.

4. Moreover, if you are not firmly resolved, your affections will not be sincere and stedfast; for all the affections are such as to their sincerity, as the will is, which doth excite or command them. And nothing is more mutable than the affections in themselves considered; they will be hot to-day, and cold to-morrow, if they be not rooted in the firm resolution of the will, which is the life of them.

5. Lastly, without a firm resolution, there can be no faithful obedience and execution of the will of God. For if men be not resolved, they will heavily go on, and lazily proceed, and easily come off; for their hands go to work without their hearts. It is the greatest work in all the world, that God calls you to; and none but the resolved are able to go through with it. Of which we shall give you a fuller account anon.

III. In the next place, let me entreat you, in the fear of God, to look after this great and necessary part of your conversion. There are many degrees of good motions in the mind; but all that falls short of resolution is unsound. Many are brought to doubt whether all be well with them, and to have some fears thereupon, that yet will not be brought

so far as to consider soberly of the matter, and deliberate what is best to be done, and to advise with their ministers for the furthering of their salvation. Many that are persuaded so far as to consider, and deliberate, and take advice, yet go no further than some cold wishes or purposes, which are all overcome by the love of the world and the power of their sins. Many that do proceed to some kind of practice, do only take a taste or an essay of religion, to try how they can like it; and begin some kind of outward reformation, without any firm resolution to go through with it: or, if their purposes seem strong, it is but occasioned by something without, and not from a settled habit within. All these are short of a state of special saving grace, and must be numbered with the unconverted.

It is a common and very dangerous mistake, that many are undone by, to think that every good desire is a certain sign of saving grace; whereas you may have more than bare desires, even purposes, and promises, and some performances, and yet perish for want of resolution and regeneration. Do you think that Judas himself had not some good desires, that followed Christ so long, and preached the gospel? Do you think that Herod had not some good desires, that heard John so gladly, and did many things accordingly? Agrippa had some good desires, when he was almost persuaded to be a christian. They that for a time believe, have sure some good desires, and more, Matt. xiii. 20. And so had the young man, that went away sorrowful from Christ, when he could not be his disciple unless he would part with all that he had, Luke xviii. 23; Matt. xix. 22. And doubtless those had more than good desires, "that had known the way of righteousness, and had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. And so had those, Heb. x. 26, 29, "that had received the knowledge of the truth, and were sanctified by the blood of the covenant;" and those, Heb. vi. 4-6, "that were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." And sure Ananias and Sapphira had more than some good desires, when they sold all, and brought half the price to the apostles.

Believe it, sirs, there are none of your desires or endeavours that will serve turn, to prove you in a state of grace, unless they be accompanied with firm resolution. Be it known to you, that you are unconverted, if you are not habitually resolved. And therefore I must here entreat you all to put the question close to your hearts, Are you resolved, firmly resolved, to give up yourselves and all to Christ, and to be wholly his, and follow his conduct, or are you not? The question is not, What good meanings, or wishes, or purposes you may have; but, Whether you are resolved, and firmly resolved? Take heed, sirs, what you venture your souls upon: God will not be dallied with, nor be deceived. He will have no unresolved, false-hearted servants.

Before I proceed to urge you further, I shall here tell you what kind of resolution it must be, that will prove a man converted; and then I shall give you such motives as should persuade you to it.

It is not all kinds of resolution that will serve turn; but it is only that which hath these following properties, that will evidence a state of grace.

I. As to the matter, it must be the whole essence of christianity that must be resolved on. It must be no less than a closing with God as your chiefest happiness, to be loved above all, and as your chiefest

Lord, to be obeyed before all; and a closing with Jesus Christ as your only Saviour, your Teacher, and your Lord, to bring your hearts again to God, and reconcile you to him; and a closing with the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier, to make you a holy people, and cleanse you from all your sin of heart and life, and guide you by the ministry, word, and ordinances, to everlasting life. Thus must you resolve to deliver up yourselves to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be made a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Should you be never so resolute in some point of religion, and, as Ananias, to give God half, and to become half religious, and half holy, and half heavenly, this is to be but half christians, and will not bring you half way to heaven. It is entire christianity that must be resolved on.

2. You must also be resolved for present obedience, and to turn without any more delay; and not only resolve to turn to-morrow, or sometime hereafter. No resolution is sincere in this case, if it be but for the future; if you had rather stay but one day or hour longer in the state of sin, and service of the flesh, you are no true disciples of Christ, though you should be resolved to turn to-morrow.

3. And your resolution must be absolute and peremptory, not only without any secret reserves, but positively against any such reserves. Here it is that hypocrites commonly fall short. They see they must mend, and they are convinced that a holy life is necessary, and they resolve hereupon to change their course, and turn religious; but either it is with this secret reserve, Provided always that I look to my credit, or estate, or life, whatever I do; and provided that I go no further in religion than will stand with these; provided that godliness be not my undoing in the world. Or else, if he have not actually such thoughts, he hath them always virtually and habitually: he is not resolved against such reserves; he hath not considered that Christ will have no disciples that cannot and will not part with all; and that if he hope for heaven, he must not look for a treasure on earth, but only pass through the world as a traveller, or labour in it as the harvest of the Lord, in expectation of a reward and rest hereafter; and so resolved to take Christ on these self-denying terms. But he that will be saved, must be thus resolved; even to sell all, to buy the invaluable pearl, Matt. xiii. 46, 47; to make sure of heaven, though he lose all on earth by it; to lay up his hopes in the life to come, and venture and let go all rather than those hopes; to take Christ absolutely upon his own terms, for better and worse, as being certain that there is no other way of life, and that there is no danger of losing by him. The hypocrite is like a man that when he delivereth up the possession of his house, will make his bargain that he will keep this room or that room to himself, for his own use; or like a servant that will not be hired, but on condition that his master shall not set him to such and such work that he loves not; but Christ will have no such servants; you must deliver up all to him, or he will accept of none; you must give him leave to make his conditions for you, and tell you on what terms you must serve him, and wholly refer the matter to him, even for life itself, and not offer to put conditions upon him, and think to bring him to any terms of yours. It is not true resolution unless it be absolute and unreserved, and against all reserves; yea, and that also as to perseverance; that you resolve to give up yourselves finally as well as totally, not only without any reserve of a revocation, but against any such revocation: it must not be a coming to Christ upon essay, or mere trial that if he like it he will stand to it, but he must make an

unchangeable, everlasting covenant; it must be part of your covenant, that you will never revoke it.

4. Moreover, your resolution must be well grounded; you must know what the essentials are of that religion which you resolve on, and you must be moved to it by right and weighty considerations; and go upon reasons that will hold up your resolution. For should you resolve on the most necessary work (as this is) upon mistakes, or wrong, or insufficient, as the will of man, the custom of the country, the reputation of christianity, or only such like; there is no likelihood that your resolution should endure, and it is not sincere while it doth endure.

5. Your resolution must be accompanied with a sense of your own insufficiency to stand to it immutably, and execute it faithfully by your own strength; as knowing the corruption and deceitfulness of your own heart. And it must be strengthened and supported by a confidence or dependence on the sufficiency of Christ, on whose grace and Spirit you must rely, both for the continuing and the performing of your resolutions; as knowing, that without him you can do nothing, but that you can do all things (necessary) through Christ strengthening you.

6. Lastly, your resolution is not savingly sincere, unless it be habitually. It is a very hard question, how far some moving exhortation, or the approach of death in sickness, may prevail with the unsanctified for an actual resolution; undoubtedly very far. But that is a man's mind and will which is habitually his mind and will. When the very inclination and bent of your will is right, then only is your heart right. A bowl may, by a rub, or bank, be turned contrary to the bias; but when it is over the rub, it will follow the bias again. So the soul is, when hindered from ascending a little while, but when it is got over the stop, it will be mounting upward. A stone will move upwards against its nature, while it is followed by the strength of the hand that cast it; but when the strength is spent, it will quickly fall again. It is not an extraordinary act, that you can try yourselves by, but such a free course and tenor of your lives, as will prove that you have a new nature, or a heart inclined and habituated to God. The main business, therefore, is, to prove that you are habitually resolved. Set all these together now, and you may see what resolution it is that must prove you to be converted. 1. It must be a resolution for all the essence of christianity, and not only some part. 2. It must be a resolution for present obedience, and not only for some distant time to come. 3. It must be an absolute, peremptory resolution, without and against reserves for the flesh, both total and final, without and against any revocation. 4. It must be soundly grounded, and moved by right principles. 5. It must be joined with a humble sense of your insufficiency, and a dependence on Christ, for continuing and performing it. And, 6. It must be habitual, and such as sets right the bent and drift of heart and life. All this is of necessity.

Well, sirs, you see now what you must do; the next question then is, What you will do. A great many of motions God hath made to you, to let go your worldliness and wickedness, and become new creatures, and live to God; and never could you be got to resolve and obey them. Many thoughts you have had of it, I suppose, and long you have been porposing that turn you would, but all have come to little or nothing, because you were never fully resolved. I am once more sent to you on this message from God, to see whether yet you will resolve; whether, after all your trifling delays, and after all your wilful sinning, and abuse of God's patience, against your own knowledge and conscience, you

will yet resolve. What say you? Shall God be your Master indeed? and shall Christ be your Saviour and Lord? Shall heaven be your happiness, and have your hearts indeed? Shall holiness be your business indeed, and shall sin be your hatred, and the flesh and the world be your enemies indeed, and used accordingly, from this day forward without any more ado? I beseech you, sirs, resolve, and fully resolve.

And because I know if we prevail not with you in this, you are undone for ever; and, therefore, I am loth to let you go before we have brought you, if it may be, to resolve; I will give you here some considerations to turn the scales, and if you will but read them, and soberly consider of them, I shall have great hope to prevail with you yet, after all. One would think, that the fifty considerations under the last direction might suffice. But lest all should be too little, I will add these following:

1. Consider, I beseech you, what leisure you have had to think of the matter. You have lived many years in the world already, and you have had nothing to do in it but to seek after true happiness. Even your worldly labours ought to have been all but in order to this; and yet are you unresolved? Alas, sirs, have you lived some twenty, and some thirty years and more in the world, and yet are you not resolved? What came you hither for, or what have you to do here? Is it twenty, or thirty, or forty years since you set out, and should by this time have been far on your journey, and are you yet unresolved whither to go, or which way to go? as if you were newly entering the world, or as if you had never heard of your business. I think so many years are a fair time of consideration, and it is time to be resolved, if you will resolve at all.

2. And I pray you consider, what helps you have had to have resolved you before this. If you did not know what you had to look after, and which way to take, you should have inquired; you had the word of God to advise with; and many experienced christians to advise with. You wanted not for the wisest, faithfulest counsellors; if you had been but willing and diligent, certainly you might have been resolved long ago.

3. And consider, I beseech you, what a case it is that you are unresolved in. Is it so hard a question, that all this time and all these helps cannot resolve you? What! whether God or the flesh should be first obeyed and loved? Whether heaven or earth, eternal glory or the transitory pleasures of sin, should be preferred? Whether you should care and labour more to be saved from sin and hell, or from poverty and worldly crosses and reproaches? These and such like, are the questions to be resolved; and are these so hard, that all your wit, and all the advice you can have from Scripture and ministers, would not serve turn to help you to a resolution, no not in twenty or thirty years' time? Oh wonderful! that ever the devil should be able so to befoul men! That reasonable creatures should be so phrenetic, that they cannot be resolved whether it be better to be saved or be damned? or whether sin, with hell after it, be better than holiness with heaven after! The Lord have mercy upon the poor distracted world, and bring some more of them to their wits! We have wise men, if themselves may be judges, very wise in their own conceit, that know many great matters in the world, and yet do not practically know whether God or the devil be the better master, whether sin or holiness be the better work, and whether heaven or hell be the better wages! If they say they know these things, judge by their lives whether they know them practically or not. Resolve they will not for God,

and holiness, and heaven, nor against the flesh, the world, and sin, whatever they may be brought to confess to their self-condemnation. Is it not a pitiful case, that such points as these should seem so hard to reasonable men, as to be so long in the resolving of them?

4. And I pray you consider, how horribly by this you disgrace your understandings. You that cannot abide to be derided as sots and fools in the world, do yet abuse yourselves thus grossly, as if there were never greater sots upon the earth. We have proud men that are so high in their own eyes, that they can hardly endure contempt from others, and love almost none that think but meanly or dishonourably of them; and yet what a horrible contempt and dishonour do they cast upon themselves. If one of these, our wise neighbours, should study seven years to know whether the sea be fire or water; whether a mountain be heavy; whether the fire be hot or cold; and could not be resolved after so many years' consideration, what would you think and say of these wise men? Why, sirs, it is far grosser folly, I tell you again, it is far grosser folly to be unresolved whether you should be holy or unholy; which is, in plain English, whether it be better to go to heaven or to hell. For faith and holiness is the way to heaven; and an unholy life is the way to hell. And if you will needs forsake the way to heaven, you may hope to come thither as long as you will; but you may as well hope to touch the moon with your finger, or run up and down with a mountain on your backs. And if you will hold on in the way to hell, that is, in an unsanctified state, you may say you hope for all that to escape hell, even as wisely as to leap into the sea, and say, I hope to escape drowning me, as well as you. Sirs, I beseech you, do not abuse God, and abuse Christ, and the Spirit, and Scripture, and withal abuse your immortal souls, for I know not what; for a stinking sin; for a thing of nought. Your souls are noble creatures, and your understandings are noble faculties. Why will you expose them to be the scorn of Satan, and make them so base and sottish as you do? You can see the folly of a poor drunkard, that will make a beast of himself, and go reeling and talking nonsense about the street for the boys to hoot at him, and make himself the laughing-stock of the town. And, I pray you, why do you not understand, that till you are resolved for a holy, heavenly life, you are all drunk, while you think yourselves to be sober. You are as miserable as the other, and more in this, that yours is in your natures, and theirs is but an accident; yours is continued, and theirs (in that particular) but by fits. In the name of God, sirs, bethink you, whether you can possibly more disgrace your wits, than to be unresolved of a case as plain as the highway, and which your everlasting salvation or damnation lieth on. If one of you could not, in twenty years, be resolved whether the sun be light or dark, or the day or the night be fitter for rest; or whether it be better to plough and sow, or let all alone, and hope God will give you a crop without labour; would you take this for a wise man? Again I tell you, your folly is more gross, that cannot all this while be resolved, whether you should cast away your wilful sins, and give up yourselves to Christ and a holy life, to obtain the glory and escape the misery that is hard at hand. If you stood up to the neck in water, or stood but in a storm of rain, you would not be so long in deliberating, whether it were better for you to stay there longer or come out. If your finger were but in the fire, you need not so long a deliberation whether you should take it out. And yet these wise men are under many thousand unpardon-

ed sins, and under the curse of the law of God, and within a step of everlasting fire, and have no way possible to escape, but by conversion, faith, and holiness; and this God hath told them, as plain as the tongue of man can speak, and yet they are considering of it, whether it be best to come out of it; and yet they cannot be resolved. Did I say they are considering? Nay, the Lord be merciful to them, they are so dead-hearted and besotted, that they do not so much as seriously consider of it, but even run on without consideration. Ah, poor wretches! they are ready to go to another world, and may look every day when the bell tolls for them, and when death will bring them to their endless life, and yet they have not wit enough to resolve whether they should make ready; no, nor wit enough in their most careless, worldly state, to know that they are unready. Death is coming, and judgment is coming, and the burning wrath of God is coming, and are even at the door; and yet these wise men are unresolved of that only way that is of absolute necessity to their safety; they must have more time yet to consider of the matter, whether it be best for them to turn or no. They stand at the very brink of hell; and yet they must further consider of it, whether it be better to turn back or to go on. Nay, they will go on without consideration! And yet these men would take it heinously, if one should lay hands on them, and carry them to Bedlam, or but tell them of the hundredth part of the sottishness that they are guilty of.

5. And it is further considerable, that these men that are all this while unresolved about their conversion and sanctification, have wit enough to resolve of more doubtful and less necessary matters, without any such advising or delays; and they are men of ordinary parts and capacities for the matters of this world. They can eat when they are hungry, and drink when they are thirsty, without a twelvemonth's time to advise first on it. They can resolve to go to bed at night, and to rise in the morning, without a year's or a day's deliberation. If they have any thing to buy or sell, they will not deliberate upon it till the market be past; if they have land to plough, or their corn to sow, or reap, or mow, they will not take a twelvemonth's time to pause upon it. They can quickly resolve upon every day's business, their travels, their labours, and all their ordinary affairs. And yet these same men cannot resolve in seven years' time, and seven to that, whether heaven or earth should be more loved and laboured for? or whether a corruptible flesh, a wicked fancy, a greedy throat, should be pleased before the God of heaven, though the pleasing of them cost them the loss of their salvation?

Why, sirs, a man that is well in his wits, would think that these matters should be more out of doubt than the former, and speedier resolved on. One would think it should be an easier question, whether you should turn to God and a holy life, for the saving of your immortal souls? than whether you should eat, or drink, or sleep for the preservation of your bodies? For I can, in many cases, bring some reason that should persuade you to forbear eating, or drinking, or sleeping for a considerable time; but no man breathing can speak a word of reason (except men's folly should be called reason) that should persuade you to forbear your conversion for a minute. And if you mistake about these bodily matters, the loss may be repaired, at least in the world to come. But if you die before you are resolved, and firmly resolved, to give up your soul and body to Christ, and live a holy, heavenly life, you are undone body and soul for ever, and all the world can never save you.

Oh what a strange and horrible thing is it, that a man that hath the wit to manage his affairs as plausibly as any of his neighbours; that can over-wit others in the matters of the world; that can govern towns and countries; that is learned in his profession, in law, in physic, in merchandise, in navigation, or any the like: I say that a man of so deep a reach, so plodding and active a wit as this, should yet be unresolved, yea, at thirty or forty years old be unresolved, whether to be sanctified or unsanctified, whether to be holy and be saved, or to be unholy, though God hath professed expressly, that such shall not see the face of God, Heb. xii. 14. These are our wise men, these are too many (besides the ignorant countrymen) of our gentlemen, our worshipful and honourable men, our great scholars, and men of noble or reverend esteem; that yet are unresolved whether to be saved or to be damned. Though God hath written a Bible to resolve them, and a thousand books are written to resolve them, and preachers are studying and preaching to resolve them; and a thousand mercies are cast into the scales that one would think should help to turn them; and some sharp afflictions are helping to resolve them; and twenty or forty years' certain experience of the vanity of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and honour, and pleasure, and the unprofitableness of sin, one would think should resolve them; yet after all this they are unresolved whether they should presently let go their sin, and whether God or the flesh should be pleased or displeased? If this be the wisdom of these men, the Lord bless me and all his chosen from such wisdom!

6. Nay, consider further of your unreasonable wickedness: are not many of your judgments resolved, when yet your hearts and wills are not resolved? I am confident, nay, I am certain it is so: you are at once both resolved and unresolved. What a confusion and war do you thus make in your own souls! The judgment is for one thing, and the will and affections are for another thing. What are you not led by reason? Will you let out your affections and lead your lives quite contrary to your knowledge? Would not most of you give it me as your judgments under your hands, that it is a thousand times better to cast away your drunkenness, your filthiness, your worldliness, and your known sins, than to keep them any longer? What say you? Are you not convinced that it were your wisest course to part with them this very day and hour? Undoubtedly many of you are. And yet for all this, will you not resolve to do it? Are you not persuaded in your own consciences, that it is better to die in a holy and heavenly state, than in a loose, and careless, worldly state? And that it were your safest and wisest course to become new men, and lead a holy, heavenly life without delay? Dare you deny this? Is it not your judgment? And yet will you not do it? Are you resolved that it should be done, and must be done, and yet will you not resolve to do it? Why, what is this but to be condemnors of yourselves? to carry a judge about with you in your own breasts, that is still passing sentence against you? "Happy is he," saith the Spirit of God, (Rom. xiv. 22.) "that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth." If your judgments be resolved, let your wills resolve, or else you are wilful adversaries of the light, and fight against reason, and unman yourselves, and sinning wilfully against your knowledge, shall be beaten with many stripes.

7. Methinks, also, it should somewhat quicken you to resolve, when you consider what a case you had now been in, if death had found you unresolved. For if you are unresolved, you are unsanctified; and

if not sanctified, you are not pardoned, or justified; and, therefore, undoubtedly you had been past all help, in endless misery, if you had died all this while, before you were firmly resolved for God. Oh what a dangerous, ticklish condition have you stood in all this while? What wise man would live an hour in such a case for all the world, for fear lest that hour should be his last? And yet would you stay longer in it? and still are you unresolved?

8. Believe it, Christ will not own you as his servants, nor trust you, whatever promises you may make him, as long as you are unresolved.

Who will take a servant that is not resolved to do any service? Who will take an unresolved person, if he knows it, as a wife, or a friend, into his intimate love? And indeed you are not truly christians till you are resolved to take Christ for better and worse. Whatever state is short of this, is also short of true sanctification, and will fall short of heaven. Christ is resolved to stick to his servants, and he will have no servants that be not resolved to stick to him.

9. And indeed if you be unresolved, as you are false-hearted at the first setting out, so it is certain that you will never go well on, nor endure to the end in case of trial, nor can you do the business of a christian's life, without resolution. If you will be Christ's disciples, you must reckon upon persecutions; you must take up your cross and follow him; you must be hated of all men for his sake and the gospel's; and you must prepare for prison, and fire, and sword: there is no hope of being saved, while you purpose to save your pleasures, riches, liberties, or lives, Matt. xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24. And will a man that is unresolved forsake his friends, estate, and life for the sake of Christ and the hopes of glory? He cannot do it. I know that a carnal, ungrounded resolution may deceive a man in the day of trial, when the self-suspecting, fearful christian may hold out; but yet without a humble, self-denying resolution, joined with an adherence to Christ for strength, there is no man will hold out. "If thou be a wavering-minded man, thou wilt be unstedfast in all thy ways," James i. 8. If thou be not resolved, the words of a man's mouth will turn thee out of the way; the very mocks and scorns of a drunkard or a fool that hath no understanding in the matters of salvation, will make thee shrink and hide thy profession, and be ashamed of Christ, in whom alone thou hast cause to glory. If thou be not a resolved man, what better can be expected, but that thou turn as the weathercock with every wind, and fit thy religion to thy worldly ends, and as another Judas, sell thy Lord for a little money. If thou fall not away, it will be but for want of a trial to procure it; and therefore in God's account thou art gone already, because thy resolution was never with it.

When you turn to God, there will remain within you the remnants of your corruption, a body of death, a rebelling flesh; and this will be still tempting you, and drawing you from God. Oh how strong do these temptations seem to the soul that is unresolved! Yea, without a firm, habitual resolution, it is impossible to overcome them. Your whole way to heaven is a continual warfare; you have enemies that will dispute every foot of the way with you. There is no going a step forward, but as the ship doth in the sea, by cutting its way through the waves and billows; and as the plough doth in the earth, by cutting through the resisting soil. There is self, which is your principal enemy, and there is Satan, and the world, and almost all that you meet with in it, will prove your hinderers; and you must make your way by valour and holy violence through all; and will an unresolved man do this?

You will scarce ever bow your knee to God in secret prayer, nor set yourselves upon serious meditations, but the flesh and the devil will be drawing you off; you will never attempt a faithful reproof, a liberal work of charity, a hazardous confession of Christ, or any dangerous or costly duty, but the flesh and the devil will plead against it, and put you to it. And in these and many such cases of your lives, you will never break through, nor do any good on it, without resolution. Do I need to tell you how hard the way of salvation is, that fly from it on mistake, because you think it harder than it is? Do I need to tell you how false you will prove to Christ, if you have not resolution; that you know it by your ordinary, miserable experience, that a poor temptation will make you sin against your knowledge? How many good wishes and purposes have you had already, in sickness, or at a lively sermon, that are all come to nothing, for want of a firm, habituate resolution! What abundance of time-servers, and of chaffy professors, are lately fallen off to the way of rising and riches in the world, or to the pride and giddy levity of dividers, that oppose the truth of God and their teachers, and trouble the church, and all because they were never well rooted by a sound resolution! They that take Christ but upon liking, do usually mislike him when he calls them to self-denial; for they had never that connatural principle that should effectually dispose their souls to like him; nor had they ever the inward experiences of power and sweetness, which are proper to the sincere, and should increase their liking of him. Either resolve therefore, or stand by and perish.

10. I beseech you consider, also, what abundance of clear undeniable reasons doth God give in to thee, to turn the scales, and cause thee to resolve. He fetcheth reasons from his own dominion and sovereignty. Should not a creature obey the Lord that made him? He reasoneth with you from his daily preservations. Do you live upon him, and should you not obey him? He reasoneth with you from his almightiness: you are all at his mercy, and wholly in his hands; and yet dare you disobey him? He reasoneth with you from his love and goodness; never did evil come from him, nor did he ever do any wrong; never was there man or angel that was a loser by him; it is not possible to have so good a master, and yet will you not obey him? He fetcheth reasons from all his mercies; every bit of bread is from him, and should be an argument with thee to obey him; every day's health, and strength, and comforts, and every night's rest and ease; thy mercies at home, thy mercies abroad, in private, and in public; all should be so many arguments with thee to resolve. You cannot look upon a plant or a flower under your feet, upon the sun or a star that is over your heads, or upon any creature, but you may see so many reasons that should move you to resolve. If all these will not serve, he fetcheth yet stronger reasons from the incarnation, example, and blood of the Son of God: canst thou look on God incarnate for sin, combating with Satan, and conquering for thee, and dying, and bleeding, and buried for thy sin; and yet be unresolved to leave that sin, and turn to him that hath bought thee by his blood? If all this will not serve, he reasoneth with thee from thy own benefit. If thou care not for God, dost thou care for thyself? Dost thou regard thy own soul? If thou dost, it is high time to resolve. He reasoneth with thee from everlasting glory. Is a certain kingdom, an everlasting glorious kingdom, nothing to thee? Art thou content to be thrust out of that eternal inheritance? Is the filthy pleasure of the flesh, for a few hours, better than the endless joys of

the saints? He pleads also with thee from the danger that thou art near. Poor soul! thou little seest what others see, that are dead before thee. Thou little knowest what they feel, that died before they were resolved for God. He fetcheth his reasons from the certain and everlasting flames of hell; and is there not force enough in these for to resolve thee? Good Lord! what a thing is a senseless sinner! Dost thou believe heaven and hell as thou takest on thee to do? If thou dost believe them, is it possible for thee believably to think of heaven and its eternal glory, and yet to be unresolved whether to turn or not? Or canst thou think of the endless miseries of the damned, and yet be unresolved whether to turn or not? Can any heart be so senseless or deluded?

Moreover, he pleadeth with thee from the equity and sweetness of his service. It is but to love him, and to seek his kingdom, and forbear those things that hurt thy soul. His commands are not unreasonable nor grievous. Darest thou speak out and say, that sin is better; and that Satan hath provided thee a better work than God hath done? He reasoneth with thee also from his wisdom and his justice. He tells thee, that as Satan hath nothing to do with thee, and as he is none of thy friends, and meaneth thee not so well as God doth; so he is not able to prescribe thee a more just and perfect law than God hath done. Follow God, and thou art sure thou shalt never be deceived or misled; for he wanteth not wisdom, or power, or goodness to be a meet Lawgiver and Guide: but if thou follow the devil, the world, or the flesh, thou followest a blind and a deceitful guide. And yet after all these reasons, art thou not resolved?

He reasoneth with thee also from thy own experience. What good hath sin done thee? and what hurt would holiness do thee? Yea, he reasons with thee from the experience of all the world. Who was ever the better for sinning? and who was ever the worse for holiness? How long will thy fleshly delights endure? What will this do for thee in thy extremity? Was ever man made happy by it? Thou knowest well enough thou must shortly leave it; and that it will forsake thee in thy greatest need; but so would not God, if thou hadst resolvedly given thyself to him. All men that refuse a heavenly life, do sooner or later wish that they had chosen it.

Abundance of such reasonings God useth with thee in his word, and by his ministers; and dost thou think indeed that there is not weight enough in these to give thee cause immediately to resolve? How little or nothing canst thou say against them! Canst thou bring any reason, that is reason indeed, against these or any of these reasons of the Lord? Darest thou say, that ever a one of them is false or insufficient? And what are the reasons which you have on the contrary to hinder you from resolving? Forsooth, because your sins are sweet, you would fain have the pleasure of them a little longer yet. O wretched souls! that find more pleasure in the abusing of your Maker and Redeemer, than in loving, honouring, and pleasing him; that delight more in serving the flesh and the devil, than in serving God, and seeking after his favour and your own salvation. You are a hundred times madder than a man that lieth tumbling himself in his dung, and will not rise out of it to receive a kingdom, because it is so soft and so sweet that he is loth yet to leave it: you are foolisher than Nebuchadnezzar had been, if he had been loth to return again to his kingdom, because he would fain stay longer among the beasts of the field, among whom, in his distraction, he had betaken himself, Dan. iv. 31—33. And what other reasons have you against resolving? Forsooth

you shall be mocked or jested at by others; by whom, I pray you? Not a man, but a miserable fool will do it. Yea, but you are told you must forsake all, and be ready to die for Christ, if he call you to it. Very true, and can you keep that which he calleth you to forsake? How long will you keep it? Silly souls! do you not know that you forsake it by not forsaking it, and lose all by saving any thing, and that you have no way to save it, but by losing and forsaking it? Suppose you were by enemies banished out of England, and upon pain of death you must be gone within a twelvemonth; and a king that loveth you, inviteth you to his country, and tells you, for the poor livings that you have lost, he will make you lords and princes, so you will bring with you the little goods you have, and leave nothing behind you; hereupon one man takes the next wind, and ships over all his riches, that he may have it when he comes there; another saith, I am loth to leave my goods, I have a while longer to stay here, and what shall I do without them? I am loth to see the habitation of my ancestors impoverished; and so when his time is expired, he is fain to leave them all behind him, and hath none that will receive him in the country where he must abide. Which of these think you is the wiser man? Which of them was it that lost his goods, and which did save them? I speak to you but such another parable as Christ used to you himself, Luke xvi. 2-4, 9; where you are advised to send your riches before you; and to make you friends of the "mammon of unrighteousness, that when you die, you may be received into the everlasting habitations."

I know there are other vain delusions that hinder you from resolving; I will not call them reasons, for they are unreasonable. I shall only say this to you, that if there be ever a man of you that heareth his words, that dare be such a blasphemer as to reproach the laws and image of his Maker, and say, That he hath made you too strict a law, and laid too heavy a task upon you, and a heavenly life is troublesome and unnecessary: if there be a man of you, that is so devilish, as that you dare plead the devil's cause, and justify his work before the Lord's, and say, that it is better to please the flesh; let that man prepare himself to make good these words before the Lord, and his holy angels; and be sure that he shall be there put to it in another manner than he is here by me. And if you have such reasons as you will stand to before the bar of God, to prove the devil the better master, and an unholy life to be better than a heavenly, see then that you look them up, and there make your best of them; and expect to live with the master that you served, and to reap as you sowed, and eat the fruit of your fleshly ways which you took to be the best. But if you have no such reasons, but your consciences are convinced that God should be served, and sin should be speedily forsaken, and heaven should be provided for above all; resolve then to do it before you stir: or else say plainly, I have no reason to be wicked, but because I will be wicked; I will forsake God and damn my own soul without any reason, because I will do it. And if you are at this pass you may take your course.

11. Another thing that I would entreat you to consider of, is this, it is a most base and treacherous abuse of God, to make any question of this which you are so long unresolved of. I confess, when a blind mind hath raised such a question, it is lawful for a reasonable man to answer it. But in him that makes a doubt of such a thing, as it is a shame to himself, so it is a heinous indignity to God. If you had a chaste and modest woman to your wife, I

think she would take it for an injury, if you would but make a question of it, Whether she or a common whore be the honestest woman? If your wife or children should bring before you a hobby-horse or an ass, and make a great question of it, Whether you or the ass be the comelier or the wiser? how would you take this of them? If you should bring an idiot or a madman before your prince, and make a question, Whether he or they be the wiser man? or if you set a rebel before him, and make a question, Which of them hath the better title to the crown? what entertainment might you expect? I tell you it is ten thousand and thousand times a baser affront and wrong to God, to set the pleasure of sin before him, and make a question, Which of them is the better? And to set your riches, and your sports, and your drunkenness, and gluttony, and your whoredom, and your revenge, in competition with your Redeemer, and everlasting glory, and to make a question, Which of them is to be preferred? To make once a question, Whether God or the flesh should be pleased? Whether Christ or the world should be loved and followed? Whether the Holy Ghost or the devil should dwell in us, and guide us? Whether the saints of God or the servants of the devil should be our chosen company? Whether the word and ministers of Christ, or the examples and words of wicked men, should more prevail with us? Whether heaven or earth should be more carefully sought after? Whether a holy, or a careless, wicked life be more to be desired? or whether it be better to turn to God or not? I say, to make such a question as this, or one of these, is little better than to put a scorn upon the God of heaven; and savour-eth of such malice as is more like a devil, than a reasonable man; or else of such folly as is below the devil, and as none of you would be guilty of in the matters of this world. If one should but make a comparison between you and some deformed monster, or between your house and a swine-sty, though he gave you the better, I think you would take it as a scorn, that he should make such a comparison or question; much more may God so take it, when you make a question betwixt sin and him. There is but one infinite, unconceivable, perfect God; and shall he be abased by such a question? There is but one thing that is contrary to God in all the world, that is worse than the devil himself, and that is sin; and shall this be put in question or comparison with God? There is but one that hath loved us to the death, but with a matchless, unconceivable, saving love, and that is Jesus Christ; and there is but one thing that is a deadly enemy to us and him, and that would damn us, when he is endeavouring to save us, and that is sin; and must there be a question or comparison between these? There is one sanctifying Spirit, that would cleanse, and heal, and save us; and there is a malicious spirit that would deceive us, defile us, and destroy us; and must there be any question or comparison made between these? There is but one eternal happiness, and one holy way to it; and there is but one everlasting misery, and fleshly, filthy, sinful way to it; and must there be made any question which of these should be preferred? Consider, I beseech you, what you do; and if it be so vile a thing to make any question of it, what is it then to be still unresolved? yea, and to choose the worse part, and stick to it in your heart and life?

12. Consider, also, that present resolution would put an end to a great many fruitless, troublesome deliberations and delays. If a man had but a weighty business of the world upon his hand, that his estate or life lieth on, it is a perplexity to him as long as

he is unresolved what course he should take. It will be troubling him when he should rest, and break his sleep. It will fill him with musings, and disturb and distract his mind, and even make him melancholy. And how can it choose but be a troublesome, distracting thing to your mind, to be unresolved what course to take for your everlasting state? I know some hearts are so desperately hardened and past feeling, (Ephes. iv. 19,) and some men's consciences so seared as with a hot iron, (1 Tim. iv. 2,) that they can throw away all thoughts of resolution, and never be much troubled. But I hope that many are not so desperate. It is not thus with all that are unconverted. How long have some of your minds been troubled whether to turn or not? Resolve, man, if thou love thy soul, and put an end to such troubles.

13. Consider, also, that resolving will put an end to a great many of troublesome temptations that do assault you, and will break the heart of Satan's hopes. As long as you are unresolved, he hath still possession of you, and is still in hopes to keep possession. And as long as he hath any hope, he will never give over, but will be repairing his garrison, and making up all the breaches that the ordinances of God had made. When one temptation takes not, he will be offering you another, and will be following and disquieting you day and night. But if once he see you firmly resolved, his hopes will fail him, and you may be much freer from his temptations than you were before. I do not say he will give over. For even when you are broken away from him, he will make after you again. But it is a greater advantage to you to fight against him in the open field, under such a captain as Jesus Christ, that will assure you of the victory, than to be in his own prison with his fetters on your heels. You know the way to be troubled with an unwelcome suitor, is to delay your answer, and take time to consider of it; and the way to be eased of him, is to give him a peremptory, resolute answer. And when he seeth you resolved, he will cease.

14. Moreover, till you are resolved of your conversion, you cannot rationally resolve of any one word or action of your lives. Nay, till then they are all misemployed to their hurt. For no man can resolve of the means till he is resolved of the end. You must resolve whether to go, before you can resolve which way to go. Before conversion men's end is wrong. Their intention and business is to please the flesh, and all their thoughts, and words, and actions, that have such an end, are wicked and pernicious. Till you are resolved by conversion to be for God, you have never a right end, (in a prevailing sense,) and therefore, you cannot order one thought, nor word, nor deed aright. I tell you, every thought you think, and every word you speak, and every deed you do while you are unconverted, are so many steps towards hell, except only those that tend towards conversion, and some way further it. Resolve, therefore, of this, or you can resolve of nothing.

15. Moreover, if you would presently and firmly resolve, you would ease your friends and the ministers of Christ of much of their sorrows, and fears, and cares for you; and of much of the most troublesome part of their work. As long as you are unconverted, they can look on you but as the heirs of hell, that will be quickly in those torments, if conversion prevent it not; and, therefore, their hearts are full of sorrow for you, when you sorrow not for yourselves; and their care is, how they might prevent your damnation, which they know, without conversion, can never be done. Many a groan doth

your misery cost them, and many a thought have they of your danger, which you are not aware of. Oh what a grief is it to believing ministers, to see so many of their people in the power of Satan, and the highway to hell, after all their care and labour for their recovery! We cannot say that the unconverted shall certainly perish, because we have yet hopes that they may be converted, though they be not. But we know that if they die in the case that they are in, there is no hope of them at all, and we know they are uncertain to live an hour. And, therefore, as long as they are in this condition, how can we choose but be filled with fear, and grief, and care for them? All the troubles that befall a faithful minister in his worldly affairs, by crosses and persecutions, are nothing to the trouble that your sin and misery bring to their minds. Oh what a comfortable life were it for a minister to live with bread and water among a people that would obey the gospel, and give us hopes that we should live with them in heaven! Oh how cheerfully may we study for them, and preach to them, when we see that it is not lost upon them! How willingly should we prepare them the bread of life, when we see they feed and live upon it! How joyfully may we pray and praise God with them, when we think how they must join with us in the celestial praises! O sirs, I beseech you, grudge not your ministers this comfort. Do not destroy yourselves to grieve and trouble them. O put them once out of their fears and grief for you, by your resolving and speedy return to God; that they that have many a time thought in their hearts, I am afraid this poor sinner will never be recovered, I am afraid he will be a firebrand in hell, may now rejoice with you when they see you coming home, and may meet you as the Father himself doth meet his prodigal children, and weep over you for joy, as they were wont to do in sorrow. You would ease our hearts of abundance of sad thoughts, if we could but perceive you once resolved, and see you come home. Now you think our preaching harsh to you, because we tell you so much of sin and damnation; and you think our discipline more harsh, when we refuse to have communion with you. But if you would once resolve and turn, how gladly should we open our doors and our hearts to you; and how gladly should we turn the stream of our preaching, and tell you of nothing but Christ, and heaven, and peace, and comfort, further than your own necessities should require it! What say you, sirs, to this reasonable request? Will you resolve without any more ado, and ease us of our grief and fears, and give us but leave to preach more comfortable doctrine to you?

16. Moreover consider, that you have much work to do when you are resolved and converted, and a great way to go when you have begun your journey towards heaven. And till you are resolved, none can be done. You can go no farther, till conversion have set you in the right way. Till then, the farther you go, the farther you are out of the way. Will you be unresolved till the night come on? Shall all the rest of your work be undone? Will you begin your race when you should be at the end? Alas! you should be able to say as Paul: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," 2 Tim. iv. 8; whereas you cannot yet say, I have begun my course; I am set in the right way.

17. Consider, also, that resolution maketh work easy and successful. The resolute army is seldom conquered. A resolute traveller will go through with his journey, and it is easier to himself: his spirits are excited; and doing it with vivacity, he

findeth less trouble in it. A slow and lazy pace doth sometimes soonest weary us. A slow motion is most easily stopt, when a swift one bears down that which would resist it. A man that resolutely sets himself to the work of God, and is past any further deliberating of the matter, and is at a point with all the world, will make a pleasure of that which will stop and stall an unresolved professor. Resolve, therefore, for your own success and ease.

I tell you, by resolving it is that you must conquer, and by conquering you must obtain the crown. The unresolved are wavering at every assault, like cowardly soldiers, even ready to run before they fight. They will not be at the cost or labour; they are soon weary; they cannot say nay to an old companion or a tempting bait. But the resolved breaks through all, and treads that under his feet as dirt, which another sells his soul for. If he meet with reproaches and scorns from men, he remembereth that Christ foretold him this, and suffereth much more of the like before him. If his friends turn enemies for the gospel's sake, he saith, I was told of this before, even that I must be hated of all men for Christ. If he be enticed by lewd and wanton company, he saith as David, "Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God," Psal. cxix. 115. If he be tempted with rewards and honours in the world, he will not stand wavering and longing after it, as Balaam; but he will say the same Balaam was forced to do: "If you will give me a house full of gold and silver, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord." And let their money perish with them, that think all the gold in the world worth the peace of a good conscience and the favour of God. If he be threatened by men to move him to forsake his duty, he saith, "Whether it be better to obey God or man, judge ye." If he hear seducers, he is rooted in the Spirit, and the infallible word, and is not shaken by every wind. If he see never so many fall off by backsliding, he saith, It was not only for their company that I chose the holy way: God is still the same, and heaven is the same; and Scripture is the same; and, therefore, I am resolved to be the same. If God afflict him by poverty, sickness, or other trials, he saith, I did not become a christian to escape affliction, but to "escape damnation. If he kill me, yet will I trust in him. Shall I receive good at the hands of God, and not evil? Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked must I return to dust. The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away: blessed be his name." If oppressing enemies insult over him, he can say, as Micah vii. 8, 9, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I set in darkness, the Lord shall be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." If the wicked cast in his teeth his profession, and the name of his God, "he rejoiceth that he is counted worthy to suffer for that name;" and yet "he will hope to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." And if he must go to heaven through poverty and a mean estate, "he hath learned to want, as well as to abound; and in what estate soever he be, therewith to be contented." And so in the work of conversion itself, for want of resolution, many stick long in the birth, and they are hanging so long between heaven and hell, that it is a wonder of mercy that God doth not cut them off, and let them perish. But the well-resolved soul doth deal more faithfully with the light that is revealed to him, and doth not stand

struggling so long against it, nor hold Christ and his Spirit so long in hand; but is glad to make sure work in so great a business, and take so good a match while it is offered. And being engaged once, he is firm as mount Sion, that cannot be moved. Resolve, therefore, that your work may be the more easy and successful, and conquer by resolving.

18. I suppose you dare not resolve against conversion and a heavenly life; and why then will you not resolve for it? What purpose you to do for the time to come? Is it your resolution to live and die as you are? Have you not purposes in your mind to repent hereafter? Dare you say, I am resolved never to be converted? Some may be so desperate; but I think it is but few, even of the ungodly. Why, this shows that there is a secret conviction in your consciences. O do not stifle it. Neutrality never saved a soul. Seeing you dare not resolve against it, resolve for it.

19. Consider, I beseech you, how much it doth concern yourselves, to have this question well and speedily resolved. God asked you, Whether you will be converted and sanctified or not? Resolve this question, and you resolve yourselves of a great many more that depend upon it.

The answer to this must be the answer to the rest. If the question were, Whether you will be pardoned or no? Whether you will live in heaven or hell for ever? Whether you will dwell with God and angels, or with devils? You would not be long in answering this. You would resolve without an hour's delay. Why, this is the question, sirs! but the answer to it must be the answer to the first question. For without sanctification, there is no salvation. If you will not be converted, you shall be condemned, whether you will or no; for God hath resolved of this already, and there is no resisting the resolution of God. The true state of the question is, Whether you will turn or burn? Choose you whether, for it must be one. O, therefore, if you will but resolve Christ and us this one question, that you will be converted, Christ will resolve you the principal questions that concern you in the world; even whether you shall be pardoned or saved; and where, and with whom you must live for ever.

20. Lastly, consider, that if you stay till you receive the sentence of death, it is two to one but that will force you to resolve. But a forced resolution will not serve turn. And then it will be very hard for you to discern whether it be any better than merely from your fears. You put off all till sickness come, and you see once that you must die, there is no remedy; and then you will cry, Oh if the Lord would but recover me, and try me once again with life, I would delay no longer, but I would become a new man, and live a holy and heavenly life; I am resolved of it by the grace of God. Yea, but who knows whether these last resolutions be sincere. We hear abundance speak this in their sickness, that never turn when they come to health, but forget all, and live in a manner as they did before. Is it not most likely to be only the fear of death that makes you take up these resolutions? If it be so, they will never save you if you die, nor hold you to your promise if you live. For it is not bare fear that is true conversion; but it is a changed heart, that is fallen in love with God and holiness, and into a settled hatred of former sins. No late repentance and resolutions but these, will be any thing worth as to the saving of your souls. And, therefore, if you will have true resolutions at the last (which is too rare) you cannot choose but be much in doubt of them, when you find so much of fear upon your spirit, and consider that you would never resolve till then.

And, therefore, if you would have a comfortable change, resolve now in your prosperity, before the face of death affright you to it, and those fears, and the lateness, do make you question the truth and soundness of it, and so deprive you of the comfort which you have so much need of at a dying hour.

And thus I have given you twenty considerations to persuade you, if it may be, presently to resolve. I am sure there is truth, and reason, and weight in them; but what good they will do you, I am not sure, because I know not how you will receive them.

IV. And now I come to the last part of my task, which is to direct you how to perform the work that I have persuaded you to. But because it is merely the determination of the will, it is persuasion that must do more to the work than direction; and therefore I shall only desire you to look back upon the qualifications of sound resolution, which I before laid down to you, and then take heed of the hinderances in your way, and to set yourselves to do your duty.

Remember that I before told you, that it is not a holy, saving resolution, unless it be,

1. Entire for the matter of it, comprehending all that is essential to christianity.

2. And unless you resolve upon present obedience without delay.

3. And also unless it be absolute and peremptory, taking Christ for better and worse, without any reserve.

4. And unless it be well grounded.

5. And unless it be built on the strength of Christ, and not only a carnal confidence of your own.

6. And unless it be habitual and firm, and become your ordinary frame and bias, and, as it were, the new nature and inclination of your souls.

By this much you see already what manner of resolution it is that you must have.

The next thing is, to advise you of the hinderances that you may avoid them.

1. The principal hinderance of resolution is, secret unbelief; when everlasting life is taken but as an uncertainty, or men have no more but a slight opinion of it. The cure of this disease, I have often, and a little before, delivered to you.

2. Another thing that hindereth resolution is, inconsiderateness, of which also I have spoken purposely before.

3. Another hinderance is, a sleepy insensibility, when the heart is hardened, and men are past feeling. We cannot tell how to awaken these men to be sensible of the things that should move them to resolve. Of this also I have spoken by itself.

4. Another great hinderance is, the natural strangeness and averseness of the mind of corrupted men, to these high and spiritual things. So that we drive men by all our arguments against the bias of their sinful habits; and those habits plead against us more forcibly without a word of reason, than all the reason in the world could do. See, therefore, that you keep under changing means till your hearts be changed; and the perusing of such weighty arguments as we offer you, may be of use to the changing of your hearts: for God useth to work on the will by the understanding; and therefore light hath an aptitude to change the will itself.

5. Moreover, the rooted interest of this world doth much hinder men from resolving to turn. It is always drawing them another way, or putting objections and cavils into their minds; and if they will needs resolve, it is this that secretly enticeth them to reserves, and to resign themselves to God but with conditions and exceptions; and so makes them hypocrites, when they think themselves converts; and

cheats them with a half-deceitful resolution, instead of one that is absolute and firm. Against this impediment also I have spoken before.

6. Another hinderance is, the nearness of fleshly, enticing objects. When the covetous man seeth his houses and lands, his goods and money, the very sight of them breaks the heart of all his better resolutions. The drunkard seems to be resolved, till he sees the cup, and then his resolution is broken. The whoremonger seemeth to be resolved, till the bait is brought near him, and then he goes as "an ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks." Certainly if these resolutions were sound, they would either cause men to fly from the bait, and not come near it, or else to refuse it when it is presented them. In the course of their lives, their resolution would govern them if they were sincere.

7. And Satan himself will do all that he can to hinder you when he sees you ready to resolve. He knows that he must bestir him now or never. You never put him to it indeed till you are resolving to forsake him. One block or other he will be sure then to cast in your way: either he tells you, it is but folly and melancholy to trouble yourself with these matters; or that you may be saved without all this ado; or that God is more merciful than to cast away all that he not sanctified; or that godliness doth but trouble and distract people, and that the professors of it are secretly no better than others, and that it is but hypocrisy for them to make such a stir with religion, and that we must be moderate in our godliness, and take heed of being godly overmuch. A hundred such foolish suggestions as these, the devil hath at hand to cast in your way, when he seeth you ready to resolve.

If these will not serve, he will set some of his wicked disciples on railing or deriding you; and perhaps some cunning fool a cavilling with you, to see if they can overwit you, and draw you back.

If that will not do, perhaps he will open the falls of professors to you, and labour to persuade you that all are such; or he will show you what divisions and differences are among them; or he will take advantage of some difficulties in religion, or some controversies in which he sees you already engaged to a party; or he will tell you of some false doctrine that some forward professors may be tainted with, to make them, and consequently godliness itself, more odious, or at least suspected to you. If all this will not do, he will endeavour to set your very parents or natural kindred against you, that those that should most promote your salvation, and on whom your livelihood much dependeth, shall become your enemies, and hate you for offering to give up yourselves to Christ. If that will not do, he will endeavour to entice you with the baits of fleshly pleasure, or of preferments, or much business, or merry company, or some great matters that you may hope for in the world. And usually this snare is the strongest of all. Or else he will tell you that if needs you will resolve, it is time enough hereafter: you may yet take more of your pleasure or commodity before you leave it; yet you may suck the breasts of the world a little drier, and then turn to God and cast it off. If all this will not prevail with you, he will tell you it is now too late, you have sinned so long, or such heinous sins, that God will not have mercy on you: he will make you believe that God hath utterly forsaken you, and there is no remedy; and you may as well spare your thoughts of turning now, for Christ will not receive or welcome you; and therefore it is even as good go on, and take up the rest that the world can afford you, for there is

no hope of better. But the most desperate temptation of all the rest, is, to put some blasphemous, unbelieving thoughts into your mind; especially if you fall into company with infidels, that will draw you to question the word of God, and the immortality of the soul, and the truth of christianity or the life to come, whether there be any such things or not. Where these once take, and are received with approbation, the soul is in a miserable case. Though I know many tempted, melancholy christians are haunted with such temptations, who yet abhor them, and do well at last, for all this. Sometimes, also, when he cannot take you off from resolving, he will lead you among some disputing opinionists, and they shall entice you to take up with their opinionative religiousness instead of true sanctification, of which I have spoken in the eighth direction. By these, and many such wiles as these, doth the old serpent do all that possibly he can, to hinder you from sound resolution and conversion. And therefore you must be armed against his temptations, and meet them with abhorrence; and if you feel them too hard for you, go daily to Christ by faith and prayer for renewed strength, and call to your faithful friends and ministers for help. Open your case to some one that is able, experienced, and faithful; that he may help you with arguments to resist those temptations which you know not how yourselves to deal with. God hath appointed pastors in his church to be spiritual fathers in the Lord, and when they have sowed in you the seed of eternal life, they watch over it till they see the blade and fruit: they travail as in birth of you, till Christ be formed in you. It is their office to help you, and God giveth to them that are faithful, abilities and affections agreeable to their office. And therefore lean upon the hand of your faithful guides, and think not to break through temptations alone, and get to heaven without the means that God hath appointed you.

Having told you the hinderances, and what to do against them, I shall add but these two words more of direction.

1. When you are resolving, give up yourselves to God with a holy covenant or vow. I mean not any rash vow, nor any unnecessary vow, but the same that you made in baptism, which your age itself doth call you to renew, but your sins against it do call you more.

Perhaps you will say that you are not able to perform it by your own strength, and you are uncertain of God's assistance, and therefore how can you promise or vow?

To this I answer, 1. You may be sure that this objection is frivolous, because it makes against the frequent, express commands of God, the practice of his church in all ages, and the nature of christianity itself. God hath in all ages been pleased to receive men into his service and church in a covenant way, and baptism itself is our solemn covenanting with him, and the Lord's supper is appointed for a solemn renewing of it. And indeed it is implicitly and virtually renewed by a true christian every day of his life. In every duty he gives up himself to God: and if he should cease this heart-covenant, he would cease to be a christian, for the very essence of his christianity consisteth in it. It is his faith itself.

2. And when you covenant for the time to come, you do not take on you to foretell infallibly your own perseverance, but you profess your present consent to be Christ's, and to continue his, and you engage yourselves thereto. And should you not choose the strictest engagements?

(1.) Where there is the greatest need of them,

because of the looseness of the heart, and the strength of temptations, that would draw us away.

(2.) Where there is the most absolute necessity, because if we miscarry we are undone.

(3.) And where you are already obliged by God's commands, whether you vow or not.

(4.) And where God hath made your consent to the obligation of necessity to salvation. He that intends to keep covenant, and knows that he must keep it, or be condemned, hath little reason to be loth to make it.

(5.) And for God's assistance, you have much more cause to expect it in the way of covenanting, which himself hath appointed you, than in the neglect of his appointed means.

Object. But I am afraid of breaking my vows again, and it is better to forbear them, than not to perform them.

Ans. 1. This reason makes as much against the inward vow and resolution of the heart, so that by this rule you would never be christians, for fear of falling away, and being worse.

2. There is an absolute necessity of your resolving and covenanting, and of keeping your resolution and covenants. And when it must be kept, or you are utterly undone, it is but a madness to refuse to make the covenant for fear of breaking it; for this is but to make choice of an easier place in hell, for fear of having a worse if you should resolve for heaven, whenas heaven is set open before you, and you thus wilfully cast away your hopes. Nay, your place in hell is not like to be the easier, when you thus deliberately and wilfully refuse the covenant.

3. Your resolutions and holy vows are means of God's appointment to keep you from breaking his imposed covenant. Is not a resolved, engaged, devoted christian likelier to be accepted, and to persevere, than a wavering that saith, I dare not vow, for fear lest I perform not?

In unnecessary matters I had rather you were too backward to vow. Some will vow poverty, and some a single life, and some will vow that they will never drink wine or strong drink more; such vows as these may be good for some in cases of special necessity, as the last remedies of a dangerous disease; but they are not for all, nor rashly to be made. But the resolution and vow of cleaving unto God in faith and holy obedience, and of renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil; this is for all, and must be made and kept by all, that will be saved.

2. *Direct.* And as I would have you second your resolution by a covenant with God, so I would advise you ordinarily to go further, and openly profess the resolution and covenant that you have made. "For as with the heart men believe unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," Rom. x. 10. Christ will confess those that confess him, and disown and be ashamed of those that are ashamed of him. When you have escaped the greatest misery in the world, and obtained the greatest mercy in the world, the greatness of it calleth you to acknowledge and give glory to God. Go to your old companions in sin, and tell them what God hath revealed to you, and done for you. Tell them, O sirs, I see now that which I never saw before! I wonder how I could venture so madly upon sin! and how I could make light of God, of Christ, of death, of judgment, and everlasting life. I have been hitherto your companion in sin, but I would not take the same course again for all the world. I see now there is a better portion hereafter to be obtained, which I was mindless of. I see now we were all this while making merry at the brink of hell, and there was but a step between us and death. Now I

see that the course that we have taken is wicked and deceitful, and will not serve turn. If I serve the flesh, it will reward me but with rottenness. I will, therefore, hereafter, serve that God, that will certainly reward me with everlasting life. I beseech you, sirs, come away with me, and see and try what I have seen and tried. I have lived with you in sin, O now let us join together in repentance, and a holy life! I shall be glad of your company to heaven; but if you will not do it, take your course. For my part I am resolved, by the grace of God, I am fully resolved, to be from this day forward a new man, and never to join with you more in a fleshly and ungodly life. Never tempt me or persuade me to it, for I am resolved.

Thus if you will declare your resolutions to others, and seek to win them, you may possibly do them good; but, however, you will be the deeper engaged to God yourselves.

Yea, though I would have no ostentation of conversion, nothing done rashly in public, nor without the advice of a faithful minister beforehand; yet with these cautions, I must say, that it is a shame that we hear no more in public of the conversion of sinners. As baptism is to be in public, that the congregation may witness your engagement, and pray for you, and rejoice at the receiving of a member; so the solemn renewing of the same covenant by repentance after a wicked life, should ordinarily be in public, to give warning to others to avoid the sin, and to give God the honour, and to have the prayers of the church, and to satisfy them of our repentance, that they may have communion with us. The papists do more offend (of the two) in so much confining confession and penitence to the priest's ear in secret, and not bringing it before the church, than they do in making a sacrament of it. I wonder that people should every day thrust into our hands their request to pray for them when they are sick, and that it is so rare a matter to have any desire our prayers, for the pardon of all the sins of their natural, unconverted state.

I would here seriously advise all those that it concerneth, that when God hath showed them so great a mercy as to convert them and make them new creatures, they would go to their faithful minister, and by his advice put up such a bill as this: Such a man, of this parish, having long lived in blindness, and deadness, and ungodliness, (and name the particular sins if they were publicly known,) and being by the great mercy of God convinced of his sin and misery, and sustained with some hopes of mercy by the blood and merits of Jesus Christ, and being now resolved, by the grace of God, to forsake this fleshly, worldly life, and to give up himself to Christ and holiness, doth earnestly entreat the church to pray for him, that his many and heinous sins may be all forgiven, and that God would again receive him into mercy, and that he may hold on in faith and holiness to the last, and never turn again to the course of his iniquity.

And if the minister think it meet, refuse not to make yourselves an open confession of your former life of sin and misery, and to profess openly your resolution to walk with God for the time to come.

This course should be more ordinary with us; and if conversion itself were not so rare, or else so defective, that it doth too little quicken men to a sense of duty, and sin, and mercy; or so doubtful, and by slow degrees, and that it is scarce discerned by many that have it, were it not for some of these, more ordinary would it be, to the great rejoicing and benefit of the church.

The Conclusion. And now I have given you

directions in the most great and necessary businesses in the world; they are such as I have received of God, and if faithfully practised, will put your salvation past all hazard. But what they have done, or what they will do, I cannot tell, but must leave the issue to God and you. It is pity eternal glory should be lost, for want of yielding to so holy, and sweet, and reasonable a course. It is lamentable to observe what ignorant, base, unworthy thoughts the most have of the very office of the Holy Ghost, who is the Sanctifier of all that God will save. The very name of regeneration and sanctification, is not understood by some, and is but matter of derision to others; and the most think that it is another kind of matter than indeed it is. To be baptized and come to church, and to say some cold and heartless prayers, and to forbear some gross, disgraceful sins, is all the sanctification that most are acquainted with; (and all have not this;) and thus they debase the work of the Holy Ghost. If a prince have built a sumptuous palace, and you will show men a swine-sty, and say, This is the palace that the prince hath been so long a building; were not this to abuse him by contempt? If he built a navy, and you show a man two or three pig-troughs, and say, These are the king's ships; would he not take it for a scorn? Take heed of such dealing with the Holy Ghost. Remember what it is to believe in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and remember that you were baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: and do you not yet know why, nor know the meaning of your baptismal covenant? It is not only to believe that there are three persons in the Trinity, but to consent to the relations and duty to them, in respect to their several relations and works. If the Father had not created you, how could you have been men? The Lord of nature must be acknowledged as the End and Governor of nature, and accordingly obeyed: and this is to believe and be baptized into the name of God the Father. If the Son had not redeemed you, you had been as the devils were, forsaken and given over to despair. The Purchaser, Procurer, and Author of grace, of pardon, and salvation, must be acknowledged to be such, and himself and his salvation accordingly accepted, and his terms submitted to: and this is to believe in the name of the Son; and in baptism we make profession hereof. And certainly the work of the Holy Ghost is as necessary to your salvation. Without the sanctifying work of the Spirit, could you never be delivered from sin and Satan, nor restored to God's image; and consequently could never be the members of Christ, nor have any saving benefit by his sufferings. Would you not think him unworthy to live, that would reproach the Father's work of nature, and say, That the whole creation is but some poor, contemptible work? And would you not think him unworthy the name of a christian, that had contemptible thoughts of the Son's redemption, as if we could be saved as well without a Saviour, or as if it were some poor and trivial commodity that Christ had purchased for us? I know you would confess the misery of that man, that believeth no better in the Father and the Son: and how comes it to pass that you think not of your own misery, that believe no better in the Holy Ghost? Do not you debase the sanctifying office of the Holy Spirit, when you show us your knowledge and parts, and outward duties and civility, and tell us that these are the works of sanctification? What! is sanctification but such a thing as this? Why, holiness is a new life and spirit in us; and these that you talk of, are but a few flowers that are stuck upon a corpse to keep it awhile from stinking among men, till

death convey it to a burial in hell. O sirs, sanctification is another kind of matter than the forsaking of some of our fouler vices, and speaking well of a godly life; it is not the patching up of the old man, but the creating of a new man. I give you warning therefore from God, that you think not basely of the work of the Holy Ghost; and that you think no more to be saved without the sanctifying work of the Spirit, than without the redeeming work of the Son, or creation, government, or love of the Father. Sanctification must turn the very bent and stream of heart and life to God, to Christ, to heaven; it must mortify carnal self and the world to you; it must make you a people devoted, consecrated, and resigned up to God, with all that you have; it must make all sin odious to you, and make God the love and desire of your souls; so that it must give you a new heart, a new end, a new master, a new law, and a new conversation. This is that noble, heavenly work which the Holy Ghost hath vouchsafed to make the business of his office: to slight and despise this, is to slight and despise the Holy Ghost: to refuse this, is to refuse the Holy Ghost, and not to believe in him: to be without this work, is to be without the Holy Ghost: and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. The holy catholic church is composed of all through the world that have this work upon them, and therefore it is called holy. The communion of saints, is the blessed vital fellowship of these sanctified ones; for these only is the resurrection unto blessedness, and the life everlasting with the Lord of life: for all others is the resurrection of condemnation, and the everlasting punishment.

But if the other two articles of our faith have been so denied by the blind, it is less wonder if this be so. Some heretics denied God to be the Creator of the world, and because they saw so much evil in the world, they said that it was made by devils or evil angels (who indeed made the sin, but not the world). So dealt the Jews by the Son, and the second article of our faith. The sacrifice of bulls and goats, and such beasts, was all the sacrifice for sin that they believed in. And thus deal the multitude of the ungodly by the Spirit. Indeed they know not themselves sufficiently, to know the need and worth of sanctification. They are too whole to value the skill and care of Christ or the Holy Ghost. The insensibility of spiritual death and misery, and thinking too lightly of original corruption, and too well of our depraved nature, is both the cause of many of the heresies of the learned, and of the common contempt of Christ and the Spirit, and recovering grace, in all the unregenerate. For it is not possible that men should have any deeper sense of the need or worth of the remedy, than they have of the greatness of their sin and misery.

O sirs, did we not come upon this great disadvantage to you, that we speak to dead men, that have indeed a natural life, which doth but take pleasure in their spiritual death, how confidently should we expect to prevail with you all! But while you think lightly of your disease, we can expect no better, but that you think as lightly of Christ and holiness, and all the means that tend to your recovery; and think of the new man, as the poets fabled of the Promethean race, that it grows out of the earth (of your own poor, sorry purposes and performances) like ordinary plants.

Truly, sirs, I have led you even as far as I can; and what more to say to you, or what more to do for you, to procure your conversion, I do not know. If it had been in my power to have showed you heaven and hell itself, that you might better have known the

matters that we speak of, I think I should have done it. But God will not have men live by sense in this life, but by faith. If I could but help you all to such a knowledge and apprehension of these invisible things, as the worst of you shall have as soon as you are dead, then I should make but little doubt of your conversion and salvation. Sure if you had but such a sight, the force of it would so work upon you, that before I went out of the congregation, you would all cry out that you are resolved to be new creatures. But though this be beyond my power, and though I cannot show you the great and wonderful things, that every eye here must shortly see, yet I come not to you without a glass of God's own making, and in that glass you may see them. There, if you have but an eye of faith, you may see that God that you have so long offended, and that now so earnestly inviteth you to return: there you may see that crucified Christ that hath opened you a way for repentance by his blood, and pleadeth that blood with you for the melting of your impenitent, obstinate hearts: there you may see the odious face of sin, and the amiable face of holiness, which is the image of God: there you may see both heaven and hell, for all that they are invisible; and may know what will be, and that to all eternity, as well as what is.

And will not such a sight in the glass of God's word, serve turn to move thee presently to give up the trade of sinning, and to resolve before thou stir, for God? I am now come to the end of this part of my work; if the reading of it have brought thee to the end of thy ungodly, careless life, it will be happy for thee, and I shall so far attain the end of my labour. I have purposely put this direction of the necessity of resolution in the last place, that I might leave upon thy spirit the reasons for resolution, that here I have laid down. And now I beseech thee, reader, whoever thou art, with all the earnestness that I am able to use with thee, as ever thou wouldst escape the fruits of all thy sin; as ever thou wouldst see the face of God with comfort, and have him thy reconciled Father in Christ; as ever thou wouldst have a saving part in Christ, and have him stand thy friend in thy extremities; as ever thou wouldst have hope in thy death, and stand on the right hand, and be justified at judgment; as ever thou wouldst escape the day of vengeance prepared for the unconverted, and the endless misery that will fall upon all unsanctified souls, as sure as the heaven is over thy head; see that thou resolve and turn to God, and trifle with him no more. Away with thy old transgressions, away with thy careless, worldly life, away with thy ungodly company, and set thyself presently to seek after thy salvation with all thy heart, and mind, and might. I tell thee once more, that heaven and hell are not matters to be jested with, nor to be carelessly thought of, or spoken of, or regarded. The God of heaven stands over thee now while thou art reading all these words, and he seeth thy heart, whether thou art resolved to turn or not. Shall he see thee read such urgent reason, and yet wilt not resolve? Shall he see thee read these earnest requests, and yet not resolve? What! not to come home to thy God, to thy Father, to thy Saviour, to thyself, after so long and wilful sinning? What! not to accept of mercy, now it is even thrust into thy hands, when thou hast neglected and abused mercy so long? O let not the just and jealous God stand over thee, and see thee guilty of such wickedness. If thou be a christian, show thyself a christian, and use thy belief, and come to God. If thou be a man, show thyself a man, use thy reason, and come away to God. I beseech thee, read over and over again

the reasons that I have here offered thee, and judge whether a reasonable man should resist them, and delay an hour to come in to God. I that am now writing these lines of exhortation to thee, must shortly meet thee at the bar of Christ. I do now adjure thee, and charge thee in the name of the living God, that thou do not thyself and me that wrong, as to make me lose this labour with thee, and that thou put me not to come in as a witness against thee, to thy confusion and condemnation. Resolve, therefore, presently in the strength of Christ, and strike an unchangeable covenant with him; get thee to thy knees, and bewail with tears thy former life, and deliver up thyself wholly now to Christ, and never break this covenant more.

If thou lay by the book, and go away the same, and no persuasion will do any good upon thee, but unholy thou wilt still be, and sensual and worldly still thou wilt be; I call thy conscience to witness, that thou wast warned of the evil that is near thee; and conscience shall obey this call, and bear me witness whether thou wilt or not: and this book which thou hast read, which I intended for thy conversion and salvation, shall be a witness against thee: though age or fire consume the leaves and lines of it, yet God and conscience shall bring it to thy memory, and thou shalt then be the more confounded to think what reasons and earnest persuasions thou didst reject, in so plain, so great, and necessary a case.

But if the Holy Ghost will now become thy tutor, and at once both put this book into thy hand, and his heavenly light into thy understanding, and his life into thy heart, and effectually persuade thee to resolve and turn, how happy wilt thou be to all eternity! Make no more words on it; but answer my request, as thou wouldst do if thou wert in a burning fire, and I entreated thee to come out. Thou hast long enough grieved Christ and his Spirit, and long enough grieved thy friends and teachers: resolve this hour, and rejoice them that thou hast grieved; and now grieve the devil, that thou hast hitherto rejoiced; and hereafter grieve the wicked, and thy own deceitful flesh, whose sinful desires thou hast hitherto followed: and if thou also grieve thyself a little while, by that moderate sorrow that thy sin hath made necessary for thee, it will be but a preparative to thy endless joys; and the day is promised, and coming apace, when Satan that thou turnest from, shall trouble thee no more, and God that thou turnest to, shall wipe away all tears from thy eyes. And if the reading of this book may be but a means of so blessed an end, as God shall have the glory, so when "Christ cometh to be glorified in his saints, and admired of all them that do believe," (2 Thess. i. 10,) both thou and I shall then partake of the communication of his glory; if so be that I be sincere in writing, and thou and I sincere in obeying the doctrine of this book. Amen.

SAINT OR A BRUTE.

THE CERTAIN NECESSITY AND EXCELLENCY OF HOLINESS, &c. SO PLAINLY PROVED, AND URGENTLY APPLIED, AS, BY THE BLESSING OF GOD, MAY CONVINCE AND SAVE THE MISERABLE, IMPENITENT, UNGODLY SENSUALISTS, IF THEY WILL NOT LET THE DEVIL HINDER THEM FROM A SOBER AND SERIOUS READING AND CONSIDERING.

TO BE COMMUNICATED BY THE CHARITABLE, THAT DESIRE THE CONVERSION AND SALVATION OF SOULS, WHILE THE PATIENCE OF GOD, AND THE DAY OF GRACE AND HOPE, CONTINUE.

TO MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS, THE INHABITANTS OF KIDDERMINSTER IN WORCESTERSHIRE; AND MY LATE AUDITORS IN THE CITY OF LONDON: CONFIRMING GRACE, WITH PATIENCE, LOVE, AND PEACE, BE MULTIPLIED.

DEAR FRIENDS,

ONCE more, through the great mercy of God, I have liberty to send you a preacher for your private families, which may speak to you (truly and plainly, though not elegantly) when I cannot, and when I lie silent in the dust. I take it for no small mercy that I have been so much employed about the great and necessary things, in despite of all the malice of Satan, who would have entangled me, and taken up my time in personal vindications and barren controversies. As I never knew that I had one enemy in the world that ever was acquainted with me; so those that know me, dissuading me from apologies against the accusations of those that know me not, have spared my time for better work. Though there are about fifty writings (in whole or part) against me published, (by infidels, seekers, familists, enthusiasts, quakers, papists, antinomians, levellers, covenant-breakers, state-subverters, church-dividers, besides impatient dissenting brethren, and dependents that took it for the rising way,) I yet find no cause (as to the present age, and those that know me) to be at any great care or pains for a defence; while malicious lies do but make men wonder, that wrinkled envy should be so mad as to come so naked on the stage, and show her ugly deformities to the world, and could not stay at least till wit had helped her to a cloak.

I was also, when I first intended writing, under another temptation; being of their mind that thought that nothing should be made public, but what a man had first laid out his choicest art upon, I thought to have acquainted the world with nothing but what was the work of time and diligence. But my conscience soon told me, that there was too much of pride and selfishness in this; and that humility and self-denial required me to lay by the affectation of that style, and spare that industry, which tended but to advance my name with men, when it hindered the main work, and crossed my end. And Providence drawing forth some popular, unpolished discourses, and giving them success beyond my expectation, did thereby rebuke my selfish thoughts, and satisfy me that the truths of God do perform their work more by their divine authority, and proper evidence, and material excellency, than by any ornaments of fleshly wisdom. And (as Seneca saith) though I will not despise an elegant physician, yet will I not think myself much the happier, for his adding eloquence to his healing art. Being encouraged then by reason and experience, I venture these popular sermons into the world; and especially for the use of you, my late auditors, that heard them. I bless God that, when more worthy labourers are fain to weep over their obstinate, unprofitable, unthankful people, and some are driven away by their injuries, and put to shake off the dust of their feet against them; I am rather forced to weep over my own unthankful heart, that did not sufficiently value the mercy of a faithful flock, who parted with me rather as the Ephesians with Paul, Acts xx.; and who have lived according to this plain and necessary doctrine which they have received. Among whom, papists, that persuade men that our doctrine tendeth to divisions, can find no divisions or sects, who

have constantly disowned both the ambitious usurpations which have shaken the kingdom, and the factions, censoriousness, and cruel violence in the church, which pride hath generated and nourished in this trying age. Among whom I have enjoyed so very large a proportion of mercy, in the liberty of so long an exercise of my ministry, with so usual advantage and success, that I must be disingenuously unthankful if I should murmur and repine at the present restraining hand of God. But I must say with David, 2 Sam. xv. 25, "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me the ark and habitation (there or elsewhere use me in his service): but if he say, I have no delight in thee, behold here I am, let him do to me as it seemeth good unto him."

And now with this treatise, let me leave you these few seasonable requests.

1. Be faithful to your faithful pastors. Think not that you can live in order and safety without their ministry. When you can, attend their public ministry; refuse not their more private help. Read well my two sheets for the ministry. Where the lawful pastor is, there the church is. Be not either impiously indifferent in your worshipping of God, or peevishly quarrelsome with what is commanded or practised by others, nor disobedient to authority in lawful things.

2. Maintain still your ancient love, and unity, and peace among yourselves, and improve your company and converse to the advantage of your souls. Be daily interlocutory preachers to one another. Speak as the oracles of God; and preach by a holy, patient, harmless, charitable, and heavenly life. This kind of preaching none can silence but your own corruptions.

3. Improve the profitable books which are among you. 1. Read them frequently, and reverently, and seriously to your families, when you have called them together, and prayed for God's blessing. 2. Carry them abroad with you, and when you fall into company where you cannot better spend your time, read to them some seasonable passages of such writings. 3. Give or lend them to those that need, and want either purses or hearts to provide them; and get them to promise you to read them, and inquire after the success. By such improvement, books may become such seconds or substitutes for public preaching, as that they may not be the least support of religion, and means to men's edification and salvation.

4. Make special and diligent provision to satisfy yourselves and others against popery, which is like to be one of the least of your temptations. To this end I pray you read well the single sheet against popery which I published, and give of them abroad to others where there is need. Read also my other books against it: my "Safe Religion," and "Key for Catholics," and "Dispute with Mr. Johnson," and Dr. Challoner's "Credo Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam;" and when their sophistry puzzleth you, 1. Call your able pastors to debate it. 2. And remember that they have the Scripture, and the far greater part of the universal church, and the senses of all the world, to confute, before they can make good the cause of their ambitious clergy. If you are but sure you know bread and wine when you see, and feel, and smell, and taste them, then you are at the end of controversy with the papists. Above all, see that you maintain the love of God, and a heavenly mind, and mortified affections, and grow not opinionative, superficial, or loose in your religion. For he that is heartily of no religion, is prepared to be of any religion. And it is because men are false to the acknowledged truth, that they are given up to make a religion of deceit and falsehood. Your fidelity to your king and country, obligeth you to do your part to preserve the subjects from a disease so injurious to them. Saith Dr. Sherman, in his late "Account of Faith" against the papists, pref. p. 4, 5: "If kings would think upon it, there might be no popes; since if popes could well help it, there should be no kings."

5. Take heed of all temptations to turbulent resisting of authority, or other unlawful means in the obeying of your passions or discontents. As God chose eminently to glorify his power under the law of works, and the spirit of bondage to fear did much prevail; but under the gospel he hath chosen most eminently to magnify his goodness, love, and mercy; so accordingly is the impress made upon his servants' hearts. They are animated by love, for the propagating of love, and therefore must work with instruments of love. And if we had well learned the doctrine and example of our Lord, and made it our work to love all, and to do good to all, and hurt to none, and with meekness and patience to let any hurt us, rather than do any thing for our own defence which is against the law of love, we should see that christianity would better thrive, when it would be better understood by the practice of the professors. Often have I noted that a whole flock of sheep will run away from the smallest dog, and yet there are few of them killed by dogs, because they are under their master's care; whereas, a wolf or fox is pursued by all, and few of them suffered to live. And oft have I observed, that when men that shift for themselves can scarce pass the streets, yet children play in the way of carts and coaches without hurt, while every one takes it for his care to preserve them, that cannot take care of and preserve themselves. And though the deer that is within the park is killed when the owner please, yet he is preserved there from others, when the wild and straggling deer that are abroad, are a prey to any man that can catch or kill them. He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth it for Christ shall save it.

The Lord establish, strengthen, direct, and preserve you to his kingdom, and keep you from the passions of corrupted nature, and from the snares and rage of a deceitful, malicious world. I beseech you, continue yet your prayers for him that desireth no greater advancement in the world, than to be

The servant of Christ, and

Helper of your joy,

June 7, 1662.

RICH. BAXTER.

THE FIRST PART.

INTRODUCTION.

TO ALL SUCH AS NEGLECT, DISLIKE, OR QUARREL AT A LIFE OF TRUE AND SERIOUS GODLINESS.

IT hath been the matter of my frequent admiration, how it can be consistent with the natural self-love and reasonableness of mankind, and the special ingenuity of some above others, for men to believe that they must die, and after live in endless joy or misery, according to their preparations in this life, and yet to make no greater a matter of it, nor set themselves with all their might to inquire what they must be, and do, if they will be saved; but to make as great a business and bustle to have their wills and pleasure for a little while, in the small impertinent matters of this world, as if they had neither hopes or fears of any greater things hereafter. That as some melancholy persons are *cætera sani*, as rational as other men in all matters saving some one, in which yet their deliration maketh them the pity or derision of observers; so many that have wit enough to avoid fire and water, and to go out of the way from a wild beast or a madman, yet have not the wit to avoid damnation, nor to prefer eternal life before a merry passage unto hell. Yea, that some that account themselves ingenious, and men of a deeper reach than the unlearned, can see no further through the promises or threatenings of God, than through a prospective or a tube, and have no wit that looketh beyond a grave; yea, are ready to smile at the simplicity of those that care whether they live in heaven or hell, and use but as much diligence for their salvation, as they use themselves for that which Paul accounted dung.

Many a time I have wondered how the devil can thus abuse a man of reason, and such as think themselves no fools! and how such unexpressible dotage can stand with either learning, ingenuity, or common understanding; and what shift the devil and these men make to keep them from seeing, that have eyes, or from seeing the heavens, that can see the smallest dust or atom. But my admiration is abated, when I consider that the wit that serveth to move a puppet is not enough to rule a kingdom; and that sleeping reason is as none; and that it is the very art and business of the devil to charm minds to sleep and wake at once; *dormire Deo, at mundo vigilare*; to be asleep to God, and awake to the world. And that present things engage the senses, and call off reason from its work; and that the seeming distance of the life to come, occasioneth the neglect of stupid, half-believing souls, till they find it is indeed at hand; even as death, though certain, affecteth few in youth and health, as it doth when they perceive that they must presently be gone. And withal, that a man is not a man in act till he be considerate; and that it is as good to be without eyes, as still to wink. We know what detained ourselves so long in sleep and folly, and we know what makes us yet so slow, and therefore we may know what it is that thus unmanned others.

Reader, if thou be one of these unhappy souls; whether thy brain be so sick as really to think that there is no life to come for man, or that there needs no such care and diligence to prepare for it; or

whether thy heart be so corrupt and bad as to be against the things which thou confessest to be good and necessary; or whether thy reason be cast so fast asleep, as never soberly to consider of the only thing of everlasting consequence and concernment to thyself; or whether thy heart be grown so dead and stupid, as to be past feeling, and never moved and affected with the things which thou hearest and knowest, and considerest to be so great and necessary: whichever of these be thy sad condition, I have now this one request to thee, as a friend that truly desireth thy salvation; and I tender it to thee with as earnest a desire, as if thou sawest me upon my knees entreating thee for the Lord's sake, and for thy soul's sake, and as ever thou hopest for the comfort of a dying man, and as ever thou carest what becomes of thy soul for ever, and as ever thou wilt answer it to Christ and thy own conscience with peace at last, that thou neither deny me, nor put me off with a careless reading, nor with contempt or disregard. My request to thee is but this reasonable thing, That thou wilt so long make a stand in thy way, and grant me so much of thy time, as once to read throughout this treatise, and seriously to consider of what thou redest, and heartily to beg of God upon thy knees, to teach thee and lead thee into the truth, and then to be true to God and to thy conscience, and resolutely to do that which thou art convinced is right, and best, and necessary. This is all my request to thee at the present. Put me not off with a denial or neglect, as thou wilt answer it to God, and as thou wilt not be a wilful self-condemner. Hast thou spent so many hours and days in vain, and cannot I beg a few hours of thee, to read and think of thy everlasting state? If thou dar'st not read and think of what can be said about such things as these, it is a sign thy case is indeed so bad, that thou hast more need than others to read and think of them. I know the devil dare not give thee leave to do it, if he can hinder thee; for fear lest thy eyes should be opened to see, and thy heart awakened to feel the things which he so laboureth to keep away from thy sight and feeling, till it be too late. And wilt thou grant him his desire to thy damnation, or Christ and his servants their desire to thy salvation? Think of it well before thou answer it by word or deed.

Being in hope that thou hast granted my request, (to read, consider, pray for help, and faithfully do what God shall teach thee,) I shall now begin to open thee the way to the matter of this treatise. The sum of my business is to teach thee, that "bodily exercise (in religion) profiteth little, but godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. I think it meet therefore to tell thee here in the beginning, what godliness is, which the apostle distinguisheth from bodily exercise, in matters of religion, and which I have proved so necessary and excellent in this treatise. And this I must do; 1. Lest thou deceive thy soul by taking something else

for godliness. 2. And lest thou lose thy labour in the reading of this book, and hearing what Scripture and preachers say for godliness. And, 3. Lest thou wrong me and thyself, (according to the custom of this malicious age,) by imagining that by godliness, I mean either superstition, or hypocrisy, or schism, or that I am persuading thee to sedition, humour, or needless singularity, under the name of godliness and religion. I shall therefore tell you distinctly here, what godliness is indeed, and what it is not.

In general, GODLINESS is our DEVOTEDNESS to God. And all these things following are essential to it, and of indispensable necessity to salvation.

I. That materially it contains these three things.

1. The true internal principle, soul, and life of godliness, which is the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 9; the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4; the new, and soft, and single heart, Jer. xxxii. 39; Ezek. xi. 19; the seed of God abiding in us, 1 John iii. 9.

2. The intention of the true ends of godliness, which is the reward in heaven, Matt. v. 11, 12; Luke xviii. 22; Matt. vi. 20, 21; Rom. viii. 17, 18; the pleasing of God and the beatifical vision and fruition of him with Christ and his triumphant church in the new Jerusalem for ever.

3. The reception and observation of the true rule of godliness; which is the will of God revealed partly in nature, and fully in the holy Scriptures. This must be in our very hearts, Psal. xxxvii. 31; Jer. xxxi. 33; and with delight we must meditate in it day and night, Psal. i. 2. To cast away and despise the law of God, is the brand of the rebellious, Isa. v. 24.

II. It is essential to godliness that it formally contains these three relations.

1. It is a devotedness of ourselves, as HIS OWN, to God as our OWNER, or Proprietary, or Lord; quitting all pretence to any co-ordinate title to ourselves, and resigning ourselves, absolutely, (and all that we have,) to him that by the right of creation and redemption is our Lord, Psal. c. 3; cxix. 94; John xvii. 6.

2. Godliness containeth a devotedness of ourselves as subjects, to God as our supreme and absolute Governor, to rule us by his laws, his officers, and his Spirit; to give up ourselves to be ruled by him as our King; to learn of him as our Teacher; to work for him as our Master; to fight under him and follow him as our Captain and Commander, Isa. lxxiii. 19; ix. 6; Luke xix. 27, &c.

3. Godliness containeth a devotedness of ourselves as beneficiaries to God in Christ as our great Benefactor in love and gratitude; or as children to our reconciled Father, to love him, and thankfully obey him, and depend on him, and be happy in his love.

III. It is essential to godliness, and necessary to salvation, that this devotedness to God be with a true renunciation, resistance, and forsaking of three great contraries, or enemies to God and us.

1. Of the devil; as the deceiver and principle of wickedness.

2. Of the world (its profits, honours, and pleasures); as the bait by which the devil would deceive us, and steal away our hearts from God, and take up our time, and turn our thoughts from the one thing necessary.

3. Of the flesh, as the rebelling faculty that would exalt itself above our reason, and be pleased before God, and so would take its pleasure as our felicity and end, instead of the true felicity and end.

IV. It is essential to godliness subjectively, that God have the pre-eminence above all creatures; 1. In the habitual estimation of our judgments, preferring him as the Most Great, and Wise, and Good, before all others. 2. In the will's habitual consent

and choice; refusing all in comparison of him, and choosing him as our Lord, our Ruler, and our Best, and consenting truly to the relations in which he is offered to us. 3. In the will's resolution to seek him and obey him, and endeavour to express these inward principles, so as to prefer no competitor before him.

V. The soul, or internal part of godliness, consisting essentially in the things already mentioned; the body of it, or godliness expressive and visible, consisteth in these three things.

1. In our covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; our Owner, Governor, and Father (or Benefactor). It is essential to visible, expressive godliness, that there be such a covenant made; and regularly it is to be solemnized by baptism. And those that are baptized in infancy, must necessarily renew and perform it themselves when they come to age, and that understandingly, deliberately, freely, and seriously.

2. Godliness visible and expressive consisteth in our profession of that devotedness to God, and that forsaking of the devil, the world, and the flesh, which we have before described as the essence of internal godliness, and to which in the holy covenant we oblige ourselves. Christ will be confessed before men, and will be ashamed of them before God and angels, who are so far ashamed of him before men, as ordinarily to refuse to own him and confess him. The public worshipping of God in Christ, in prayer, thanksgiving, praises, and sacrament, is appointed as the professing acts, by which we openly own our Lord. And therefore ordinarily the assembling ourselves together for this public worship is not to be forsaken, through negligence or fear; but with Daniel we must pray though we are sure to be cast to the lion's den. For though no duty be at all times a duty, yet the disowning of our God, or denying him, or being ashamed of him, or inordinately afraid of man, is at all times a sin. And ordinarily and seasonably to profess true godliness, our subjection and devotedness to God is essential to external godliness.

3. Visible, expressive godliness doth essentially consist in the practice of our fore-described covenant and profession. That our faces be truly heavenwards, and that our walk be in the way of God, though we sometimes slip and stumble, and if we step aside, that we turn not back again, but return by repentance in our way. That the drift, and aim, and bent of our lives be for God and our salvation, and that there be in us no sin, which truly and habitually we had not rather leave than keep. And that our great business in the world be the pleasing of God, and the saving of our souls. And that neither honours, nor profits, nor pleasures of the flesh, have the pre-eminence, and be preferred. That Christ be not put under the great ones of the world, nor put after your commodity, nor put off with the leavings of the flesh, but that all be made to stoop to him, and take his leavings. All this is of necessity to salvation, and essential to expressive godliness.

By this time, reader, thou mayst easily see, 1. That godliness is not an uneffectual opinion, or dead belief. If thou wert the most orthodox professor or preacher in the world, thou art ungodly if thou have no more. All have not faith that say the creed. The notional apprehension and the practical judgment are often contrary. The opinion that is insufficient to change the heart, to move the will, to renew the life, shall prove insufficient to save the soul.

2. You may see that godliness is not the adhering to a party, though such a party as pretendeth to some special excellency, or calls itself the only

church, or the purest church. It is a sin to make and cherish parties, divisions, and factions, in the universal church, and it is not godliness to sin. A godly man, through weakness, may be of a sinful party, but that is contrary to his godliness. He will worship God with his best, and be where he may have best advantage to his soul, and therefore, if he can, will hold personal local communion with the best and purest congregations; but not as separating from the rest, and betaking himself to a party set against the church universal, or a party sinfully distant from others in the church universal. The grand design of the devil is, when men will needs look after religion, to make them believe that to be of such a church or party, is to be religious, and to trust to that instead of godliness for the saving of their souls. And carnal, self-seeking teachers are the principal instruments of this deceit; who for their honour or commodity would draw away disciples after them, and make poor souls believe that they must be their followers, or of their side, or opinion, or church, if they will be saved. The papist saith, You must follow the pope, and be of our church, or you are no true catholics, nor in the true church, and cannot be saved. And some other sects say the like of their churches. And how many thousand ungodly wretches do think to be saved, because they are of such a church or party! But the catholic or universal church is the whole company of believers headed only by Christ; and godliness must prove thee a living member of this society, unless thou wilt be burnt with the withered branches. And God will never condemn any one that is truly godly because he is not of this sect or party, or of that. And the papists that are the most notorious sect and grand dividers of the church, and condemners of the justified, shall know one day, that ambition was not true religion; and that the name of unity, and universality, and antiquity were unmeet instruments to be used to the destruction of unity, and contradiction of universality and antiquity; and that God hath set apart for himself the man that is godly, though the accuser of the brethren would cast such out, Psal. iv. 3. And who shall condemn when it is Christ that justifieth? Rom. viii. 33.

3. You may see now, that godliness is not any mere external act of worship. External worship there must be, and that with all decency and reverent behaviour. But it is hypocrisy if there be nothing but the corpse without the internal godliness which is the life and soul. Bodily exercise is here by the apostle distinct from godliness.

4. You may now see that godliness is not the mere forbearance of the outward acts or practice of any sin. For else a sleep or a prison might make a man godly by restraining him from the acts of sin. He is ungodly that would rather live in the sin which through some restraint he doth forbear. If you would do it, you have done it, in God's account.

5. You may see also that whatsoever religiousness, obedience, or endeavours subject Christ to the flesh and the world, and make him give place to them and come behind, do not deserve the name of godliness. You are not godly, how far soever else you go, if God and your salvation take not place before all the honours, profits, and pleasures of the world. As he is not God that hath any greater, wiser, or better than himself; so that is not godliness which giveth the precedence practically to any thing but God; that pretendeth never so highly to honour him, and yet more esteemeth their own honour with the world; or that professeth love and obedience to him, and yet loveth and obeyeth a lust before him, and sets more by love and obedience to

themselves, than by their own or other men's love or obedience to God. All these are the cheating counterfeits of godliness.

6. And if none of these be godliness, much less doth it consist in any sin; in superstition, idolatry, or in cruelty, blood, and persecution through a carnal zeal; in a bringing all others by violence to our proud, impious wills, in murmuring, sedition, rebellion, or resisting lawful powers, under pretence of propagating religion. Godliness consisteth not in Jesuitical contrivances, and undermining others, and equivocations and pious frauds; in disturbing kingdoms, killing kings, blowing up parliaments, absolving subjects from allegiance, and giving away the dominions of temporal lords, if they will not obey the pope in exterminating their heretics (as is decreed to be done in the approved General Council at the Lateran under Innocent III. Can. 3.); nor doth it consist in murdering thirty thousand or forty thousand treacherously in a few weeks, as in France, or much above twice as many in Ireland; nor in butchering christians by hundreds or thousands, as they did long ago by the Waldenses and Albigenses, and Bohemians; nor in racking and tormenting them by inquisition; nor in frying them in the flames of faggots, as in Queen Mary's days, and frequently elsewhere. This is the religion of the father of malice, that thirsts for blood, and not of the merciful Prince of peace. Godliness is not the running to arms, and pulling down governments to set up the proud, self-conceited actors, under pretence of setting up Christ and preparing for his kingdom; snatching in their dream at crowns and kingdoms, and finding when they awake that they have caught a gallows. When the friars had spawned the turbulent people among us in England, that thought they must do any thing, and overturn the governments of the world, to make Christ the fifth monarch, and bring him from heaven to reign visibly on earth before he is willing to come, I must confess I oft thought that their cunning was much more wonderful to keep these people from being undeceived, than at first to deceive them. To keep them (in despite of all our discoveries and warnings) in such furious blindness, as to go on and do their father's work, and rage against these that told them their original, and whither they were going. The poor seduced people never read such books as Friar Campanella's "*de Regno Dei, et sacerdotio Christi*," &c. wherein he brings up all the prophetic texts in Isaiah, Daniel, &c. which these men use, and laboureth to show what a golden age is coming, in which divisions shall cease, and unity become the strength and beauty of the world, and this by the universal reign of Christ; and what a happy people the saints will be, and how they shall then judge and rule the world, (and, oh the comfort! the time is near,) and just such words he useth for his fifth most glorious, universal monarchy, as others now do. But when all comes to all, the mystery unveiled is but this; that Christ must reign by the pope his deputy; and that all princes and nations must submit and stoop; and their kingdoms must all become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, to be governed by his deputy, the pope; and (the power falsely called spiritual, being first well settled) the other key or sword also, (the temporal,) must for unity sake be put into the same hand. The heavens therefore should rejoice, and the earth be glad, for the Lord thus cometh to judge the world. The fifth monarchy is at hand: the universal, holy reign of Christ, not by profane princes, but by his Holiness the pope, and by the saints, (the friars, Jesuits, monks, and clergy), that shall judge the world, to whom ere long all knees shall bow.

But you will say, We are so far from joining with these friars, that we hate the pope much more than you do. I answer, You have received their frame of doctrine of the universal fifth monarchy that is at hand. There is but one thing to do, and you are theirs; which is, to convince you that Christ is not to come and reign here personally, but by his great vicegerent. And they that could bring you to believe things more improbable, may more easily bring you to them from your unreasonable conceit.

Pardon this digression; I thought meet to tell you that godliness lieth not in breaking the law of God, nor in obeying pride, nor being the enemies of government and order in the world, nor in an impatient striving by right or wrong, to break away from the yoke of suffering, that God for our sin (or for his cause) shall lay upon us. And now I have fully and distinctly told you, what godliness is, and what it is not.

And now go thy way, malicious soul, and say, if thou dare, (as the devil's informers frequently do,) that it is sedition, or faction, or schism, or disobedience, that we draw the people to under the name of godliness. Hold on if thou wilt a little longer in such impudent calumniation against me and other ministers of Christ. But know that thy day is coming, and that for all these things thou shalt come to judgment; and if thou justify the ungodly, yet remember, that "It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment; and he that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous, the people shall curse him, nations shall abhor him," Prov. xxiv. 23, 24. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord," chap. xvii. 15. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter;—which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as the dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel," Isa. v. 20, 23, 24. Let the malicious serpent accuse Job before God; in the end it shall turn to his own confusion. And if any of the princes of the earth will by dogs be provoked to destroy the priests, or by jealousy kindled by malicious whispers, be incited to do by the servants of Christ, as they did by the Waldenses, Bohemians, and protestants in many places, &c. we will remember the memorable words of David, 1 Sam. xxvi. 18, 19, and let the sufferers imitate him in the submissive part, "Wherefore doth my Lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering. But if it be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods." (By going where they are served.)

Having fully showed you what godliness is, I now beseech thee, reader, to inquire, Whether this described case be thine? Art thou devoted to God without reserve, as being not thine own but his? And hast thou devoted all thou hast to him with thyself, to be used according to his will? Art thou more subjected to his authority, and observant of his laws and government, than of man's? And can his word do more with thee, than the word of any mortal man, or than the violence of thy lusts and passions? Art

thou heartily engaged to him as thy felicity, and dost thou give up thyself to him in filial love, dependence, and observance, as to thy dearest Friend and Father? Dost thou highest esteem him, and resolutely choose him, and sincerely seek him, preferring nothing in thy estimation, choice, resolution, or endeavour before him? Try by these and the other particulars in the description, whether you are godly or ungodly; and do it faithfully. For the day is at hand, when "the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the just," Psal. i. 5.

And besides the marks expressed in the description, let me offer you some from the plain words of the text, that you may see what God accounteth godliness, and consequently how to judge yourselves.

1. In John iii. 3, 5, 6, it is written, "Verily, except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his," Rom. viii. 9.

From these texts you see, that a heart and life made new by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, is absolutely necessary to true godliness.

2. "Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" Psal. cxix. 5. "To will is present with me," Rom. vii. 18. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth," &c. Psal. lxxiii. 25. "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee," Isa. xxvi. 8.

From these and such like texts it is evident, that the principal desires of a godly man, and the choice of his will, is to be what God would have him be.

3. "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night," Psal. i. 2. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby," 1 Pet. ii. 2; Luke x. 42.

From these and such like texts it is manifest, that all the godly do love the word of God, as the food of their souls, and the director of their lives.

4. "Lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, &c. For where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," Matt. vi. 20, 21, 33. "Enter in at the strait gate—strive to enter in—for many shall seek and shall not be able," chap. vii. 13; Luke xiii. 24. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure," 2 Pet. i. 10; Rom. xii. 11.

From these and such texts you may discern, that godliness consisteth in such diligence for salvation, as to seek it before any earthly things, and not think the labour of a holy life too much for it.

5. Rom. viii. 1, 5, 6—8, 13; Gal. v. 18, 19. Read them, and you will see that godliness consisteth in living after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, and in mortifying the deeds of the body by the Spirit, living not by sensuality, but by faith.

6. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light," &c. John iii. 19, 20. "And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord. But I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the King say so," 1 Kings xxii. 7, 8.

From these and such like texts you see, that the

godly love the discovering light, and the most searching, faithful preacher; but the ungodly cannot endure the light which showeth them their sins, nor love the preachers that tell them their sin and misery.

7. "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if you love one another," John xiii. 35; 1 Cor. xiii. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren," 1 John iii. 14. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord," Psal. xv. 4.

From these and such like texts it is evident, that all that are truly godly, have a special love to those that are godly. They love and honour Christ in his image on his saints.

8. Acts ii. 42; and iv. 32. You may see, that the godly love the communion of saints, to join with them in holy doctrine, fellowship, and prayers.

9. "Pray continually," 1 Thess. v. 17. "Christ spake a parable to them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to wax faint," Luke xviii. 1. "Behold he prayeth," Acts ix. 11. "I will pour out—the spirit of prayer and supplication,—" Zech. xii. 10. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought," &c. Rom. viii. 26.

From all these and such like it is evident, that prayer is the breath of a godly man. He is a man of prayer. When he wanteth words, he hath desires with tears or groans.

10. "This people draweth near me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me—," Matt. xv. 8, 9. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," John iv. 23, 24.

From such texts it is evident, that every godly man doth make the inward exercise of his soul the principal part of his worship unto God, and doth not stick in bodily exercise, or lip service.

11. "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord," Josh. xxiv. 15. So Deut. vi. xi.; 1 Pet. ii. 17, 18; iii. 10; Eph. v.; vi.

From many such texts it is evident, that godly men desire the sanctification of others, and make conscience of the duties of their relations, and would have their households or friends to serve the Lord as well as they.

12. Luke xiv. 26, 33; xviii. 22; Matt. x. 37; Rom. viii. 17, 18.

From these and other texts it is evident, that all things are below Christ and heaven in the practical esteem of a godly man, and that he will forsake them all rather than he will forsake him. All these are Scripture marks of godliness.

Having hastily run over these things to help you in the trial, I will add some directions to help you in the practice, and therein yet fuller to acquaint you, wherein true godliness doth consist.

Briefly to lay down before you first the mere enumeration of the chief points wherein sound godliness doth consist, to help your memories, while you see them close together: 1. Sound godliness consisteth in a solid understanding of the substantial points of religion. 2. In a sound belief of the truth of God's word, and the reality of the unseen things. 3. In an adhering to the holy Scriptures as the divine rule of faith and life. 4. In the love of God in Jesus Christ, excited by the belief of his love revealed by Jesus Christ. 5. In true humility, and low thoughts of ourselves, and low expectation from others. 6. In a heavenly mind, that most regardeth the things above, and seeketh them as our only felicity at home. 7. In self-denial, and mortification, and temperance,

and victory over the desires of the flesh. When we can deny our own conceits, and interests, and wills for God; and are dead to the world, and are not servants to our fleshly appetites or senses, or to the things below. 8. In thankfulness for received mercies, and praising the glorious name of God. 9. In the willing and diligent use of the means that God hath appointed us for salvation. 10. In charity or love to all men, even our enemies; and a special love to true believers. 11. In a love to the holy communion of saints, especially in public worship. 12. In a tender desire of the unity of the saints, and their concord and increase of charity; and a trouble at their discord and divisions. 13. In dealing justly in our places with all men, and carefully avoiding all that may be injurious to any. 14. In studying to do all the good we can, and doing it to our power; especially to the household of faith. 15. In a conscientious discharge of the duties of our relations, as rulers, teachers, parents, masters, subjects, and inferiors. 16. In watchfulness against temptations, and avoiding occasions of sin. 17. In serious preparations for sufferings and death, and patient bearing them when they come. These are the things that godliness doth consist in.

And now out of all I will draw up ten practical directions, which in a special manner I would entreat you to practise, if you would be solidly godly, and not be deceived with names or counterfeits.

Direct. 1. Be sure to live upon the substantial of religion, and let them receive no detriment by a pretence of zeal for lesser points: lay not your religion in ineffectual opinions; and let lower truths and duties keep their places, and not be set above the higher.

Direct. 2. See that your religion be principally seated in the heart. Understand it as well as you can (lest it be taken from you); but never think it is savingly your own while it is but in the brain. So much you believe indeed as you love, and as hath imprinted the image of God upon your hearts. Ever see that your wills be resolved for God and holiness; and that you be able truly to say, I would be perfect; and I would fain be better than I am.

Direct. 3. Be sure you take up with God alone, as your whole felicity, and think not that there is a necessity of the approbation of men, or of liberty, plenty, life, or any thing besides God. Do not only think that there is a God, and a life of glory for you, but live upon them, and be moved and actuated by them; trust to them, and take them for your part. Live by faith, and not by sight.

Direct. 4. Live daily upon Christ as the only Mediator, without whom we have no access to God, acceptance with him, or receivings from him. Look for all that you have from God to come by him; live on him for reconciliation, for teaching, for preservation, for communication, for consolation, and for salvation. Let Christ make your thoughts of God more familiar, as now reconciled and condescending to us.

Direct. 5. Obey the sanctifying motions of the Spirit: and if you have disobeyed, repent; not despairing, but returning to obedience; but see that you live not in any known sin, which a sanctified will can enable you to avoid. Resist sins of passion; but most carefully take heed of sins of interest, deliberately chosen, and kept up as necessary or good.

Direct. 6. Make it the principal work of your religion and your lives, to inflame your hearts with the love of God, as he is presented amiable in his wonderful grace in Jesus Christ. Strive no further to affect your hearts with fears or griefs, or other troubling passions, than as tendeth to the work of

love, or is a just expression of it. Go daily to promises, and mercies, and Christ, and heaven, of purpose for fuel to kindle love: be much therefore in thankfulness and praise, which are works of love. All goeth on sweetly, and easily, and acceptably that is carried on by love. That is the best soul, and likeliest to God, that hath most of love to God and godliness. And that is the best service, and likeliest to the work of heaven, that hath most of love. Let the principal striving and pleading with your hearts be to kindle love; and your principal complaints, for the want of it.

Direct. 7. Keep up charity to all, even unto enemies; and special love to all the godly. And therefore hate backbiting and slandering, and making the worst of other men's actions: take them as thieves that come to rob you of your charity. He that speaks evil of another, persuadeth you so far to hate him (unless it be in charity, persuading you to seek his cure). Hear the reproacher and backbiter understandingly, as if he said in words, as he doth in sense, I pray you hate such a man, or abate your love to him. As the way to cause love is to represent the object lovely, which doth much more than to command me to love it; so the way to cause hatred, is to represent the object hateful or unlovely, which is more than to bid us hate our brother. And he that hateth his brother is a manslayer; and none such have eternal life abiding in them. Away therefore with those volumes of learned slanders and reproaches, begotten betwixt uncharitableness and self-love (or pride); and take them as the devil's books, that are written to draw thee to hate thy brother. Frown also upon the censorious: take heed also of divisions and parties, because they are enemies to universal love, and are but imposthumes or boils of the church, where zeal and love are diseasedly drawn into a narrow compass; and that is appropriated to a few, that should be common to all believers. Cherish meekness and patience, and reject all that carnal zeal or envy, contention and animosities, which are contrary to love. Read and study well the third chapter of St. James, and the epistle of St. John.

Direct. 8. Understand the preciousness and use of time. Love diligence the better, because it is a redeeming of time; a doing much in a little time. Hate that which would rob you of so precious a commodity.

Direct. 9. See that there be no predominant selfishness or worldly interest unmortified at the heart. Study duty, and do it faithfully, and trust God with life, estate, and events; and shift not for yourselves by sinful means.

Direct. 10. Maintain your authority over your sense and fleshly appetites. Captivate not reason to the brutish part; especially under pretence of liberty. Use your bodies as may strengthen them, and best fit them for the work of God: let them have so much delight in things allowed as conduceth to this; but take heed of making the delights of flesh and sense your end, or allowing yourselves in an unprofitable pleasing of your enemy; or of corrupting your minds, and relishing too much sweetness in the things of the flesh, and losing your relish of spiritual things. Set not the bait too near you: keep the gunpowder from the fire. He that believeth that if ever he be damned, it will be for pleasing his flesh before God, and if ever he be saved, he must be first and principally saved from the inordinate pleasures of the flesh, will not be so forward as brutish infidels are, to seek out for delights, and plead for all that pleaseth them as harmless.

Having thus in the introduction showed you what godliness is, and how it may be known, and what you must do to be soundly and sincerely godly, I hope you are prepared for the following discourse, of the Certain Necessity and Excellency of Godliness, which tends to fetch over the delaying, resisting, unresolved wills, of those that are yet in the BRUTISH state, and are strangers to the dispositions, employments, desires, hopes, and joys of true believers. The Lord concur effectually with his blessing. Amen.

LUKE x. 41, 42.

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

IN order to the decision of the great controversy practically managed through the world, Whether godliness or worldliness and sensuality be better? I have already performed the first part of my task, in proving the certainty of the principles of godliness and of christianity; which of itself will infer the conclusion, which I undertake to prove, that the reasons for godliness are so sure, and clear, and great, that every one must be a SAINT OR A BRUTE. He that will not choose a life of HOLINESS, hath no other to fall into but a life of SENSUALITY. Either the superior faculties proper to a rational nature must be predominant; and then we can be no less than SAINTS; or else the inferior, brutish faculties will be predominant; and then, (though from your natural powers you are called MEN, yet,) if you may be denominated from your intended END, and from the USE of your faculties in order to that END, you are but an ingenious kind of BRUTES; exceeding apes and monkeys in the cunning contrivance of your unhappy designs, but incomparably worse in your successes; because you were indeed intrusted with the noble faculties and gifts of MEN, while you captivated them unto your appetites and sense, and lived but to the END OF BEASTS.

The second thing that I have to do, for the conquering all opposition to this conclusion, is to prove the NECESSITY of HOLINESS, which (being now to speak to such as profess to believe the holy Scriptures) I may easily do from this plain and pregnant text. To which I shall annex such cogent REASONS as may silence those that will not acquiesce in the authority of the holy word.

So great is the difference between a dreaming opinion in religion, (called a dead faith,) and a serious, hearty, practical belief, that if they that say (and do but say) they believe the holy Scriptures, and yet are ungodly, had soundly believed, considered, and digested this very text, it would have made such a change both in their hearts and lives, as would have told them by happy experience, that the gospel is not a dead letter, nor saving faith a lifeless, uneffectual thing; and that God sent not his Son into the world only to be complimented with, and reverently treated with a few good words; nor his gospel and ministers merely to be entertained with a demure, silent, and respectful audience; nor hath proposed his kingdom to be merely the matter of commendation or discourse. But that as man is a creature of a noble and capacious nature, so he hath a high and noble end, and consequently the highest employment for his reason; and that

religion is the most NECESSARY and must be the most SERIOUS business in the world. Did they believe this text, as verily as they pretend to believe the gospel, it would help to the recovery of the understandings of the ambitious, and make the proud ashamed of their glory, and settle the drunken, aspiring minds of those that think it worth more than their salvation, to sit upon the highest perch. It would call off the covetous worldling his immoderate seeking provisions for the flesh, and save them that are drowned in the cares of this life, by showing them the true and necessary treasure. It would spare them many a vexatious thought, and a great deal of unnecessary labour, and prevent the shame and horror that must befall them, when in the end they find their labour lost, and all their expectations frustrated. It would quickly stop the mouths which prejudice, ignorance, malignant enmity and delirium have opened against a life of faith and serious godliness; and cause them that scorn it as a needless thing, to make it their daily business and delight. It would tell the sluggish, senseless sinner, that he hath work of everlasting consequence upon his hand, and that it is no time to dream or loiter; and it would tell the brutish sensualist that there are more sweet and durable delights; and the time-wasting fool that time is precious, and he hath none to spare and cast away, having so great a work to do. It would set men on seeking with greatest diligence, the kingdom which before they did but dream of; and would turn the very stream of their hearts and lives on that which before they minded but as on the bye. In a word, it would make the earthly to become heavenly, and the fleshly spiritual, and the slothful to be diligent, and rotten-hearted sinners to become renewed saints, as all must do that ever will be saved. And if these words of Christ be not thus received by you, and work not such wonders on men's hearts, it is not because there is any want of fitness in the text, but because men's hearts are hardened into a wilful contempt of the most precious truths, which in themselves are apt to change and save them.

Of all ways of teaching, history is accounted one of the most effectual; because it hath the greatest advantage on our apprehensions, as setting our lesson before our eyes in the great character of example, and not only in the smaller letter of a naked precept. And of all history, what can be more powerful, than, 1. Where one of the actors is the eternal Son of God; and that not above our reach in heaven, but here in our flesh, on the stage of this sublunary world? 2. And the other actors are such as most fitly represent the different actions of all the world, at least that live within the sound of the gospel; and lay open the great question about which the world is so much divided. 3. And when the matter itself is of the greatest consequence that can be imagined; even concerning the present choice and resolution of our hearts, and that expending of our time, and that business and employment of our lives, on which our endless life dependeth. All this you have here set out even to the life, before your eyes, in the glass of this example in my text; and the Lord of life doth call you all to see your faces in it; and here plainly sheweth you what will be expected from you; and what you must be, and do, and trust to; and this not in any long and tedious discourse, that might overcharge your memories, or weary your attentions; but in very brief though full expressions.

As Jesus entered into Bethany, Martha (who it seems was the owner of the house) received and entertained him. No doubt but a great company fol-

lowed Jesus; or his disciples, that ordinarily accompanied him, at least. Martha thinks that having entertained such a guest, it were a great neglect, if she should not provide for him and for his followers; and therefore she is busy in doing what she can; but the number is so great, that she is oppressed with the care and trouble, and findeth that she hath more to do than she is able: her sister, that she thought should have helped her in such a case, is sitting with the disciples at the feet of Christ, to hear his word. Martha seeing this, is offended at her sister, and seems to think that Christ himself is too neglective of her, or partial for her sister; and therefore thus pleads her cause with Christ, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." As if she had said, Is it a fit thing that both thyself and all this company should be unprovided for, and have neither meat nor drink? or is it fit that all should be laid on me, even more than I can do, while she sits hearing with the disciples? Deal equally and mercifully, and bid her help me. And indeed most people would think that this was but a reasonable motion, and that when Christ was made the judge between them, he should have decided the case on Martha's side; but he did not so: but, 1. Instead of commending Martha for her care and diligence, he sheweth her error, by a gentle but yet a close reproof: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." 2. Instead of reproving Mary for negligence of her duty in the house, he highly commendeth her for the seasonable doing of a greater work: "Mary hath chosen the good part." 3. He groundeth the reason of his judgment on the different nature and use of their employments: "One thing is needful;" in comparison of which, the rest were all unnecessary things, and such as then might have been neglected. 4. And so he passeth sentence on Mary's side, that the good part which she hath chosen, "shall not be taken away from her:" in which he not only answereth Martha with an express denial, as if he should say, I will not take off Mary from the work which she hath chosen; but also on that occasion doth point out the durable nature of the good which she had chosen, and promise the continuance of it.

Concerning Martha, some expositors run into two extremes. Some think that she was an unregenerate worldling, and savoured only fleshly things; and that these words of Christ describe her state as one that had not yet made choice of the one thing needful, and the better part. But it is only her present action that Christ doth reprehend and censure, and not her state. Her entertainment of Christ, and speeches to him, and other passages, give us great probability that she was a true disciple, as after it is said that Jesus loved her, John xi. 5.

On the other side, one learned annotator thus paraphraseth the words of Christ to Martha, Thou takest a great deal of unnecessary, though not culpable pains; as if Christ's words were no reprehension of her, nor her course blameworthy.

But the plain truth lieth between these two extremes. Martha, though most probably a true disciple, was here to blame, in preferring a lesser duty before a greater, and doing that unseasonably, which in due time was to be done, and in neglecting an opportunity for the hearing of Christ's word, which Mary took. It was not only blameless, but a duty in itself to make provision for Christ and his attendants; but she should have been hearing first while he was preaching, and taken that opportunity for the benefit of her soul. It was no ordinary preacher that was come under her roof: his stay was not like

to be long: his doctrine concerned her salvation: she knew not whether ever she should have the like opportunity again; and therefore she should have rather stayed for his own direction, when to go make provision for their bodies, than to have omitted the hearing of his word.

But you will ask perhaps, When a sermon and other worldly business fall out at once, are we always bound to hear the sermon?

I answer, no, not always; for else in great cities that have frequent preaching, you should do nothing else but hear: we have a body as well as a soul; and must have meet employment for both; and must make due provision for both; and must be serviceable to the bodily welfare of others, and to the common good. Our bodily labour and temporal employment must be conscientiously followed, as well as our spiritual; for God hath determined that "in the sweat of our faces we shall eat our bread," Gen. iii. 19. And even in innocence Adam was put into the garden to dress or till and keep it, Gen. ii. 15. With quietness we must "labour and eat our own bread; and if any will not work, neither should he eat," 2 Thess. iii. 10, 12. See Paul's example, chap. v. 8, "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you." We must "labour, working with our hands, that we may have to give to him that needeth," Eph. iv. 28. And if our bodies have not competent employment, they will grow such rusty, unfit instruments for the soul to work by, that when melancholy or other diseases have disabled them, the soul itself will have the loss; and he that will do nothing but hear, and pray, and meditate, is likely shortly to be scarce able to pray and meditate at all (unless it be one of a very strong and healthful constitution).

No one therefore from this determination of Christ to Martha, is to be driven from their lawful calling into a contrary extreme. But this was not the case between Mary and Martha: it was a special opportunity which then was to be taken. We must first seek God's kingdom, and its righteousness, and prudently take such opportunities for our souls as we can, without omitting greater duties, and as our case requireth; not taking as much food as we can ingest, but as much as we can digest: it is possible to eat too much, but not to digest too well. A christian must have prudence, when two duties come together, to know which at that present time is the greatest, and to be preferred; which dependeth much on the necessity, and the ends; the good that will follow the doing of them, and the hurt that will follow the omission. And without this prudential discerning of time and duty, we shall never order our conversations right, but shall live in a continual sin when we are doing that, which in its own nature and season is our duty.

A poor man may not read and hear so frequently as a rich (ordinarily); nor a servant as the master; because there would greater evils follow the omission of their common labour at that time.

Thus much being said for the explication of the text, there is no more necessary but what will fall in most conveniently with the matter. The sense is, as if Christ should have said, Martha, Martha, I know thou dost all this in love to me, and meanest well in it; and it is no more than what is thy duty in its proper season; but oh! what is the food that perisheth in comparison of that which endureth to everlasting life! It is my meat and drink to do the will of him that sent me, in feeding and in saving souls. Thou hadst now an opportunity to hear my word, the word of the Son of God, thy Saviour, and

thereby to have promoted thy everlasting happiness, as Mary doth; and this should have been preferred even before this provision for our bodies; and if for this thou hadst now omitted thy care and labour about meat and drink, I would not at all have been offended with thee: thou hadst thy choice, and Mary had her choice; thou hast chosen care and trouble about many things, and made thyself a great deal ado; but Mary hath chosen that one thing that was necessary, which is the better part, and therefore it shall not be taken from her, but she shall possess the benefit of her choice.

Where note, for the fuller understanding of it, the true opposition between the case of Mary and Martha.

1. As to the matter; Martha had many things in hand, a multifarious care and trouble; but Mary had but one.

2. As to the manner and effects of their employments; Martha was full of care and troubles, distracted or disturbed by the cumbrance of her businesses; but Mary was quietly hearing and learning how to be free from care and trouble, and how to attain everlasting rest.

3. As to the quality of their business; Martha's was of less necessity or concernment, though good and honest in its place; but Mary's was about the thing of absolute necessity.

Also Martha's was good in its season, but a lesser good; but Mary's was that good part, which containeth all other good or referreth to it, and therefore was to be preferred.

4. And therefore as to the continuance; Mary's being a more eligible employment, and about an everlasting treasure, shall not be taken from her, when the fruit of Martha's employment will quickly have an end.

Yet in these different cases, each one had her choice; had Martha chosen better, she had had better. And the choice much proceeded from the judgment and disposition: had she judged better, and been inclined better, Martha would have chosen better.

Before we come to the principal doctrines, we may profitably note these observations by the way.

1. Note here, that the nearest natural relations, (as brothers and sisters, yea, parents and children,) are not always of one mind or way in the matters of their salvation. Greater difference may be between them, than this between Martha and Mary in the text. They may rise up against each other, and seek each others' lives, as Christ foretold, Mark xiii. 12. And therefore father, mother, brother, sister, and all are to be denied for Christ, (that I say not hated, as Christ saith, Luke xiv. 26,) when they stand in opposition to him. The same parentage and education made not Esau and Jacob of a disposition, or of one mind or way; nor Isaac and Ishmael; nor Shem and Ham; nor would restrain Cain, the first man born into the world, from cruelly murdering his brother, upon a difference about their religions, caused by his own ungodly mind; even because his "own works were evil, and his brother's righteous and acceptable to God," 1 John iii. 12. And therefore parents must patiently submit (having done their duty) if even the children of their bodies should prove reprobates. And brothers and sisters must submit, if these in so near a relation be castaways. God hath not promised that all our kindred shall be saved. Rejoice that you are not yourselves forsaken; and be glad that any and so many are sanctified, though further from you in the flesh; and love them in their more excellent relation to Christ and you.

2. Note here, how our Lord doth spend his time in the place and company where he is. When he entereth into a house, he is presently at work in teaching poor souls the way to God; or else how could Mary have been employed in hearing him? In our places and measure we should imitate him in this. Can you come into any house or company and find nothing to say or do for God? Are there none wiser than yourselves that you may learn of, as Mary did of Christ? Nor none more ignorant, whom charity requireth you to teach? Nor none that need a quickening word, to mind them of their everlasting state? As soon as worldly, or vain, ungodly people get together, they are presently upon some worldly or vain discourse. And if you be indeed a heavenly and spiritual people, should you not be more ready when you come together, for heavenly, spiritual discourse? Have you not a thousandfold more to set your tongues on work? the necessities of the hearers, the hopes of doing good, the presence of God, the sense of the duty, the sweetness of the subject, the avoiding of sin, and the blessing of God's acceptance to yourselves? Oh had we but the skill, and will, and diligence, that this interlocutory preaching by holy conference doth require, what a supply-party would it be for the promoting of men's salvation, where the more public preaching of the gospel is wanting? Who can forbid us by familiar discourse to exercise our charity, in minding poor, regardless sinners of the life to come? and exhorting them to due preparation and repentance? and to open to them the riches of Christ, and set forth his love, and draw them to embrace him?

3. Note here, how carefully we should take the present opportunities of our souls, to hear and learn as Mary did. She stands not cavilling like our full-stomach hearers, that ask, How can you prove that I am bound to hear such a lecture, or to come to church and hear a sermon twice on the Lord's day, or to come to the minister to ask advice, or be instructed by him? no more than a hungry man will ask, How prove you that it is my duty to eat every day? or than a sick man will say, How prove you that I am bound to seek to the physician, to go or send to his house, and to look after him? As there is much in the very new nature, and health, and relish of a gracious soul, to decide such controversies as these without any subtlety of argument, so a christian's prudence and care of his salvation will tell him, that when Christ hath a voice to speak to him, it becometh him to have an ear to hear; and that the sermon telleth the hearer the season of his duty, and the offer of a mercy telleth us when it is our duty to accept it, without any other more particular obligation; unless when we can truly say as before God, that some duty that at that time is greater, hindereth us. These are easy questions to those that savour the things of the Spirit. When Christ is speaking, Mary will be hearing; and lesser things shall not call her off.

If any shall say, So would we too, if we could hear Christ; I answer, Remember that he never intended to abide himself on earth, and teach his church personally by his own mouth; but hath appointed messengers and officers to proclaim his law unto the world, and tender them his grace, and saith, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me," (Luke x. 16.) and he that "despiseth, despiseth not man but God," 1 Thess. iv. 8. And he that will not now believe and hear Christ speaking by his ministers, when he is acknowledged to be the Son of God, and his sealed word hath had so long possession in the world, would hardly have regarded Christ himself in a

time when he appeared in the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man, and was believed on but by a few persons then counted but inconsiderable.

4. Note also, the humility and teachableness of disciples in those times, who were wont to sit learning at their teachers' feet; which was then an ordinary case, and not of Christ's disciples only. Paul was brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel," Acts xxii. 3. Not like the proud and self-conceited part of our hearers in these times, that come to hear somewhat for their malicious or contentious minds to quarrel with, and expect that their teachers tell them nothing but what is agreeable to their own conceits, and think us to be injurious to them, if we would heal their ignorance or impiety, and make them any wiser or better than they are; and that reproach us and set themselves against us as their enemies, if we will not be ruled by them, and humour them in all our administrations, as if we were the patients and they the physicians, we the learners and they the teachers, yea, we their servants, and they our guides and rulers in the matters of our own office.

But let us come closer to the words themselves, and consider of the instructions which they afford us; which are these.

Doct. I. It is but one thing that is of absolute necessity, but it is many things that those are taken up with, that neglect that one.

Doct. II. The one thing needful leadeth to content; but the many things of the world do trouble, and disquiet, and distract the soul.

Doct. III. All men where the gospel is preached, have their choice whether they will seek and have the one thing necessary, or trouble and distract themselves with the many things that are unnecessary.

Doct. IV. They that choose the one thing necessary, do choose the good part; and they that choose any other, do make an evil and unhappy choice.

Doct. V. The one thing needful shall not be taken from them that choose it; but they that choose it not, shall have no better than they choose.

Doct. VI. Those that make the bad, unhappy choice, are apt to grudge at them that choose better, and will not think and do as they.

Doct. VII. When the matter is brought before the Lord Jesus Christ, he will not take part with those that murmur at his servants' choice, and speak against them; but will commend their choice, and condemn the contrary.

All this you see lie plain here in the text, and it is all worthy our larger consideration. But the first is like to hold me so long, that to avoid prolixity, the rest shall be but touched under that.

Doct. I. One thing is needful. It is one thing only that is absolutely necessary; but many things that men busy themselves about, that neglect this one.

In handling this, I must show you,

I. In what respect it is that this needful thing is said to be but one.

II. How it is that the troublesome matters of the world are called many.

III. Where to and how far this one thing is necessary.

IV. Whether the rest are indeed unnecessary.

V. I shall assist you in the application of it to yourselves, that it may reach the end to which I do intend it.

I. In what respect is the needful thing but one?

Which will be the easier understood, when you know what the one thing needful is. And it is, most directly, that which is our end, To be saved, and to

please the Lord, or to glorify God and enjoy him in glory for ever; which comprehendeth or implieth the necessary means.

And this blessed state is one, considered, 1. Objectively. It is one God that we have to please, and to behold, and love, and praise for ever. 2. It is one formally; that is, it is only the soul's fruition of this one God that is our end and blessedness. And thus the end being principally meant, it is said that one thing is necessary; though the means may be more than one that are necessary to obtain it.

And yet even with respect unto the means, it may be said that one thing is necessary, by a general, comprehensive speech, as one containeth many parts. As to cure a sickness may be said to be the one thing needful to preserve a man's life; when yet that cure must be done by many acts and means. The means are but one thing as denominated from their end, even our everlasting happiness. And they are but one as denominated from their original, they being all but the will of God revealed in his word for man's direction to salvation. And they are all one in the principal stock that proceedeth from this original or root; and that is, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is therefore eminently called the way; because there is no other way or means, but what standeth in a due subordination to the Redeemer as the chief means, as well as to the pure Godhead as the end.

Also as all the means of God's appointment have a union of nature or similitude with the end. And as God's image is one in all his children, so is it, in their kind and measure, in all his ordinances and means. They also in their kind and place are partakers of the divine nature. The name of God is as it were written upon them, and his blessed nature legible in them.

Also the means are all but one, as all are parts of one holy frame, which most harmoniously concur to the doing of one work; as all the wheels and other parts are but one coach which carrieth us to our journey's end. As Christ and his church are one body, 1 Cor. xii. 12, so Christ and all subordinate means for the recovery and salvation of his own, are one kingdom of God, and one way to the Father, and one salvation. I shall fuller open it under the next head.

And now for the negative, you may discern by what is said, 1. That there is no such unity as even in the end must confound God and man, or his glory and our salvation.

2. Nor is here any such unity as doth confound the end and means; no, not the Godhead with the manhood of the Redeemer, much less with the inferior kind of beings.

3. Nor is there any such unity as doth confound all the means among themselves, and make all one; or exclude the rest by exalting one; but rather each one doth suppose the rest to constitute the perfect frame. Christ doth not exclude faith, nor faith exclude repentance; nor faith and repentance exclude obedience; nor doth the office of one of these exclude the use and office of the rest. Public duties exclude not private, nor do private exclude public. One part excludeth not another. Reading excludeth not preaching, nor both of them praying; but their nature and use bespeak a conjunction. The whole body is not an eye or hand; nor doth the unity exclude, but include, even the smallest members.

4. Nor is there such a unity as excludeth difference of degrees. For one means may be more necessary and excellent than another. And the same person by growing doth differ from himself as he was before; and one will hereafter excel another in

glory, as they do in holiness and faithful improvement of their talents.

II. Let us next lay both together, and see how the troubling matters of the world are called many in opposition to this one.

And, 1. Every creature to a sensual man, is made by him in some sort his end and god. For he doth not use it only, and refer it as the godly do, to an end that is one; but he would enjoy it and make it objectively his end itself, and so idolize it. And therefore though in the general notion of delight they all agree; yet materially what abundance of ends and gods have carnal men! Every sense must have its own delight: the eye must have its delight, and the appetite its delight; and so of the rest.

2. And also these fleshly baits and pleasures are discordant even among themselves. They draw the sinner several ways; and one of them fighteth against the other. The riches of the sensualist do usually contradict his ease, and often his voluptuous humour; and his ambition and pride doth bridle his disgraceful lust; and one sin will not let another have its end, but robbeth him of the poor expected fruit. And thus they do distract the sinners, and tear their very hearts in pieces; and divide and dismember them, where God would heal them and unite them in himself. And the toilsome cares and labours by which these things must be obtained, are many, and oft contrary to each other; and a great deal of stir it is that a deluded sinner makes to little purpose.

The sum then of both these heads is this. The matter of a christian's faith and religion, desire, hope, and love, is therefore called one thing, because God who is one is the sum of all. It is but one sun, though it hath many beams, and all those beams are nothing but the emanations of the sun; and have nothing but what they have from it. God is all to the religion and the soul of a true believer; and therefore all to him is one. Creatures, and duties, and ordinances which are many, are all but one to him in God. His faith beholdeth them, and his affections relish them as united all in God: 1. As their spring from whom they flow. 2. And as the life by whom they are all animated; and as the matter and sense which they signify and import. 3. And as their end to which they tend, and in which they all terminate and agree.

Many branches are but one tree, and have one stock; and many members are one body, because they are animated with one soul. Many letters, syllables, and words may make one sentence; and many leaves may make one book, and treat but of one subject. Many actions of a ploughman are called ploughing, and of a weaver, weaving, &c. as being all united in one end. I know these similes have their dissimilitude, but this is the sum; that it is God that the believer seeth, and seeketh, and loveth, and converseth with, and intendeth in all the ordinances of grace, in all his duties, and in all the creatures; and in God they are united, and one thing to him. He hath nothing to do at church or at home, in private or public, but live to God, and seek after the everlasting enjoyment of him. If weakness and temptation put any other business into his hands, he is so far stepped out of the christian way. In his very common labours and mercies (so far as he is holy) God is to him the spring, the life, the sweetness, the beauty, the strength, the meaning, and the end of all, and therefore all in all.

But the creatures in the hands and use of the ungodly, or of the godly, so far as they use them sinfully, have no such unity. Though in themselves they so depend on God, that none can make a separ-

ation, nor can they at all exist without him; yet in the sense, estimation, ends, and use of the ungodly, the creatures are separated from God, and are as branches cut off from the tree; and departing from God, these men are gone from unity, and are lost, distracted and confounded in the multitude of the creatures; and will never have unity till they return to God.

III. In the next place let us consider, What is the necessity that is here spoken of, and how far this one thing is necessary to us.

And, 1. One thing is necessary morally, for itself, which is our ultimate end; when other things are necessary but for that.

2. Comprehensively of the means we may say, that one thing, that is, sanctification, is necessary to the pleasing of God; which is to be regarded, 1. As the end of obedience, and, 2. As the end of love; by the obedient soul in way of duty; and by the loving soul devoted to God, as its delight.

The world hath many contrary masters, and therefore hath many things to do to please them; and when they have done their best, they cannot please them all, but may leave more displeased than they please. For those that they must please, expect impossibilities; and many a single person perhaps may look for as much as you can give to all. And they have such contrary interests, which you must humour, that the same things that one expects to please him, will vehemently displease another; and perhaps the more displease the other, because it is pleasing to that one.

And ourselves have our contrarieties in ourselves, and are as hard to be pleased by others or ourselves. We have our sensual desires which are unreasonable and inordinate, unseasonable and importunate, and will take no nay. A sensual, covetous, ambitious fancy, is a bottomless vessel; your pouring in doth no whit fill it. It is a devouring gulf; a consuming (that I say not an unquenchable) fire. Like the horseleech it crieth, Give, give, and the more you give, the more it craveth, and is never less satisfied than when it hath glutted itself with that from which it seeketh satisfaction.

But God is one, and with this one thing is he pleased, even with a holy heart and life. He hath no contradictory interests or assertions, and therefore hath no contradictory commands; that which must please him, must be suitable to his blessed nature. He is infinite in wisdom, and therefore hath no pleasure in fools, that bring him sacrifice, and refuse obedience, and "know not that they do evil," Eccl. v. 1; and have not the wit to know what they do, and whom they speak to; and to know that which only is worth the knowing. How often do we read him rejecting the sacrifice of the wicked, and casting their costliest offerings in their faces, as things that he abhorreth, when they come to him without that humble, loving, and obedient heart, which he requireth! "Their oblations are vain, the multitude of their sacrifice is to no purpose, and incense is an abomination to him; their feasts and sabbaths his soul hateth, they are a trouble to him, he cannot bear them," Psal. l. 8, &c.; Isa. i. 11, 12—20, if they come without the "one thing necessary." Without this he careth not for their fastings, or formalities, Isa. lviii. 5. It is not "thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil, nor the fruit of their body, if they would give it for the sin of their soul," that he will accept. "But he hath showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" Micah vi. 7, 8. The conclusion of the whole matter is this: "Fear

God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man," Eccl. xii. 13.

You are never the better beloved of God for being rich or honourable in the world, nor yet because you are poor, or in a mean condition, nor because you are sick or well, weak or strong, comely or uncomely; but because you love him through his Son, and "believe in him whom the Father hath sent," John xvi. 27. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 6. The "new man must be put on, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him; where there is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all," Col. iii. 10, 11. "For in Christ Jesus circumcision availeth nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, and faith that works by love, and the keeping of the commands of God," Gal. v. 7; vi. 15; 1 Cor. vii. 19.

This one thing (even "godliness which is profitable to all things") is necessary in us, (supposing the necessities in Christ,) to render us acceptable to the holy God. And without this all the accomplishments imaginable will make us but as "sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal," 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

3. One thing is needful to the saving of our souls; without which all things else are vain. There are many ways to hell; but to heaven there is but one. There are a thousand ways to delude and blind a soul, but only one for its true and saving illumination. Erroneous sectaries are blinded in some particular points, by the seducing words of men. And ungodly sensualists are blinded in the main, and damnablely err from the necessary, practical doctrines of salvation, being deceived by the inclination of their own concupiscence. Errors are multifarious, and abound even in many that inveigh most fiercely against the erroneous. But truth is simple. We have one Teacher to instruct us, one Spirit to enlighten us, one word of God to be our rule, one light to guide us through all the darkness and mazes of the world, and recover our deluded, darkened minds. Thousands are ready to draw us away from God. Temptations lie thick on every hand; within us, and without us; before us, and on each side. Which way can you look or go, but you will meet with baits and snares? And if Eve be once deceived, Adam is the easilier overcome. When the appetite and senses are ensnared by their objects, and imagination corrupted, the understanding is in danger of deceit. You may go into an hospital, and see a variety of diseases; but health is one and the same. One hath the pestilence, and another hath the leprosy, and another a palsy, and another is distracted; but among a thousand people in health, you see no such difference. Health only is formally the cure of all.

What abundance of miserable sinners be in the world, that are almost at hell already! But only one sort of men, even the regenerate, are rescued by grace, and shall be saved from it. Many inventions have men found out for their destruction; but there is no way but by Christ, through faith and holiness, to their salvation. Set as light by Christ and holiness as you will, and deride it as foolishly and perversely as you please, you will find at last, that this way or none must bring you to heaven. Either ignorance, or pride, or covetousness, or malice, or gluttony, or voluptuousness, or lust, or any one sin of a hundred may be your ruin. But there is only one salve to heal these sores; and only one cordial or antidote that can expel these several sorts of poison from your hearts. "Godliness is profitable to all things," 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Drudge for the world as long as you will, and gape

after honour, and applause from men, and try a thousand ways for your content; but when you have all done, you must return by sound repentance into the way of holiness, or you are lost for ever. When you have slighted grace, you must give up yourselves to the power of that grace. When you have set light by a life of holy love to God, and the fruition of him in glory, you must make it your treasure and delight, and your hearts must be upon it, or you are undone, Matt. vi. 21. When you have made a jest of a holy life, you must come about, and take yourselves that course that you jested at, though you be as much jested at by others; yea, and make it the principal business of your lives, or perish in hell under the vengeance of the Almighty, whose justice you provoked, and whose mercy you neglected. Choose you whether, but one of them will be your part. Even as Saul, that was "exceeding mad against believers, and persecuted them even to strange cities," (Acts xxv. 10, 11.) was glad to become one of them himself, though he suffered as much as he had caused them to suffer; and accounted it the greatest mercy of his life, that God vouchsafed him such a change, whatever it cost him.

IV. *Quest.* But is nothing necessary but this one? Are not other things also needful in their places?

Ans. I told you that other things are not other, so far as they stand in due subordination to this one, or are the parts of it. He that saith to a sick man, You would do well if you had such a skilful man for your physician, doth not by these words intend to exclude his apothecary, or his medicines, or the taking of them, or the instruments and means by which they are applied; but rather includeth and implieth all these in the one thing mentioned to which they do subserve. So all God's graces, and all the means of grace, and christian duties, are contained or implied in the one thing necessary, or supposed to it. Because it is one thing that is necessary as the end, therefore many means are necessary to the obtaining of it; though there be also a kind of unity (as hath been showed) among those means.

Quest. But are not outward things also necessary? Must we not have food and raiment? and must we not labour and provide it, and take care for our families, and follow our callings? Must we not by lawful means avoid reproach and poverty in the world?

Ans. In the way of duty it is as necessary that we labour in our callings, and provide things honest, and subserve God's providence for the maintenance of ourselves and others; and the things of this life are needful so far as life is needful, that we may have time and strength to do our works, and be supported while we seek the one thing needful. But that which is not necessary for itself, but for another thing, is not simply or principally necessary. So far as heaven may be obtained, and the work of christianity done without the accommodations of the flesh, so far these worldly things are needless. There is no necessity that you be rich or honourable; or that you live in health or wealth; or that you escape the hatred, and reproach, and trouble of a malicious world! There is no necessity that you should save your lives when Christ requireth them. For he that so saveth his life shall lose it, Matt. xvi. 25. And that usefulness (which you may in a lower sense call necessity) that any of these things are of, is but in their respect to the one thing necessary, as they are sanctified means to the service of God and our salvation. If your daily bread be to be called necessary, it is not for itself, or for fleshly pleasure, nor ultimately for your life itself; but to sustain your life while you are seeking after life eternal, and

serving him that is the Lord of life. Your credit, or honour, or pleasure in the world, are no further necessary or useful to you than they promote this great end for yourselves or others. Nothing but God is simply necessary for himself, and nothing else is any way truly necessary but for him.

And therefore as by necessity of precept you must labour in your callings, and seek provision for yourselves and families, you must most carefully watch your hearts that your desires and labours be not carnal, as tending only to carnal ends; but that you sincerely subject the things desired to the one thing necessary, for which you must desire them; and therefore that you desire but such measures and proportions, as are most suitable to that end which is only for itself desirable: even life itself must not be desired simply and ultimately for itself.

As you must pray but for your daily bread, and be content with food and raiment, so you must see, that these be but for better things; even in order to the doing of the will of God, the promoting of his kingdom, and the hallowing of his name, which must be first and most desired. The order of your duty is, to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and then other things are promised with it, Matt. vi. 33. And therefore for it, must be desired and sought.

And if your very food and life must be desired but for this everlasting end, then it is still but one thing that is necessary, and finally to be desired. For the means is willed but with an imperfect willing, because not for itself; and that only hath our full and perfect love, which is loved for itself. Even in the act of love unto the means, it is more properly the end that is loved than the means, and the means is chosen for that end. So that you see that for all the necessity of creatures, and of diligence in our callings, the truth is still clear, that it is only one thing that is truly necessary.

V. *Use 1.* The understanding is the subservient faculty, to let in that light, which may by direction and excitation guide the will. Having showed you the truth, I am next to show you how you may improve it; and so to apply it, as may best help you to apply it to yourselves.

And if I should here fall upon things impertinent, or make it my work to tickle your ears, or exalt myself in your esteem, by an unseasonable ostentation of learning or eloquence, or carry on any such corrupt design, while I should faithfully do the work of God, my text itself would openly condemn me. If one thing be needful, it is that one that I must do myself, while I am exhorting you to do it. And woe be to me, if I should lay by that, to do any other unnecessary work, even to fish for the applause of carnal wits, while my very subject is the reproofs of Christ against a much more tolerable error!

And as to the manner of my admonition, if one thing be needful, I hope you will allow me to be as plain and serious as I can, about this one. And my first address to you shall be for trial.

And I shall make it now my earnest request to you, that you will bethink you how much you are concerned, to compare your hearts and lives with this passage, and judge yourselves by the word of God that is now before you. And for your own sakes do it seriously and faithfully, as passengers that are hasting to the great assize. What say your consciences, sirs, to this question? Have you indeed lived in the world as men that believe that one thing is necessary? Hath this one had your chiefest care and labour, and have you chosen rather to neglect all other things than this? Look behind you, and judge of the course that you have taken by the

light of this one text. I do not ask whether you have heard that one thing is necessary; nor whether you have talked of it, and confessed it to be true; nor whether you have been called christians by yourselves and others, and have come to church, and forborne those sins that would have most blemished your honour in the world. This is nothing to the question. Thus many thousands do, that were never acquainted with the one thing necessary. Nor do I ask you whether you have used to allow God half an hour's lip-service, or formal, drowsy prayer at night, when you have served the world and flesh all day. Nor whether you have been religious on the bye, and given God some lean devotion which cost you little, and which your flesh can spare without any great diminution or detriment in its ease, and honour, and profit, and sensual delights. Nor whether you run to some kind of duties of religion, to make all whole, when you come from wilful reigning sin; and so make religion a fortress to your lusts, and quiet your consciences while you serve the flesh. I confess such a kind of religiousness as this, the world is acquainted with. But this is unanswerable to the rule before us.

But the question is, Whether this one thing hath been the treasure and jewel of your estimation; the darling of your affections; the prize of your most diligent endeavours, and the only felicity of your souls?

Sirs, as lightly as you hear this question now, you will one day find that your lives, yea your salvation lieth upon your answer to it. Can you truly say, as before the Searcher of hearts, that it is he that hath had your hearts? that this one thing hath been more esteemed by you, than all the world besides? that other things have all stooped unto this one, and served under it? and that this hath had the stream of your heartiest affections, the drift of your endeavours, and hath been the matter that you have had first to do, and the thing for which you have lived in the world?

If this be not so, never talk of your christianity for shame. Your religion is vain, if this be not your religion. Alas, I know that we have all of us yet too much of the flesh, and are too cold in our affections, and too slow and uneven in our endeavours for our end. But yet for all that I must still tell you, (as I have often done because it is necessary,) that here lieth the difference between the truly sanctified soul, and all the hypocrites and half-christians in the world. Every true christian is devoted unto God, and hath made a hearty and absolute resignation of himself and all that he hath unto him; and therefore loveth him with his superlative, most appreciative love, and serveth him with the best he hath, and thinks nothing too good or too dear for God, and for the attainment of his everlasting rest. Christ hath the chiefest room in his heart, and the bent and drift of his life is for him. He studieth how he may best serve and please him with his time, his interest, and all that he hath; and if he fall, as it is contrary to the habitual resolution of his soul, and contrary to the scope and current of his heart and life, so he riseth again by repentance with sorrow for his sin, and loathing of himself, and sincerely endeavours to amend, and goeth on resolutely in his holy course. This is the state of every one that is in a state of life.

But for all hypocrites and half-christians, their case is otherwise. The world and flesh is dearest to them, and highest in their practical estimation, though not in their speculative; and it hath their highest affections of love and delight, and the very

bent and stream of heart and life, while God is served heartlessly on the bye, for fear lest they be damned when they can enjoy the world and sin no longer, and is put off with the leavings of the flesh, and hath no more of their hearts, their tongues, their time, their wealth, than it can spare. They ask their flesh how far they shall be religious, and will go no further than will stand with their prosperity in the world. With the first and best they serve the flesh, and with the cheapest and the refuse they serve the Lord. When they go highest in their outside carnal religiousness, they go not beyond this hypocritical, reserved state; and usually, as Cain, they hate Abel for offering a more acceptable sacrifice. God must take up with this from them, or be without. They always serve him with this reserve, though it be not always explicit and discerned by them, Provided that it may go well with me in the world, and I may have some competent proportion of honour, profit, or pleasure, and religion may not expose me to be undone. If God will not take them on these terms, (as most certainly he never will,) he must go look him other servants; and so he will; and make them know at last unto their sorrow, that he needed not their service, but it was they that needed him, and the benefits of his service.

I thought meet (though I have done it oft before) to give you this difference between the hypocrite and the sincere. And now it is my earnest request unto you all, that you will presently call your souls to an account, and know which of these two courses you have taken; and which of these two is your own condition.

If nature had made you such strangers to yourselves, as that you were unable to answer such a question, I would never trouble you with it; but I suppose by faithful inquiry you may know this much of yourselves, if you are but willing. You know where it is that you have dwelt, and what it is that you have been doing in the world, and you can review the actions of your lives, though they have been of smaller consequence. Why then may you not quickly know, if you will, so great a thing, as what hath been the end and business for which you have lived in the world till now? Have you been running so long, and know not yet what is the prize that you have run for? Have you forgot the errand that you have been so long going on? Have you been busy all your days till now, and know not about what or why? Certainly this is a thing that may be known, if you are willing and diligent to know it. It is for one of these two that you have lived; for the world, or for God; to please your flesh, or to please God and be saved; either to make provision for earth or heaven. Which of these is it? Deal plainly with yourselves, for your salvation is deeply concerned in the account.

Perhaps you will say, that it was for both; for as you have a soul and body, so you must look to both; yea, but so as one that knoweth that one thing is needful. As your body is but the prison, the case, the servant, of your souls, so it must be provided for and used but as a servant, and maintained only in a fitness for its work. But the question is, Which of them hath had the pre-eminence? Which hath had the life of your affections and endeavours? Which of them was your end; about which hath been the chief business that you have most carefully and diligently carried on? This is the great question.

You cannot have two masters, though you may have many instruments and fellow-servants? You cannot acceptably serve God, if you serve mammon. Every wicked man may do something in religion, and every good man may do something that is con-

trary to religion. A carnal man may do something for God, and for his soul; and a spiritual man ought to do something subordnately for his body, and too often, alas, doth something for it inordinately. But which bears the sway? and which is first sought? and which comes behind, and hath but the leavings of the other?

"Be not deceived: God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. If you sow to the flesh, of the flesh you shall reap corruption; but if you sow to the Spirit, of the Spirit you shall reap everlasting life," Gal. vi. 7, 8. "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world (for themselves). For if any man love the world (with his chiefest love) the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15. Is it not a wonder that any reasonable man can be such a stranger to himself, as not to know what he lives for, and what hath had his heart, and what hath been the principal business of his life? Some by-matters you may easily forget or overlook; but can you do so by your end, which hath been your chiefest care and business?

If indeed you no more know your own minds, nor what you have all this while been doing in the world, ask those that you have conversed with; and judge by the effects and signs. Others can tell what you have most seriously talked of. They may conjecture by their observation, what you have most carefully sought, and resolutely adhered to; whether it be God or the flesh, this world or heaven? the one thing needful, or the many troubling trifles in your way? It is like that wise and godly observers can help you to discern it; though sensualists will but deceive you.

A man's love, at least his chiefest love, cannot be hid, but will appear in his behaviour. If you love God above the world, you will seek him and his glory before the world; and if you do so it may partly be discerned, if you have conversed with discerning men. Heaven and earth are not so like, nor the way to each of them so like, but it may partly be discerned which way men are going, and what they drive at in their daily course.

But I will urge you no further to the trial. I will take it for granted that your consciences are telling many of you, that you have been troubled about many things, while the one thing needful hath been neglected. And if indeed this be your case, suffer me to tell the guilty plainly, what it is that they have done.

1. Whatever you have been doing in the world, you have lost your time, if you have not been seeking the one thing necessary. If you have been gathering riches, or growing up in honour as the rush groweth in the mire, (Job viii. 11.) or filling your purses or your barns, or pleasing your fancies and flesh; you have but fooled away your time, and done just nothing, and much worse. Nothing is done, if the one thing necessary be undone. Believe it, time is a precious thing, and ought not to have been thus cast away. When you come to the end of it, the worst and proudest of you shall confess it is precious. Then, oh for one year more! oh for a few days or hours more, to make sure of this one thing which you should have spent your lives in making sure of! Will you then think thus, and yet can you now afford to cast away twenty or thirty years upon nothing? If time be worth nothing, your lives are worth nothing. And why should a man desire to live for nothing? You love your lives too much, and yet will you so contemptuously cast them away? He hath lost his life, who hath lost the end of his life. The loss of a hundred pounds in money is not (to yourselves) so great a loss, as

the loss of a day's or an hour's time. What then is the loss of so many years? Did you ever well consider of this? If you live a thousand years, it is all lost, if you have not spent it in making sure of the one thing necessary. For is not that lost, and worse a thousand times than lost, that is spent in crossing the end that it is given for? and which is no comfort, but terror in the review, and which leaveth no fruit, but grief and disappointment? Let me tell you, if you hold on thus unto the end, you will wish, and wish a thousand times, either that you had never had an hour's time, or else that you had had hearts to have better perceived the worth and use of it, than to cast it away as you have done upon nothing. It is but one thing that is worth your time and lives.

2. Whatsoever else you have been doing, you have lost all your labour with your time, if this one thing needful have been neglected. No doubt you have been busy since you came into the world; but to little purpose. You might as well have been idle, as so laboriously doing nothing. No doubt many a journey you have rode and gone, and many a hard day's labour you have taken, and sharpened perhaps with care and grief. But you have lost it all, if it were a hundred times more, if it have not been laid out upon the one thing necessary.

And is it not a pitiful thing that men of reason should vex themselves, and toil their bodies, and suffer hunger, and thirst, and weariness, and make such a stir and pudder in the world, and all for nothing, and in a vain show? How many mornings have you risen to your labour, and how many days and years have you spent in it, and now it is all lost! How many thoughts, and fears, and cares have possessed and pestered your minds, and now they are all lost! Some of you have followed your trades, and some your husbandry, and some have run up and down after recreations. Some of you have been scraping riches, and some contriving to keep up their reputation, and some to satisfy their appetites, and live in pleasure and contentments to the flesh; and now look back upon all that you have done and gotten, and tell yourselves whether all this be not lost, yea, alas! much worse than lost. If you be not ready to pass this conclusion at the very heart, it is because your hearts are yet blinded and hardened in sin; but God will soon bring that to your hearts that shall convince you of it. If God have made use of any worldly, sensual person of you, for public good, of church or state, as men do of thorns for hedging to their lands, or of briars to stop a gap, or of firewood to warm their family; yet as to any durable benefit to yourselves, I may well say that all your labour is lost.

And this is not all; but the pains also that you have taken in your formal, hypocritical religion, your hearing, reading, receiving sacraments, and pretended prayer, all the thoughts that ever you had of death and judgment, and the life to come, and all that you have done with reservations and by halves for your own salvation, this also is all lost; except as a less measure of misery may go for gain. If you miss of the one thing necessary, you do but lose your labour, whatever else you seem to gain.

A great stir you make in seeking for preferment, or dominion over others, or about your lands, your honours, or your delights; so great that your neighbours can scarce live quietly by you; and the kingdom cannot be quiet for some of you, nor your own consciences be quiet within you for the desperate work that you engage them in, which they know must be heard of another day. And when all is done, you will find you have been but hunting of a

feather. You would see this now if God would open your eyes by grace. But if you miss of so seasonable an information, you will see it too late in the land of darkness. When death hath opened your eyes, and your impenitent souls do suddenly awake in another world, you will understand that you made all this stir but in your sleep. As busily and seriously as you acted the part of lords and ladies, of gentlemen, tradesmen, or husbandmen in the world, if you did not seriously and first do the work of true believers for the world to come, you will then find too late that your labour is lost, and all was acted but as in a dream.

Do you believe this now, or do you not? If you do, will you yet go on? If you do not believe it, show me now what you have gotten by all this stir that you have made in the world, that will follow you one step further than the grave, and that you can say shall be your own to-morrow? If you were to die this hour, will it be any lasting comfort to you, that you have laboured to be rich or honourable, or that you have attained it? or that you had your glut of sensual delights, and a merry life as to the fleshly pleasure as long as it would last? Will you die the more comfortably for any of this? or much the less? That yet you are alive, is the great mercy of God, and not to be ascribed to any of these. And when you cease to live, then these will be your grief and torment.

Beloved hearers, I have no desire, the Lord knows, to discompose your minds, or to disquiet you with any molesting, unnecessary scruples; nor causelessly to dishonour either you or your employments. But I must needs say that it is a doleful case, that men in their wits should spend a life of precious time, and also a great deal of care and labour, in doing nothing, and much worse than nothing, when they have a work of everlasting consequence to do, and they know that the devil's chiefest hopes do consist in the success of these diversions! I must seriously profess to you, that I am constrained by the word and teachings of God, and by undeniable reason itself, to look upon all the labour of your lives, the highest, and the busiest, but as the picking of straws, of playing with a feather, or riding upon a staff or a hobby-horse, or such like actions as children, fools, or madmen use, as long as you mind not and seek not after the one thing necessary. Whatever they may be to others, they are no wiser or better to yourselves. This is my judgment; yea, this is the judgment of the Spirit of God, Phil. iii. 8. If Paul was not mistaken, your gain itself is to be accounted loss, and all but dung, in comparison of the knowing and winning of Christ, that you might be found in him, and have his righteousness. Think not the name of dung too base, when God himself hath written it here upon your highest endowments and honours, by his Spirit. And indeed what will they all do more than dung to procure you the favour of God, or the pardon of your sins? If you offer him gold, will it do any more than if you offered him so much dirt? Is not the prayer of a beggar heard as soon as of a lord or gentleman? If they would do any thing to buy you peace of conscience or everlasting life, or if they would but keep you alive on earth, I should not marvel at your course. But when they will do none of this, but make your way to heaven more difficult, yea, your salvation a thing impossible while you thus live after the flesh, (Rom. viii. 13,) how then can any easier sentence be passed upon your choice? Be you the greatest or the wisest in your own esteem, or in the esteem of others of your mind, I believe, yea, I am sure, that you are all this while but laboriously idle, and

honourably debasing yourselves, and delightfully tormenting yourselves, and wisely befooling yourselves, and thriffully undoing yourselves for ever. I have reason to say that your rising, and honourable, and voluptuous employments, are not only like children's playing in the sand, and making them houses with sticks and stones; but so much more pitiful, as the reason which you abuse exceedeth theirs. And could you all attain to be lords and ladies, I should look upon you but as a king or queen upon a chess-board, as to any felicity that it bringeth to yourselves; whatsoever use the overruling providence of God may make of you for his churches. The wise merchant is he that seeking pearls doth find this one of greatest price, and selleth all that he hath and buyeth it, even all the worldly treasures which you so highly value, Matt. xiii. 45, 46. There is more true riches in this one pearl, than in a thousand loads of sand or dirt. If you will load yourselves with mire and clay, conceiting it to be your treasure, your back will be broken before you will have enough to make you rich.

O sirs, with what eyes, with what hearts do you use to read such passages of Christ that speak so plainly to you, as if he named you, and so piercingly as one would think should make you feel? Luke xii. 19–21, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee; and then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." Would you have Christ speak plainer to you; or closerly apply it, that you may perceive he speaks to you? You have lost all the labour of your lives; but that is not all.

3. But furthermore consider, that if the one thing needful have been neglected, whatever else you have been doing, or whatever you have got, (unless as preparatory to this,) you have not only lost your labour, but you have all this while been busily undoing yourselves, and labouring for your own perdition.

If it were but the loss of your time and labour, you would then die but as brutes, and be as if you had never been; and to those that have brutified themselves, this will seem more tolerable than to live in holiness to God. But alas, you have done much worse than this! You have not only been digging your own graves, but barring up against yourselves the doors of heaven, and kindling the unquenchable fire to torment you, Mark ix. 44.

I beseech you, give me a considerate hearing, you ambitious gentlemen, you covetous worldlings, and you that serve your lusts and pleasures! Do you think you had been doing the work of wise men, if you had all this while been burning your own fingers, or cutting your own flesh, or setting your own or your neighbours' houses on fire? What would you have us call that man that would live in such employments as these, and yet would be accounted wise or honourable? Do I need to tell thee, as Nathan did David, that "thou art the man?" Do I need in so plain a case to tell you, that you have been doing worse, (I speak not rashly,) a thousand times worse against your souls, than this would have been which is supposed to be only against your bodies? Alas! self-destroyers, what do you mean? Did God send you hither on no better an errand than to kindle and blow the fire of his wrath, and fall into it when you have kindled it? Have you no better work in the world to do, than to prepare yourselves a place in hell, and with a great deal of care, and cost, and stir, to labour for damnation, as if you were afraid of losing it?

I know you will say, God forbid, we hope better, we intend no such thing. But alas, the question is not, what you intend, but what you are doing? Not whether it be your desire that everlasting death should be the wages of sin, but whether it be the law and unchangeable will of God? Rom. vi. 23. If you seek not first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and look not after the one thing needful, with your chiefest estimation, resolution, and endeavour, as sure as Christ is true, this will prove your case at last, though now you wink, and wilfully go on, and will not believe it. As sure as the gospel is true, this is true. There are but two ends, heaven and hell; and if you miss the former, you fall into the latter. "If you live after the flesh, you shall die," whatever you imagine; and you must "mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit," if you "will live," Rom. viii. 13. If you see a man cutting his own throat, and you ask him, What are you doing, man?—will you kill yourself? and he answereth you, No, God forbid; I have no such meaning; I will hope better; would you think that this would save his life? or that his hopes and meanings would prove him ever the wiser man? I tell you, from the word of God, it is one of the plainest truths that is there contained, that if you value not, choose not, and seek not the one thing needful above all other things whatsoever, you are all this while but sowing the seeds of endless misery, whose fruit you must reap in "outer darkness, where will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xiii. 42, 50. You are "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will give to every man according to his works," Rom. ii. 5, 6. You are sowing in pleasure to the flesh, in eating, and drinking, and mirth, and honour; but you shall reap in corruption, lamentation, and woe, Gal. vi. 7, 8. "For woe to you that now laugh! for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you that are rich! (and have no better, but want the everlasting riches;) for you have received your consolation. Woe to you that are full! (and yet are empty of Christ and grace;) for you shall hunger," Luke vi. 24, 25. These are the words of Christ himself, and therefore true if Christ be true.

Yea, more than this; let me have leave to tell you, (for why should I not tell you of your greatest folly, and that which is necessary for you to know?) as long as you neglect the one thing necessary, you are acting the part of the most deadly enemies against yourselves. No enemy that you have in all the world, could do that against you, as you do against yourselves. You abhor the devil; and I blame you not; for his malice and enmity deserveth it: but you do much worse against yourselves than the devil himself could ever do. To tempt you to sin is not so much as to consent to it and commit it. He can but entice you, and not constrain you. It is you that are the neglecters of your Maker and Redeemer, and the wilful rejecters of your own felicity. Satan doth bad enough against you by temptation, but you do worse by yielding and sinning; much worse than all the devils in hell could do against you. For God hath not given all of them so much power over you, as he hath given you over yourselves.

Lord, what a distracted case is the ungodly world in! They hate any man else that they do but imagine is their enemy! Though he do but diminish their worldly wealth or honour, they cannot forgive him. If a man give one of them a box on the ear, he cannot bear it. And as for the devil, who is the common enemy, they spit at his name, and think they bless themselves from him. And yet these same men do spend all their care, and time, and la-

bour, in doing more against themselves, than all their enemies could do in earth or hell; and are worse than devils to themselves; and yet they never fall out with themselves for it; but can forgive themselves as easily as if they did themselves no harm. This is true, too true, sirs, as harsh as it seemeth to your ears. And if it displease you to hear of it, bethink yourselves what it is to do it; and how God and all wise men must judge of you that have no more mercy on yourselves. Certainly it is much worse to do it, than to tell you what you do. God tells men of their sin, and God doth nothing but what is good; but it is themselves only that commit it. I beseech you, do but understand what you are doing, as long as the one thing necessary is neglected by you.

4. Consider also, that whatsoever else you have been doing in the world, if you have not done the one thing needful, you have unmanned yourselves, and lived below your reason, and, in plain English, you have lived as beside your wits.

I give you no harder language than God himself hath frequently given you in his word, and than you will shortly give yourselves, if you repent not; yea, and sooner, if you do repent. If you have (in this) the use of your reason, you must needs know what you have your reason for. And I beseech you tell me for what you have it, if not to serve and please your Maker, and prepare for your everlasting state? Is it only that you may know how to plough and sow, and follow your trades and pleasures in the world, and satisfy your flesh a little while, and then die as the beasts that perish? None of you, I suppose, will say so, that calls himself a christian. If God had made you for no higher things than beasts, he would have given you no higher faculties and endowments. As they be not made to enjoy God, so they have no knowledge of him; he sendeth not his word to them, and calleth them not to learn the knowledge of his will. But you know, or may know, that there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and are capable of loving him, attending him, and serving him, and therefore of enjoying him. Beasts are not ruled by the hopes and fears of a life after this; for their nature and end do not require it. But men must be thus ruled, or else there can be no sufficient ruling of them, in an ordinary way: which shows that the nature of men is capable of the things which are the matter of their hopes and fears.

Verily, sirs, I think as to any good that cometh by it, there is very little difference between having reason and having none, if we had nothing to do with it, but cunningly to lay up our food, and make provision for this corruptible flesh, and had not another life to mind. It were no such great difference, in my opinion, as it commonly goes for, whether we were men or dogs, if it were only for the matters of this transitory life. For though I may not deny but yet man were the nobler creature, yet alas the difference would be but gradual and small, as an ape or dog excels a swine. And as to his happiness, it is doubtful whether man would not have the worst of it. For as brutes have not man's knowledge, so they have not his toil and trouble of mind, his care, and fear, and griefs, and disappointments. Nor have they so terrible forethoughts of death through all their lives, as man must have, much less such fears of what would follow after death.

And therefore I may boldly say, that you have thrown away your wits, and laid by your reason as to the principal use of it, if you have forgot, or have not chiefly sought, the one thing necessary. Where were your wits when a lump of flesh was preferred before immortal souls? and when the trouble and

dung of a transitory world was more esteemed than God and endless glory? Where were your wits when you might have had Christ, and life in him, and his pardoning, healing, sanctifying grace, and you had no mind of him, and were not sensible of your necessity, and passed him by with as much neglect as if you could have been saved without him? when you might long ago have made sure of heaven; and now you are even ready to drop into hell, and stay but for a fever, or consumption, or some other disease, to cut the thread, and turn the key, unless a speedy, sound conversion shall yet prevent it? What have you done in all your life-time that should make a wise man judge you reasonable? Is that your reason, to be penny-wise and pound-foolish; to be wise to do evil, and to have no knowledge to do good? Jer. iv. 22; to run up and down for I know not what, and to leave that undone that you were created and redeemed for? Can you think that it is reasonable to make such ado for the air of dying men's applause, and to be well thought of, or to live like gentlemen, or to the contentment of a fleshly mind, when you know that you are just ready to pass out of this world into an endless life of joy or torment, (yea, certainly of torment, if you thus hold on,) where all these things will afford you no relief or benefit, but the memory of your course will be the fuel of your misery? Can that man be wise that damns his soul? Can he deserve the name of a sober man, that will sell his salvation for so short, so small, so filthy a pleasure as sin affordeth? Is he worthy the name or reputation of a wise man, that hath not wit enough to escape eternal fire? nor wit enough to forbear laying hands upon himself, and doing all this against his own soul? What think you, is not the case plain enough?

Be not offended if I speak yet plainlier to you; for, in a case so lamentable, how can we be too plain or serious? Suppose you knew a prince or lord that had an itch upon him, which the physician offereth speedily and easily to cure; but he hath so much pleasure in scratching, that he doth not only refuse the cure, lest it deprive him of his delight, but he will give his kingdom or lordship to one that will scratch him but a little while, though he be sure to live a beggar after all his days. I put it to yourselves, what name you would give this man, or what esteem you would have of him? Do you think that any ungodly, worldly person is wiser than this man? Alas, their case is so much worse, that there is no comparison: they are more foolish than your hearts can now conceive, or than I am able fully to express. You have now the itch of pride and lust; and your throats must be pleased in your meats and drinks; and you itch after riches, and honour, and recreations; and Christ telleth you, by his word, that these are but your sick desires, and that the pleasing of them tends to kill you; and he offereth you for nothing a safe, and certain, and speedy cure: but you refuse it, and will not hearken to him. You must be scratched whatever it cost you: you must have your riches, and honour, and fleshly pleasure, as the felicity which you cannot part with, though it cost you your salvation. Though God be neglected, and his favour lost, and your souls be lost, and the "one thing needful" cast aside, you must have your carnal imaginations gratified: and is this your wisdom? The Lord bless us from such a kind of wisdom.

Yet this is not the worst: I will show you one strain more of the distraction of the ungodly world. If these men do but see one person of a hundred that are more diligent for heaven than earth, to fall into melancholy, or distress of soul; or suppose it

were into some loss of reason; they presently cry out against religion, and strictness, and preciseness, and making so much ado to be saved; and say it is the way to make men mad. Hence comes the proverb of the papists, *Spiritus Calvinianus est spiritus melancholicus*; and of the profane among ourselves, that A puritan is a protestant frightened out of his wits. They dare not study the Scripture so much, nor meddle with such high matters as their salvation, nor be so godly, nor meditate on the world to come, lest it should drive them out of their wits. O miserable men! as if it were possible for you to be more dangerously mad than you are already! (unless by growing unto greater wickedness!) Do you lay out your wit, and strength, and time, in feeding a corruptible body for the grave, and spend your lives in running after your own shadows, while your everlasting life is forgotten or neglected? Do you sell your Saviour with Judas for a little money; and change your part in God and glory, for the brutish pleasures of sin for a season? And are you afraid of altering this course of life, and turning to God, lest it should make you mad? Lord, what a besetting thing is sin! What a cunning cheater is the devil! What a deluded, distracted sort of people are the ungodly! Will you run from God, from Christ, from grace, from mercy, from Scripture, from the godly, and from heaven itself, for fear of being mad? Why what greater madness can you fear than this? What worse is human nature capable of? Unless it be the addition of a further measure of the same, and unless it be to hold on in that way, and persecute the contrary with such like aggravations of your madness, I know not of any worse that you should fear. Will you run to hell to prove yourselves to be in your wits? Again I say, the Lord bless us from such a kind of wit. Nay, hell itself hath no such distractedness as yours. The difference between the one thing needful, and your many things, is there better, though too late, understood? Is loving God the way to be mad? and loving the world and fleshly pleasures the way to be wise? Is conversing with God in humble prayer, and believing his love, and loving him, and delighting in him, and speaking of his name, and word, and works unto his praise, and hoping to live with him for ever, I say is this (which is the work of a believer) a liker course to make men mad, than serving the devil, and drudging in the world, and living under the curse of God, and in continual danger of damnation? What men are they that dare entertain such horrid and unreasonable suggestions?

I confess we are not unacquainted with the sadness and melancholy that some persons have contracted by religious employments; and perhaps one of a thousand may lose their wits: but I must tell you all these following points, that will show you that religion is not to be blamed for it, nor avoided.

1. It is ordinarily persons of the weaker sex, or of very weak brains and very strong passions, that are naturally inclined to it, and are not able to bear any long and serious thoughts, about matters of that moment, which are apt to make the deepest impressions: but persons that naturally are of sound and calm dispositions, are seldom troubled with any such effects.

2. It is usually the case of persons that mistake the nature of religion, though not in the main, yet in some particulars of great concernment; that study not sufficiently the love of God declared to us in our Redeemer, but feed their grief and troubles only by the thoughts of their own infirmities; and that consider not that the chief part of religion doth consist in love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and in thanks-

giving and delightful praising our Creator. So that it is not long of religion if men will leave out the chief part of religion, and make themselves a religion of so much only as may breed their troubles.

3. And I must further tell you, that as I have had opportunity of knowing the state of as many troubled, distempered minds as any one of you, whoever he be; so I must needs bear witness, that I have met with many that have been distracted by worldly cares, or sorrows, or discontents, for one that ever I knew distracted with the cares about the matter of their salvation. And yet though it be worldly care and sorrow that most commonly bringeth death and madness, you will not therefore give over your callings, and resolve that you will meddle no more with meat, or drink, or clothes, or houses, or lands, or friends, or children. Nay, it were well if you would be brought to moderation, and taken off your inordinate desires.

4. And yet in the conclusion I must tell you, that, though I know that the loss of a man's understanding is a very grievous affliction, and such as I hope God will never lay upon me, yet I had a thousand times rather go distracted to Bedlam with the excessive care about my salvation, than be one of you that cast away the care of your salvation for fear of being distracted, and will go among the infernal Bedlams into hell for fear of being mad. The height of your carnal wisdom is more deplorable than their distraction. For God will condemn no man because he is distracted, nor so much as blame him for it, unless as it is the fruit of sin, no more than he will condemn or blame an idiot or a beast because they have no use of reason. If David had been as he feigned himself to be, (1 Sam. xxi. 13, 14,) it would not have cast him out of God's favour, so far as one sin did, much less so far as the ungodly are. A man may go to heaven for such a madness. But you that have reason for the world, but none for God; that are wise to do evil, that have wit to destroy yourselves, and serve the flesh, but none to look after your recovery and salvation; it is you that shall have the stripes, the many, the great, the endless stripes. You that have so much wit as that you glory in it, and think yourselves wiser than the rest of the world, and yet have not wit to know, and love, and serve your Maker, nor to value and seek first the one thing necessary, it is you that will prove the miserable fools.

If you had not a natural capacity of understanding, you had had no sin. But now you have no cloak for your sin, when you have the worldly wisdom, which is foolishness with God, and have a sinning, self-destroying wit, and are wilfully void of the wisdom that should save you, (1 Cor. i. 25; iii. 19; Jer. viii. 9,) when you have not a necessitated, but a voluntary distraction; and "this is your condemnation, that light is come into the world, and you have loved darkness rather than light, because your deeds were evil," John iii. 19.

If you think this wilful and senseless neglect of the one thing needful, is not a sufficient evidence to prove that miserable distraction which I charge upon you, will you but believe your Maker, and let the word of God be judge between us, and mark what language it giveth to such as I now describe, 2 Thess. iii. 2; Jer. iv. 22; Eccles. vii. 25; 2 Pet. ii. 12; Psal. xcii. 6; xciv. 8; Jer. x. 8, 14; Deut. xxxii. 6; Psal. lxxiii. 3, 22; 2 Sam. xiv. 10. In these places your course hath no better titles, than unreasonable, foolish, brutish, sottish, &c. even from the God of wisdom himself, who is the fittest to give you the character that you deserve. When you have truly considered of your way, if indeed you find that you

have dealt like wise men, hold on and say so at the last, when you have eaten the fruit of your doing, and have seen the end.

5. Furthermore consider, that whatever else you have been doing in the world, if the one thing necessary be yet undone, you have lost and abused all the mercies that God hath bestowed on you. Many a thousand precious mercies have been given you. And to what use, but to help you to everlasting mercy, and to prevent your everlasting misery? This is the end, and this is the life and excellency of all your mercies. For all present mercies have the nature of a means to a further end. And the goodness and nature of the means consisteth in its fitness to promote the end. And therefore you have lost all the mercies that you have received, if you are never the nearer your end for them, and if they have not promoted the love of God, and your salvation. You have had health, and strength, and time, and peace, and liberty, and some of you also wealth and honour in the world. But you have lost them all, if your salvation be not furthered by them. Many a preservation you have had, when others have been cut off before your faces; and many a deliverance from dangers known or unknown, and much of the fruit of that patience of God, which hath till now attended you in your sin. Many a sermon you have heard, and many a warning you have had, and you have been planted in God's vineyard, and daily watered with the ordinances of grace. But all these are lost, if the one thing necessary hath been neglected. Nothing in this world doth you good indeed, any further than it promoteth your everlasting good. And do you think that you have dealt kindly or justly with God, to deal so contemptuously with all his mercies, as to cast them away, and tread them underfoot? When you want but food, or raiment, or liberty, or health, you value them and pray for them; and when you have them what do you with them, but throw them as in the channel, and sacrifice them to your lusts and enemies? When death looketh you in the face, you begin to know the worth of time, and then, O what would you not give for a little more, and that God would try you a few years longer? And when you have time, what do you with it, but serve the devil, and cast it away for nothing, and spend it in preparing for everlasting sorrows? How can you for shame cry to God for mercy in your next distress, when you have contemptuously thrown away the mercies of twenty, or thirty, or forty years already? If your own children should ask you for meat or drink, and when they have it should throw it to the dogs; or ask you for money, and cast it into the dirt, and do thus a hundred and a hundred times over; would you go on to give it them because they cry for it?

O sirs, that you could but use your reason in the matters for which it was given you by your Maker! Either time and mercy is worth something, or nothing! If it be worth nothing, never beg for it, and never be sad when it is taken from you. Why make you such a stir for that which is nothing worth? (I mean your corporal mercies, for spiritual mercies you can be too well content to be without.) But if they be worth any thing, why do you cast them away, and make no better use of them? What good do you with them? or what good do they do you? Believe it, sinners, God doth not despise his mercies as you do. He will not always give you meat, and drink, and health, and strength, and life to play with, and do nothing with. He will teach you better to value them before he hath done with you. Not that he thinks them too good for you, but he would have them be better to you than you will

let them be. He would have every bit you eat to be used to strengthen you in your walk to heaven, and every hour of your time to help you towards eternal happiness, and every present mercy to further your everlasting mercy; that so by the improvement their value may be advanced, and they may be mercies indeed to you. Be ruled by God, and you shall receive more in one mercy, than you do now in a thousand. But if you will do nothing with them, blame him not if he take them from you, and leave you destitute of what you knew not how to use.

Nay, your sin is greater than merely to cast away your mercies. You do not only lose them, but turn them all into a curse, and undo your souls with that which is given for the sustentation of your bodies. While you know no better use of mercies, than to please your senses, and accommodate the flesh, and forget the one thing needful, which is the end of all, you turn them all into sin, and fight against God by them, and strengthen his enemy and your own, and block up your way to heaven by them, and treasure up wrath for the dreadful day, when your wealth shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire, James v. 1—3; Rom. ii. 5. You contemptuously cast that bread to dogs, which he giveth you to supply your own necessities. You treacherously carry over his provision to the enemy. Consider this, you that say you hope to be saved because God is merciful. You have found indeed that God is merciful, by large experience. But if you do not learn, and quickly learn, to make a better use of his mercies, abused mercy will prove your everlasting misery. Oh what a reckoning will you have! What a load to press you down to hell! Unless you would have used them better, it had been easier for you if these temporal mercies had been denied you. Can that man look to be saved by mercy, that would not be entreated to consent that mercy should save him in the day of salvation, in the accepted time; but served the devil with those very mercies that would have saved him? God sendeth you his mercies to kill your sins, and sanctify you, and engage you to himself; and if you will feed your sins with them, and make them your idols, and forsake God for them, and be false to him, to your covenant, and your duty, and neglect that one thing for which he gave them to you, you do not only lose them but turn them to a curse. And alas, poor sinners, what will you have to fly to, to trust in, or to comfort you, when mercy abused hath not only forsaken you, but falls upon you as a mountain, and feedeth your aggravated, endless misery?

6. Moreover, whilst you neglect the one thing necessary you neglect Christ himself, and reject the saving benefit of his bloodshed, and refuse the healing work of his Spirit, and the precious benefits which he hath offered you in the gospel. And how can you escape if you neglect so great salvation? Heb. ii. 3. How will you be saved when you refuse the only Saviour? There is indeed enough in Christ to heal and save the humbled soul, that thirsteth for his righteousness and salvation, and valueth and seeketh him as a Saviour; and if you would come to him, you might have life, John v. 40. But while you give yourselves to please the flesh, and follow the world, and look so little after Christ, or after the ends and benefits of his sufferings and grace, Christ is as no Christ to you; and grace is as no grace to you; and the gospel is as no gospel to you; and you will be never the more saved, than if there had no Saviour ever come into the world, or there had never grace been given to the world, or there had never been promise made or gospel preached to the world. For Christ will not save them that continue

to neglect him, and set light by all the mercy that he offereth, and the salvation which he hath purchased, and do not esteem and use him as a Saviour, and cannot find enough in God and glory to take off their hearts from the pleasures and idols of the flesh. If Christ "would have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and you would not," Matt. xxiii. 37, you will be as far from being saved by him, as if you had never heard of his name.

And yet that is not all: if you prevent it not by true conversion, you will wish a thousand and a thousand times that this were all. But there is worse than this; for Christ will not leave a man of you as he finds you. If you are so far in love with worldly wealth and fleshly pleasure, that you can taste no sweetness in his grace, and see no desirable glory in his kingdom, he will make you taste the bitterness of his wrath, and feel the weight of his severest justice. The most compassionate Saviour is the most dreadful Judge to those that will not be saved by his grace. It will be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for those that were the obstinate refusers of his gospel, Matt. vi. 11, 12. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, that hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" Heb. x. 28, 29. "See therefore that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not that refused him that spake on earth, how much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven!" Heb. xii. 23.

7. As long as you neglect the one thing needful, whatever good conceits of yourselves you have entertained, and whatever hopes, or peace, or comfort you have built upon those conceits, they are all but mere delusions, and irrational, like the laughter of a madman, that is no comfort to the standers-by, who know that it is but the fruit of his distemper, and maketh him an object of more compassion. What wisdom is it to look high and carry it gallantly in the world, when you know not but vengeance may overtake you the next hour? Alas, man, thou hast to do with God! Though thou see him not, it is he that upholds thee, and observeth thee, and looketh for love and duty from thee, and will be glorified by thee, or thou shalt dearly answer it. God will not be neglected and abused at so cheap a rate as sottish infidels imagine; "He despiseth thee, if thou despise him," 1 Sam. ii. 30; and thou despisest him if thou despise his messengers, and word, and ways, Luke x. 16; 1 Thess. iv. 8. And if God despise thee, what honour is it to thee to be stout-hearted and high in thy own conceit, and to live applauded by thyself and others? Think of yourselves as well as you will, God counteth you worse than the basest brutes, as long as you make yourselves so by neglecting the one thing for which you have your reason. When you swagger it out in the world, you do but gingle your fetters, and glory in your shame, Phil. iii. 18, 19. While fools admire you, God abhorreth you; he "laugheth you to scorn, and hath you in derision," as he expresseth himself after the manner of men, Prov. i. 26—28; Psal. ii. 4. When you are proud of your riches, or honour, with such as yourselves, you are but proud of the bonds of your captivity, 2 Tim. ii. 26. Though you live as carelessly and merrily, and laugh as heartily, and sport yourselves as fearlessly, as if all were safe, and nothing ailed you, yet your mirth is but your madness, Eccles. vii. 4, 6; ii. 2; and God seeth that your day (a woeful day) is coming, Psal. xxxvii. 13, and you know not but you may the next hour be tormented in hell, that this hour are so pleasant and confident on earth. And is this a desirable or rational

kind of mirth? Did you but now foresee the end, did you see what you must see, or feel a little of what you must feel, you would presently be far from mirth or laughter; it would spoil your sport, and turn your tune to doleful lamentations. O short, unsatisfactory pleasure! O endless, easeless woe, how quickly wilt thou surprise them that little dream of such a change! You say religion is a melancholy thing; but verily your condition is so much worse than melancholy, that it may make a man melancholy to think of men in so sad a case. If any thing in the world will make a man melancholy, methinks it should be to stand in your unhappy state, and thence to look into eternity; and to think of your enmity to heaven, and that you have no part in Christ, no title to his kingdom; and to think what haste you are making to your infernal home, and how fast the wheels of night and day do hurry your unprepared souls to judgment; and that your "judgment lingereth not, and your damnation slumbereth not," as the Holy Ghost speaketh, 2 Pet. ii. 3. Whether you sleep or wake, be sure it sleepeth not. In a word, to neglect the one thing needful, is to neglect heaven itself and your salvation: to neglect heaven is to lose it; and lose heaven and lose all. And what comfort can the forethoughts of life everlasting afford a soul in a state of sin, that is passing to everlasting misery? And what comfort can any thing in this transitory life afford that man, that hath no matter of comfort in the life to come, yea, that must there live in endless sorrows? O let me not taste of that frantic and unreasonable mirth, that tendeth to such heaviness, and driveth away those wise, recovering thoughts that are necessary to prevent it! For the Lord's sake, and for your souls' sake, all you that neglect the one thing needful, will you but search the Scriptures, and soberly consider whether all this be not certain truth; and if it be, how it should affect you, and what a change in reason it should make upon you! I have done with this use. If you have taken a survey of your own hearts and lives, will you next, for the exercising of your compassion, look a little further.

Use 2. If one thing be needful, and the neglect of this be so unreasonable, so unmanly, and so dangerous as we have seen it proved, then what an object of compassion and lamentation is the distracted world! Look upon this text of Scripture, and look also upon the course of the earth, and consider of the disagreement, and whether it be not still as before the flood, that all the imaginations of man's heart are evil continually, Gen. vi. 5. Were it but possible for a man to see the affections and motions of all the world at once, as God seeth them, what a pitiful sight would it be! What a stir do they make, alas, poor souls, for they know not what! while they forget, or slight, or hate the one thing necessary. What a heap of gadding ants should we see, that do nothing but gather sticks and straws! Look among persons of every rank, in cities and country, and look into the families about you, and see what trade it is that they are most busily driving on, whether it be for heaven or earth? and whether you can discern by their care and labours that they understand what is the one thing necessary? They are as busy as bees, but not for honey, but in spinning such a spider's web, as the besom of death will presently sweep down, Job viii. 14. They labour hard; but for what? for the food that perisheth, and not for that which will endure to everlasting life, John vi. 27. They are diligent seekers; but for what? Not first for God, his kingdom and righteousness; but for that which they might have had as an addition to their blessedness, Matt. vi. 33. They are still do-

ing; but what are they doing? Even undoing themselves by running away from God, to hunt after the perishing pleasures of the world. Instead of providing for the life to come, they are making provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts, Rom. xiii. 14. Some of them hear the word of God; but they choke it presently by the deceitfulness of riches, and the cares of this life, Luke viii. 14. They are careful and troubled about many things; but the one thing that should be all to them, is cast by as if it were nothing. Providing for the flesh and minding the world, is the employment of their lives. They trouble themselves with it, and trouble their families, and nearest relations, and ofttimes trouble the whole town or place where they live; so that unless we will let them have their bone to themselves, and give them our cloak when they have taken our coat, and say as Mephibosheth, Let him take all, there is no living quietly by them. A dog at his carrion, or a swine in his trough, is not more greedy than many of these sensualists, that labour of the *caninus appetitus* to their trash. But to holiness they have no appetite, and are worse than indifferent to the things that are indeed desirable. They have no covetousness for the things that they are commanded earnestly to covet, 1 Cor. xii. 31; they have so little hunger and thirst after righteousness, that a very little or none will satisfy them. Here they are pleading always for moderation, and against too much, and too earnest, and too long. And all is too much for them that is above stark naught, or dead hypocrisy; and all is too earnest and too long, that would make religion seem a business, or would engage them to seem serious in their own profession, or put them past jest in the worship of God and the matters of their salvation. Let but their servants or children neglect their worldly business, (which I confess they should not do,) and they shall hear of it with both ears. But if they sin against God, or neglect his word or worship, they shall meet with more patience than Eli's sons did. A cold reproof is usually the best; and it is well if they be not encouraged in their sin; and if a child or servant that begins to be serious for salvation, be not rebuked, derided, and hindered by them. If on their days of labour they oversleep themselves, they shall be sure to be called up to work (and good reason); but when do they call them up to prayer? when do they urge them to read, or consider, or confer of the things that concern their everlasting life? The Lord's own day, which is appointed to be set apart for matters of this nature, is wasted in idleness or worldly talk. Come at any time into their company, and you may have talk enough, and too much, of news, or of other men's matters; of their worldly business, sports, and pleasures. But about God and their salvation, they have so little to say, and that so heartlessly and on the bye, as if they were things that belonged not to their care and duty, and no whit concerned them. Talk with them about the renovation of the soul, and the nature of holiness, and the life to come; and you shall find them almost as dumb as a fish, as dry as a chip, or as erroneous or insensible as those that speak but words by rote, to show you how little they savour or mind the things of the Spirit. The most understand not matters of this nature, nor much desire or care to understand them. If one would teach them personally, they are too old to be catechised or to learn, though not too old to be ignorant of the matters which they were made for, and are preserved for in the world. They are too wise to learn to be wise, and too good to be taught how to be good; though not too wise to follow the seductions of the devil and the world, nor

too good to be the slaves of Satan, and the despisers and enemies of goodness. If they do any thing which they call a serving of God, it is some cold and heartless use of words, to make themselves believe that for all their sins they shall be saved; so that God will call that a serving of their sins and abominations, which they call a serving of God. Some of them will confess that holiness is good; but they hope God will be merciful to them without it. And some do so hate it, that it is a displeasing, irksome thing to them, to hear any serious discourse of holiness, and they detest and deride those as fanatic, troublesome precisians, that diligently seek the one thing necessary. So that if the belief of the most may be judged by their practices, we may confidently say, that they do not practically believe that ever they shall be brought to judgment, or that there is any heaven or hell to be expected; and that their confession of the truth of the holy Scriptures, and their profession of the articles of the christian faith, are no proofs that they heartily take them to be true. Who can be such a stranger to the world, as not to see that this is the case of the greatest part of men? And which is worst of all, they go on in this course against all that can be said to them, and will give no impartial, considerate hearing to the truth which would recover them to their wits, but live as if it would be a felicity to them in hell to think that they came thither by wilful resolution, and in despite of the remedy. And is it not a sad prospect to a man that believeth in the word of God, and life to come, to look upon such a distracted world? O sirs, if Jesus Christ be wise that condemneth their course and them, then certainly all these men are fools. And if Christ knew what he said, we must needs think that they know not what they do. Oh what is the matter that reasonable men should have no more use of their reason in things of such importance, than thus to neglect their everlasting state for a thing of nought? Did God make them unreasonable, or give them understandings incapable of things of such high concernment? Or rather, have they not drowned their reason in sensuality, and wilfully poisoned it with malicious averseness to God and holiness? What is the matter that the one thing needful is no more regarded? Hath God made them believe that they shall dwell here for ever, and never die? No, surely; this is so gross a lie, that the devil himself cannot make them believe it. They know that they must die, as sure as they are alive. And yet they prepare not, but waste their days in scraping in this dunghill world, as if they were to go no further. Did God never warn them by a sermon, or sickness, to prepare for the life which they must live for ever? Yes, many a time; but they would take no warning. Did God never tell them that after this life there is another, where they must live in endless joy or torment? Yes, and they professed that they did believe it. They heard it a hundred times over, till they were weary of hearing it. Did God make them believe that they shall die like beasts that have no further to go, nor any other life to live? No; if they do believe this, it is the devil and not God that maketh them believe it. What then is the matter that the one thing needful is no more regarded? Hath God shut up their souls in desperation, so that it is in vain to seek or trouble themselves for that of which there is no hope? Oh no! his compassion hath provided them a full remedy; by the death of his Son redemption is procured, and he hath made them a deed of gift of Christ, and pardon, and eternal life, and tendered it to them, that upon their acceptance it may be theirs. Many a time he hath offered this

mercy to them, and many a time hath he urged them to accept it. He hath set before them life and death, and given them their choice, and directed and persuaded them to choose aright. Impossibility of attainment is not their hinderance; for mercy beseecheth and importuneth them to accept it, and grace and salvation are brought unto their hands. Oh wonderful! What then is left to take off a reasonable creature from minding and preferring its own everlasting, great concerns? Is it because they have done their work already, and having made sure of heaven, have time to turn themselves to other matters? Alas, no, the most are far from any such assurance; and have done but little to procure it. If they were to die this hour, they know not where their souls shall be the next. And if death even now should lay its terrible hands upon them, they have no other comfort than to yield unto necessity, and leave their souls by a short security, to try the passage of their unavoidable change, unless they are comforted by such presumptuous self-deceit, which the next moment after death will vanish, and never return unto them more, Job viii. 13, 14; xi. 20; xxvii. 8; Prov. xi. 7.

This is the case of the miserable world; but they have not hearts to pity themselves, nor can we make them willing to be delivered, because we cannot make them know their case. If a man fall into a pit, we need not spend all the day to persuade him that he is there, and to be willing to be helped out of it. But with these fleshly, miserable souls, the time that should be spent by themselves and us for their recovery, must be spent to make them believe that they are lost; and when all is done we leave them lost, and have lost our labour, because we cannot prevail with them to believe it. Drown they will, and perish everlastingly, because the time that should be spent in saving them, must be spent in making them know that they are sinking; and after all they will not believe it, and therefore will not lay hold on the hand that is stretched forth to pull them out. The narrative of the savage people of Soldania doth notably represent their state. Those people live naked, and feed upon the carrion-like carcasses of beasts, and hang the stinking guts about their necks for ornaments, and wear hats made of the dung, and carve their skins, and will not change these loathsome customs. Some of them being drawn into our ships, were carried away for England. When they came to London and saw our stately buildings, and clothing, and provisions, they were observed to sigh much, which was thought to have been in compassion of their miserable country, which so much differed from ours. When they had stayed long among us, and got so much acquaintance with our civility and order, and all that belongs to the life of man, as that they were thought fit to communicate it to their countrymen, the next voyage they were brought back, and set on shore in their own country, to draw some of the rest to come into the ships, and see and enjoy what they had done (who had purposely been used as might most content them). But as soon as they were landed, they leaped for joy, and cried, Soldania, and cast away their clothes, and came again in the sight of our ships, with dung on their heads and guts hanging about their necks, triumphing in their sordid nakedness. Just so do worldly, sensual men, in the matters of salvation. If against their wills they are carried into cleaner ways and company, and the beauty of holiness and the joys of heaven are opened to them, they are weary of it all the while; and when we expect they should delight themselves in the felicity that is opened to them, and draw their

old acquaintance to it, and be utterly ashamed of their former base and sinful state, they are gone when the next temptation comes, and return with the dog unto their vomit, and with the washed swine to wallow in the mire, 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22, and glory in their filth and shame, and only mind their earthly things, Phil. iii. 11.

Use 3. By this time you may see yourselves that the disease of sinners is in their own hearts, and it is that that must be healed if they will be saved. But what should we do to get into those hearts, to search your sores and work the cure? I come now to the principal part of my message to you; but will you indeed entertain it, if it prove itself to be from God? How the case standeth with mankind, you have heard in my text from Christ himself. How one thing is needful; and how the busy, idle world is diverted from this one thing, by many needless, troublesome things to their own destruction. If hence I warn you of your danger, and tell of your duty, and exhort you to take another course than you have done, I hope you will confess I do but what is needful both for you and me, and what you have no reason to contradict. Come then, for the Lord's sake, and let us treat practically and successfully about so great a business; and make something of it before we leave it; and end not till we amend what we find amiss. What course then will you take for the time to come?

Will you go on to trouble yourselves about many things, and neglect the one thing needful, as you have done? Dare you harbour such a purpose? or dare you stifle those thoughts and motions that would tend to better purposes? Or may I not hope that the light hath ashamed your sleepiness and works of darkness, and that you are grieved at the heart for the sinful negligence of heart and life, and resolved now to be new men? For God's sake resolve, sirs. What will you do? Waver not, but resolve! It is more than a thousand lives that lieth on your resolution. I come to you this day as the minister of the great Pastor of the flock, that spake these words, not only to acquaint you if you know not, or to remember you if you know, that one thing is needful; but also with authority to command you in his name, to value it, to love it, to choose it, to seek it, and labour for it as the one thing needful. What say you, will you or will you not? This unspeakable mercy I offer you from the Lord. He is willing to put up at your hands all that is past, and to lay all your sins on the score of Christ, and freely to forgive you through the virtue of his blood, if you will now at last be- think you better, and come to Christ, and live as men that know what they have to do. If you will but see your former folly, and heartily bewail it, and set your hearts on the one thing needful, he will encourage you, and help you, and bid you welcome, and number you with his sons, though you have lived as his enemies. Though you have lived like swine and serpents, he will put you in his bosom, if you will but be washed and changed by his grace. Though you have set more by your worldly riches than by his glory, and have set more by the favour of mortal man than by his favour, and though you have set more by your bellies, and your brutish pleasures, and little toys, than you have done by everlasting life, he will yet be merciful to you, and put up all these indignities at your hands, and take you into his dearest love, if you will but now become new creatures, and give your hearts to him that made them, and seek that first that is worth the finding, and lose not the rest of your lives and labour upon unprofitable things. What can you say against this offer? Is it not unconceivable and unspeakable mercy? O what would the damned give another

day for such an offer? O what would you yourselves give another day for such an offer, if you now neglect it? What say you then, will you accept of this offer of mercy while it may be had, and close with grace while grace would save you, or will you not? As ever you look for mercy in the hour of your distress, when nothing but mercy can stand your souls in any stead, take mercy now while it may be had. Refuse it not when it is offered you, as you would not be refused by it when hell and desperation would devour you. If you slight it because it is free, you slight it because it is great, and therefore greatly to be valued. Think not hereafter to have it at your beck, if you neglect it now when it seeks for your acceptance. Do not say, I will a little longer keep my sins, and a little longer enjoy my pleasures, for I can have Christ's offer at any time before I die. O little dost thou know what a stab such a trifling purpose may give to the very heart of all thy hopes and happiness! and how terribly God may make thee know how ill he taketh thy unthankfulness and contempt! and how dear one other week of sinful pleasure may cost thy soul! In the name of God I warn you, do not so despise everlasting happiness! Do not so trample on the blood of Christ, if you would be saved by it! Do not abuse the Spirit of grace, if you would be sanctified by it! Play not any longer with the consuming fire, the wrath of a jealous and Almighty God! Jest not with damnation! Though grace be now offered you, it will not be at your command. Despire this motion, and you may be out of hearing before the next. What can you expect, if you will slight such mercy, but either that death should shortly bring you to your reckoning, or that God should leave you to yourselves, and give you up to the hardness of your hearts. And if you will needs choose the world and fleshly pleasure, and God and glory shall be thus contemptuously passed by, you may take your choice, and see what you will get by it. But remember what an offer you had this day, and that heaven was once within your reach, and that it might have been yours for ever if you would.

But because I am loth to leave you so, I will try by some such arguments as the reason of man must needs approve, whether yet you may not be brought to yourselves, and yield to grace that you may be saved. And they shall be the arguments that lie before you here in the text.

I. Remember, it is necessity that is pleaded with you in my text. One thing is necessary. Necessity, and your own necessity, is such an argument, as one would think of itself should turn the scales, and fully resolve you, and put you past any further deliberation or delay. If necessity, your own necessity, and so great necessity to so great an end, will not prevail with you, what will? Necessity is that *ingens telum*, that natural reason taketh to be irresistible. Men think they may do almost any thing, if they can say necessity commandeth it. *Omnem legem frangit, magnum illud humane imbecillitatis patrocinium*, saith Seneca. What is it that necessity seemeth not sufficient to justify with the most? And we will grant the argument to be undeniable, if it be from absolute necessity indeed, and if men will not dream that it is more necessary to be rich, or honourable, or to live, than to be holy, and to be blessed with God, and to please him that created them. *Ubi necessitas incumbit, non ultra disputandum est, sed celerime et fortiter agendum*. Words signify nothing against necessity. Reason is but hindering, troublesome folly, when it pleadeth against necessity. *Omni arte, omni ratione efficiatur necessitas*. Curt. In worldly matters how quick-sighted, how resolute, how active is necessity! What conquerable difficulties will it not overcome,

what labour will it not endure, if it have but the encouragement of hope? And yet this necessity is indeed no true necessity at all. For that which is necessary but to my credit, or estate, or health, or life, can be no more necessary than is my credit, and estate, and health, and life itself. When men do but fancy a necessity where there is none, yet that will carry them through thick and thin. But, O sirs, you have a real, undeniable necessity to be holy, and to set yourselves to the work of your salvation; such a necessity as is founded in your nature, and laid on you by your Maker, and as all the true reason in the world will confess to be indispensable necessity.

Faxis ut libeat quod est necesse.

Make no more words then, but resolve and stir when it is a matter that must be done. It is pity and shame that the amiableness of God and holiness will not prevail with you of themselves. But if you cannot yet perceive them to be delectable, acknowledge them to be necessary. Be ashamed that pretended necessity for the body should be more powerful with others, than real necessity for salvation is with you. Look upon almost all the travail and labour that is under the sun, and all the diligence that is used here in the world, and consider whether it be not a thousandfold smaller necessity than I am now pleading with you, that setteth almost all on work? The rich will not toil and labour, but will take their ease, because they think they are under no necessity; but the poor will labour, because they must. Though the command of God to rich and poor should make them equally diligent in their several callings, in obedience to their Creator; yet many thousands that labour all the year in obedience to their own necessities, would soon give it over and take ease, if they could but be well maintained without it, notwithstanding the commands of God. And the poor that reproach the rich for idleness, would be idle themselves if they were but rich. The tradesman followeth his trade, and the husbandman his hard labour all the year, and what reason will they give you, if you ask them why they do it, but this, We cannot live else; we must do it to maintain ourselves and families. And is not the reason a thousand times stronger for our souls? May we not better say, We must please God, and set our hearts on the life to come, and mind and seek the one thing needful, whatever becomes of other things; for we cannot live else; we cannot be saved else.

Necessity makes the traveller trudge from morning till night; and the carrier to follow his horses through fair and foul from year to year. It makes some dig into the bowels of the earth, in mines and coal-pits; and some to hale barges; and some to cut through the terrible ocean, and venture their lives among the raging waves and storms; and some even to beg their bread in rags from door to door. And O what will not necessity do that can be done? And yet how many thousands trifle or do nothing for their souls, as if there were no necessity of being saved, or no necessity of being holy that we may be saved! When, alas, all the necessity in the world is no necessity at all, in comparison of this. You must beg, or starve, or famish, if you do not work. But you must burn in hell, if with fear and diligence you work not out your own salvation,) for all that it is God that worketh in you,) Phil. ii. 12. You must lie in prison if your debts be not paid. But you will be cast into outer darkness, if, by the pardon of your sins, you be not discharged from your debt to God. You may become beggars if you be idle in your callings. But you will be the prisoners of hell, and shut out of all the happiness of the saints, if you labour not for the

food that doth not perish, and strive not to enter in at the strait gate, and give not diligence to make you calling and election sure, John vi. 27; Matt. vii. 13; Luke xii. 24; 2 Pet. i. 10. You must suffer hunger and nakedness if you have not food and raiment. But you must suffer everlastingly the wrath of God, if you have not the one thing necessary. You will be the scorn and laughingstock of men, if you fall under their contempt, and lose your honour. But you will be the enemies of God, and hated by him, if you continue to contemn his grace.

O had you but seen the life to come, you would say, there is a necessity of attaining it! Had you been one hour in hell, you would think that there is a necessity of escaping it, and that there is no necessity to this.

What say you to all this? Is it not of truth and weight? Can you deny it? or should you make light of it? None but an infidel can deny it; and none but a dead-hearted sinner can make light of it. Believe the word of God, and the truth of it will be past question with you. Consider but that you are men that have immortal souls, and the weight of it will appear inestimable to you; above contempt; above neglect. Believe it, sirs, you may as well see without light, and be supported without earth, or live without food, as be saved without holiness, or happy without the one thing necessary, Heb. xii. 14; John iii. 3, 5; Matt. xviii. 3. And when this is resolved of by God, and established as his standing law, and he hath told it you so oft and plainly, for any man now to say, I will yet hope for better; I hope to be saved on easier terms, without all this ado; is no better than to set his face against the God of heaven, and instead of believing God, to believe the contradiction of his own ungodly heart; and to hope to be saved whether God will or not; and to give the lie to his Creator, under the pretence of trust and hope. It is indeed to hope for impossibilities. To be saved without holiness, is to see without eyes, and to live without life. And who is so foolish as to hope for this? Few of you are so unreasonable as to hope for a crop at harvest without ploughing or sowing; or for a house without building; or for strength without eating and drinking; or to sleep and play, when you have nothing to maintain your families, and say, You hope that God will maintain both you and them. And yet this were a far wiser kind of hope, than to hope to be saved without the one thing necessary to salvation; and without a heart that is set upon it, and a life that is employed for it. It is the Holy Ghost that calleth you to answer the question, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. ii. 3. If you know how, then enter the lists with God, and dispute the cause with him. How will you escape, if you be neglecters of the only way that he hath provided for your escape? Is there any power or interest of men or angels that can procure your escape? How can that be done, that God hath resolved shall not be?

I beseech you now, beloved hearers, to remember this urgent motive of necessity, and use it when you are tempted to delay or trifle about the business of your salvation, as if it were some indifferent, needless thing. Without worldly riches you may be rich in faith; without worldly honours you may have the honour of being the sons of God; and without worldly pleasures, or health, or life, you may have the favour of God and life eternal. But without the one thing needful, you have nothing that is durably or satisfactorily good, but are undone for ever. Without the things of the world, you live in want for a little while, and then you will be equal to the greatest princes. But without this one thing, you must

live in endless woe and misery, and be far worse than the basest prisoner in the dungeon, or than the toads and vermin that lie in the uncleanest holes or sinks of the earth. And yet dare you delay another day before you make so necessary a change? You have hearts of stone, if your own necessity thus urged upon your consideration will not awake you. If your hearts were not dead within you, while you hear these things, one would think such a necessity should make you feel, and resolve upon a speedy change, and make you stir in the diligent performance. Can you go on in security, in negligence, and worldliness, when you hear of your necessity, that you must change, or you are lost for ever? O stupid souls, that will not be moved with necessity of everlasting consequence! Oh what hath God, or Christ, or heaven, or holiness done against these men, that will rather lie in hell for ever, than they will live in the love and service of this God, and in the practice of holiness, and in the hopes of heaven? How meet are they for hell, that will venture upon it deliberately and upon choice, to escape the trouble of living in the holy love, delight, and service of the ever blessed God! that is, to escape the trouble of heaven. Is it so great a sin to shut up the bowels of compassion against our brother in his need? 1 John iii. 17; and is it not more unnatural to deny compassion to yourselves in your own necessity, and in the greatest necessity? O poor sinners, remember your necessities! your own, your great, your absolute necessities. When you hear men that gather alms cry, Remember the poor, doth it make thee think, What a poor, necessitous soul have I to remember? As Paul saith of preaching to others, I may say much more to you, of minding and practising this great work of your salvation; "Necessity is laid upon you, and woe to you if you do it not!" 1 Cor. ix. 16. Woe to you that ever you were born, and that ever you were reasonable creatures, or rather, that ever you so abused your reason, if you neglect and miss of the one thing necessary!

I know you have other wants to be supplied, and other matters to look after in the world. But alas, how small are they! God will supply all your other wants, if you will first and faithfully look after this, Phil. iv. 19; Matt. vi. 33; 1 Pet. v. 7. Or if life and all go, you will find all in heaven. But if you miss of this one thing, nothing in the world can make supply, or do you good. And though now your feeling tell you not these things, alas how quickly will God make you feel, and teach you by that sensible way that you would needs be taught by!

Awake then, you sluggish, careless souls! Your house over your heads is on a flame! The hand of God is lifted up! If you love yourselves, prevent the stroke. Vengeance is at your backs. The wrath of God pursueth your sin; and woe to you if he find it upon you when he overtaketh you! Away with it speedily. Up and be gone, return to God; make Christ and mercy your friend in time, if you love your lives. The Judge is coming; for all that you have heard of it so long, still you believe it not. You shall shortly see the Majesty of his appearance, and the dreadful glory of his face, and yet do you not begin to look about you, and to make ready for such a day? Yea, before that day, your separated souls shall begin to reap as you have sowed here. Though now the partition that stands between you and the world to come, do keep unbelievers strange to the things that most concern them, yet death will quickly find a portal to let you in; and then, sinners, you will find such doings there as you little thought of, or at least did sensibly regard on earth. Before your corpse can be wrapped

up in your winding-sheets, you will see and feel that which will tell you to the quick, that one thing was necessary. If you do die without this one thing necessary, before your friends can have finished your funerals, your souls will have taken up their places among the devils in endless torment and despair; and all the wealth, and honour, and pleasure, that the world afforded you, will not ease you. This is sad, but it is true, sirs, for God hath spoken it.

Up therefore, and bestir you for the life of your souls! Necessity will awake the sluggish. Necessity, we say, will break stone walls. The proudest will stoop when they perceive necessity. The most slothful will bestir them when they feel necessity. The most careless will look about them and be industrious in necessity. Necessity is called the tyrant of the world, that can make men do any thing that is possible to be done. And yet cannot necessity make you cast away your sins, and take up a holy and heavenly life? Necessity will make men fare hard, and work hard, and travel hard; go bare, and suffer much; yea, it will even cut off a leg or arm to save their lives. And yet can it not prevail with reasonable creatures, to cast away the poison of a fruitless, filthy, deceitful sin, and to be up and doing for their salvation! O poor souls! is there, think you, a greater necessity of your sin than of your salvation? and of pleasing your flesh for a little time, than of pleasing the Lord, and escaping everlasting misery? I beseech you, consider your own necessities.

2. Consider, also, that it is but one thing which God hath made necessary for you. And I showed you before, how that the means themselves, though they are many, have a certain unity in their harmony and connexion, and as they centre in the ultimate end, which is one. If God had sent you upon such a multitude of errands as the flesh and the world doth, and set you on such disagreeing, contrary works, then you had been excusable if you had neglected some of them. But he hath sent you but upon one errand; even to seek and make sure of everlasting life; and therefore if you neglect this one you are unexcusable. If the world be divided into a thousand opinions, or go a thousand several ways, they may thank themselves, who are the authors of this confusion; but God is no cause of it, or friend to it. He hath made them but one work, and set them but one way to heaven, and given them one Master, Jesus Christ, to teach that way; and written but one law, even his holy Scripture, to be their sure and constant guide. And if men would stick to this one Master, and not make flesh and blood their master, or the multitude their master, or the rulers of the world, or the custom of their forefathers, the master of their faith; and if they would stick to this one word of God, and not run after the traditions of men, they would not be in such a maze, nor of so many minds, as now they are. But they do in their doctrines as they do in their practice. God hath marked them out but one way in the holy Scripture, which is the good and the sure way, the way that Peter, and Paul, and the rest of the apostles went to heaven in, and this way will not serve men's turns, but they will run a hundred ways instead of this one; and they must make new ways which the apostles of Christ were never acquainted with.

If God had loaded your memories with many things you might possibly have said, We cannot remember them all; but he hath set you finally but one thing to remember, even to lay hold on everlasting life, and press on to the crown that is set before you; and he hath an ill memory that cannot remember one thing, and such a thing as this is too.

It may be you are ignorant and cannot learn many things; but God hath set you but this one thing to learn as of absolute necessity: and he is dull indeed that cannot learn one thing, and such a thing too. If you cannot understand the depths of sciences, nor reach the height of learning that others do attain, yet learn this one thing, to know God in the Redeemer; and if you know this, you know all. Paul was not only contented with this knowledge, but "resolved to know nothing else but Christ and him crucified;" that is, nothing that is wholly alien to this; nothing but what doth keep its due subordination to this, and so may be reduced to the knowledge of Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 2. He would not own any other knowledge as knowledge, but disclaimeth it as ignorance and foolishness, though it seemed wisdom in the eyes of the world, chap. iii. 19. This seeming knowledge and wisdom of the world, that is totally disjunct from Christ, is part of the all that we must sell to buy the pearl, if we will obtain it, Matt. xiii. 46. And part of the "all things" which Paul accounted dung and loss, that he might "win Christ and be found in him," Phil. iii. 7—10. For they that know not this one thing, know nothing, whatsoever they may seem to know: and they that would go beyond the knowledge of Christ, and think it too low for them, and trouble their brains and the church with their speculations, they do not know indeed, but dream. And if they would see their faces in the glass of Scripture, 1 Tim. vi. 4, "They are proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words; whence cometh envy, railing, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth."

Moreover, if your strength be so small that it will not suffice for every thing, at least you should lay it out on this one thing.

Your time, I know, is small, your lives are short, and therefore you may say, We have not time for many things; but when you have but one thing given you to do, that must be done, you may sure find time for this, for which you have your time.

If you set your servant to work, and bid him be sure to do one thing, whatever else he do, you will not take it well if that one shall be neglected. If you send him on an errand, and bid him be sure to remember one thing whatsoever he forget, you will not take it well if he forget that one. If you trust him but with one thing, and bid him be sure to keep that one, you will not take it well if that be lost; especially if he wilfully throw it away.

O consider whether this be not your case. God hath sent you into this world but on one errand, even to make sure of everlasting life, and will you neglect that one? He hath trusted you with one thing, and will you cast away that one? He hath given you one lesson to learn, even to please him and to save your souls, and will you not learn and remember that one? If you had forgot your food or raiment, or forgot the houses you dwell in, it had been a small matter in comparison; but to forget that one work that must be done, that one friend that you must always trust to, that one place that you must live in for ever, this is most unreasonable; and when you have recovered your understandings, you shall confess it to be so.

3. Consider, further, that this one thing is that good part: you see it is here called so. "Mary hath chosen that good part—" Other things seem good to sense, and to perverted reason that is blinded by sense; but this is it that seemeth good to reason illuminated by the spirit of faith. Other things seem good for a while, but this is that good that will still be good.

I may not only say, that the good of other things is small in comparison of this, but that it is nothing at all, but as it is related unto this. This is that good that makes all things else good that are good. As they come from God, and reveal God to us, and lead us up to God, and are means to this eternal life, so they are good; but otherwise there is no goodness in them.

And therefore, seeing that goodness is naturally the object of man's will, one would think you should quickly be resolved of your choice. Sensual good is but a nominal good, if it reach not higher. All that you hunt after so eagerly in the world, is nothing but real vanity and vexation, a shadow of good, a picture of profit, a dream of delight, which one frown of God will turn into astonishing horror and despair; like a tender flower that is nipped with one frosty night, or withered with one scorching day; but it is only this one thing, that is the solid, substantial, and enduring good. The pleasure of the flesh is a good that is common to men with brutes; they can eat, and drink, and play, and satisfy their lusts, and master one another, as well as you. But it is the spiritual good that is proper to a reasonable creature. The pleasure of the flesh may melt you into foolish mirth, and make you like drunken men, that are gallant fellows in their own eyes, while sober men are ashamed of them, or pity them, or they become a laughingstock to others. But it is this one thing only which is that good which wisdom itself will justify. A man that is tickled may laugh more than he that is possessed of a kingdom, or hath the desires of his heart; but he is not therefore to be accounted the happier man, nor will any wise man so account him. O sirs, one would think that to men that have read and heard what we have done, and have had that experience which we have had, these things should be plain and past all question; and that spiritual, heavenly, everlasting things should be confessed by us all to be that good part that should possess all the fervent desires of the soul.

But oh that we could see the truth of this belief in the choice of your wills, and the drift of your endeavours! If God would open your eyes and show you things as they are, and save you from your wilful blindness, you would then see which is the better part, and you would be ashamed that ever you should make any question of it. That is the good part, which beareth the most lively image of God, which is goodness itself, yea, which possesseth us of this good. That is the good part, which will make us good, and not that which deceiveth us and makes us worse. That is the good part, which the wisest and best men judge to be so, yea, which God himself doth judge to be so; and not that which the most blind, deluded sinners do judge the best. That is the good part, which is best at last, and which is an enduring good, and not that which perisheth in the using, and flieth from us when we have greatest need. That is the good part, which all men will say is good in the conclusion; which the wicked themselves, that are now of another mind, will confess at last to be the best; and not which is commended only in prosperity, while the frenzy or dream of sensuality doth beguile men, and which they will all cry out against at last. If you would know which is the best part, take counsel of God, and see what he saith, and ask men of wisdom and of greatest experience, that have tried both, and men that have staid the end, and seen what fleshly pleasures, and profits, and honours can do for them: for how can men make so true a judgment that do not either stay the end, or else foresee the end by faith? Do not take their judgments that are drunk with their sensual delights, and that will confess they must repent themselves,

and therefore confess they must be of another mind. Take not their judgments that neither have seen, nor yet foresee the end; the worst is yet to come with them. Their states and minds are near a change. The day is near when they will say, that heaven was the better part, and be convinced by punishment, that would not be convinced by instruction.

Surely, sirs, it is so easy a question to reason itself, where sin hath not blinded it, whether God or the world be the better part, that one would think there should be left no room for doubting. Dare any of you speak out and say, that earth is better than heaven, or sin than grace, or temporal pleasure than eternal happiness? I think you dare not. Shame will forbid you, and conscience will contradict you, if you should say so. And will you commend God by your words, and discommend him by your lives? Will you say heaven is best, and yet seek the world before it; and not let it have the best of your affections and endeavours? Shall it be highest in your mouths, and lowest in your hearts and lives? Shall it have the first place in your prayers, and the last in your labours? Why then you commend God but to his dishonour and your condemnation. You extol heaven and heavenly things but to the confusion of your own faces, that your own confessions may be brought in hereafter as witnesses against you. In the name of God therefore I charge you, if you know which is the better part, condemn not yourselves by making choice against your knowledge.

4. Consider, also, that this good part is offered you, and you have your choice, whether God or the world, whether heaven or earth, shall be your portion.

It is not purchasing, or proper meriting, but choosing the good part, that you are called to. It is not, Mary hath purchased or merited the better part, but, hath chosen the better part.

Two things are here contained. (1.) That it is not matter of impossibility that you are called to: you are not excluded from the hopes of salvation, by any exceptions that God hath put in against you in his promises; but it is conditionally made as well to you as to others.

(2.) And the condition is not any thing unreasonable, but your own consent. Christ and salvation are offered to your choice. If you will but prefer them before the trifles of the world, you may have them. The door of grace is open to you as well as to others. If you will but enter you may live. You are not left in a remediless case, nor given over to desperation. You cannot say, Repenting and believing will do us no good; we cannot have Christ though we were never so willing. You cannot say, We would fain have Christ and his Spirit to sanctify us, but we cannot; we are willing to be his disciples, but he is not willing to accept us, and to be our Saviour. You cannot say so, and say truly. You cannot say he is set to sale to you, and that he expecteth such a price as you are unable to give; for you are called to take him freely; and though this be sometimes called buying, yet it is "a buying without money and without price," Isa. lv. 1—4. And though you must "sell all you have" for this unvaluable pearl, Matt. xiii. 46, yet that is but a metaphorical selling, a parting with your sin and fleshly pleasure, as troubles and impediments that would keep you from salvation. As a sick man sells his diseases for health; or at least, as he hath health by forbearing some hurtful things that please him; or as a prisoner purchased the liberty that is freely given him, by consenting to come forth and cast off

his fetters. Your hands are full of dirt, and God offers you gold, and you cannot receive it till you throw away the dirt. This is your purchase. You give God nothing as a valuable price for his mercy, but you throw away the sin that is inconsistent with your happiness. Still I shall tell you, you may have Christ if you will. Pleasures and profits are flattering you to your destruction, and God calls you from them, and offereth you his Son and everlasting life, and entreateth you to accept them. And here you have your choice. The offer is, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. And if you will but choose that happiness that is offered you, and Christ the way to that happiness, all the world cannot bereave you of your choice. It is brought to your hand and urged on you. You have now your choice, whether you will have Christ or the flesh, grace or sin, heaven or hell. As you choose, so you shall have. And if you miss of life, it will be because you did not choose it. Even because you "would not come to Christ that you might have life," John v. 40, and "would not have him to rule over you," Luke xix. 27, and "would not have the Lord indeed for your God," Psal. lxxxii. 11, and "did not choose the fear of the Lord," Prov. i. 29; yea, when Christ would have gathered you, you would not be gathered, Matt. xxiii. 37. It is this "turning away of the simple that doth slay them, because they refuse when Christ calls them, and regard not when he stretcheth forth his hand, but set at nought his counsel, and will have none of his reproof," Prov. i. 24, 25, 32. See therefore that you refuse not him that speaketh; for if you turn away from him that speaks from heaven, and neglect or make light of so great salvation, how do you think it possible you should escape? Heb. xii. 25; ii. 3; Matt. xxii. 5.

But perhaps some of you will think to excuse yourselves for want of free-will, and say, How is it in our choice, when God must give us to will and to do? and we can do nothing of ourselves? Have we free-will or power to choose the better part? You must not set up the power or will of man too high.

Ans. No; it is you that would set up your wills too high, in making us believe that you are not wilfully ungodly and impenitent, but omit all the good, and do all the evil that you do, because you cannot help it. You cannot but know that he is the sinner to be blamed and punished, that can and will not, rather than he that would but cannot do good, and forbear the contrary. You know that it is wilfulness, and not unwilling impotency, that the venom of malice and naughtiness lieth in; and therefore you are excusing your wills, and laying all upon your impotency, which is but to excuse your faults. I would make you know the baseness of your wills, and that it is long of your badness that you are like to be undone, if grace prevent it not by your thorough conversion. I do not say that you have any power but what you have from God; but I say you have the natural and legal power, and more than power, even a grant and offer of such a mercy from God. You have human faculties, and leave, and offers, and entreaties; and you may have Christ and life as he is offered if you will. When I say it is in your choice, I do not say that you have the wit or the heart to make a right choice. No; if you had but so much wit and grace, I need not use all these words to you to persuade you to choose the better part. Your wills are free from any force that God puts upon them to determine them to sin; or from any force that Satan or any enemy you have can use to determine them to sin. All they can do is morally to entice you. God doth not make you sin. If you

choose your death, and forsake your own mercy, it is not God that determineth your wills to make this choice. Yea, he commandeth, and persuadeth, and urgeth you to make a better choice. And though Satan tempt you, he can do no more. You have so much power, that you may have Christ if you will. You cannot say, I am truly willing to have Christ, and cannot. Thus much free-will undoubtedly you have.

But I must confess that your wills are not free from the misguiding of a blinded mind, nor from the seduction of a sensual inclination, nor from a base and wicked disposition of your own. This kind of free-will you show us that you have not. But is your wickedness your excuse? and is your wilfulness your innocence? What then can be culpable?

Sirs, I would not have you abuse God, and befool yourselves with names and words, saying, you have not power and free-will, as if you might thus excuse your sin. I have opened the matter in plain terms to you, that children may understand it, though learned men have endeavoured to obscure it. God giveth you your choice, though your own wickedness do hinder you from choosing aright. You have a price in your hands, but fools have not a heart to their own good, Prov. xvii. 16. I know that you want both wisdom and a sanctified will; and I know that your minds and wills are contrarily disposed. You need not tell me that you are wilful and wicked, when there must be so many words spoken, and so many books written, and so much mercy and patience of God, and so many afflictions from his hand, and all will not serve to make you choose the better part. But if you were willing, if you were truly willing, the principal part of the work were done. For if you are willing, Christ is willing; and if Christ be willing, and you be willing, what can hinder your salvation?

Having laid this groundwork from the plain word of God, methinks I may with this advantage now plead the case even with common reason. One thing is needful; the good part is that one; and this is tendered to you by the Lord. What is it then that you do make choice of? and what do you resolve? May you have Christ, and pardon, and everlasting life, and will you not have them? Shall it be said of you another day, that you had your choice, whether you would have Christ and life, or sin and death; and you chose destruction and refused life? I beseech thee, reader, whosoever thou art that readeest these lines, that thou wouldst a little turn thine ears to God, and withdraw thyself from the delusions of the flesh and world, and use thy reason for thy everlasting peace; and consider with thyself what a dreadful thing it will be, if thou be everlastingly shut out of the presence of God, upon thy own choice! And if thou lose thy part in Christ, and pardon, and everlasting glory, upon thy own choice! and if thou must lie in hell-fire, and conscience must tell thee there for ever, Thou hast but the fruit of thine own choice! Heaven was set open to me as well as others. I had life, and time, and teaching, and persuasions as well as others; but I chose the pleasure of sin for a season, though I was told and assured that hell would follow; and now I have that which I made choice of, and taste but the fruit of my own wilfulness! Will not such gripes of conscience be a hellish torment of themselves, and an intolerable vexation, if thou hadst no more? Had you rather have sin, than Christ and holiness? Alas, I see by your lives you had! But had you rather have hell than God and glory? If not, then choose not the way to hell. Why do you give God such good words, and prefer your sin when you have

done, before him? Why do you speak so well of Christ and heaven, and yet refuse them? Why do you speak so ill of sin and hell, and yet choose them to the loss of your salvation? Surely if you were soundly persuaded that Christ is better than the world, and holiness than sin, you would choose that which you say is the best. For that which men think indeed to be the best, and best for them, they will choose and seek after. And therefore, when you have said all that you can in commendation of grace and a holy life, no wise men will believe that you are heartily persuaded of the truth of what you say, as long as you run away from Christ, and follow the flesh, and take that course that is contrary to your profession. For that which you like best you will certainly choose and seek with the greatest care and diligence. Now you have your choice; if you would have the better part, now choose it.

5. I have one other motive yet from the text to persuade you to choose the better part. If you choose it, it shall never be taken from you. You hear this is the resolution of Christ himself concerning Mary's choice, and that which is spoken of her will be as true of you, if you make the same choice. If all the enemies you have in the world should endeavour to deprive you of Christ and your salvation, they cannot do it against your choice. If by power or by policy they would rob you of your portion, they cannot do it. For which way should they do it? They cannot turn the heart of God against you, nor make him break his covenant with you, nor repent him of his gift and calling which he hath extended to you. For he is unchangeable, and loveth you with an everlasting love, Mal. iii. 6; Jer. xxxi. 3; Isa. liv. 8; Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21, 23; 1. 5; Rom. xi. 29. They cannot undermine the rock that you are built upon, nor batter the fortress of your souls, nor overcome your great Preserver and defence, nor take you out of the hands of Christ, Psal. lxxiii. 26; xxxi. 2, 3; lxii. 2; lix. 9, 16; John x. 28. Cast not away the salvation that is offered you, and then never fear lest it be taken from you. See that you choose the better part, and resolvedly choose it, and it will be certainly your own for ever. For man cannot take it from you, nor devils cannot take it from you, and God will not take it from you. Rust and moths will not corrupt this treasure; nor can thieves break through and steal it from you, Matt. vi. 19, 20.

But you cannot say so of worldly riches. If you choose to be lords and princes on earth, you cannot have your choice; but if you could, you cannot keep it. If you choose the wealth and credit of the world, and were sure to get it, you were as sure to leave it. For naked you came into the world, and naked you must go out, Job i. 21. If you choose your ease, and mirth, and pleasure, these will be taken from you. If you choose the satisfying of your fleshly desires, and all the delight and prosperity that the world can afford you, yet all must be taken from you, yea, quickly and easily taken from you. Alas! one stroke of an apoplexy, or a few fits of a fever, or the breaking of a small vein, or many hundred of the like effectual means, are ready at the beck of God, to take you from all that you have gathered for your flesh. And then whose shall all these things be? None of yours I am sure, nor will they redeem your souls from death or hell, Luke xii. 20; Psal. xlix. 7. If you be in honour, you abide not in it, but are (as to your body) as the beasts that perish. If you think to perpetuate your houses and your names, this your way is but your folly, though your posterity go on to approve your sayings, and succeed you in your sins, Psal. xlix. 11—13. "The

worldly wise man doth perish with the fool : as sheep they are laid in the grave. Death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning," ver. 10, 14. "They shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb," Psal. xxxvii. 2. "I have seen the wicked in great prosperity, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree; yet he passed away, and lo he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found," ver. 35, 36.

You think it a fine thing to have the fulness of the creature, to be esteemed with the highest, and fed and clothed with the best, and fare deliciously every day, as the rich man, Luke xvi. But hath he not paid dear, think you, for his riches and pleasure by this time? His feeding and fulness was quickly at an end; but his torment is not yet ended, nor ever will be. You think it a brave thing to clamber up to riches, and that which you call greatness and honour in the world; but how quickly, how terribly must you come down! "Go into the sanctuary of God, and understand your end: surely God hath set them in slippery places, and casteth them down into destruction: how are they brought to desolation as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awakeneth, so at the awakening shall their image (or shadow of honour) be despoiled," Psal. lxxiii. 17-20.

How short is the pleasure, and how long is the pain! How short is the honour, and how long is the shame! What is it under the sun that is everlasting? You have friends, but will they dwell with you here for ever? You have houses, but how long will you stay in them? It is but as yesterday since your houses had other inhabitants, and your towns and countries other inhabitants, and where are they all now? You have health, but how soon will you consume in sickness! You have life, but how soon will it end in death! You have the pleasure of sin; you say unto yourselves, Eat, drink, and be merry; but how soon will all the mirth be marred, and turned into sadness, everlasting sadness! when you hear, "Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul; and then whose shall these things be?" Luke xii. 20.

O miserable wretch! if thou hadst chosen God instead of thy sin, and the everlasting kingdom instead of this world, thou wouldest not have been thus cast off in thy extremity. God would have stuck better to thee. Heaven would have proved a more durable inheritance; for it is a "kingdom that cannot be moved," Heb. xii. 28. The day is near when thy despairing soul must take up this lamentation: My dearest friends are now forsaking me. I must part with all that I laboured for and delighted in. I have drunk up all my part of pleasure, and there is no more left. My merry company, and honours, and recreations are past and gone; I shall eat, and drink, and sport no more. But God would not have used me thus, if I had set my heart upon him and his kingdom. Oh that I had chosen him and made him my portion, and spent these thoughts, and cares, and labours, for the obtaining of his love, and promised glory, which I spent in the pleasing and providing for the flesh! then I should have had a happiness that death could not deprive me of, and a crown that fadeth not away. Neither life, nor death, nor any creature could have separated me from his love. I need not then have gone out of the world as a prisoner out of the gaol, to the bar, and to the place of execution. My departing soul should not then need to have been afraid of falling into the hands of an unreconciled God, and so into the hands of the devils as his executioners, nor of passing out of the flesh to hell.

O poor sinners, for how short a pleasure do you sell your hopes of everlasting blessedness, and run yourselves into endless pains! O what comparison is there between the time of your pleasure, and the everlastingness of your punishment? How short a while is the cup at your mouths, or the drink in your bellies, or the harlot in your embraces, or the wealth of the world in your possession! And how long a time must you pay for this in hell! How quickly are your merry hours past! but your torments will never be past. When your corpses are laid in the grave, men can say, Now he hath done his satisfying the flesh and following the world; but never man can truly say, Now he hath done suffering for it. Your life of sin is passing as a dream; and your honours as a shadow, and all your business as a tale that is told; but the life of glory which you rejected for this, would have endured for evermore. Suppose as many thousand years as there are sands on the sea, or piles of grass on the whole earth, or hairs on the heads of all the men in the world, yet when these many are past, the joy of the saints, and the torments of the wicked, are as far from an end as ever they were. The eternal God doth give them a duration, and make them eternal.

When our joys are at the sweetest, this thought must needs be part of that sweetness, that their sweetness shall never have an end. If our foretaste be joy unspeakable and full of glory, what shall we call that joy which flows from the most perfect fruition and perpetuation? 1 Pet. i. 7, 8. We have joy here, but alas, how seldom! alas, how small in comparison of what we may there expect! Some joy we have, but how oft do melancholy, or crosses, or losses in the world, or temptations, or sins, or deserts interrupt it! Our sun is here most commonly under a cloud, and too often in an eclipse; and we have the night as often as the day. Yea, our state is usually a winter; our days are cold and short, and our nights are long. But when the flourishing state of glory comes, we shall have no intermissions nor eclipses. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. And the perfect day is a perpetual day, that knows no interruption by the darkness of the night. "For there shall be no night there, nor need of candle or sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever," Rev. xxii. 5. This is the life that fears no death, and this is the feast that fears no want or future famine; the pleasure that knows nor fears pain; the health that knows nor fears sickness: this is the treasure that fears no moth, or rust, or thief; the building that fears no storm nor decay; the kingdom that fears no changes by rebellion; the friendship that fears no falling out; the love that fears no hatred or frustration; the glory that fears no envious eye; the possessed inheritance that fears no ejection by fraud, or force, or any failings; the joy that feels or fears no sorrow. While God who is life itself is our life; and while God who is love, is the fountain and object of our love, we can never want either life or love. And whilst he feeds our love, our joyful praises will never be run dry, nor ever go out for want of fuel. This is the true perpetual motion, the circulation of the holy blood and spirit from God to man, and from man to God. Being prepared and brought near him, we have the blessed vision of his face, by seeing him; and by the blessed emanation of his love, we are drawn out perpetually and unweariedly to love him and rejoice in him; and from hence incessantly to praise and honour him. In all which, as his blessed image and the shining reflections of his revealed glory, he

takeath complacency, which is the highest end of God and man, and the very term of all his works and ways.

I thought here to have ended this first part of my discourse; but yet compassion calls me back. I fear lest with the most I have not prevailed; and lest I shall leave them behind me in the bonds of their iniquity. I daily hear the voice of men possessed by a spirit of uncleanness, speaking against this necessity of a holy life, which Christ himself so pe-remptorily asserteth. I hear that voice which foretelleth a more dreadful voice, if in time they be not prevailed with to prevent it. One saith, What need all this ado? This strictness is more ado than needs. Another saith, You would make men mad, by poring so much on matters that are above them. Another saith, Cannot you keep your religion to yourself, and be godly with moderation, as your neighbours be? Another saith, I hope God is more merciful than to damn all that be not so precise. Another saith, I shall never endure so strict a life, and therefore I will venture as well as others. The sum of all is, they are so far in love with the world and sin, and so much against a holy life, that they will not be persuaded to it; and therefore to quiet their consciences in their misery, they make themselves believe that they may be saved without it, and that it is a thing of no necessity, but their coming to church and living like good neighbours may serve the turn without it, for their salvation. And thus doth the malicious serpent, in the hearts of those that he possesseth, rise up against the words of Christ. Christ saith that this is the one thing needful. And the serpent saith, It is more ado than needs; and what needs all this ado? Though I have fully answered this ungodly objection already in my "Treatise of Conversion," sect. 36; and more fully in my "Treatise of Rest," part 3, chap. 6; yet I shall once more fall upon it. For death is coming, while poor deluded souls are loitering; and if Satan, by such senseless reasonings as these, can keep them unready in their sin, till the fatal stroke hath cut them down, and cast them into endless, ceaseless fire, alas, how great will be their fall! and how unspeakably dreadful will be their misery! Whoever thou be, whether high or low, learned or unlearned, that hast disliked, opposed, or reproached serious, godly christians, as puritans, and too precise; and that thinkest the most diligent labour for salvation to be but more ado than needs, and hast not thyself yet resolvedly set upon a holy life; I require at thy hands so much impartiality and faithfulness to thy own immortal soul, as seriously to peruse these following questions, and to go no further in thy careless, negligent, ungodly course, till thou art able to give such a rational answer to them, as thou darest stand to now at the bar of thine own conscience, and hereafter at the bar of Christ.

Quest. 1. Canst thou possibly give God more than is his due? or love him more than he deserveth? or serve him more faithfully than thou art bound, and he is worthy of? Art thou not his creature, made of nothing? and hast thou not all that thou art and hast from him? and if thou give him all, dost thou give him any more than what is his own? If thou give him all the affections of thy soul, and all the most serious thoughts of thy heart, and every hour of thy time, and every word of thy mouth, and every penny of thy wealth, (in the way that he requireth it,) is it any more than is his due? Should not he have all, that is Lord of all?

Quest. 2. Is it not the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and might?" And do not heathens confess this by the light of nature? And

hath not thy tongue confessed it many a time? And doth not thy conscience yet bear witness that it is thy duty? And is it possible thou shouldst thus love him with all thy heart, and soul, and might, and yet not seek and serve him with all thy heart, and soul, and might? or can the most sanctified person do any more, if he were perfect?

Quest. 3. Dost thou not confess that we are all sinners? and that the best is still too bad? and that he that loveth and serveth God most, doth yet come exceeding short of his duty? And yet wouldst thou have such men come shorter? and darest thou persuade them to do less? Must not the best confess their daily failings, and beg pardon for them from the Lord, and be beholden to the blood of Christ, and lament their imperfections? And yet wouldst thou have them be such odious hypocrites, as to think they serve God too much already, while they confess that they come so short? Shall they confess their failings, and reproach those that endeavour to avoid the like? Shall the same tongue say, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner, and, Lord, I am good enough already; what need there so much ado to please and serve thee any better? What would you think of such a man?

Quest. 4. Is it not an unquestionable duty to grow in grace? and to press towards perfection as men that have not yet attained it? 2 Pet. iii. 18; Phil. iii. 12—14. And must Paul, and Peter, and the holiest on earth, still seek to grow and labour to be more holy? and shall such a one as thou say, What need I be any more holy? that art utterly unsanctified.

Quest. 5. Is it not one of the two grand principles of faith and of all religion, without which no one can please God? Heb. xi. 6. Whoever cometh to God must believe first that God is (that there is a God, most powerful, wise, and good). Secondly, that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. This is one of nature's principles. It is the diligent seekers of God that he will reward. And yet dare a fleshly, negligent sinner reproach the diligent seeking of God, and take it for a needless thing, and say, What needs all this ado? Are not these the atheist's seconds; even next to them that deny that there is any God, or that blaspheme him? And indeed, if he be not worthy of all the love and service that thou canst give him, he is not the true God! Consider therefore the tendency of thy words, and tremble.

Quest. 6. Doth not that wretch set up the flesh and the world above the Lord, that thinks not most of his thoughts, and cares, and words, and time, and labour for the world to be too much ado, and yet thinks less for God and heaven to be too much? And dost thou think in thy conscience that the flesh is better worthy of thy love, and care, and labour, than the Lord? or that earth will prove a better reward to thee than heaven? Who, thinkest thou, will have the better bargain in the end? The fool that laid up riches for himself, and was not rich to God, and shall lose all at once that he so much valued, and so carefully sought, Luke xii. 20, 21; or he that laid up his treasure in heaven, and there set his heart, and sought for the never-fading crown? Matt. vi. 20, 21, 33; and counted all as loss and dung for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ? Phil. iii. 8. Do you think that there is anything more worthy your care, and time, and labour, or can you more profitably lay it out?

Quest. 7. Have you not immortal souls to save or lose? And are not your bodies for their service, and to be used and ruled by them? And should not your souls then have more of your care and diligence, than corruptible flesh that must turn to dirt?

Quest. 8. Dare any one of you say that you are

wiser than the all-knowing God? Is not thy wisdom less to his, than a glowworm's light is to the sun? And hath not God most plainly and frequently in his word commanded thee a holy life? Yea, every part and parcel of it is nothing else but the obeying of that word; for if it be not prescribed by the Lord, it is not holiness, nor that which I am pleading for. And when the living God hath told the world his mind and will, shall a sinful man stand up and say, I am wiser than my Maker; I know a better way than this; what need there all this stir for heaven? What dost thou less than thus blaspheme, and set up thy folly above the Lord, when thou condemnest or reproachest holiness which he commandeth?

Quest. 9. Dare you say that God is not only so unwise, but so unrighteous and tyrannical, as to give the world unnecessary laws, and set them upon a needless work? What king so tyrannical as would require his subjects on pain of death to go pick straws against the wind? What master or parent so foolishly cruel as to command their servants or children, to weary themselves with hunting butterflies, and following their own shadows? And darest thou impute such foolish tyranny to the God of heaven, as if he had made a world, and set them upon a needless work, and commanded them to tire themselves in vain?

Quest. 10. Can a man be too diligent about that work which he was made for, and is daily preserved and maintained for, and for which he hath all the mercies of his life? Thou hadst never come into the world but on this business, even to serve and please God, and prepare for everlasting happiness. And are you afraid of doing this too diligently? Why is it, thinkest thou, that God sustaineth thee? Why diest thou not many years ago, but only that thou mightest have time to seek and serve him? Was it only that thou mightest eat, and drink, and sleep, and go up and down, and fill up a room among the living? Why, beasts, and fools, and madmen do all this, as well as thou. Why hast thou thy reason and understanding, but to know and serve the Lord? Is it only to know how to shift a little for the commodities of the world? or is it not to know the way to life eternal? Look round about thee on all the creatures, and on all the mercies which thou dost possess; every deliverance, and privilege, and accommodation; every bit of bread thou eatest, and every hour of thy precious time, are all given thee for this one thing needful. And yet wilt thou say that this one thing is needless, for which thou hast all things? Thou mayst then say, that God made the world in vain; and preserveth and governeth it in vain. For all this is but for his service, which thou callest vain.

Quest. 11. Doth not reason tell thee, that the place in which thou must live for ever, should be more diligently minded and prepared for, than this in which thou must continue but for a while? Alas, it is so short a time that we must be here, that it makes all the matters of this world (as such) to be inconsiderable things, as dreams and shadows. What great matter is it for so short a time, whether we be rich or poor, well or sick, in credit or in contempt; whether we laugh or weep; when our part will be so quickly acted, and we must go naked out of the world as we came into it? For so short a time, a poor habitation may serve the turn; as well as the most splendid palace. A painful, obscure, afflicted life may do as well as the most plentiful provisions, and the greatest ease and worldly honours. The purple and fine linen, the silks and bravery, will be soon forgotten; and the soul in hell will be no more the better for them than the rotten carcass in the

grave. The taste of the delicious meats and drinks will quickly be forgotten; and sportful youth will be turned into cold and languid age; and the most confirmed health into dolorous sickness; and mirth and laughter into mournful groans. And is such a transitory life as this more worthy of your care and greatest diligence, than life eternal? Oh! one would think that the world that you must be ever, ever in, should never, never be forgotten! There is the company that you must live with for ever. There is the state that you shall never change. There is the joy or torment that shall have no end; and while you forget it you are posting to it, and are almost there. And can you be too careful for eternity?

Quest. 12. Consider also but the infinite joys of heaven, and tell me, whether thou dost think they are not worthy the greatest cost or pains that thou canst be at to get them? Dost thou think that heaven is not worthy of the labour that is bestowed for it by the holiest saints on earth? Will it not requite them to the full? Will any that come thither repent that they obtained it at so dear a rate? If now thou couldst speak with one of those believers mentioned in Heb. xi. that "lived as strangers and pilgrims on earth," as "seeking a better, even a heavenly country," that preferred the "reproach of Christ before the treasure of the world," and chose "affliction with the people of God," before the "pleasures of sin for a season; that were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might receive a better resurrection; that had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, and of bonds and imprisonments, and were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented, though men of whom the world was not worthy;" would any one of these now tell you, that they did or suffered too much for heaven? or that it was not worth ten thousand times more? If thy tongue dare say that heaven is not worth the cost or trouble of a holy life, (or if thy life say so, though thy tongue dare not,) thou judgest thyself unworthy of it, and sentences thyself unto damnation.

Quest. 13. And are the torments of hell so small and tolerable, that thou thinkest a holy life too dear a means for to prevent them? Dost thou believe the threatenings of the Lord, that he will "come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power?" 2 Thess. xviii. 9. And yet canst thou say, What needs all this ado to escape such endless misery? Thou wilt take any medicine to cure but the gout or stone, if once thou have felt them. Thou wilt draw out a tooth to prevent the pain of it. And is holiness so hateful or grievous a thing to thee, that thou wilt venture on hell itself to avoid it? If so much of hell be in thy heart already, blame none but thyself if thou have thy choice.

Quest. 14. Why wast thou baptized into the covenant of holiness, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, if thou think it needless to perform thy covenant? A holy life is no more than in baptism thou wast solemnly engaged to. There didst thou renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil; and tookest God for thy portion and absolute Lord, and gavest up thyself to be ruled by him, and saved by Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit; and dost thou now say, What needs all this ado? Are we all by our baptismal vow engaged to a needless thing? I tell thee, there is not the holiest man on earth, that doth any more than what he is bound to by the covenant relations which he undertook in baptism.

Quest. 15. Moreover, what a hypocrite art thou to profess thyself a member of the holy catholic church, if holiness, which is the life of the church, seem needless to thee! Why dost thou profess to believe and desire the communion of saints, if the life of saints seem needless to thee, and thou wilt not have communion with them in their sanctity? Dost thou not plainly renounce thy covenant, and faith, and duty, when thou renouncest a holy life as a thing unnecessary?

Quest. 16. Dost thou think, or darest thou say, that the bloody death and holy life of Jesus Christ were more than needs in order to thy salvation? Unless thou be a professed infidel, I know thou darest not say so. And if thy soul were worth the sufferings of the Lord of life, is it not worth all the cost and labour of thy duty? Christ lived a life of perfect holiness; he never sinned; he fulfilled all righteousness; he prayed all night, and with greatest fervency; preaching and doing good was his employment. Though he hated pharisaical superstition, and the teaching for doctrine the commandments of men, and serving God according to men's traditions, yet was there never so holy, and pure, and precise, and strict, and heavenly a life as Jesus Christ's. And this was for our redemption, and our example. And darest thou say that this was needless? Should we not endeavour to imitate our pattern? Are they better that are likest Christ, or they that are most unlike him? And which dost thou think is liker Christ, the holy or the unholy? Sure we that fall so short of the example that Christ hath given us, are far from being more diligent than needs, when Christ went not too far, nor was too strict, that went so very far beyond us.

Quest. 17. Look upon all the institutions of the Lord; on magistracy, and ministry, and the great works of their office; on prayer, and preaching, and sacraments, and discipline, and all other ordinances of God; and also on all the frame of the holy Scriptures; and also on all the workings and graces of the Holy Ghost; and tell me whether thou darest say, that all or any of these are in vain? and whether that holiness which all these are appointed for, can be a vain and needless thing?

Quest. 18. Darest thou say that Christ doth more than needs in his intercession for us with the Father now in heaven? It is he that sendeth the Spirit to sanctify us. It is he that prayeth that we may be sanctified by the truth? We have no grace and holiness but what we have from him. And darest thou say he doth too much? It is he that sends his ministers to call men to a holy life. Look into his word, and see whether the doctrine which they preach be not there prescribed to them; and the duties of holiness there commended. If therefore it were erroneous or excessive, it would be long of Christ, and not of his messengers or disciples, that speak and do no more for holiness than he bids them; but fall exceeding short.

Quest. 19. Art thou wiser in this, and more to be believed, than all the ancient prophets, and apostles, and servants of God in former ages, and than all that are now alive on earth, that ever tried a holy life? The Scripture will tell thee that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and all the rest of the saints that were then most dear to God, were so far from thinking that a holy life was more than needs, that they thought they could never be holy enough, and blamed their defects when they excelled such as now thou blamest as too precise. And if thou wilt prefer the words and example of a worldling, or of a sottish, sensual man, before the judgment and example of

these saints, the company that thou choosest, and the deceivers whom thou followest, shall be also thy companions in calamity, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see the saints from east and west, from north and south, sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you, and such as you, thrust out; even when the last in time (whom you here despised) shall be equal to the first and ancient saints, Luke xiii. 27—30. Why do you hypocritically honour the names and memorials of the prophets, apostles, and other former saints, and keep holidays for them, and yet reproach their holy course, and prefer the judgment of a drunkard or a malignant enemy of godliness before theirs? For so you do when you argue against a holy life.

Quest. 20. Dost thou think that there is now one soul in heaven or hell, that is of thy profane opinion, and would say, that a diligent, holy life is more ado than needs for men's salvation? Certainly those in heaven have more knowledge, and experience, and love to God and man, and goodness, than to be of so impious a mind, or once to entertain such beastly thoughts. And those in hell, though still unholy, have learned to their cost to know the great necessity of holiness; and would tell you, if they could speak with you, that the most strict and heavenly life for millions of ages were not too dear for the escaping of the everlasting misery. Why else do we find one of them in Luke xvi. described as so desirous, that one from the dead might be sent to his brethren, to warn them that they come not to that place of torment? And what is it that he would have had them warned of, but that they should live a holy, self-denying life, and with all their diligence lay up a treasure in the life to come, instead of living so sensual, and voluptuous, and ungodly a life as he had lived? The scope of the story tells us, that this would have been his message, if he might have sent.

Quest. 21. Dost thou think in thy conscience that at the hour of thy death, or at least at judgment, thou shalt think thyself that holiness was unnecessary? Doth not thy heart tell thee that then thou shalt be of another mind? and wish with the deepest desires of thy soul, that thou hadst lived as strictly, and prepared for everlasting life as seriously, and served God as diligently, as ever did any saint on earth? But alas, those wishes will be then too late. Now is thy day; and now thou takest thy work to be needless; and to see the necessity when time is gone, will be thy torment, but not thy remedy. Not one in this congregation, or town, or country, not one in England, or in all the world, but shall be forced at last, whether he will or no, to justify the wisdom of the godly; and the worst of you shall then, with ten thousand fruitless groans, desire that you had imitated the holiest persons that you knew. Not a tongue then shall say, What needs all this ado for heaven? Not a man there dare call his neighbour puritan, nor take up a contemptuous jeer against the diligent servants of the Lord.

Quest. 22. Is not that man at the heart against the Lord, that reproacheth his serious, diligent servants, and counts his work a needless thing? Men are more willing to please those that they love, and more ready to do the works they love. If your son or servant speak against your service, but as you do against God's, what would you think of their affections? Doubtless it is no better than a secret hatred to the holiness of God, and a serpentine enmity to his holy ways, that causeth all these senseless cavils, and impious speeches, against the life that he hath commanded us to live.

Quest. 23. Is it not most unreasonable impiety, for that man to speak against too strict, exact obedience, and against serving God too much, that hath served the world, the flesh, and the devil in the vigour and flower of his days, and this with pleasure, and never said, It is too much? When thou wast drinking and sporting thou wast not weary: when it comes to a matter of riches, or honour, or ease, or pleasure, to gratify thy worldliness, pride, laziness, and voluptuousness, then thou never sayest, It is too much! And is all too little for sin and the devil, and all too much for thy soul and God? Let conscience tell thee whether this be just.

Quest. 24. Is it not a foolish wickedness for that man to cry out against making haste to heaven, and going so fast in the ways of God, that hath loitered already till the evening of his days, and lost so much time as thou hast done? If thou hadst begun as soon as thou hadst the use of reason, and remembered thy Creator in the days of thy youth, and never lost an hour of thy time since then till now, thou hadst done no more than what thy God, thy soul, and all right reason required of thee! For surely he that made thee, hath in wisdom proportioned thy time to thy work, and hath not given thee an hour too much. A long life is short enough to prepare for everlasting. And shall a loitering rebel that hath wasted so much of his little time, cry out, What needs so much ado?

Quest. 25. Is it not the graceless, miserable sort of men that cry out, What needs all this ado? Certainly it is. For Scripture, and reason, and experience tell us, that all that are godly are of another mind. The more grace they have, the more they would have. The more they love God, the more they would love him. The more good they do, the more they would do. Do you not see how they labour after more grace? and hear how they complain that they are no better? Oh how it would glad them to be more holy and more heavenly! It is therefore the strangers and despisers of grace, that never knew by experience the nature, and power, and sweetness of it, that say, It is more ado than needs. And is it not a most unreasonable thing for a man that hath no saving grace and holiness at all, to cry out against excess of holiness? And for a man that is in the captivity of the devil, and ready suddenly to drop into hell if death do but strike the fatal blow before he be regenerate, to talk against doing too much for heaven? And for a man that never did God one hour's pleasing service, Heb. xi. 6, to prate against serving God too much? O poor wretch! were thine eyes but opened, thou wouldst see that of any man in the town or country, this language ill becometh thee. When God hath been so long offended, and thy soul is almost lost already, and death and hell is hard at hand, and may swallow thee up in endless desperation for aught thou knowest, before thou hast read this book to the end, or before thou see another year, or month, or day, is it time for such a one as thee to say, What needs so much ado? One would think if there be any life in thee thou shouldst stir as for thy life; and if thou have a voice to cry, thou shouldst cry out to God both day and night in fervour of thy soul, even now while mercy may be had, lest time should overslip thee, and thou be shut up in the place of torment. If hell-fire will not make thee stir, what will? Should a weak christian that is cast behindhand by his negligence but once speak against a diligent life, he were exceedingly to blame. But for thee that art yet in the gall of bitterness, and the misery of an unregenerate state, to speak against holy diligence for salvation, when thou art in such great and deep distress, and like a

man that is drowning, or a house on fire, that must presently have help or perish; this is a madness that hath no name sufficient to express it by; which it is a wonder that a rational soul should be guilty of.

Quest. 26. Art thou not afraid of some sudden vengeance from the Lord, for thus making thyself his open enemy, and contradicting him to his face? Mark his language, and then mark thine. Christ saith, "Enter in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," Matt. vii. 13, 14. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able," Luke xiii. 24. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, (or exactly,) not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time," Eph. v. 15, 16. "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 20. "Wherefore, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure," 2 Pet. i. 10. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling," Phil. ii. 12. "Seeing then all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God," 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12. "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear," 1 Pet. iv. 18. "Lay not up for yourselves a treasure on earth, &c. but lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, &c. For where your treasure is there will your hearts be also," Matt. vi. 19—21. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," Matt. vi. 33. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life," John vi. 27. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," Matt. xi. 12. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," 1 Cor. ix. 24—27. "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness; incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you," Isa. lv. 1—3. "Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," Rom. xii. 11. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and sanctify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 11—14. "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully," Jer. xviii. 10. " whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest," Eccl. ix. 10.

These and such like are the sayings of God, by which thou mayest easily understand his mind concerning the necessity of a serious, diligent, holy life.

And shall a blind and wretched worm come after, and dare to contradict him, and unsay all this, and say, What needs so much ado? What! darest thou thus openly resist God to his face? What art thou? and what is thy word, that we should regard it before the word of God?

Quest. 27. Dost thou not know that by thy speaking against a diligent, holy life, thou gratifiest the devil, and openly servest him, and sayest the very things that he would have thee say? What can more please him, and advance his kingdom, and suit his malicious ends, than to stop and cool men in the service of the Lord, and make them believe that holiness is but a needless thing? If the devil might have leave to walk visibly among men, and speak to them in their language, he would speak to them as thou dost, and say the same things, which he puts into thy mouth; and would do all that he could to keep men from a holy life. And darest thou thus openly play his part?

Quest. 28. Canst thou think (when eternal life is at the stake) that a man so weak, in the midst of so many hinderances and enemies, hath cause to count his diligence unnecessary? When Satan, like a roaring lion, is seeking day and night to devour thee, (1 Pet. v. 8) when his malice, subtlety, and diligence is so great, and so unwearied; when his instruments are so many, so subtle, and so powerful; when the world aboundeth round about thee with such dangerous, enticing snares and baits; when thy traitorous flesh so near thee is thy most perilous enemy, incessantly drawing thee from God unto the creature; and when thou art so impotent to resist all these assaults; art thou then in a condition fit to cry out against the greatest diligence for thy soul? Should a man going up the steepest hill, when it is for his life, be afraid of going too fast? When thou hast done all thou canst, it is well for thee that ever thou wast born, if it suffice. If weaknesses and enemies cause such a difficulty that the righteous themselves are scarcely saved, (that is, with much ado,) is it then time for thee to ask, What needs so much ado?

Quest. 29. Dost thou not deal exceeding unthankfully and unequally with God? When he thinks not the sun and moon, and all the creatures, too good to serve thee, nor all his mercies too great for thee; no, not the blood of his beloved Son, nor his Spirit, nor heaven itself, if thou wilt accept them in his way; wilt thou think thy best too good for him, and thy most diligent service to be too much; when thy all is next to nothing; and thy best doth not profit the Almighty, but thyself, and the gain will be thy own? If a man should think it too much to put off his hat and thank thee, when thou hast given him a thousand pounds; or to go a mile for thee, when thou hast saved his life; thou wouldst say he were not a man, but a monster of ingratitude. But thy unthankfulness is ten thousandfold worse to God, who would deliver thee from everlasting torments, and give thee everlasting glory, and save thee from Satan and all thy sins, if thou wilt but take his safe remedies; and thou churlishly refusest, as if all were not worth so much ado.

Quest. 30. Dost thou know what a life it is that thou accountest an unnecessary toil? It is a life of the greatest safety, commodity, honour, and delight, (besides the justice and honesty of it,) of any in the world; and indeed thou canst not choose any other but at thy peril, and to thy greatest loss and ruin, and to thy present and everlasting shame and sorrow. It is the sweetest and most pleasant life on earth, that thou ignorantly accountest such a tedious toil. The manifestation of this shall be my work in the second part of this discourse.

And now I dare affirm, that when the dreadful God shall shortly judge thee who hast read or heard these words, it will be found indelibly written upon thy conscience, that thou hadst here such reasons laid before thee, to prove the necessity of a serious, diligent, holy life, as all the wit in earth or hell is not able solidly to confute; and that an ungodly, sensual life is most unreasonable; and that if, after this, thou continue in an unsanctified, fleshly state, thou shalt justly perish as one that wilfully refused salvation, as in despite of God, his mercies, and his messengers, and of the plainest, undeniable truth and reason; and that in refusing to be a SAINT, thou madest thyself in the greatest matters no better than a BRUTE, wilfully subjecting thy reason to thy sensuality, and judging thyself unmeet for everlasting holiness.

But here I know the self-deceiving hypocrite will object, That all this that I am proving so diligently is confessed, and nothing to the point in question: which is not, Whether one thing be needful, and holiness be of necessity to salvation? for who denieth this? But the question is, Whether it be this puritanical, precise way of serving God which only deserves the name of holiness? and whether they be not as truly godly and sanctified that say their prayers morning and night, and go to church on Sundays, and follow their businesses the rest of the week, without any more ado?

Ans. Either it is the substance of holy duties, or but the circumstances, which you quarrel at as puritanical and precise. If it be only the circumstances, (as whether we should receive the Lord's supper standing, or kneeling, or sitting? whether we should pray publicly without book, or in the book? and whether a Scripture form or another be better? and whether a continued speech, or versicles, anthems, and oft-repeated words and sentences be better? What form of church government is best? by diocesan bishops, or by all the pastors? and the like,) it is not of such things as these that I am pleading with thee. Though some of them are matters of considerable moment for the helping or hindering men in godliness; yet it is greater matters than these that I am now contending for. Agree with us practically in the substance; in faith, repentance, love, obedience, mortification, heavenliness, humility, patience, and serious diligence and zeal in all; and then I am none of those that will condemn or censure you; but one that will rejoice in you, as those that I hope to rejoice with for ever.

But if it be the substantial duties of godliness that you resist, while you own but the name of godliness in the general, I must tell you that it is not names and generals that will save you; nor prove that you have yourselves one spark of grace. Nothing more easy and common than for the most ungodly to say, they are all for a godly life; and God forbid that any should be against it; when yet they hate and reject it indeed, when it comes to the practice of those particular duties in which it doth consist. It is not godliness that they hate and reproach, but it is fervent prayer, holy conference, meditation, self-denial, mortification of the desires of the flesh, heavenly-mindedness, &c. In general, they will say that God's law must be obeyed, and his will preferred before their own. But when it comes to the particulars, they love him not above all, they take his name in vain, they keep not holy his day, they disobey superiors that would reform them, they are envious, malicious, covetous, lustful, and break all the commandments in particular, which in general they profess to keep. As if your servant should

promise to do your work; and when you set him to it, one thing is too hard, and another he is not used to, and so he hath his exceptions against the greatest part which he undertook. As if one should wound one of you in the head, and stab you to the heart, and cut off an arm or a leg, and say, I wish the man no harm. It is not the man that I hate or hurt, but only the head, the heart, the arm, &c. Even so it is not holiness that these men hate, and speak against; but it is so much praying, and meditating, and reading the Scriptures, and making such a stir about religion when less ado may serve the turn.

But, wretched soul, if thou have not the wit to see the contradictions of thy deceitful tongue, and the venom of thy malignant heart, dost thou think that such sottish shifts as these will blind the eyes of heavenly justice, and save thee from the vengeance of a holy God, which he hath denounced against rebellious hypocrites? But come on; let us try whether the several parts of godliness which thou questionest, or callest puritanism, or preciseness, are not more expressly and preceptually commanded in the word of God.

1. Is it so much preaching and hearing sermons that thou quarrellest with? Hear then how Christ and his apostles preached, and how they required men to hear. "And in the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed unto a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him; and when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said, Let us go unto the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth: and he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee," Mark i. 35, 37—39. "And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them; no, not so much as about the door; and he preached the word unto them," chap. ii. 2. "And they went into a house, and the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread: and when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him; for they said, He is beside himself," chap. iii. 19—21. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ," Acts v. 42. "They that were scattered went every where preaching the word," chap. iv. 4. "I kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house.—Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.—Therefore watch; and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears," chap. xx. 20, 28, 31. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Rom. x. 14, 15. "Every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I do therein rejoice, and will rejoice," Phil. i. 18. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21. "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," &c. Col. i. 28, 29. "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine," 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe unto me if I preach not the gospel!" 1 Cor. ix. 16.

What say you now? do we not fall much short of those that we should imitate, rather than do too much in preaching? But what need we more than the text itself, where, for hearing Mary is so commended, and her sister blamed for neglecting it, though it was to make provision for Christ himself, and those that were with him. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, being to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight," Acts xx. 7. "Let every one be swift to hear," James i. 19. "He that hath an ear, let him hear," Rev. ii. 7, &c. "Jesus said, My mother and my brethren are those which hear the word of God and do it," Luke viii. 21. I hope you see this duty is past question.

2. Is it the reading of the Scripture that is the puritanism, or too much ado, that you blame? Or is it the frequent meditating on such high and holy things? Hear what the Spirit saith of this. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.—The ungodly are not so," Psal. i. 1, 2. "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thy testimonies are my meditation. Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word," Psal. cxix. 97, 99, 148. "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food," Job xxiii. 12. "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver," Psal. cxix. 72. "Have ye not read the Scriptures?" Mark xii. 10. The eunuch "sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet," Acts viii. 28. "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine," 1 Tim. iv. 13. I hope you see also that this part of godliness is past question.

3. Is it much and fervent prayer that is the preciseness, or too much ado, that you make question of? Hear then what the Holy Ghost doth say of that. "In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God," Phil. iv. 6. "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God concerning you," 1 Thess. v. 17, 18. "And he spake a parable to them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint," Luke xviii. 1. "I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," Luke xi. 8, 9. "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God," Luke vi. 12. Daniel would not give over praying three times a day in his house, for thirty days' space, at the king's command, no, not to save his life from devouring lions. David saith, "Seven times a day do I praise thee," Psal. cxix. 164. "Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord," Lam. iii. 19. It is part of the wicked atheists' description that "they call not upon the Lord," Psal. xiv. 4. "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and the families that call not on thy name," Jer. x. 25. "The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth," Psal. cxlv. 18. When Paul was converted, the Lord lets Ananias know it by this token, "for behold he prayeth," Acts ix. 11. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," Acts i. 14. The three thousand converts "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine

and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," Acts ii. 42. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mysteries of Christ," Col. iv. 2. "Continuing instant in prayer," Rom. xii. 12. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," James v. 16. "For every creature is sanctified by the word of God and prayer," 1 Tim. iv. 5. "She that is a widow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day," 1 Tim. v. 5. "Praying in the Holy Ghost," Jude 20. "Night and day praying exceedingly," 1 Thess. iii. 10. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me," &c. Eph. vi. 18. "What prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore, and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house, then hear thou from heaven," &c. 2 Chron. vi. 29.

I hope by this time, if you have eyes, you see that more frequent and fervent prayers than any of us use, (and that without book), were used by the ancient servants of the Lord, and were not thought more ado than God requireth of us.

4. Is it constant, diligent teaching, instructing, and catechising your families, and labouring that yourselves and they may understand and practise the law of God? Hear also what the Spirit saith of this; and then judge, whether it be too much preciseness.

"My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God," Prov. ii. 1—5. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates," Deut. vi. 5—7, 11, 18—20. "For I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord," Gen. xviii. 19. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," Josh. xxiv. 15. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," Prov. xxii. 6. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," Eph. vi. 4. These and many such passages show you that the most diligent instructing of your families is not more ado than God requireth, but a most weighty, needful part of godliness.

5. Is it the meeting of divers neighbours together (distinct from church meetings) that you question? Why, if it be schismatical in opposition to the public meetings, or to do any unlawful work, we are against it as well as you. But if it be but for the redeeming of their time, for their spiritual advantage, and orderly, peaceably, and soberly observed, by some that have more time, or care of their souls, than the rest of their neighbours; sure you will not for shame imagine, that neighbours may lawfully

meet to make merry, and feast, and sport, and confer about their worldly business, and yet may not meet to pray, and praise God, and repeat what instructions they have received of their teachers, and prepare for and improve the public ordinances. Hear what the Spirit saith also to this. In the text here you find just such a meeting, where Christ was teaching, and Mary and his disciples hearing, and Martha cumbered with providing for the company, and blamed for neglecting the advantage for her soul. Peter came out of prison to the house of Mary, where many were gathered together praying, Acts xii. 12. Cornelius "called together his kinsmen and near friends" to hear Peter, who there preached to them, converted and baptized them, Acts x. 24. I need to instance in no more, because this was the ordinary practice of Christ and the apostles. If you say, those were times of persecution; I answer, true; but, 1. Yet such times in which public assemblies were ordinarily held, and public preaching used. 2. And as the good of men's souls required it in times of persecution, so when the good of souls requires it, in times of liberty, it is from the same general reason a duty; but never forbidden by Christ in any times of greatest prosperity and peace.

6. Is it the holy observation of the Lord's day that is the preciseness that you cannot away with? Of all men, it becometh not them to quarrel at this, that own our homilies, and with the Common Prayer use after the fourth commandment to say, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;" when they have heard, "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day, thou, thy son, thy daughter, thy man-servant, thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates." You see all the aforesaid duties must be performed, and public assemblies for God's worship and our instruction continued; and therefore there must be some known appointed time for these. And do you know any other day that is fitter? I think you will not pretend to that. You would not have another day instead of this; but you would have no day at all for such holy works, but a day for ease, and idleness, and sports, and vain discourse, and pleasures, with some little formal public worship intermixed to cheat your souls. It is not then the day, but the serious, diligent, holy employment and duty that you are against; and that I have proved to be God's will before. Doubtless, if you leave all men to serve God when they will, without any stated time, his worship will soon be brought to nothing, and they that pretend to keep every day holy, will keep none. Look upon the places where the Lord's day is kept holy, and see whether godliness flourish not there incomparably above all other places. And I think none can doubt but that more souls have been converted and brought home to God on that day than on any day of the week, if not than all the rest beside. And there is not the peevishest malignant soul of you, that can with any show of reason prove that the holy observation of the Lord's day is unlawful, if it were not necessary; so that we are at least on the safest side of the hedge. For we can say that we can take a most happy opportunity for the good of our own souls, and the worshipping of God; and that we are sure we do that which is no sin. Our adversaries themselves do not charge us with doing that which is forbidden, but that which they conceit unnecessary. But if we should do as they, and neglect this day, we are not sure but it may be a great sin (nay, indeed, we are sure it would be so).

But what saith the Holy Ghost now to this ques-

tion? To pass by the fourth commandment at this time, the letter of it, and the equity and reason of a seventh day, the advantage of reason why there should be no less under the gospel, and such like; I shall only now say these two things. (1.) It is plain in Scripture that (*de facto*) the apostles and churches used to meet for holy communion in God's worship on the Lord's day; and consequently that this was appointed by the apostles, or immediately by Christ himself, there being then no other who pretended to any such authority, and that apostolical allowance no man questioneth. The apostles then having the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, by which they were enabled infallibly to make known the will of God, and being commissioned as well as enabled hereunto; as their writing of the holy Scriptures, so their constitutions for the ordering of the church, being the effects of that authority received from Christ, and that ability given them by the Spirit, are divine, and principally the acts of Christ and the Holy Ghost, whose agents the apostles were. Now that the first churches did by their appointment observe the Lord's day for holy actions, is apparent. As Christ first laid the groundwork by rising on that day, so he began that very day to preach unto Mary the comfortable doctrine of his ascension, in words that deserve to be written in gold, or rather in the deepest room of every true believer's heart: "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God," John xx. 17. The first sermon that ever was preached on a Lord's day, even on the first Lord's day by Christ himself, even to a beloved penitent woman, whom he chose to be as it were his apostle to his apostles, to deliver them this message as from him.

On the same day the disciples being assembled, he owned and blessed their assembly, and gave them the Holy Ghost and apostolical power.

When Thomas being absent from the assembly the first Lord's day, did miss the sight of Christ and was unbelieving, Christ left him a whole week in his unbelief, and would not heal him till the next Lord's day, which he honoured with that cure. Then the disciples being met again, Christ came among them, and convinced Thomas.

On another Lord's day they were all with one accord in one place, and the Holy Ghost was in the extraordinary measure given them. And Acts xx. 7, it is mentioned as the custom of the disciples, to come together on the first day of the week to break bread; and Paul then preached to them even till midnight. And 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, the collections for the saints were made every first day of the week in all the churches of Galatia, and at Corinth, because they had then their holy assemblies. And therefore, Rev. i. 10, it is called peculiarly The Lord's day.

(2.) To clear this past all rational doubting, we find in all the writings of the ancients, and histories of the church, that all the churches through the world unanimously observed the Lord's day as instituted by Christ, or the Holy Ghost in the apostles; none ever questioning or contradicting it, that I ever read of. He that hath read the writings of the ancients, and denieth this, is unworthy to be disputed with. The practice of the universal church is a full exposition of the forecited Scriptures; and though it be no law to us itself, yet it is a full discovery of the fact, (telling us what was the primitive practice,) and so a discovery of the law. And shall any private ignorant man come in after one thousand six hundred and twenty-six years, and say the apostles and all the churches in the world have been deceived till this day, and we must rectify the

mistake? Shall these fellows come in at the end of the world, and call the apostles and all the churches of all ages puritans, for keeping holy the Lord's day? Or will any but a brain-sick person hearken to such shameless men as these?

Object. But the ancient churches did not keep that day as a sabbath, but only as a day for public worship.

Ans. We will not stick with you for the name. We urge you not to call it the sabbath, (though the ancients sometimes did so: see our Homilies "Of the Place and Time of Prayer,") if you will call it as Scripture and the churches did, is but the name of the Lord's day. And it was then the custom of the churches to spend almost all the day in public worship and holy communion, and therefore they had but little time for any private duties that day. And yet (though the private practices of particular persons on that day be little mentioned in church history) no man can prove that they used to spend any remaining hours of that day as common time in common business. So that to quarrel against the holy observation of the Lord's day, is but to quarrel with the Holy Ghost and the apostles, and all the churches of all ages since, and with the happiest season for the worshipping of God, and seeking our own and other men's edification.

7. What is there yet remaining then that you quarrel with as too much preciseness? Is it the strictness of men's lives in forbearing sin, and not doing as their neighbours do, in rioting, and vain recreations, and delights? For this I need not stand to justify them, with any impartial, sober man. If sin be evil, and displease God, and deserve damnation, he that most fully and carefully avoideth it, is the honestest and the wisest man. You will not blame your child or servant for being loth to offend and disobey you, even in the smallest matter. You like not him that offereth you the least abuse, so well as him that offereth you none. You had rather be well than have the least disease. You will not take a little poison; nor would you feel a little of hell. Why then should we not avoid the least sin so far as we are able? If sinning be good, then devils are the best creatures, and angels and Christ (in his manhood) the worst. But if sin be the greatest evil, what will you call those men that do not only wilfully commit it, but plead for it, and reproach those that would fain avoid it? Or what if some of those that you reproach, are mistaken in some point, and take that to be a sin that is none? Or what if you think it to be no sin which they scruple? Will you blame a man that loves God, to be afraid of that which he suspecteth may offend him? Or will you blame him that cares for his salvation, to make as sure of it as he can, and to keep as far from the brink of hell as he is able? How is it that you observe not that your very reproaches do confute themselves? What is it that you are offended at in the servants of the Lord? Is it good or evil? Surely it is some fault or other of theirs, that you will pretend to be the cause. For scarce any but the devil himself will openly and professedly oppose goodness under the name of goodness. And if it be a (real or supposed) fault that you speak against them for, doth it not intimate that they should avoid all faults, as far as they are able? And yet will you at the same time reproach them for being too strict, and fearful to offend, as if it were their fault that they are unwilling to be faulty?

But let us hear what God saith of this. "Fools make a mock at sin," Prov. xiv. 9. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people," ver. 34. And yet you would make the avoiding it

a reproach. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," Gen. iv. 7. "Be sure your sin will find you out," Numb. xxxii. 23. "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death," James i. 15. "Abstain from all appearance of evil," 1 Thess. v. 22. "But I say unto you, that for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," Matt. xii. 36, 37. "Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 19. "But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment—but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire," ver. 22. "I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart," ver. 28. "I say unto you, swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool:—but let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil," ver. 34–37. "But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, nor by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest you fall into condemnation," Jam. iv. 12. "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you as becometh saints: neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks," Ephes. v. 3, 4. A hundred such passages of Scripture I might recite, that might quickly satisfy you what God expecteth, and whether it be too much preciseness to fear the smallest sin.

8. But perhaps it is the rigour of their church discipline that maketh you offended with those that you count too pure and precise; because they will not let other men alone, but are reproving them, and bringing them to open penitence and confession of their open sins, and casting those out of the communion of the church, which do refuse it. *Answe.* But do they do this of themselves, or doth God command it them? Do you think that the communion of saints is to be turned into a rabble of impiety, and the church into a swine-sty? Do you not know that the canons of the ancient churches for many hundred years after Christ, are stricter in this discipline by far, than those that now offend you by their strictness? And hear what the Holy Ghost saith, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him," Lev. xix. 17. "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man or a publican," Matt. xviii. 15–17. "For I verily as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present concerning him that hath done this deed, that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. —Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the

whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven.—Now I have written to you not to keep company; if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat.—Therefore put away from among yourselves the wicked person," 1 Cor. v. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.—And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed," 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds," 2 John 10, 11. "Confess your faults one to another," James v. 16. "Give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me," Josh. vii. 19. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy," Prov. xxviii. 13. Doth not all this justify the exercise of discipline, and condemn the neglect of it?

9. But, (saith the impious person,) why make they such a difference between themselves and other men; extolling themselves as the only servants of the Lord, and condemning others as ungodly and children of the devil, and terrifying men's consciences with the fears of hell?

Answe. If any do so against such as are sanctified and renewed, and have the Spirit of Christ, and live to God, they deal uncharitably: and if you dislike their censoriousness, so do I, and so do all the sober, considerate servants of the Lord. But if it be only against the carnal, unsanctified world that they do thus, it is God that maketh the difference, and not they. Do you not find the whole Scripture dividing all the world into two ranks, the godly and the ungodly? the regenerate and the unregenerate? the converted and unconverted? the sanctified and unsanctified? the carnal and the spiritual? the earthly-minded and the heavenly-minded? the pardoned and unpardoned? the justified and unjustified? the children of God and the enemies of God? the servants of God and of the devil? the heirs of heaven and the heirs of hell? To prove this would be to repeat the Bible. Read Psalm i. x. xv. xxxvii.; Matt. v.; Rom. viii.; John iii.; Matt. xiii.; 1 John iii. &c. Do you not find Christ himself acquainting you beforehand that one sort shall be set at his right hand in judgment, and the other at his left? and one part sent to life everlasting, and the other to everlasting punishment? Matt. xxv. Do they speak any more of the everlasting torments, the worm that dieth not, the fire that is unquenchable, than Christ himself hath done? Matt. xiii. 2; 2 Thess. i. &c. Do you love to be flattered into hell, and deceived in a matter of everlasting consequence? Is it not better for you to search your hearts, and try whether you have the Spirit of Christ or not; and then search the Scripture, and try whether any man be his that hath not his Spirit, (Rom. viii. 9,) or can be saved that is not converted and born again of the Spirit? Matt. xviii. 3; John iii. 3, 6. "Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

10. But you will say that the reason of your distaste against these that are so forward in religion is, that they are inwardly as bad as others, and as proud and worldly; and why do they not excel

others in good works, as much as they do in their devotions?

Ans. 1. So they do, according to their ability. Twenty years' trial and more I have had of them since I was a minister of Christ, and I can truly say that, ordinarily, I have known of many a shilling, if not pounds, that have come from the purses of these that you call puritans and precise, for one groat or penny that I have known come from most others about me of their rank, to any pious and charitable use. But all that are godly, are not rich; and though Christ extolth the widow's two mites, the standers-by regarded them not, Matt. xii. 42, 43. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not," 2 Cor. viii. 12. And he that hath said, "Take heed that you do not your alms before men to be seen of them; otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven," (Matt. vi. 1.) hath hereby kept his servants from making the world acquainted with much of their deeds of charity. And for the sins of the heart that you charge them with, they are known to none but God, unless they be discovered in their lives. But malice in all ages hath been used to such unproved slanders of the servants of the Lord.

2. But suppose them as bad as malice doth imagine: is that any reason why both they and you should not be better? It is holiness and not sin that I am pleading for. Is their godliness and care of their salvation necessary, or not? If it be, why do you not imitate them in that? and if you know any fault in them, take warning and avoid it: but be not so mad as to run into hell, because some fall in the way to heaven, or some miss the way that seemed to go thither. Imitate not the Judas in Christ's family, but the rest of his disciples, and that not in their falls, but in their faith and piety. All that shall be saved, have both holiness towards God, and justice and charity to men. "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits," Jam. iii. 17. If you want the first, you are ungodly; if the latter, you are

hypocrites: and if the hypocrite and the ungodly will stand snarling here at one another, they shall perish together, in that misery that will convince them that neither of them were the heirs of life; when saints indeed, and none but they, shall live with Christ.

Object. But it is but a few that are of so strict a mind and life; and shall none be saved but these few?

Ans. Christ hath told you whom he will save: he will falsify his word, nor take the unsanctified into heaven for want of company. He hath told you that the gate is strait, and the way narrow, that leads to life, and few there be that find it, Matt. vii. 13, 14; and that it is a little flock to whom the Father will give the kingdom, Luke xii. 32. You shall not want company in heaven, nor find comfort in your company in hell.

But if you would have the number of the godly to be greater, why do you not increase it by your joining with them? Why do not all the town and parish agree together, and bind themselves in a covenant to serve and seek the Lord, as the Israelites, Josh. xxiv.; 2 Chron. xv. 12, 13. O happy people, that will thus accord and heartily perform it!

And now, beloved hearers, I have finished this first part of my task, and proved to you the necessity of a holy life: that "one thing is needful," while you pitifully cumber yourselves about "many things," is the message that from Christ I have been hitherto delivering to you. What say you? Are you yet resolved to seek this one thing with the chiefest of your desires, and care, and labour, or are you not? Dare any of you say that you have not heard that which should resolve a sober, considerate man? I think you dare not. But if you dare, I am sure you shall never be able to make it good, and justify your words, to God, or to your consciences, at last, or to any wise, impartial person. Now take your choice, whether you will now be SAINTS, and for ever like ANGELS; or now be like BRUTES, and for ever like DEVILS: for one of these must be your case, as sure as you have heard these words.

THE SECOND PART.

CHAPTER I.

HOLINESS AND ITS FRUITS ARE THE BEST PART. WHEREIN THE HAPPINESS OF SAINTS CONSISTETH.

LUKE x. 42.

But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

THOUGH I have before taken up this latter part of the text by way of motive, in the conclusion of the former part of this treatise, I am very loth that a subject of so great importance should be so lightly passed over. And therefore, by God's assistance, I shall attempt a fuller handling of it. The necessity of holiness I have spoken of already. It is the goodness of it that I am next to speak of.

And before I enter upon it, let me entreat thee,

reader, whoever thou art that openest this book, to remember that I am writing, and thou art reading, of the greatest and highest matters in the world; and therefore come not to it with common affections, and read not this as thou wouldst do a history, or a rhetorical oration, to find delight for a curious mind; but confessing thyself a scholar to Christ, with reverence take thy lesson from him, as that which thou camest into the world to learn, and which all thy comforts, thy hopes, thy safety, and thy everlasting happiness depend upon.

And here, in the entrance, I will freely tell you what moveth me to fall upon this subject, and be so earnest with you in this point. One thing is the

observation of the carelessness and wilfulness of the most, that live in the neglect of holiness and everlasting life, for all that can be said to persuade them to a wiser course. While they all profess themselves to be christians, and to take the Scripture for the word of God, and confess this word in particular to be true, that it is heaven and holiness that are the most necessary, and most to be desired and sought after, yet will they not be moved to live according to this profession, nor to love that most which they confess to be the best, nor to seek that first which they confess to be most needful. They have the case here decided by the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and as plainly, and fully, and peremptorily decided as they could wish. If they were infidels, and understood but the law of nature, even reason might tell them that there is no doubt of it, but that eternal life is more to be sought after than transitory things. And yet they live as if the case had never been decided by Christ or by reason; or as if they had never heard of any life but this. Look into most towns, and see whether there be not more at Martha's work (and worse) than at Mary's. Look into most families, and see whether they be not, with Martha, troubling themselves with many things, when the good part is almost cast aside. Even in the families of lords, knights, and gentlemen, that are doubly obliged to God, and pretend to be wiser than the ignorant vulgar, the matters of their salvation are turned out of doors, or thrust into a corner, and the matters of their bodies do take up the day. How many Marthas for one Mary shall we find among both rich and poor!

Yea, that is not the worst, but they that are so blind and wicked as to choose the worse part themselves, would have all about them do so too. And as Martha grudged at Mary's practice, and complaineth to Christ against her, so these repine at the choice of the godly, and think them but melancholy, crack-brained people, that make more ado for their salvation than they need. And they are not content to keep such ungodly thoughts in their breasts, to their own damnation, but they must be the devil's mouth to spit reproach in the face of holiness, and consequently in the face of Christ, as if they bid defiance to the Lord, and would make it their employment to jeer and scorn men's souls from heaven. If one in a family do with Mary choose the better part, (though without any neglect of their calling in the world,) the rest make a wonder of them, and some deride them; and some hate, and vilify, and threaten them, and few will imitate them. And who more forward to distaste and despise them than the masters of the families that are bound to teach and lead them in that way! So that a poor soul (even in a land and age that countenanceth holiness more than almost any other in the world) can scarcely sit at the feet of Christ, and learn his word, and seek his kingdom and righteousness first, but they are gazed at, and censured and derided, as if they did some very foolish, needless, yea, or wicked thing! As if it were the only folly for a man to follow Jesus Christ, and obey his God, and save his soul, and do that work with greatest diligence, for which he is a man, for which he hath his life, and time, and mercies, and which if he neglect, he is lost for ever! The Lord have mercy upon the poor deluded world! Whence comes this general damp and dotage upon the understandings and the hearts of men; of great men, of learned men, of men that are accounted wise in the world?

It is good and evil that constituteth all that wonderful difference that is between the reasonable creatures, both here and hereafter. The good of

holiness, and the evil of sin, do make the difference between the godly and the wicked. The good of everlasting happiness, and the evil of everlasting misery, doth make the difference between the glorified and the damned. Goodness in general is so naturally the object of man's will, that evil as evil cannot be desired, and good as good cannot be hated. What then is the matter that few attain the greatest good, and few escape the greatest misery? It is because they would not choose that good, and refuse the way and cause of misery. But how cometh it to pass that men will make no wiser a choice? Is the case so doubtful that they cannot be resolved in it? Every man would have that which he thinks is best for him. Why do men follow after wealth, or pleasure, or credit in the world, but because they take it to be best for them? Why do they set so light by holiness, and Christ, and heaven, but because they apprehend them not to be best for them? Would men refuse, and obstinately against all persuasions refuse a holy life, if they took it practically to be best for them? What! will they contrive their own destruction? Do they long to do themselves a mischief, and the greatest mischief in the world? No, that is not the case; but the matter is this: Their senses draw them another way; their eye, their ear, their taste, their feeling, every sense hath a pleasure of its own, and this sense or flesh is violent and unreasonable, and would fain be satisfied; and reason, that was given us to rule it, is bribed, and blinded, and perverted by it, and so is ready as a servant to obey it, and to take its part; and the fleshly mind discerneth not the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned. The will also, and the affections, are, by the bias of a fleshly inclination, corrupted, and habitually lean to the fleshly part. And that which men love, they will easily think well of, and are glad of any thing like reason to defend it; and that which is against the inclination of the will, will hardly be thought well of, and any thing like reason will serve against it. This depravation of the mind and will of man, enslaved and ruled by the flesh or sensuality, is the very cause that most men will not choose the better part, and so the cause of their perpetual misery. And till the Holy Ghost send in a heavenly light of wisdom into the mind, to show them the true difference between the good and the evil; and a new inclination into the will, that shall turn their hearts from the evil to the good; they will still go on, and the matters of God will seem foolishness to them, and they will take those men for the veriest fools that follow the wisdom of the Lord, and provide carefully for eternal life; and they will take those for the wisest men, that are most contrary to the God of wisdom, and that dare leap most fearlessly into hell. Or if this be not their opinion, but conviction force them to a wiser kind of language, yet will it be their practical estimation, and their hearts, as their choice and lives will easily declare. For "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," John iii. 6. The fleshly man will have a fleshly mind and will, and openly or secretly will live after the flesh, and such are the heirs of death, Rom. viii. 5, 7, 13. Fleshly generation cannot make a spiritual mind or heart in any, but it must be by spiritual regeneration. And therefore "except a man be born again of the Spirit," as well as of "water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," John iii. 3, 5.

This inward difference of inclination is the true cause of the difference of the judgments, and the courses of men, about the matters of God and their salvation.

This is it that makes so many to think none wise

but those that are more dangerously mad than men in Bedlam; and that makes so many others stand in doubt as men unresolved what to choose, and what course to follow. As if it were really a difficult point for a man to be resolved in, whether it be best and wisest to follow the teachings of God or of the flesh; and to seek first the kingdom and righteousness of God, or to make a pudder for nothing in the world; and to tickle this itching flesh awhile, though they must smart for it for ever, or to master the flesh and live to God!

In a word, the world are half unresolved, whether it be better to be holy with God's promise of eternal glory, or to take the pleasures of sin for a season, and neglect this holiness, though this course be threatened by the living God with everlasting torments? This is the true state of the question, which I say one part of the world doth seem to be unresolved in, and another part are resolved on the worse side, against their souls and a holy life; and only those that the illuminating, sanctifying Spirit hath resolved, do choose the needful, better part.

The reason of this distracted judgment of the most is within themselves. It is not because that there is any such difficulty in the case, as should put a wise man to a stand; nor is it because they have not sufficient evidence in the word, or that God denied them teachers, books, or any necessary means for their information. The light is among them, but they love it not because their hearts and deeds are evil, and their darkness doth not comprehend it; and this is their delusion, and their condemnation, John i. 6—8; iii. 19.

When I am preaching to a congregation of many hundred or thousand souls, if the salvation of all that people did lie upon any other question no harder than this that we have in hand, so it were such as fleshly interest, and corrupted minds and wills, had no quarrel against, how easily, how surely should I save the souls of all that heard me! Reader, let me have thy judgment. If the question were, Whether light or darkness be the better?—Whether a dead corpse be better than a living man?—Whether a cottage for a day, or a rich habitation for term of life, be better?—Whether as much drink as will make thee drunk, or a night's lodging with a whore, be better than lands and lordships for thy life-time, or for a thousand years?—Whether one sweet cup with shame and beggary all thy life after, or one bitter draught with perpetual prosperity, should be rather chosen?—Whether a sick man were better take an unpleasing medicine that would cure him, or a pleasant poison that would kill him?—Whether he were better pay a little to the physician, or die to save his money?—Whether that prince be wise that will sell his kingdom for a cup of wine, or for children's rackets?—Or whether that child be virtuous that cannot abide his father's sight, or house, or commands, but loveth better to do that which he knows displeaseth him, or tumble in the dirt with swine?—I say, if any of these were the question to be resolved, and the salvation of all that heard me lay upon the true resolution, I leave it to your own judgments, whether I were not like to save the souls of all that heard me? And yet in a case as clear in itself, and much more clear, how few do we prevail with! Is not the question, Whether God or the creature, holiness or sin, earth or heaven, short or everlasting pleasures, should be preferred? as plain to a wise man as any of those that I mentioned before? Is it not as plain a case to a man of judgment, whether holiness, with everlasting joys, be better than fleshly pleasures with damnation? as whether a kingdom be better than a jail, or gold

than dirt, or health than sickness? Yet do your salvations lie upon this question, this easy question. I must again repeat it: All your salvations lie upon the practical resolution of this easy question. Be but resolved once that God is best for you, and heaven is best for you, and accordingly make your resolute choice, and faithfully prosecute it, and God will be yours, heaven will be yours, as sure as the promise of God is true. But if you will not choose God and glory as your best, but will choose the world and simple pleasures as better for you, you shall have no better than you choose, and shall suffer a double condemnation for neglecting and refusing so great salvation.

You hear now by men's talk, and you see by their lives, that the world is divided upon this question, What it is that is best for a man, and which is his best and wisest course. One part (and the greater) think in their hearts that present prosperity is best, because they think that the promised happiness of the life to come is a thing uncertain; or if there be such a thing, they may have it after the pleasures of sin: these are the infidels.

Another part have a superficial dead opinion, that heaven and holiness are best; but the love of the flesh and the world lieth deeper at their hearts, and beareth the greater sway in their lives; and these are the hypocrites; that is, christians in opinion and profession, and so much of their practice as will stand with their fleshly interest, but infidels in their practical estimation, and at the heart, and in the reserves and secret bent of their lives.

Another part, being illuminated and sanctified from above, believe the certainty and excellency of glory, and see the vanity and vexation of this life, and taste the sweetness of the love of God, and perceive the necessity and sweetness of that holiness, which others so abhor; and hereupon give up themselves to God, and set themselves to seek for the immortal treasure, and make it the principal care of their hearts and business of their lives to escape damnation, and live with Christ in endless glory.

All the world consisteth of these three sorts of men, infidels, hypocrites, and true believers. Now the question is, which of these three are in the right? Both the other do condemn the hypocrite that halfeeth between two opinions; and one thinks that Baal is God, that the world is best, and therefore he gives up himself to it; and the other thinks that the Lord is God, and heaven is best, and therefore he gives up himself to it. And if it would do any thing with those that doubt, towards the turning of the scales, to tell you which side Christ is on, it is told you here in my text, as plain as the tongue of man can speak, "One thing is needful. Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

The doctrine which I am now to handle to you from the plain words of the text, is this:

Doct. That those that prefer the learning of the word of Christ, to guide them by holiness to everlasting happiness, before all the lower matters of this world, are they that choose the better part, even that which shall never be taken from them.

If now the word of Christ alone would serve your turn, I had done my work, I needed not to go any further. You would be now resolved, that heaven and holiness is best, and would set your hearts and lives to seek it; and so it would be your own for ever. But this text hath long stood in the gospel, and men have heard and read it often, and yet the most are not persuaded; and therefore I must try to open it a little further to you, and plead it with you, and work the reason of it upon your minds.

Reader, our business is but to inquire, what it is that is best for man to set his heart on and seek after in his life, and enjoy for ever? I say, it is the everlasting enjoyment of God in heaven. For Christ saith so. If thou think otherwise let us debate the case. If thou believe as I do, live as thou professeth to believe. If men did but deeply and soundly know what it is that is best for them, it would set right their hearts and lives, and make them happy. But not knowing this is it that keepeth them from God and holiness, and everlastingly undoes them.

Though I have often opened this heretofore on other occasions, yet my present subject now requireth, I. That I tell you what that is that here is called "the good part." II. What it is that is set against it, and by fleshly minds preferred before it. And having briefly opened these two things, I shall come to the comparison, and show you which is the better part.

I. That which Christ calls here, that good part, is, 1. Principally, the end of man, or our everlasting happiness with God in heaven. 2. Subordinately, the means by which it is attained. 3. That happiness which is the end, comprehendeth in it these particulars, which if you distinctly apprehend, you will much the better understand the nature and excellency of it.

1. The true believer hath the small beginnings, and earnestness, and foretastes of the everlasting blessedness in this life in his approaches to God, and living upon him by faith and love, and in his believing apprehensions of the favour of God, the grace of Christ, and the happiness which in heaven he shall enjoy for ever.

2. At death the souls of true believers do go to Christ, and enter upon a state of happiness.

3. At the last day, the body shall be raised and united to the soul, and the Lord Jesus Christ will come in glory to judge the world, where he will openly absolve and justify the righteous, when he condemneth the ungodly, and will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that do believe; and the saints shall also judge the world, and be themselves adjudged to everlasting glory.

4. Their everlasting habitation shall be in the heavens, even near unto God, and in the presence of his glory.

5. Their company will be only blessed spirits, even the holy angels and glorified saints, with whom we shall be one body, and constitute the new Jerusalem, and be perfectly one in God for ever.

6. Their bodies shall be perfected and made immortal, spiritual, incorruptible, and glorious bodies, shining as the stars in the celestial firmament; no more subject to hunger, and thirst, or cold, or weariness, or shame, or pain, nor any of the frailties that now adhere unto them, but be made like the glorified body of Christ.

7. The souls of the saints united to these bodies shall also be perfected, having far larger capacity to know God, and enjoy him, than now we have; being freed from all ignorance, error, unbelief, pride, hardness of heart, and whatsoever sin doth now accompany us; and perfected in every part of the image of God upon us.

8. The eyes of the glorified body shall in heaven have a glory to behold that is suitable to their bodily capacity. Heaven being not a place where the essence of God is confined, but where a prepared glory will be manifested to make happy the angels and saints with Christ. And whatever other senses the glorified bodies shall then have, (whether formally or eminently, we cannot now conceive what they will be,) they will all be satisfied with suitable delights from God.

9. The blessed person of our Redeemer in our nature glorified, will there be the everlasting object of our delightful intuition and fruition. An object suitable to the eye of the glorified body itself. We shall for ever live in the sight of his face, and in the sense of his unspeakable love.

10. The glorified soul (whether mediately or immediately) shall behold the infinite, most blessed God, and by knowing him be perfected in knowledge. As we shall see the person of Jesus Christ, and the glory of God with open face, and not as in a glass, as now we do, so we shall know so much of the essence of the Deity as we are capable of, to our felicity.

11. With the knowledge of God, and the beatifical vision, will be joined a perfect love unto him, and closure with his blessed will. So that to love him will be the everlasting employment of the soul.

12. This love will be drawn forth into everlasting praise; and it will be our work before the throne of his glory to magnify the Lord for ever.

13. In all this love, and praise, and glory, and in the full fruition of the eternal God, we shall rejoice with full and perfect joy, and we shall have full content, delight, and rest.

14. In all this blessedness and glory of the saints, the glory of God himself will shine, and angels shall admire it, and the condemned spirits with anguish shall discern it, that God may be glorified in our glory.

15. In all this happiness of believers, and his own glory, the Lord will be well pleased, and that blessed will which is the beginning and the end of all, will be accomplished, and will have an eternal complacency, as the saints shall have an endless complacency in God.

This is the glory promised to the saints; this is that good part which they choose. I cite not the texts of Scripture that prove all this, because the things are all so plainly and frequently expressed in the premises. And I shall have occasion to do somewhat of this anon. And so (in brief) I have told you what the good part is.

II. We are next to inquire, What it is that is put by worldly, carnal men, into the other end of the scales, and is set up in comparison with all this everlasting glory? Yea, what is it that is preferred by ungodly men before it? What it is that sin and the world will do for men? What do they find that lose the Lord? What do they get that miss of heaven? What do they choose that refuse the needful, better part?

And here I am even amazed at that which I must give you an account of. O wonderful, astonishing thing, that ever such base, unworthy trifles should, by reasonable men, be put into any comparison with God! Wonderful, that so much madness and wickedness can enter into the mind and heart of man, as to let go all this glory for a toy! And yet more wonderful, that this should be the case of the greatest part of men on earth! And yet more wonderful, that so many make so mad a choice, even when the case is opened to them, and plainly opened, and frequently opened; and when they are earnestly entreated to be wiser, and importuned to make a better choice!

In a word, all that is set against the Lord, and all that is preferred before this everlasting life, and all the portion of ungodly men, is no more than this: The pleasure of sin for a season; the satisfying of the flesh. A little ease, and pelf, and fair words from men as miserable as themselves; and all this but for a little, a very little time, when temperance is as sweet at least; a little that is excessive or forbidden, in wealth, or meat, or drink, or clothes, or

lust, or other fleshly pleasures, is the joy, and the heaven, and the god of the ungodly. The fleshly pleasures which are common to the beasts, and a little vain-glory among men, and this for a short, uncertain time, (and then to pass to everlasting punishment,) this is the chosen portion of the wicked. This is all for which they refuse the Lord, and for which they refuse a holy life. This is all for which they part with Christ, and part with their everlasting peace! This is all that they have for heaven and their salvation! and all for which they sell their souls! To the everlasting shame of sin and sinners, it shall be known that this was all! To the abasing of our own souls, that sometime were guilty of this madness, I shall tell you again that this is all! To the humbling of the best, to the confounding of the wicked, and the amazement of us all, I must say that this is all! This dirt, this dream, this cheat is all that the wicked have for God and glory! This nothing is all that they obstinately prefer and choose before him that is all in all! O wonderful madness, stupidity, and deceit! so common! so wilful! and so incurable! till tender mercy and grace shall cure it, in them the balance will be saved.

Well, the balance is now set before you. You see what is in the one end and in the other. You see the part that believers choose, and the part that is chosen by the rest of the world. And are you not yet resolved which is best, and which to choose?

Two sorts I look to meet with here, to whom I shall apply myself distinctly before I come to the comparative work. First, some will tell me, that all these are needless words; and that there is no man so senseless as to think that temporal things are better than eternal, or the world than God, or sin than holiness.

Ans. Oh that this were true! how happy then were all the world! I grant that many are superficially convinced, that are not converted; and that many have a slight opinion that heaven and holiness is best, that yet have no love to it, and will not seek it above all. But their practical judgment doth not go along with their opinion. They relish the world as sweetest unto them. In the prevailing, deepest thoughts of their hearts, they set most by the pleasures of this world. Why else is their heart most towards them? Why else do they choose them, and refuse to live a holy life? Why have they no delight in God? and why have we so much ado with them, to bring them to a heavenly mind and life, and all in vain? What! will not men be persuaded to choose that which they know is best for them?

Object. Temptations are strong, and men are weak, and so men go against their knowledge.

Ans. I. What do temptations prevail with you to do? Is it not to think well of sinful pleasures, and to think more hardly of the ways of God? Is it not to like a worldly, fleshly life better than a holy life? If not, how can you follow those temptations? And if it be so, then they draw you for that time to think that fleshly pleasures are the better part.

2. But if indeed it be as you say, you are the most unexcusable miscreants in the world. What! do you know that God is best for you, and yet will you fly from him? Do you know that heaven is the only happiness, and yet will you seek this world before it? Do you know what is best for you, and will not have it? and what is worst, and yet will keep it? Will you go to hell, and know whither you are going? And will you run from heaven and damn your-

selves, and know that you do so? yea, and that while we day by day entreat you to the contrary? If this be the case of any one of you, the God of justice shall teach you to know what you are doing, by his everlasting vengeance. Heaven and earth shall be witness against you, your own consciences, and such confessions of your own, shall bear witness against you, that you justly perish, and are damned because you would be damned, and are shut out of heaven because you would not be persuaded to come thither.

Object. But we hope we may have both pleasure here and heaven hereafter; and that we may be saved by the mercy of God and the blood of Christ, without the sanctification of the Spirit, and though we do not live a holy life.

Ans. And who gave you these hopes? Is it God, on whom you pretend to trust? or the devil, that doth deceive you? Certainly not God; for he hath told you over and over, that he will save none but the sanctified, Acts xxvi. 18, and "that except a man be born again, even of the Spirit as well as of water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," John iii. 3, 5, and that "without holiness none shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. And is it God that persuadeth you that his word is false? Doubtless it is the devil. When God had told Adam and Eve, "that in the day that they did eat the forbidden fruit they should die the death," was it not the serpent that gave them hopes of living, and told them that they should not die? If you be at that pass that you will take on you to trust in God, and yet will not believe him, but your trust is but trusting that God is a liar, you are as sottish in your presumption as heathens are in their infidelity. For who is worse, he that believeth that there is no God, (as atheists do,) or he that believeth that God is a liar, which is to be no God, and worse?

If therefore you do believe indeed that heaven is best, you must needs believe that holiness is necessary; yea, and best too, when heaven consisteth so much in perfected holiness. And therefore you must choose and seek with the greatest diligence, that happiness which you confess is best, or never hope that it will be yours. O did you at the heart believe it to be best, and that for you, you would love it, and seek it, and be a holy people without delay. You cannot so turn away from that which you heartily judge to be best for you indeed.

But the most that I have to deal with, are they that cannot be persuaded at the heart, but that feasting, and drinking, and lust, and wealth, and worldly honour are better for them than a holy life, with such promises of heaven as God hath left us. For all or most ungodly men have this persuasion next their hearts, whether they observe it and know of it or not.

Now with such deluded, unbelieving souls, I am next to plead this weighty cause. If thou that readest this be one of them, that takest a worldly felicity, with God's threatenings, to be better and rather to be chosen than holiness, with his promise of future happiness, I will now debate the case with thee, and undertake by the light of Christ, to open the horrible folly of thy mistake. And if I do not give thee such sound and weighty, undeniable evidence, that no man of reason should resist, to prove the choice of holy persons to be the wisest, and their part the best, I will give thee leave to call me a liar and a deceiver for ever.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT IN REASON HE MUST DO THAT WOULD BE CERTAINLY RESOLVED WHICH IS THE BEST PART AND WAY. AND WHO SHALL BE JUDGE.

BUT before we come to the debate, I have two questions to put to thee, that in reason must be first resolved.

The first is, Whether thou art willing to know the truth, and resolved to choose the best part when thou knowest it? It is in vain for me or any man to reason with thee, if thou wouldest not know; and to show thee the truth, if thou hate it, and wilt not acknowledge it when thou seest it; and to bring thee in the clearest light, if thou be beforehand resolved to shut thy eyes. And if thou wilt not choose that which thy conscience shall be convinced thou shouldst choose, as being absolutely best, to what purpose then should it be revealed to thee? Wouldest thou be a happy man or not? Wouldest thou have joy or sorrow? good or evil? Stop here, and before thou goest any further, make me this promise before the Lord, That thou wilt not wilfully resist the light, and that thou wilt choose, and presently and resolvedly choose, that part that thy conscience shall tell thee upon certain evidence is the best. Promise but this, which no man of reason should refuse, and then we may make something of our debate.

My second question is, Who it is that shall be judge between us in this debate? or whose witness it is that you will take for current?

I am willing to stand to the judgment of any that understand the case, and are impartial. I hope you will consent, that we shall take the most competent witnesses and judge. And if so, 1. You know that the devil is no competent judge. It is he that persuadeth you that present delights are the better part, and rather to be chosen than a holy life. But he is God's enemy, and therefore no wonder if he speak against him. He is your deadly enemy, and therefore no wonder if he would deceive you. He is cast out of heaven himself, and would not have you possess the room that he hath lost. He is a wicked, lying spirit, and therefore is not to be believed. He is a murderer from the beginning, and therefore will not speak for your salvation, John viii. 44. If the devil be to be believed, then none are wiser than the ungodly, sensual, worldly men; and none are in a worse condition than those that are despised by the world for holiness, and that suffer all things for a life unseen. But the enmity that is planted in your very natures against the devil, I hope will help you to confess, that he must not be the judge.

2. And truly ignorant, ungodly men are unmeet judges. And it is they that bawl against religion, and speak against they know not what. 1. They are blind by nature, and more blind by customary sin. And must a blind man be your judge or witness in a case of everlasting moment? 2. They are unexperienced in the ways of God. How can they judge of a state that they were never in, and of a way that they never went? They never tried the work of the new birth, nor never tried the holy exercise of faith, or love, or any grace, and therefore you may as well take the judgment of a simple man concerning another country, that was never there, or concerning navigation, that never was at sea, or concerning learning, that never read a book, or concerning music, that never touched an instrument, as the judgment of an unsanctified man concerning holiness and communion with God; unless it be those that have

a common convincing light, that causeth them to approve of that which they neglect themselves.

3. And certainly your own sensuality and fleshly minds are unfit judges of the case, for they also are blind and unexperienced. They are not suited unto spiritual things. To which I may add, 3. That they and ungodly men are partial in the case, and therefore unfit to be witnesses or judges. All the Scripture speaks against the devil, and the wicked, and the lusts of the flesh; and therefore they are a party, even the party that is to be ejected. 4. Yea, they are enemies, and therefore their testimony or judgment is not to be regarded. And what else will speak a word against a holy life, but the devil, the flesh, and wicked men? Not any. And therefore let it be concluded that these are incompetent judges in the case.

But who then shall be judge? Let God be judge, let Christ be judge. Who can, who dare refuse this Judge? Refuse him not; for none but he is fit and competent. Refuse him not; for he will be Judge whether you will or no; and therefore your refusal will be vain. 1. He is most wise, and knoweth all things; and therefore cannot be deceived. 2. He is infinitely good, and therefore cannot do any wrong. He is impartial, and respecteth not the persons of the greatest. He is most just, and therefore cannot pass an unjust sentence. 3. He only is the Judge that hath full authority to make a final decision of the case. 4. And in a word, he is so absolutely perfect, that he is liable to no just exceptions, nor can men or devils have any thing to say against his judgment. Are you agreed then that God shall be your Judge? Will you take that for the better part, which he calls better? If so the controversy is at an end. The living God hath given us his judgment long ago. If you ask me, Where; I will tell you anon, when I have examined some of the witnesses of the case.

And though I am resolved to own no proper final judge but God, yet under him there are many witnesses that are worth the hearing. Indeed I am content to refer the cause to any one that doth but know what he saith, and is not unfaithful (reserving to God the final judgment).

And, 1. Go to the wisest men on earth, and let them be witnesses. What think you of all the prophets and apostles, and of all the ancient fathers of the church? Were not these men wiser than you, or than the sottish scorners that revile the ways which they never went, and speak evil of that which they understand not? If prophets and apostles were not for holiness against a fleshly, worldly life, then I will be of your mind. But if they all as with one heart and mouth do cry down sin, and cry up holiness, why should you then refuse their testimony? Are you wiser than all these?

2. What think you of all the godly, able ministers of Christ that are now alive, or ever were? Are they not wiser than you, and a few drunkards that have scarce wit enough to do the devil's service, without such sottishness as shames his cause? Have none of Christ's ministers, that spend their days in studying and searching after knowledge, more wit even in the matters of God, than a carnal gentleman, or ignorant, malicious wretch, that never used the means for knowledge as these have done? In any other matter you will allow men that have made it the study of their lives to know more than you. If you want counsel for your estates, you will go to one that hath studied the law. If you are sick, you will sooner seek advice of one that hath made it the business of his life to understand diseases and remedies, than to one that never studied it. You will sooner

take the judgment of every tradesman in his trade, than your own or another's that never learned it. Allow but those men to be competent witnesses that have bent their thoughts, and prayers, and cares this way, and the controversy is resolved. For what is it that all our sermons plead for, but holiness in order to everlasting happiness? What is it that so many thousand books are written for, but for holiness? Open the books of the wisest men, and see which side it is that they are on? Go to the wisest, ablest ministers, and ask them which is the better part?

3. If wisdom suffice not, let the best and honestest men be witnesses. Who better than Christ, than his apostles, than all the holy martyrs and confessors of the church, and all the doctors and faithful ministers of Christ? Which side think you were they on that laid down their lives for the cause of Christ? Sure they that would rather burn at a stake, or suffer all the scorns and torments of the world, than forsake a holy, heavenly life, did take it to be better than all the pleasures or profits of the world. Sure all the holy doctors and pastors of the church, that lived such holy lives themselves, and spent their days in praying, and watching, and meditating, and preparing for the life to come, contemning all the vanities of the world, did think that this was the better part, which they followed after with so much diligence and patience as they did?

Hear me a few words, you proud and self-conceited sinners, that will plead for your ungodly ways, and plead against a holy life, and quarrel with the most faithful administrations of your pastors. It is a matter of everlasting moment that you and me do differ about; and which of us is liker to be in the right? I confess I am a weak and ignorant man; but is the sottish, ungodly quarreller any wiser than I am? How camest thou, man, to thy knowledge, that thou thinkest thyself wiser than me, and all the pastors of the church? My knowledge, that is but little, hath cost me almost forty years' hard study. Hast thou read, and meditated, and studied more? Hadst thou better helps and means of knowledge? God usually giveth his gifts in the painful use of means. If I should think myself wiser in thy trade, and able to control thee, thou wouldst judge me a self-conceited fool. What hast thou done for thy knowledge that I have not done? Hast thou prayed for it day and night? So have I. Hast thou had any private way of learning that no man knoweth? Truly I have marvelled at the faces of many ignorant, careless men, that they do not blush when we have thus expostulated with them, when they quarrel with their teachers, and set against them with as brazen a face as if they were all doctors, or had studied forty years, and we were as they are; yea, as if they were wiser than all the apostles, doctors, and pastors of the church. Were it not a wonder indeed, if God should give more knowledge about the matters of salvation to a sensual, voluptuous gentleman, or to an idle drone, or a fellow that scarce ever read over the Bible, and to such as live a worldly, fleshly, and ungodly life, than to all his ministers and servants that love his laws, and meditate in them day and night, and live in prayer and other holy exercises, and make it their daily care and business to conform their hearts and lives to the holy doctrine which they study? Surely God will sooner reveal his mind to a diligent searcher, that feareth and loveth him, than to a lustful epicure, or a drunken, swearing, worldly sot. He that every day abuseth the Holy Ghost that should be his teacher, is not so likely to come to knowledge, as he that humbly learneth and obeyeth him. It is a strange

evidence that most wicked men do give us to prove themselves wiser than their teachers; when they can scarce give us a wise account of the principles of religion contained in a catechism, they will prove themselves wise by despising wisdom, and railing at the wise. They prove themselves learned by reproaching the learned. They prove themselves godly enough to be saved, by hating and scorning them that are godly; and prove themselves the servants of Christ, by speaking against his service. They prove themselves wise enough to teach or quarrel with their teachers, by refusing to learn, and to be any wiser, and by babbling out their sinful folly. And when they have done, they prove that their hearts for all this are as good as the precisest, by prating against that holiness which is the only health and goodness of the heart, and by showing us to our grief that they neither know what goodness is, nor what is in their hearts. They prove to us that they have hopes for all this, of being saved and seeing the face of God, by hating them that are pure in heart, that have the promise of seeing his face, Matt. v. 8; and by reviling or forsaking the way of salvation, and by showing us on their souls the open marks of the wrath of God, and of a state of condemnation. This is the devil's logic; and this is the wisdom of the wicked. They may next go further, and prove that they are chaste by reviling chastity; and prove that they are sober by speaking against sobriety, and by wallowing in their vomit; or prove that they know all arts, and trades, and sciences by reviling them. And as they now prove that they are the free-men of Christ by showing us the devil's fetters upon them, so, if they hold out, they will shortly have nothing to prove themselves in heaven, but by showing us the flames of hell which they endure.

If therefore all the holiest and wisest men on earth may be admitted to be witnesses, then holiness must be your best, and all things else be nothing worth in comparison of it.

5. Moreover, if yet you would have more witnesses, shall those be heard that have tried both states, the state of sin and the state of holiness; and that have gone both ways; and therefore are able to speak to us by experience?

If you were to take advice about any worldly business, you would choose a man of experience for your counsellor; an experienced physician for your bodies; and an experienced tradesman for your work. You will sooner believe a traveller that hath seen the places he speaks of, (if he be honest,) than another. Godly men have tried both ways: alas! they have known, and too much known, the way of sin; and they have tried the holy way that you dislike. I think therefore that they are competent witnesses. And if their witness be worth any thing, the cause must go against the ungodly; for their lives tell you their judgment. Their hatred to sin, their diligent seeking after God, their constant endeavours in a holy course, their suffering any thing rather than forsake this holy way when once they have sincerely chosen it; all these do fully acquaint you with their judgment. Do you think it is for nothing that the holy servants of the Lord do stick so close to him, and labour so constantly in his work? Surely if they had not found that this way is beyond comparison the best, you might draw them from it into a state of ungodliness again; at least fire, and sword, and torment might persuade them to forsake it. Something he findeth in it that is good, that will let go his life and all the world for it.

What say you now? have you any just exceptions against the testimony of these experienced men?

The ungodly cannot be competent witnesses; for they have tried but one side: they have had experience of a profane, a fleshly, worldly life; but they never yet tried a holy life. And therefore how should they be fit to tell you what good is in the way of God, which they never travelled in? or what gain is in the heavenly treasure, which they never traded for? or what beauty is in the face of Christ and glory, which they never had an eye of faith to see? or what sweetness is in the hidden manna, which they never tasted? If you say that many that have tried the way of godliness, have turned from it, and are against it; I beseech you weigh my answer.

1. It is not one of a hundred that doth so, not in these apostatizing times, when all seducers are let loose. And is one man's judgment more regardable than a hundred, yea, many hundred?

2. Nay, it is no one at all! Those that you say turn off, are only such as tried an opinionative religiousness, and some of the outward duties of christianity, but they never tried the power of a living, rooted faith, nor the predominant love of God in the soul, nor a living hope of the heavenly glory, nor the sweetness of a heavenly life, nor the mortification of the fleshly interest, and true self-denial. These are the vital parts of christianity, which these few apostates never tried; though some of them have had some acquired counterfeits of them, and some good gifts of common grace, and think that none had more than they had.

Sinner, I beseech thee for the Lord's sake, deal faithfully with thy poor soul, when all lies at the stake. Wilt thou take the judgment of a swaggering gallant, or a scoffing, worldly, or ungodly sot, that none of them ever truly tried a state of holiness; and wilt thou refuse the judgment of God, and of all his servants that have tried it? Go to any godly man, and ask him which of these ways he hath found by experience to be best; and hear what he will say to thee. He will be ashamed to hear thee make a question of it. He will tell thee, Alas! friend, I was once deceived by sin, and deceived with the pleasure of my flesh, and the glittering glory and riches of this world, as you are now. I once was a stranger to the life of faith, and the hopes of heaven, and the holiness of the saints. But it was by the mere delusion of the devil, and it was the fruit of the blindness and deadness of my heart. I knew not what I did, nor where I stood, nor what I chose, nor what I set light by! I never well considered of the matter, but carelessly followed the sway of my fleshly inclination and desires! But now I see I was the devil's slave, and my pleasures were my fetters, and my own corrupt affections were my bondage; and I now find that I did but delude my soul; I got nothing by all that the world did for me, but provision for my after-sorrows; I had been now in torments if I had but died in that condition. I would not be again in the case that I was in for all this world, or a thousand such worlds! That life that once I thought the best, hath cost me dear, even the breaking of my heart; and a thousand thousandfold dearer would have cost me, if the dearest blood and recovering grace of my dearest Lord had not prevented it. O had I not been unspeakably beholden to the mercy of the Lord, even to that mercy which I then made light of, I had been undone for ever; I had been laid under everlasting desperation before this. Now I find that there is no life so sweet as that which I then was so loth to choose! Now it is my only grief that I was holy no sooner, and can be more holy than I am. Oh that I had more of that quickening, comforting, saving grace! Oh that I were further from my former sin-

ful, fleshly state! Oh that I could get nearer God, though I parted with all the prosperity of this world! I now find what I lost by my continuing in sin so long; but then I knew it not. O friend, as you love your soul, take warning by me, and make use of my experience, and give up yourself to God betimes! This, or to this purpose, would the answer of an experienced person be, if you should ask him, which is the better way?

But if you say, that thus we would be ourselves the judges, and bring the matter into our own hands; I answer you, 1. It is true we would be ourselves your helpers, and do the best we could for your salvation: and if you will neither help yourselves, nor give us leave to help you, take what you get by it; we have done our part.

But, 2. I will not yet set you with you. I will further make you this reasonable offer. I demand of thee, whoever thou art that readest these words, Whether thou know of any man on earth that thou thinkest to be a wiser man than thyself? If not, thou art so like the devil in pride, that no wonder if thou be near him in malignity and misery. If thou do know of any wiser than thyself, go with me, or with some faithful minister to that man, and ask him, Whether a diligent, holy life be not much better than any other life on earth? And if he do not say as I say here, and as Christ saith in my text, that the godly choose the better part, or else if I prove him not a very sot before thy face, I will give thee leave to brand my understanding in thy esteem, with the notes of infamy and contempt.

Yea, more than so, I will allow thee to go to one that differeth from me in the way of his religion. Ask an anabaptist, if thou think him more impartial, whether a holy and heavenly heart and life be not the best? and try whether he will not say as I do. Ask those that you call episcopal, or presbyterian, or independents, or separatists: ask an Arminian, or one of the contrary mind: yea, ask a papist, and see whether he will not say as I do. It is true, they are every one of them of minds somewhat different about some points in the order and manner of their seeking God. But all of them, that are but sober men, will confess as with one mouth, that God should be loved above all, and sought and served above all, and that all should live a holy, diligent, heavenly life.

2. But yet if all this will not satisfy you, I will come yet lower. Who is it that you would have to be judge or witness in this case? Is it thy malignant, or worldly, or drunken and ungodly friend? I am contented that the case be referred even to him, and to as many of them as thou wilt, upon condition that he will but first try the way that he is to judge of. Let him but make an unfeigned trial of a life of holy faith, and love, and obedience, and self-denial, as long as I have done, and we will receive his testimony. Nay more, let him thus try a life of holiness, (inwardly and outwardly,) but one year; yea, or but one month, or day, or hour, and we will take his testimony. But to be judged by a man in a matter of salvation, that speaks of what he never knew nor tried one hour, but speaks against he knows not what, this is a motion too bad to be made to a very Bedlam.

6. If yet you are not resolved which is the better part and way, to whom do you desire to refer it? Shall heathens, Jews, and infidels be judges? Why if they be, they will give the cause against you. Jews and most of the heathen world do profess to believe a life to come, where some are happy and some are miserable; and they commonly profess that all men should obey their Maker, and make it

their chiefest care and labour in this life to be happy in the next: heathens will confess this. And yet I suppose you will easily confess that these men are none of the fittest judges. The way to life by Jesus Christ they do not understand. But that the world is vanity, and nothing to be preferred before our happiness in the world to come, this they will commonly acknowledge. And if the lives of the most of them contradict this profession, yet still they are forced to confess the truth; and truth is not the less truth, because they that confess it will not obey it. Nay, what greater testimony can you wish to silence your unbelieving thoughts, than the witnesses of the enemies of the truth, who as they condemn themselves by bearing witness to that which they refuse to practise, so shall their witness aggravate your condemnation, if you will live below it. What! are you christians, and yet refuse to come up in your choice and lives to the doctrine of heathens and infidels?

7. I know you will think at least that those heretics that are daily bawling against us, will not be partial on our side. If you think that this doctrine is contrived by us for any ends and interests of our own, hearken then to our enemies. These railing quakers, that can scarce tell how to speak a word of the ministers of Christ, but what is the spawn of venomous, fiery, bitter malice, do for all this cry up holiness of life. Though they corrupt the doctrine of Christ so odiously, and speak like heathens in many of their ecstasies and writings, yet do they openly cry down your sensual, worldly ways. Do you not hear how they rail at us for your sakes that are vicious and ungodly, and tell us that you are the fruit and shame of our ministry? Though these words be the fruit and shame of their malicious heresy, (for all the world may know that it is our daily work to procure your conversion, and that you keep your sins, and refuse a holy, heavenly life, in despite of us,) yet I must tell you that these wretches shall condemn you. The streets and congregations have heard them cry out against your ungodly lives, and yet you will not turn to God. Must good and bad, must ministers and raging heretics, give in their testimony against you, and yet will you not be satisfied and come in?

8. If yet you know not the better part, to whom will you appeal? Will you go to the multitude and put it to the vote, not only among christians, but throughout the world? Truly there is no great reason for this, when most men are so blind and wicked; but yet if you should, they would go against you, twenty, if not a hundred to one. I know well enough that when it comes to practice, they will not live a holy life, and show thereby a root of bitterness. But if you ask them what their judgment is, whether God or the world, whether heaven or earth, whether holiness or sin be best, and to be chosen, most men are against you, and would give it you as their judgment under their hands, that God and everlasting life should be first sought. Though by this confession they condemn themselves, yet is it their confession. As I told you before, the Jews are for this doctrine; the Turks and other Mahometans are for it; most of the heathen world is for it, doctrinally, though they will not practise it. Only there are three sorts against it in the world, that ever I heard of. One sort are the cannibals that eat men's flesh, and go naked, and live like beasts, and never heard of another life; and some such savages as they. Another sort are a few of the heathen philosophers and their followers, that differ in this from all the rest. A third sort is here and there a debauched apostate, that by the righteous judgment of

God are so far forsaken by his grace, for their pride and falsehood against the truth, that they have lost the belief of a life to come, and live under the visible plagues of God upon their souls, as men that have sinned wilfully against the truth, and have "no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fire that shall destroy the adversary," Heb. vi. 6, 7; x. 26; and are near the state of the devils themselves, that are reserved in the chains of spiritual darkness to the judgment of the great day, Jude 6; Job xxi. 30. And will you take the judgment of here and there a forlorn wretch, a deplorable apostate, an epicure, or a country of inhuman cannibals, before the judgment of the most wise and godly, and of almost all the world? What excellency hath the understanding of these singular men, that it should be so valued above all others? You know partly in this place, who they be that are of this opinion. And is their number, or wisdom, or conversation such as should move you to be of their opinion? Shall half a dozen desperate apostates of ungodly lives seem wiser to you than all the world? And yet I am persuaded that if you go to any, even of these few apostates, whatever they think, they will confess that a holy life is best. And yet have you not witness enough against you?

9. Who then shall be the judge? Shall we appeal to the very things themselves, and to the daily experience of the world? You see that worldlings labour for the wind. You see that all their care and pains will not avoid the stroke of death, that turneth the proudest flesh into a clod, and maketh dirt of the greatest prince. You see that wealth and honour do but mock men, and leave them in the grave to darkness and corruption. And when you are sure that this will be the upshot of all your fleshly pleasure and worldly gains, are you not satisfied past all doubt, that the smallest hopes or possibility of another life should be sought with far more care than this?

10. If none of these witnesses be regarded by thee, I know not whom to appeal to, but thyself! And wilt thou needs thyself decide the case? Hast thou knowledge and experience, honesty and impartiality, enough to fit thee to be judge? If thou hadst thou wouldst make no doubt of it, but have been resolved for heaven and holiness ere this. Thy unresolvèdness proves thee blind and partial, and very much forsaken by the Spirit of light. And should such a one be judge? But go to, I will much refer thy case to thyself (reserving still the final judgment of the Lord) upon these just and reasonable conditions.

(1.) Wilt thou first thyself but use those necessary means for knowledge, in reading, fasting, praying, watching, meditation, conference with the wise, and such like, as all those do that come to ripe and saving knowledge? If I refer my health to thee as my physician, thou must not refuse to try my pulse, and see my urine, and use the means to find out the disease. Wouldst thou be my lawyer, and refuse to read my evidences, and study my case? And wilt thou needs be judge thyself, of the matters of thine own felicity or misery, and yet refuse to read, and hear, and pray, and meditate, and use the necessary means of understanding? Wilt thou lie in bed and work out thy salvation? Wilt thou make use of no one's eyes but thy own, and yet wilt thou wink, or draw the curtains, or shut the windows, and cast away thy spectacles, and neither come into the sunshine, nor use a candle? This is but to say, I will wilfully condemn my soul, and none shall hinder me.

(2.) But yet another condition I must propose. If thou wilt but (as I said before of others) a while

make trial of a holy life, and try in thyself, what faith, and hope, and charity are, and try what self-denial is, I will then refer the matter to thyself. Go back from God if thou find any reason for it; and turn from Christ, and heaven, and holiness, if thou do not like them. But if thou wilt needs be the judge, and wilt not be persuaded to try the thing, thou art a partial, self-deceiving judge.

(3.) But if this much cannot be obtained, at least be considerate in thy judging. If thou wilt but take thyself aside from the noise of worldly vanities and deceits, and commune seriously with thy heart, and bethink thee as before the Lord, and as one that knows he must shortly die, whether heaven or earth should be sought most carefully, and whether God or thy flesh should be served most resolutely and diligently; and if thou wilt but dwell so long upon these manlike thoughts till they are digested, and truth have time to show its face, I dare then leave the question to thyself. The next time that the sermon or any affliction comes near thee, and awakeneth thy conscience, do but withdraw thyself into secret, and soberly bethink thee of the matter, what hopes thou hast from the world, and what thou mayst have from God; what time is, and what eternity is; and give but conscience leave to speak, and then I will venture the issue upon thy conscience: for thee I mean, though I must stick to a better judge myself. Doth not conscience sometimes tell thee, that the holiest persons are the wisest, and that thy labour is liker at last to be lost and repented of, than theirs? Doth not conscience sometimes make thee wish that thou wert but in as safe a case as they; and that thou mightest but die the death of the righteous, and that thy last end might be as theirs?

(4.) But if all this will not serve the turn, thou shalt be judge thyself; but it shall be when thou art more capable of judging. If God by grace shall change thy heart, I will stand to thy judgment. If he do not, when thy graceless, guilty soul shall pass out of thy pampered, dirty flesh, and appear before the dreadful God, I will then leave the case to thy conscience to judge of. To all eternity it shall be partly left to the judgment of thy conscience, whether sin or holiness be better? and whether saints or careless sinners were the wiser? and whether it had not been better for thee to have spent that life in preparing for thy endless life, which thou spendest in slighting it, and caring for the world and flesh? Then thou shalt be judge thyself of these matters; but under a more severe and righteous Judge; and so as shall make thy tearing heart to wish with many a thousand groans, that thou hadst judged wiser in time.

But because that judgment will be to desperation, and too late for hope or any help, let conscience speak when thou liest sick, and seest that thou art a dying man. Then judge thyself whether a holy or a worldly life be better; and whether it had not been thy wiser course to have sowed to the Spirit, that so thou mayst reap everlasting life, than to have sowed to the flesh, from which thou now lookest to reap no better than corruption. "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. vi. 6, 7.

But because it will be very late to stay till thy own death draw so near thee, go but to thy neighbours that lie in sickness, looking for the stroke of death; yea, to thy companions in sin and folly, and ask them then which way is better? Ask them then which is the better part? Whether now they had rather be the holiest saints, or such as they have been? Whether now they had not rather they had spent their time

in the most careful seeking for everlasting life, than in doing as they have done? Say to thy old companion now, Brother, I see you are near your end; the mortal stroke of death is coming; you are now leaving all the pleasures of this world. I pray you tell me now your judgment, whether mirth, and sport, and feasting, and drinking, and wealth, and honour, be more to be sought than life eternal? and whether hearing and reading the word of God, and praying, and meditating, and flying from sin, be as bad or as needless a thing as we have formerly taken it to be? Had you rather appear before the Lord in the case of those that we derided as puritans, and too precise, for making such ado about salvation, or in the case that you and I have lived in? Ask but this question to thy old companions, and try whether the consciences of almost all that approach their end, do not bear witness against ungodliness, and do not justify the holy diligence of the saints. It is but two days since a poor drunkard of a neighbouring parish being ready to pass out of this world, did send hither, and to other parishes, in the terrors of his soul, to desire our congregations to take warning by him, and to strive with God, if possible, for some mercy for his soul, that was passing in terrors into another world because of the guilt of his odious sin.

Well, sirs, I have gone along with you to all the creatures in this world, that have any fitness to judge in this case, and if all these will not serve, we must go to another world for judgment, or stay till you come there.

11. And really do you think if we could speak with angels or departed souls, that they would not consent with God and all believers in their testimony? Oh how they would rebuke their madness, that make any doubt of so great, so plain, so sure a truth, as this of the necessity and the excellency of a holy life! None are so fully resolved of this question as they that have tasted the end of both, and past the righteous judgment of the Lord. They that are feeling the anguish of their consciences, and the tormenting displeasure of Almighty God, are satisfied by this time, whether the godly or ungodly were the wiser men, and whether sanctity or sensuality were the better course. They that are rejoicing with Christ in glory, are satisfied perfectly of this question, and are far from repenting of their choice. Christ tells you enough, in the case of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi. how men judge in the life to come.

12. But if all these witnesses will not serve you, what shall we say to you? Whom will you choose to be your counsellor? There is none left that I remember, unless you will go to the devil for advice. But against this I have told you enough before. Will he speak for holiness that is a spirit of uncleanness; and will he show thee heaven that labour-eth purposely to hide it from thee till thou have lost it? Or will he let thee see the odiousness and danger of thy sin, when it is the snare and bait by which he hopeth to undo thee? But yet for all this, let me tell thee that thou mayst learn even from the tempting enemy himself, the truth of that which I am now asserting. For as the devil himself believeth it, when he persuadeth thee not to believe it; so the very nature and manner of his temptations, may help thee to perceive that heaven is attainable, and holiness is the only way. Would he make so much ado about it, to keep thee from the believing it and seeking it, if there were not a heaven for thee to find? Why is he so eager to draw thee unto sin, if sin be not hurtful to thee? Dost thou not feel the importunity of his temptations? It is easy to observe

them. Why is he so much against a holy doctrine, and a holy life, and a holy people, if it were not that he knows the necessity and worth of holiness for thy good? The actions of a knowing enemy may do very much to acquaint us with the truth. Besides this, he hath oft appeared in bodily shapes (as I am able to prove by undeniable evidence); sometimes to entice men to sin, and sometimes to be God's executioner to afflict them for it, and sometimes to make a covenant with witches and conjurers for their souls, as many a hundred of them have confessed at their death. And why should he be so desirous of thy soul, if thou hadst none to lose? or so desirous to deceive thee, and deprive thee of salvation, if there were none for thee to lose? and if this were not the chief concernment of thy soul, why should thy chief enemy so much regard it? Thou seest that he is not so careful to deprive thee of thy fleshly pleasure. He careth not how much thou hast of this. The more the glutton is pleased with his cheer, and the more the drunkard delighteth in his cups, and the more the fornicator is pleased in his filthiness, and every voluptuous person in his voluptuousness, the devil is pleased so much the more. He cares not if thou have all the kingdoms of the world, if he can deprive thee of the everlasting kingdom. Nor will he grudge thee the glory and honour of the world, if he can but keep thee from the heavenly glory. He will allow thee the hypocrite's reward, which is the applause of men, if he can but keep thee from the saint's reward, which is the favour of God. He cares not how much of thy good things thou hast here, if he can deprive thee of the everlasting good. It is his desire that thou have thy portion in this life, that thou mayst miss of the believer's portion in the next. Certainly the devil himself, by his temptations, apparitions, and contracts, doth plainly tell us of a life to come, and what it is that conduceth most to our good or hurt, our joy or torment; and consequently teacheth us what to choose, by tempting us so palpably and eagerly to refuse it.

You see now what a jury of witnesses I have brought in, to testify which is the better part. The devil and the wicked are added to the rest, because you will hear no better witnesses. If you will, here are enough whose testimonies are unquestionable.

But when all is done, it is the Lord that is and will be Judge. All these are but witnesses to dispose thee to receive his sentence. Thou art no believer, till the authority of the word of God will serve to satisfy and resolve thee.

CHAPTER III.

FULL PROOF (IN TWENTY QUERIES) FROM REASON ITSELF THAT THERE IS A LIFE TO COME, AND HOLINESS IS THE WAY TO IT, AND THE BETTER PART. AND THAT THE GOSPEL IS THE CERTAIN WORD OF GOD, (IN FIFTEEN QUERIES MORE,) WITH ANSWERS TO THE INFIDELS' OBJECTIONS.

AND by this time I come somewhat nearer to the infidel, and am ready to answer his foregoing question, Where shall I find the judgment or testimony of the Lord? Oh, saith the unbeliever, if I were but sure that there were a life hereafter, where the godly and wicked shall be differently rewarded, as the Scripture speaks, then I must confess he were no better than a madman that would prefer this world,

or wilfully live in sin, and would not seek heaven with all his might, and be as earnest in holiness as the strictest saint! But I am not sure that this is true, and that there is any such difference after death to be expected.

Ans. Alas, poor wretch! art thou at that pass? Hast thou so far lost the knowledge of God, and of thyself, and of thy end and business here, and of the word and works of God, as to turn worse than Jew, or Turk, or heathen, even to think thyself a beast, that hath no life nor happiness but this? If this be thy case, I cannot now stand to deal with thee according to thy necessity. I am now dealing with them that confess a life hereafter. And because we cannot in all our writtings repeat over the same things, I desire thee to peruse what I have already written for such as thee, in the second part of "The Saints' Rest," and in a treatise called, "The Unreasonableness of Infidelity;" and at present take only some brief advertisements for thy conviction.

Query 1. And first, whereas you say, you are not sure of a life hereafter, I demand of you, Whether you are sure that there is no such life? I am sure you are not. If you think you are, (which none but a debauched man can think, that hath put out the eye of natural light,) let us hear your proof, and you shall soon be told the vanity of it. But if you are not sure that there is no such life, then I would know of you, Whether a possibility of such everlasting things deserve not greater care and diligence than is used by the holiest saint on earth? You say, you are not sure that there is a heaven for saints. But what if it prove true, (as nothing more true,) will you sit still, and lose it for you know not what? or for want of a little care in seeking it? You say, you know not whether there be a hell for ungodly men, or no. But what if it prove true, (as certainly it will,) where are you then? Will you venture yourselves upon the possibility of such an endless loss and torment, which now you might on reasonable terms escape? You will confess that a possibility of a kingdom should be more regarded than the certainty of a pin or a feather. And a possibility of some tormenting disease but for twenty years, should more carefully be avoided than the certain stinging of a nettle.

Query 2. You say, you are not sure that there is a life to come. But are you sure to continue the life you have? Or is it any great matter that you are called to lose, for the obtaining of that life, that you are not sure of? You know the contrary, or easily may do. You are sure that you have not long to be here. Nothing more sure than that you will shortly die. And you are not sure but it may be tomorrow. And while you are here, it is nothing worth the naming (but what hath reference to another life) that you do possess. What have you to your flesh, but meat, and drink, and sleep, and lust, and such kind of bestial delights, which is better be without than have, if we could also be without the need of them. Can you call these by the name of happiness, without renouncing your reason and experience? You say, you know not what God will do for you hereafter. But you know what sin and the world will do for you here. Even nothing but hold you in a transitory dream, and then dismiss you into rottenness and dust. If you were not certain of another life, as long as you are most certain of the vanity of this, doth not reason tell you, that a possible everlasting glory should be preferred before a certain vanity? If you were not sure to get any thing by God and a holy life, yet as long as you are sure, even as sure as you live, that you can lose nothing by it, that is worth the talking of, is not the case

then resolved, which way is the better? If you say, you shall lose your fleshly pleasures; I answer, They are not worth the having. The pleasure doth not countervail the trouble; no more than the delight of scratching (as I said before) doth countervail the trouble of the itch. Moderation and temperance is sweeter than excess. If too much be better than enough, and that which hurteth nature better than that which helpeth it, then self-destroying, and fighting against your bodily welfare, would be best. Is not a temperate meal more pleasant than a gluttonous surfeit, that is worse to the feeling of the glutton the next day? Is not common food that costeth not much, and kindleth no troublesome itch in a man's appetite, more pleasant than enticing, costly dainties? Is not so much drink as nature requireth, much better than that which makes the stomach sick, the brain witless, if not the purse pennyless, and breedeth many noisome diseases to the flesh, and hasteneth death, that hasteth of itself? By that time the gaudy apparel, the dainty fare and drink, is paid for; and by that time the flesh hath suffered all that pain and sickness that are the ordinary followers of excess, methinks you should say, that if there were no hell your sin were a punishment itself, and that in this life it brings more pain than pleasure, and that such kind of pleasure was not worth the keeping, to the hazard of the least possibility of an everlasting life. Wouldst thou, under thy hand and seal, give away thy hopes and possibility of everlasting life, and run the hazard of an everlasting torment, for the pleasures of sin, or to avoid the trouble of a holy life? Why then thou mayst as well even sell it all for pins, or points, or children's rackets. Then thou art as foolish as the worst of witches, that sell their souls to a lying spirit, that, whatever he doth promise them, doth pay them with nothing but calamity and deceit. When thou comest to know better what it is that the world can do for thee, thou wilt then confess there was nothing in it, that should not have been slighted for the smallest hopes of an everlasting life. Dost thou think the world will be much better to thee for the time to come than hitherto it hath proved? Deceive not thyself; it will prove the same; yea, and worse at last. Look back now upon all the pleasures of thy life, from thy infancy to this day, and tell me what the better thou art for them. If this were the hour of thy death, would all the profits or pleasures of thy life be any comfort to thee, or make thy death a whit the easier? Have the dust or bones of the carcases of voluptuous sinners any comfort or benefit now, by all the pleasure of their former sin? Surely I need not all these words to a man of common understanding, to convince him that if heaven were as uncertain as the infidel doth imagine, a man of reason should venture all that he hath upon the mere possibility; because his all indeed is nothing, and he is sure he can be no loser by the bargain, it being not so much as the venture of a pin for the possibility of a crown.

Query 3. But that is not all. What if I shall prove to thee past all denial, that even in this life holiness is far the most delightful, gainful, honourable life, and that the ungodly live in a continual misery? Will not this serve turn to convince thee that a holy life should be undertaken for a mere possibility of heaven, if we had no more? Read but the proofs of this anon, and if I make it not good to thee, call me a deceiver. But if I prove that holiness is the sweetest life on earth, and heaven the sure reward hereafter; and that sin is a misery itself to the sinner, and hell the certain punishment hereafter; then see that thou confess that God is a good Master, and

the devil a bad one; for at last thou shalt be forced to confess it.

Query 4. Well! you say you are not sure that there is another life for man. But have you used the means to make it sure to you, and to be well resolved? If you have, then you have impartially searched, and prayed, and meditated on the word of God, and heard what can be said by wiser men, for that which you say you are not sure of; but if you have trusted to your own understanding, and neglected meditation, prayer, inquiry, and other needful means, what wonder then if you be uncertain, even whether there be a heaven or hell? It is no disgrace to physic, or astronomy, or music, or languages, or navigation, but to you, if you say that you are uncertain of all their conclusions, when you never studied them, or at least never studied them with that diligence and patience as those must do that will attain a certain, satisfying knowledge.

Query 5. Moreover, if you are so uncertain of a life to come, I would ask you, Whether, in all your search and study, you have behaved yourselves as learners, or rather as proud, self-conceited men, that think themselves wise enough before they learn, to try and judge their books and teachers. If this be your case, no wonder if you be infidels. If you come with such a disposition to read a book of astronomy, or physic, you will never learn. If you go to any schoolmaster, or to learn any language or science, and think yourselves able before you have learnt them, to try and judge your teacher and all the books you read, and so will reject all that you do not understand, or agreeeth not with your former conceits, you will sooner prove doting fools than scholars, and sooner be the derision of rational men, than come to the knowledge which you pretend to seek. Come to Christ's school as little children in meekness and humility, and a willingness to be taught, and patiently continue in the use of means till learning can be attained, before you think yourselves fit to censure the truth of God which you are learning, and then tell me whether God doth not resolve you.

Query 6. Moreover, I would know of you that doubt so of the life to come, whether you have been true to so much light as you received, and have lived in obedience to the truth which God revealed to you? Or rather, whether you have not wilfully and knowingly lived in some secret or open sin, and striven against the light and Spirit of Christ, and abused the truth which you have known, and used violence with your own consciences? If so, (which it is ten to one is your case,) it is no wonder if you are infidels, forsaken of God, whom you first forsook, and given up to pride and self-deceit.

Query 7. If man have no life to live but this, and no further end of his actions than a beast, nor any further account to give, then he is indeed but one of the higher sort of beasts, differing but gradually from a dog, as a dog doth from a swine. And if this be indeed thy judgment of thyself, I demand, Whether or no thou be content to be used as a beast? Wilt thou not take it ill to be called or judged a beast by another? or wouldst thou have others judge better of thee than thyself? Wouldst thou have no man regard thy propriety or life any more than a beast is to be regarded? A beast hath no propriety, no not of that which nature hath given him. You accuse not yourselves of doing him any wrong, when you deprive the sheep of his fleece, nor when you make a constant drudge of your horse or ox. And do you think it lawful before God, for any one that can but master you, to do the like by you? to strip you naked, and to make packhorses of you,

and use you as their slaves? We take it to be no sin to take away the lives of beasts, if it be but for our own commodity. We kill oxen, and calves, and sheep, and swine, and fowl, and fishes for our daily food. And is it lawful before God for others to do so by you? Should nothing restrain them but want of power to overcome you? If you say that you are beasts, as beasts you should be used.

Query 8. Moreover, I would know of you, Whether you think that there is any other world, which spiritual inhabitants do possess? If you say no, you go against all reason and experience. Against experience, because that many a hundred witches, and many apparitions, and haunted houses, have put the matter out of question (for all that many reports of such things have been false). And against all reason, because we see that this inferior world is every where replenished with inhabitants. The earth hath men and beasts, the air hath birds, the water hath fishes. And can a man of common reason, then, think that the superior regions which we see, and which we see not, (which for greatness, and for splendour and excellency, are a thousandfold above this earth,) should all be uninhabited and destitute? and that there are not creatures also there, for excellency and number incomparably beyond the inhabitants of this lesser, lower world! Certainly nothing is made in vain, nor are the works of God so monstrously disproportioned and discomposed, as for the nobler parts to be only for the baser. The heavens that are over us, and all the vast and most excellent parts of the creation, have a use that is answerable to their excellency. God makes not cottages to be inhabited, and palaces and cities to lie waste and desert to no use.

But if you grant there is another world proportionably replenished with creatures, you may easily see from thence a probability, that man shall be translated thither. Why not the soul of man, as well as those spirits that in assumed shapes have made their appearances unto man? As all things ripen to their perfection, why should it seem any more improbable that the soul shall pass hence into the world of spirits, than that the chicken shall come out of the shell, and the infant out of the womb, into so wide and light a world as this, when before they were shut up in a narrow darkness, and never heard nor knew any thing of that world which they enter into?

Query 9. Do you know why it is that God hath given man that knowledge, and free-will, and capacity to seek another life, which beasts have not, if he be intended for no other life than beasts? If God be not most wise, he is not God. If he be, then he maketh not so excellent faculties as these in vain, but fitteth all his creatures to their uses. Every workman will do so by his work. Why is a knife made keen, but to cut with? And what are the wheels of your watch or clock made for, but to show you the hour of the day? Look now into the whole frame of the soul of man, and judge by its aptitude what it is made for.

(1.) Man is capable of knowing that there is a God, and knowing his attributes, which beasts are not, because they be not made to enjoy him.

(2.) Man is capable of knowing his relation to this God, that he is our Creator, and we his creatures; he our Lord, and we his own; he our Ruler, and we his subjects; he our Benefactor, and we his beneficiaries. And we are capable of knowing our duty in these several relations. And certainly all this is not in vain.

(3.) Man is capable of knowing that the everlasting love of God is that alone that can make him happy. And why would God show him this, if he

were not capable of enjoying it? Reason tells men that nothing here can make us happy, and that God can do it.

(4.) Man is capable of knowing that certain duties are to be performed in order to the pleasing of his Lord, and what those duties are; which would not be if we were not capable of pleasing him, and so of being happy in him.

(5.) Man is made capable of desiring after the everlasting love of God; and that above all things in this world. And God hath not made such desires in vain.

(6.) Man is capable of loving God as an object everlastingly to be enjoyed, and that above all other things.

(7.) Man also is capable of referring all the creatures unto God, and using all things but as means to this everlasting end. Thus do believers. And surely all this is not in vain.

(8.) Man is a creature that cannot regularly be moved according to his nature, to the performance of his duty to God and man, unless it be by motives fetched from the life to come. Take off that poise, and all his orderly motion will soon cease. Nothing below such everlasting things are fit or sufficient morally to govern him, and cause him to live as man should live.

(9.) He is possessed of actual fears of everlasting punishment, and shall never perfectly overcome these fears by his greatest unbelief.

(10.) He is capable of fetching his highest pleasures from the forethoughts of everlasting happiness, and receiving from hence his encouragement in well-doing and foretaste of the reward. Now this being the natural frame of man, as is past denial, (when brutes have no such thing at all,) let reason judge whether the God of nature have made this nature of man in vain, that we see hath suited every other creature to its use; our horses to carry us, and our ox to draw for us, and the earth to bear its several fruits for them and us. And hath he mistaken only in the making of man, and gone beyond his own intention, and fitted him for those uses and enjoyments that he was never meant for? These are not imputations to be cast upon the most wise and gracious God.

Query 10. Moreover, I demand of you, What is the end of man, and all these special faculties, if there be no life for him after this? Either he hath an end which he is to intend, or he hath none. If none, then he hath nothing to do in the world. For all actions of man are nothing else but the intending of some end, and the choice and use of means for the attaining it. Man must lie down and sleep out his days, if this be true that he hath no end. Nay, sleep itself hath some. And he cannot choose but intend some end and seek it, if he would never so fain, unless he will take some opiate, stupifying potion, or run mad. And he that made him also, and placed him here, had some end in it. For if man had thus no end, he could have no maker or efficient cause. For every rational efficient intendeth an end in all his works. (And he that made men rational, is eminently much more knowing than his creature.) And if we had no maker, then we have no being, and so are no men.

But if man unquestionably have an end, it is either something that is nobler or baser than himself, and some state that is better or worse than that in which he seeks his end. Baser it cannot be; for that were monstrous, that baser things should be the end of the more noble. Beasts are made for man, and therefore not man for beasts. The earth is made for beasts and men, and therefore we are not

made for the earth. Our means is not our end. If you grant that we are made for the God that made us, (as nothing more sure,) then how is it that God can be our end if there be no life but this? 1. Here we are but in seeking him, and still are forced to complain that we fall short. Here we are but in the use of means. 2. We find that our knowledge, desires, and love will here reach no higher than to carry us on towards that perfection that is in our eye, and not to satisfy the soul. The creature that doth attain his end, hath rest in it, and is better than before. But we have nothing here like rest, and should be in a worse condition hereafter, if we had no more. 3. Here we sin against the Lord, and wrong him more than we serve him. We know but little of him and his work; and serve and praise him but a little, and not according to the capacity of our nature. And therefore if he have not a higher end for us, and we a higher end to seek than any is in this world to be found, our natures seem to be in vain. For my part, though it be in weakness, I must needs say it is my trade and daily work to serve my God, and seek after an immortal blessedness. And if I thought that there were no such thing to be had, and no such use for me, I must needs stand still, and look about me, or in my practice unman myself by a brutish life, as I had brutified myself in my estimation and intention. For what could I find to do in the world? What should I do with my reason and knowledge, or any faculty above a beast, if I had no higher a work and end than beasts? Verily, if I had lost the hopes of another life, I knew not what to do with myself in the world! but must become some other creature, and live some other kind of life than now I live.

Query 11. Moreover, I desire you to consider, Whether it be credible to a man of reason, that God made his noblest creature in this world with a nature that should be a necessary misery and vexation to itself above all the misery of the baser creatures? and that the wiser any man is the more miserable he must needs be?

This is not credible. Yet thus would it be, if there were no life but this. For, (1.) The knowledge that man hath of a superior good (which beasts have not) would tantalize him and torment him. To know it, and must not partake of it, is to be used as a horse that is tied near his provender, which he must not reach.

(2.) The love, and desires, and hopes, that I before described, would all be our vexation. To love and desire that which we cannot attain, and that with the chief of our affections, is but to make us miserable by virtue.

(3.) To use all those means and do the duties before mentioned in vain, when we are not capable of the end, is but to roll a Sisiphus' stone, and to be made to wash blackamoors, or to fill a bottomless tub.

(4.) No creature here but man hath fears of any misery after death, and therefore none would be here so miserable. There is no infidel but must confess, that for aught he knows there may be a life of punishment for the wicked. And this may be will breed more fears in a considerate man, than death itself alone could do.

(5.) Or if there were no fear of that, yet man hath reason to think beforehand of his death, and to think of his abode in darkness, which beasts have not. To think of being turned to a stinking carrion, and to a clod, and so continuing for ever, without any hope of a resurrection, would be matter for continual horror to a considering man, which brutes are not molested with. And wise men that can foresee, would be tormented more than fools. All this is incredible, that

God should make his nobler creature to be naturally most miserable; and give him knowledge and affections, and set a certain death and possible torment continually before his eyes, to torment him, without any remedy! And besides the hoped life hereafter, there is none.

Query 12. Do you think that the belief of another life is needful or useful to the well governing of this world, or not? If you say no, (1.) Why then do infidels and brutists say, that religion is but the device of men for the governing of the world? and that without it subjects would not be ruled? You confess by this your frivolous objection, that the world cannot be ruled well without the belief of a life to come.

(2.) And it is most manifest from the very nature of man, and from the common experience of the world, 1. If man be well governed, it must be either by laws containing rewards and penalties, or without. Not without, for, 1. All the world doth find it by experience, that it cannot be; and therefore every commonwealth on earth is governed by laws, either written, customary, or verbal.

2. If the love of virtue for itself should prevail with one of a thousand, that would be nothing to the government of the world.

3. Nor could any man be effectually induced to love virtue for itself, according to the doctrine of the brutists. For virtue itself is made no virtue by them, but a deformity of the mind, while they overthrow the end, and object, and law, that it is measured and informed by (as I shall more fully open to you anon). It is therefore most certain that no nation is or can be governed as besemeth man, without proposed punishments and rewards.

And if so, then these must be either temporal punishments and benefits, or such as are to be had in the life to come. That temporal punishments and benefits cannot be motives sufficient for any tolerable (much less perfect or sufficient) government, is a most evident truth. For, 1. *De facto*, we see by experience, that no people live like men that be not governed by the belief of another life. The nations that believe it not, are savages almost all; living naked and bestially, and knowing nothing of virtue or vice, but as they feel the commodity or discommodity to their flesh. They eat the flesh of men, for the most part, and live as brutishly as they believe. And if you say that in China it is not so, I answer, one part of them there believe the immortality of the soul, and most of them take it as probable, and so the nation hath the government which it hath, from everlasting motives.

And if you say that the ancient Romans had a sufficient government, I answer, 1. The most of them believed a life to come, and it was but a few that denied the immortality of the soul; and therefore it was this that governed the nations. For those that believed another life, had the government of the few that did not believe it, or else the government itself had been more corrupt. 2. And yet the faultiness of their belief appeared in the faultiness of their government. Every tyrant took away men's lives at pleasure. Every citizen that had slaves (which was common) at pleasure killed them, and cast them into the fishponds. The servants secretly poisoned their masters, and that in so great numbers, that Seneca saith, *Epist. 4. ad Lucil.* that "the number of those that were killed by their servants, through treachery, deceit, or force, was as great as of them that were killed by kings;" which was not a few.

2. It is apparent that the world would be a wilderness, and men like wild, ravenous beasts, if they were not governed by motives from the life to come.

1. Because the nature of man is so corrupt and

vicious, that we see how prone they are to evil, that everlasting motives themselves are too much uneffectual with the most.

2. Every man naturally is selfish, and therefore would measure all good and evil with reference to themselves, as it was commodious and incommodious to them. And so virtue and vice would not be known, much less regarded.

3. By this means there would be as many ends, and laws, or rules, as men, and so the world would be all in a confusion.

4. If necessity forced any to combine, it would be but as robbers, and strength would be their law and justice; and he that could get hold of another man's estate, would have the best title.

5. All those that had but strength to do mischief, would be under no law, nor have any sufficient motive to restrain them. What should restrain the tyrants of the world, that rule over many nations of the earth, if they believe no punishment after death, but that their laws and practices should be as impious and bestial, as their lusts can tempt them to desire? What should restrain armies from rapes and cruelty, that may do it unpunished? or popular tumults that are secured by the multitude?

6. And there would be no restraint of any villany that could but be secretly committed. And a wicked wit can easily hide the greatest mischiefs. Poisoning, stabbing, burning houses, defaming, adultery, and abundance the like, are easily kept secret by a man of wit, unless a special providence reveal them (as usually it doth).

7. At least, the probability of secrecy would be so great, and also the probability of sinful advantage, that most would venture.

8. And all those sins would be committed without scruple, which the law of man did appoint no punishment for; as lying, and many odious vices.

9. If one man, or two, or ten, should be deterred from poisoning you, or burning your houses, or killing your cattle, &c. by human laws, a thousand more would be let loose and venture.

10. All the sins of the heart would have full liberty, and a defiled soul have neither cure nor restraint. For the laws and judgments of men extend not to the heart. All the world then might live in the hatred of God, and of their neighbours, and in daily murder, theft, adultery, and blasphemy of the heart. Within they might be as bad as devils, and fear no punishment; for man can take no cognizance of it. And it is the heart that is the man. You see then what persons the infidels and brutists would have us all be! what hearts and lives mankind should have according to their laws! Be devils within, and murder, and deceive, and commit adultery as much as you will, so you have wit to escape the gallows, and you are scholars fit for such bestial masters.

11. Yea, let me add this one more mischief: Hereby they would destroy all charity and good works, except the very bestial love of those that please men's lust. For no laws of men compel men to the love of God or man; nor much to good works. Who would do any thing comparatively, that believed not a reward and punishment hereafter? If we give all that we have to the poor, we can here have no reward but the breath of a man's mouth, which at death we understand not. Take down the everlasting ends and motives, and all good works, and inward virtues too that should produce them, are taken down.

And by this time you may see what a litter of bears, what a pack of ravening dogs, what cannibals, the world should be turned into, by the doctrine of the brutists, that deny the life to come.

Well! but perhaps you will by this time have so much sense, as to confess that threatenings and punishments, hopes and fears of the state of another life, are necessary to the well-governing of this world. And if so, I desire no more, to satisfy any man that believes there is a God (and that is any man that hath not drowned his wits in sin). For, 1. This will then show that the nature of man is formed for another life; and God did not make him such in vain. 2. And certainly if everlasting motives must be put into the laws that govern us, and into our hopes and fears, then it is not possible, but such things there are to be expected. For any man to imagine that God would make a world, which he cannot govern but by falsehood and deceit, this is to say that God is no God. For all lying and falsehood comes either from a want of power, or wisdom, or goodness, when men either cannot make good their words, or otherwise attain their ends; or when they have not wit to know what is, or was, or will be, or when they are so bad, as to be disposed to deceive. But he that ascribeth any of these to God, doth worse than to say that there is no God. If I hate deceit and lying myself, the God that gave me all that little good which I have must hate it more. Dream not of any but a worm, or fool, or impious tyrant, that needs or loves deceit and falsehood to attain their ends. Judge by the frame of heaven and earth, and by that little good that is in good men, whether the living God be one that needs such hellish engines to rule the world.

If therefore in order to the government of mankind we must needs believe a life to come, it is certainly true. And why do you not believe that which government requireth you to believe?

Query 13. Moreover, I demand of you, Whether you take God indeed to be the Governor of this world, or not? By governor, I mean properly one that ruleth the rational creature as such, by moral means, even laws and executions. I exclude not his potential, efficacious operations, but conclude a necessity of moral government. I know a self-conceited popish infidel hath endeavoured to persuade the world that God's sovereignty and moral government are metaphorical expressions, arising from the misconceivings of weak men; and that wiser men like himself do conceive of God's government only as of an artificer's disposal of his works, that physically accomplisheth all his will. As if God's natural causations and his moral were inconsistent; or as if God were not wise and good as well as almighty; or did not in his government of men demonstrate his sapience in his laws, and his goodness in attractive benefits, as well as his power in mere natural motion; or as if man were not a rational creature, and a free-agent, and were not to be governed according to his nature, by objects suited to his intellect and will, but must be used and ruled like a stone or beast; or as if God could not infallibly attain his ends by a sapiential government, and by preserving the liberty of the will, as well as by a mere necessitating causation! This man was so enamoured upon his supposed skill in physics and metaphysics, that he not only lost his morality, but grew to be such an enemy to it, as to blot out all true morality, civility, policy, and economy at a dash; and stands with the rest of the proud fraternity, as a monument of God's justice against the proud, so deplorably forsaken even in the reason that he glorieth of, that children may perceive his folly. He that is all for operations of power, as excluding sapiential government by laws, and their just executions, doth think sure that a horse hath more of the image of God than a man. For he is much stronger. Brutish force would be

more excellent than the attraction of goodness and the conduct of wisdom, if the government (which is no government) that these men dream of were the most excellent. As he will allow his artificer to show as much at least of his wit, by making a watch or clock that shall, though by a necessity, move without the finger of the workman continually moving it; so methinks he should allow the infinitely wise and gracious God, to be nevertheless wise or gracious, if he rule the rational free-agent, without a forcible necessitation, by a gracious attraction and sapiential conduct, agreeable to the reason and liberty of the creature, as long as we exclude not the co-working of Omnipotency, nor deny the infallibility of divine predefinition, which may be secured with the security of the creature's liberty.

In a word, to deny God to be the Sovereign Governor of the world in proper sense; 1. Is a denying him to be God; it being a term of relation, comprising government, and not of mere nature. When it is commanded us that we have no other gods, and when we are required in the holy covenant to take the Lord for our God, and give up ourselves to him as his people, it most plainly expresseth that his governing authority, or his sovereignty, is comprehended in the term God. And indeed, having made a rational, free creature, whose nature requireth moral government, it followeth by necessary resultancy, that he that had sole authority and sufficiency, must be his sovereign.

2. These proud blasphemers that deny God's proper government, do contradict the very drift of Scripture, that calleth him our King and Governor, and requireth our subjection and obedience.

3. They deny the being of God's laws, both the law of nature, and the written laws, and so blot out the word of God, and the sense and use of all his works. Though they allow them a certain physical operation on us, yet as laws they do obliterate them: that is, as they are *norma officii et judicii*, our rule of duty and expectation, and God's resolved way of judging.

4. They hereby overthrow all duty as such, and make good actions to be but as the motion of the arrow that hits the white, and to have none but a physical goodness in them. For there can be no proper obedience, where there is no proper government or law.

5. Hereby also they deny all inward virtue: for this also can have but a physical goodness, if government and laws be down.

6. Hereby they deny the being of sin. For where there is no law and government, but mere physical necessitating motion, there is no transgression. And therefore when they make a deal of talk about purging away sin, it is not sin indeed that they mean, but a mere physical disease to be physically expunged.

7. Hereby they deny all the proper judgment of God by Christ at the last day, and make his judgments to be nothing but execution.

Yea, and, 8. All proper execution is denied, as vindictive, or remunerative, and so all justice.

9. The authority of every prince on earth is overthrowed. For there can be no authority but from God's sovereign authority, any more than any being without derivation from the first Being. They may talk to the ignorant of contracts, and people's wills being the original of governing authority, and deify the multitude, and make them give that which they never had; but a mean understanding may perceive their folly.

10. Hereby they destroy all human laws, that must receive their strength from God's laws, or have

none; and so they absolve all subjects in the world from conscientious obligations to obedience. If God have no proper governing laws but physical motions, then we are no further obliged to obey men, by any law of God, than we are effectually moved to it, and than we do obey them. And if so, then we can owe no more obedience to parents, masters, or princes, than they force us to. If they can make us obey them, well and good: if not, we break no law of God by disobedience.

These and many such like are the consequences of that horrid doctrine that denieth God to be the Sovereign Ruler of the world. In a word, it dasheth out at once all government, laws, justice, obedience, good works, and all morality, dissolving the whole frame of the universal monarchy of the world, and denying God to be our God, and man to be man and his subject.

But if you yield that God is the Governor of the world, it is then most evident that there is a life to come. For if he govern us, it is by laws and judgment. And if by laws, which are they? There is nothing known among rational men, by the name of a law of God, which containeth not promises and threatenings of rewards and punishments hereafter. He hath no laws for the governing of this world, that contain no motives but from temporal things. And I showed you before, that he need not, he cannot govern the world by falsehood and deceit. And we see here by experience, that there is no such execution in this life of the laws of God, as are sufficient to the ends of government. The wicked prosper, and destroy the just: the best do most deny their flesh, and are oppressed by others. You see this in yourselves, and make it an argument for your infidelity. But stay a little till the assizes come. It follows not that there is no government or justice, because the thief or murderer is not hanged before the assizes, or as soon as he hath done the fact. Eternity is long enough for their punishment. If God then be the Governor of the world, as most certainly he is, then is there a reward and punishment hereafter; and God's day will come, when man's is past.

Query 14. My next question is, Whether you think that God should be loved and obeyed or not? If not, then certainly none should be loved or obeyed. For none deserves it if he deserve it not, from whom we are, and have all our benefits. But if he be, then I further question you,

Whether it be likely or possible, that any man, or at least all the best people in the world, be losers by God, and their love and obedience to him? And whether it be credible, that goodness and obedience to the Lord, should be the constant, certain way to men's undoing, loss, or misery? I think you will say, if you believe that there is a God, that this cannot be. For certainly, he that sets us at work, will own us in it, and save us harmless. An honest man will take it for a disgrace to him, that his service should be the shame and misery of his servants, and he should make them no satisfaction. If God be not able to bear us out, he is not God. And his wisdom and goodness assure us that he will do it. So that there is no possibility that goodness should be man's loss, and any should finally be losers by God. On this assurance I am encouraged to lay out all my time and labour, and dare boldly venture all that I have, in the work of God: for I am sure I cannot lose by him.

But be thou judge thyself whether his service would not make us losers, if there were no life but this (though I confess the loss would be small and short). Who are so hated and persecuted, as they

that serve God best? How many thousands of them have been fain to give up their bodies to tormentors, and their lives to the devouring flames! The very work of God consisteth in flesh-displeasing things; to deny ourselves and condemn this world, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly in the world, and to be for this the scorn of men, is the lot of the obedient.

If you say, This is not the lot of any but those that are over-righteous, I answer, 1. We cannot be over-obedient to God. 2. You contradict the experience of all ages. Even the form of godliness is hated by the profane; and temperance by the drunkard; and he shall be their scorn that runs not with them to excesses of riot. Seneca tells us that it was so even at Rome among the heathens, that he was their derision that would not be as bad as the rest. If therefore in this life only we had hope, we were of all men most miserable, 1 Cor. xv. 19. Not but that even here we have the far better life than wicked men: but that is because it savoureth of the life to come, to which it hath relation. Otherwise we should lose our credit, ease, pleasure, profit in the world, and have nothing for it. Faithfully labour for God, O my soul, and never fear being a loser by his work.

Query 15. I further ask, Whether you would be alone of this brutish opinion, or would you have all others of your mind? If you would not have others believe as you do, it seems you think not well of your own opinion, but take it to be naught for men to hold. And why should not all men hold it if it were true? But if you would have all of that mind, it were time for you to look about you. Certainly the law-makers would make other laws than now they do, and men would lead other kind of lives. And what security you would have of your goods, or houses, or lives a week, from the malice or covetousness of others, I cannot imagine. You would not dare to travel by the way, or look out among men: you could not trust your servants, nor your wives or husbands, because there would be nothing but temporal punishment to restrain them, which cunning might escape. I do not think but you would rather have servants, or neighbours, or husband, or wife, that believe a life to come, than those that do not, if you had tried others but a little while, and seen how little they were to be trusted, and consequently how bad your opinion is.

Query 16. And I would know, Whether you pretend to any honesty and conscience or not? If not, you will give us leave to judge of you and trust you accordingly. If you do, then upon what ground is it possible for you to be honest? If you believe no life to come, you must take your pleasure here on earth for your chiefest happiness: and you cannot believe any proper government of the world by the laws, rewards, and punishments, sufficient to restrain men from their sin. Virtue can be no virtue, if God no more regard it; and sin is no sin, if against no law. Indeed while you live among believers, where vice is in disgrace, you may for your credit seem to be virtuous: but your profession alloweth us to judge that you avoid no evil that you dare commit, if it do but suit with your fleshly interest. He that believeth no life to come, and tells me so, doth bid me, in effect, to suppose him resolved for all the wickedness imaginable, so far as he dare, and hath temptations and opportunity. Are you of this brutish judgment? I shall expect from you then no better than a brutish life; and trust you less than I would do a brute, because you have more interest and temptation to do evil, and more cunning to perform it. Are you brutists in opinion? Then you are

already habitually perfidious, cruel, covetous, malicious, murderers, whoremongers, thieves, liars, and worse, if any thing be worse! For honest you cannot for shame expect that any should esteem you. I will not believe a word you say, further than some interest of your own is concerned in the truth of it.

Query 17. If it be not the very light and law of nature that teacheth and obligeth a man to believe a life to come, how comes it to pass, that all the world, except a few savages and cannibals, and here and there an apostate among us, do universally profess to believe it? The Jews, the Turks, the heathens of most nations, besides the christians, do all make it an article of their belief. We differ indeed about the way, (and yet are all agreed that godliness and honesty, fearing God and doing righteousness, are necessary,) but that there is another life, we are in almost all the world agreed. And will you go against the light of human nature itself? Or with what face can you expect that here and there such a wretch as you should be thought wiser than all the world, till you give us better evidence of your wisdom? And how justly do they perish that will follow you!

Query 18. Are not those that believe the life to come, of holier lives (for the generality) than those that do not? And whether is it like that God should reveal his mind to them, or unto wicked wretches? And is it likelier that he should forsake all the holy persons of all ages, and give them up to deceit in the greatest matters, who most diligently study and pray for knowledge, rather than forsake those sensual wretches that wilfully forsake him?

Query 19. Is there not in thy own conscience, at least sometimes, some fears yet left of a life to come? I believe there is; and when thou hast done thy worst, thou wilt hardly perfectly overcome them. Doth not conscience say, O but what if there should be a hell for the ungodly? Where am I then? Hearken then to thy conscience.

Query 20. Dost thou believe that spirits in borrowed shapes have oft appeared unto men, and in voices spoken to them, to draw them to sin, or to perdition? If thou do believe it, thou mayst easily believe that there is a hell which they are so busy to persuade us to, and a heaven of which they would deprive us. If thou believe not that there have been such apparitions, I am able to give thee undeniable testimonies. Read what I have said in my "Treatise against Infidelity" of this. Read Regimus, Bodin, Danæus, Malleus Maleficorum, &c. of Witches; and read a little book called "The Devil of Masson," where is abundant testimony of his vocal conference, for about a quarter of a year together, in the house of a godly minister in a populous city, before papists, protestants, and all. Many I could give you that were done here at home.

In these twenty questions I have but endeavoured to prepare you to believe, by showing you the very light of nature: but it is a lively faith in the word of God that effectually prevaileth against infidelity; and therefore next let us come to that. I will not so much lose my time as to cite particular texts of Scripture, for that which is the very work and drift of the Scripture. But because thou canst have no shift in the world for thy brutish unbelief, but by denying the Scripture to be the word of God, I refer thee to that which I have written in the books fore-mentioned to prove it; and at this time shall add to what is there said, but these few questions.

Quest. 1. If the Scripture be not the word of God, how could it tell us of the making of the world, and such like things, which none but God alone could tell? I know you will say, I know not whether it tells us true or not; or whether the world were not

as Aristotle thought, from eternity. But tell me this then, (to pass by the rest now,) How comes it to pass that in all the world there are no books or monuments known of any longer standing than the time that Scripture assigneth to the creation? It is not six thousand years since the creation. If the world had lasted thousands and millions of years before, is it possible that all its antiquities should be lost, and not one to be seen, nor mentioned by any man, in all the world? (For the fabulous tales of some in China, without all proof, are not worth the mentioning.) Certainly some book would have been saved, or some cities, or lasting piles, or stony monuments preserved, or some sign or tradition kept alive, of some of all those many thousand years.

If you say, that writing or printing were not then known, you come to that which confounds you more. How is it possible that in so many hundred thousand years the world grew to no more experience, and arts and sciences were ripened no more, when now they have ripened in a shorter time? How is it that printing and writing were not found out? and that all sciences and arts are of so late invention, and as it were but in their youth? Certainly knowledge is the daughter of experience, and experience the daughter of time; and therefore if the world had been from eternity, it must needs have been many a hundred thousand years ago, at a far higher state of knowledge than is yet attained in the world. For every age receiveth the experiences and writings of the former, and hath opportunity still to make improvement of them. At least the world could not have been ignorant so long of printing, writing, and a hundred things that are certainly of late invention. It is therefore an incredible thing that an eternal world should lose all the memorials and monuments of its antiquity, before the Scripture time of the creation. And therefore doubtless it began but then.

Quest. 2. And if God were not the Author of the Scripture, how come so many clear and notable prophecies of it to be fulfilled? How punctually doth David and Isaiah (liii.) describe the sufferings of Christ, and Daniel foretell the very year! and so of many others.

Quest. 3. And how comes it all to contain but one entire frame conspiring to reveal the same doctrine of grace and life, (at first more darkly, and in types and promises, and afterwards more clearly in performance,) when the writers lived at hundreds and thousands of years' distance from each other?

Quest. 4. And if thou hadst not a blinded, prejudiced mind, thou wouldest perceive an unimitable majesty and spirituality in the Scripture, and wouldest savour the Spirit of God in it as its author, and wouldest know by the image and superscription, that it is the word of God. It beareth unimitably the image of his power, and wisdom, and goodness; so that the blessed Author may to a faithful soul be known by the work.

Quest. 5. If the Scripture came not from the Spirit, it could not give or cause the Spirit; if it bore not God's image itself, how could it print his image upon the souls of so many thousands as it doth? The image of God is first engraven on the seal of his holy doctrine, and thereby imprinted on the heart. There is no part of that holy change on man, but what that holy doctrine wrought. If therefore the change be of God, the doctrine that wrought it is of God; for both of them are the same image, answering each other, as that on the seal and on the wax. But it is most certain that the holy change on the soul is of God. The nature of it sheweth this: for it consisteth in the destruction

of our sin, and the denial of ourselves, and the raising the heart above this world, and the total devoting of ourselves and all that we have to God, and conforming ourselves to his will, and resting in it, and seeking and serving him with all our power, against all temptations, and living in the fervent love of God and of our brethren, and desires after everlasting life; and a taking Christ for our Lord and Saviour, to reconcile us to God, and do all this in us by his Spirit. And surely such a work as this must needs be of God. If it be good, it must needs be originally from him that is most good: this is undeniable. (And he that will say, this is evil, is so much of the devil's nature and mind, that it is no wonder if he follow him, and be brutified.) And you cannot say, that the work is good, and the doctrine bad; for the work is nothing but the impress of the doctrine. And God doth not use to appoint or use a frame of falsehoods and deceptions, as his ordinary means to renew men's souls, and work them to his will.

Perhaps you will say, that you see no such change made by the word, nor any such spirit given by it unto men, but only the effects of their own imaginations. But, 1. The question is, Whether they are true or false imaginations? God's truth causeth that impress on the mind of man, which you call his imaginations; for where should truth be received, but in the mind? And how should it work but by cogitation? They are cogitations above and contrary to those of flesh and blood, that are wrought by this holy doctrine. It is nevertheless of the Spirit, because it moveth man by consideration.

2. And if you see not a work on the hearts of the regenerate appearing in their lives, which raiseth them to a far better state than others, it can be no better than strangeness or malice that can so far blind you.

3. But if it be so with you, give leave yet to the persons that know this holy change in themselves, to believe the more confidently the word that wrought it. We know that we are renewed and passed from our former spiritual death to life; and therefore that it was the truth of God that did the work of God upon us. Nothing but truth can sanctify: but the word doth sanctify; therefore the word is truth.

Indeed the holy church of Christ throughout all ages of the world, hath been his living image, and so a living witness of his word, as showing by their lives the transcript of it in their hearts. It is easy for any that know them, except the maliciously blind, to perceive that the true servants of Christ are a more purified, refined, honest, conscionable, holy, heavenly people than the rest of the world. For my part, I am fully convinced of it; I see it; there is no comparison; for all their imperfections, which they and I lament, I am fully satisfied that there is much more of God on them than on others. And therefore there is much more of God in the doctrine that renewed them than in any other. The church is the living Scripture, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. iii. 15); the law is written in their hearts, (Heb. viii. 10), better than it was in the tables of stone, 2 Cor. iii. 3. And by their holy love and works, the world may know that Jesus Christ was sent of the Father, and may be brought to believe on him, by their unity, John xvii. 21—23; Matt. v. 16. God would not concur so apparently and powerfully with a false doctrine, to make so great a change in man; nor so far own it, as to use it for the doing of the most excellent work in all this world, even the gathering him such a church, and sanctifying to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14.

If you say that some of the heathens have been as good : I answer, 1. The goodness found in them, is but in temperance, fidelity, and such like ; and not a holy spirituality, or heavenliness, no, nor a thorough conscientiousness in what they knew.

2. That good was rare in comparison of that which the gospel worketh, as well as small.

3. That good which they had, was wrought only by some scraps or parcels of the same holy truth that is contained in the Scriptures. And therefore even so much truth among the heathens as profited them to any reformation, was the word of God, and owned by him.

Quest. 6. Do you believe that Jesus Christ did rise again from the dead, or not? and that he and his disciples did work those many uncontrolled miracles, or not? If you do believe it, then what need you further testimony to prove the doctrine to be of God? or to prove that there is a life to come? Shall the Captain of our salvation himself arise from the dead, and conquer death, and ascend up into heaven, to show us that there is a life to come, and yet will you not believe it? Or would God lend to any man his power to confirm a false doctrine to the world? If so, then, 1. It would be God himself that should mislead us. For it is he that worketh the miracles, or granteth special power to the instrument to do it. 2. Man should be unavoidably misled. For if a man rise from the dead, and raise others, and give to thousands the gifts of languages, healing, and the like, and all this have no greater contrary evidence from God of some contradiction or controlment, I am unavoidably deceived; and neither my greatest innocency or diligence, or any other help from men, could possibly relieve me. And he that can believe that the infinitely powerful, wise, and good, is either necessitated or disposed to deceive the world, and rule them by deceit and falsehood, and to lend his power to confirm a doctrine that he hateth, and is against himself, this man indeed believeth not that there is any God. 3. Even the brutists themselves, and all the infidels with whom we talk, will confess that if they should see Christ rise, or see such miracles, they would believe : and therefore they do confess that they are cogent evidence to those that know of them.

Object. Did not the sorcerers in Egypt work miracles? *Ans.* 1. Wonders they did, but not miracles. 2. They were controlled, and shamed, and disowned by God by Moses' contradictory, conquering miracles.

Object. But some might have died between the magicians' wonders, and Moses' controlment, and so have been unavoidably lost. *Ans.* 1. The time was near, and that not likely of those that knew of them. 2. At the first wonder of the magicians, Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods, Exod. vii. 12, and therefore the conquest obliged them to suspend belief of the other. 3. The miracles of Moses were not to reveal a new doctrine of salvation that could not otherwise be known; but partly to convince Pharaoh that the Lord was God, and partly to cause him to let go the Israelites. The people's salvation lay not on the latter; and the former they had abundant means to know by the works and light of nature itself. And the magicians' wonders were not to reveal a new false doctrine any further than to contend against Moses' miracles; and if they had, yet being against the doctrine of the whole creation, that revealeth the Creator, no man could be excusable for believing them, because God hath given so full a testimony before against them, so that this objection is plainly but an impertinent cavil.

But I doubt not but you will say, that you are not

sure that Christ rose again, and that ever such miracles were done. I ask therefore,

Quest. 7. Whether it be possible, that so many and so wise and godly men (as their writings prove them) should give up their lives and all that they had and could have hoped for in this world, to persuade the world that they saw Christ risen, if it were false; and to draw them to believe a falsehood that tended to the worldly ruin of them all?

Quest. 8. And is it possible that if they had been so bad and mad, that so many thousands would have believed them when their own frequent miracles, language, &c. were the witness of their fidelity to which they openly appealed? and this in the very age and place where all these things might easily be confuted if untrue? If I should pretend to convince the world by languages not learned, and by other miracles and gifts which I never had, would countries, or any sober persons, believe me? or should I not be the common scorn? Would the churches of the world have been planted by pretended miracles that never were? Would they all have given up estates and lives upon an evident lie? It was easy for them all to see and hear whether these things were done or not. And therefore he that seeth those churches which were the proper effects of miracles, may know the cause; a real effect had a real cause.

Quest. 9. Was it possible that so many hundred thousand persons, dispersed about the world on a sudden, could, without coming near each other, agree both upon one and the same false doctrine throughout, and on the same practices to deceive the world?

Quest. 10. Is it possible that among so many thousands, that torments, or death, or common ingenuity, would not have forced some to have repented, and opened the deceptions of all the rest?

Quest. 11. Is it possible that so many heretics that did fall from them and set against the true apostles, would none of them have disclosed the deceit, if really the miracles had not been done?

Quest. 12. Is it possible that none of the Jews, their bitter enemies, nor any of the learned Romans of that age, would have discovered the fraud, and by writing confuted matters of fact, being public, and if false, so easily confuted?

Where are the books that ever any one of them wrote to disprove any of these miracles? If you say the christians burnt them; give us the least proof of it if you can. When did any Jew complain of such a thing? Nay, how could the dispersed, persecuted christians destroy the writings of their reigning enemies? The writings of Jews and Romans then written remain to this day, and had fuller human advantages of preservation than any that are against them. No Jews or Romans complained, or to this day complain, of such a thing, nor tell us of any such writings of theirs, that ever were in the world.

Quest. 13. Nay, the Jews confessed the miracles themselves, and had no shift left for their unbelief, but by blaspheming the Holy Ghost, and saying that they were done by the power of the devil.

Quest. 14. All the dispersed churches and christians of the world, have universally concurred in delivering us down these matters of fact, and the writings that contain them; and this is a thing that they grounded all their hope of salvation on, and for which they contemned this present world. And the enemies that gainsaid their doctrine, did not gainsay these matters of fact. Could this be feigned?

Quest. 15. Have I not fully manifested in my book against Infidelity, (to which I must again dismiss you,) that there is a full and infallible evidence, that

this Scripture was written by the apostles and evangelists, and these miracles done, as there is that any of the statutes of this land are the current statutes of those parliaments that are said to make them? And your lands and lives are held by the credit of these statutes.

A word or two to the objections of a masked infidel of this country, Clem. Writer.

Saith he, Men be not commanded to believe these statutes on pain of damnation. Therefore the case is not like.

Ans. But men are commanded to obey them upon pain of death; and believing is prerequisite to obeying; therefore the case is like. Death is the utmost penalty that man can inflict; or if there be greater, it all runs on the same foundation. And sure that evidence that proves men culpable for breaking man's laws must prove him culpable for breaking God's. You have no other eyes to read the laws of God, than those by which you read man's laws. And doth it follow that God must not condemn you for breaking his laws, when men do but hang you for breaking theirs? Sure God's laws and man's may be printed in the same character, and read with the same eyes, and both have the same natural means of delivery, and yet the sin and punishment differ as the authority doth.

Object. But (saith he) can the miracles confirm the Scripture, when it is the Scripture that reports the miracles?

Ans. 1. Cannot a statute tell you what parliament made it, and what matters of fact were the occasion, and also what shall be your duty upon pain of death? so that the makers and facts shall give force unto the law, and yet the law reveal the maker and facts? Do not church constitutions do the same? The Scripture hath two parts; the history and the doctrine. May not the history confirm the doctrine, and that doctrine oblige us to our duty?

2. But you suppose that the miracles and facts can only be known by a divine belief of the history. But that is false. The common evidence that all statutes, histories, and actions in the world have to make them certain to posterity, (as Cicero's or Virgil's writings, or Caesar's reign, &c.) the same have the books and miracles of Scripture to us. And by these we can know them *de facto* to be such, before we believe them by a divine faith. And as the Scripture is a history that hath the same evidence as the best of histories have, so it may concur with abundance of other evidence, (which I have recited in my "Determination against Infidelity," and in my "Key for Catholics,") to prove the facts; and then those facts will fully prove the truth of all the doctrines which they attest, and consequently, we shall add to our human faith and knowledge, a divine faith concerning the history itself.

Object. 3. But (saith this writer) if God had meant that the Scripture should be a law to all, he would not have wrote it in a language which they understand not.

Ans. 1. Any thing will serve to make an infidel, when the mind is corrupted and deplete. Were they no laws which the Romans wrote in Latin, for the government of all the nations of the Roman world? It was enough that the rulers of the provinces caused them to be so far understood by the people as was necessary to a righteous government. I mean those laws that were added to the proper laws of that people.

2. Was there any one language then that all the world understood? And was it not enough that God appointed the ministerial office purposely to preserve and publish this gospel to the world from

generation to generation? And is not translating (whether by voice or writing) a part of that preaching or explication? Did not the ministers of Christ preach the same doctrine to the world then, in the several languages of the nations where they came? And were not the Scriptures presently translated according to the use of the churches? Upon how silly a pretence then would your silly imperial majesty impose it on the God of heaven, to write his word in as many languages as are in the world, if he would be believed!

I will trouble you with no more such wretched cavils. These three are the main strength of three pamphlets written against the holy Scriptures and me, by this apostate. Their sum is, Man is man; therefore we are not sure that Scripture is true, or that God is God. I mean, Man cannot understand the minds of others but by signs. All signs, whether words or deeds, have some ambiguity, or liableness to misunderstanding; therefore nothing can be known concerning God or man by signs. These are not his words; but the true scope and life of all the writings of him and all the infidel seekers.

If you chide me for troubling the christian reader here with so much against the infidels and brutists, I answer, 1. I did it because that sort increase, and threaten the land. 2. Because the strengthening of the belief of the best christians is the removing the cause of all their weakness and complaints. 3. And principally, because when once the certain truth of another life is manifested, he must be a Bedlam or worse that will not be godly, or that will open his mouth any more against a holy life. What! is it possible for a sober man to believe that he is so near an everlasting joy or misery, and yet to neglect it, and oppose them that make it their chiefest care and labour to prepare for it? The brutist hath drowned his reason; and the careless professor laid it to sleep; the malicious, ungodly professor of christianity fights against it, and only the serious, holy christian doth use it for his everlasting good.

CHAPTER IV.

HOLINESS IS BEST FOR ALL SOCIETIES.

READER, if thou be but a man that hast the free use of thy reason, I have already removed the greatest impediment out of thy way, and said enough by confuting thy infidelity, to prove that godliness is the better part. Thou hast nothing left now to say against it, but what fiftieth against reason in the open light, and therefore I shall find an easier task with thy understanding in all that follows, though with thy corrupted will and concupiscence the conflict yet may be as strong.

Well! if yet thou art not resolved, that diligent, serious godliness is that good part that all should choose, and better than all thy worldly pleasures, I shall now discover it to thee in these particulars.

I. I shall show you that godliness is best for all societies.

II. That it is best for every person. And that, 1. It is the safest way. 2. It is the honestest way. 3. That it is the most gainful way. 4. That it is the most honourable way. And, 5. That it is the most pleasant and delightful way. Yea, that there is no other true safety, honesty, profit, honour, or delight but what is to be found in this way. I lay not only all the reputation of my understanding, but all the

hopes and happiness of my soul upon the proof of this point. If I prove it not, I will confess myself a fool and undone for ever. But if I prove it, let the ungodly make this sad confession, and choose the better part while they may have it.

1. And first, That godliness is the best for all societies (that are just) I prove thus:

1. Godliness doth unite or centre all societies in the only Head and Centre of unity; that is, the blessed God himself. A commonwealth will never have peace in a state of rebellion against their sovereign (unless he be one that they can overcome). Nor soldiers in a state of mutiny against their general. Nor scholars in shutting out their master. God is the only Sovereign of the whole world. The godly all unite in him. Ungodliness is rebellion against him. The rebels are always in his power. There is no peace nor safety therefore, nor any unity, but an agreement in rebellion for a while, to any that are not by holiness united in him, and loyal subjects to him. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked," Isa. xlvi. 22.

Object. But do we not see that the main divisions of the world are about religion? *Ans.* 1. It is true; but not by the truly religious. The great quarrel of the world is against religion in the life and practice of it. 2. It is unholiness that cannot abide to be accounted unholiness, that are the chief dividers. 3. Among the truly godly, there is no division in the main, but only differences about the smaller branches of religion, which are numerous, and less discernible, and less necessary than the common truths. They are all agreed of truth enough to bring them to heaven; and therefore enough to unite them in dear affection upon earth. Nay, there is not one of them that hath not a special love to all that he discerneth to be the servants of the Lord. If any be without this, he is ungodly. And we are not to answer for the miscarriages of every infidel or ungodly man, that will put on the name of christianity and godliness. If there should be fallings-out among the godly, they cannot rest till they are healed and set in joint again. But you must not then be so unjust as to conclude, that we can have no unity till we are in all things of a mind. May not men of various complexions be of one society? Are not the multitudes of veins and arteries in your bodies united in the trunks and roots? Is not the tree one, that hath many branches?

Object. But God whom you will needs unite in, is far from us, and his mind unknown, and so is not the mind of princes; and therefore we cannot unite in God.

Ans. In things necessary to our future happiness and present unity in special love, the mind of God is more plainly and fully opened to us, than the mind of any prince unto his subjects. What precepts can be plainer, than to love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves, and first to seek the kingdom of God, and to repent and believe in Christ? How plain are the articles of our faith and the ten commandments! Divisions have been about niceties; I hope God will call back his churches to the ancient simplicity and practical godliness, and then the christian world will be agreed, except the wicked.

2. Godliness propoundeth and prosecuteth the most uniting, excellent, powerful end, for all that duty that should advance societies; and therefore must needs be best for all societies. God and heaven is the common end of all the godly. They are agreed every man of them in one end; and so are not others. Their end hath that power in its attractive excellency, by which it can do the greatest things

that are to be done with the will of man. The ends of the ungodly are small and childish toys. Our end also is as the sun, sufficient for all; and therefore not a matter of contention. All may have God as well as one, without diminishing the happiness of any.

3. Godliness takes away the ball of the world's contention, that sets men every where together by the ears. It teacheth men to slight the honour and vain-glory that the gallants will fight and die for, and to contemn that wealth that towns, and countries, and kingdoms are divided and destroyed by. It teacheth men to slight that money, the love of which is the "root of all evil," 1 Tim. vi. 10. It sheweth men a better treasure, and not only verbally, but effectually teacheth them to trample upon that which the tumultuous world doth so much scramble for, and seek by such rapine, oppression, deceit, and blood. If all the ambitious climbers and state-troublers were truly godly, they would quietly seek for higher honours. If all the covetous noblemen, soldiers, landlords, and rich men were truly godly, they would never set both city and country into combustions, and poor oppressed families into complaints for the love of money. If thieves turned godly, you might travel safely, and spare your locks, and keep your purses. If tradesmen were all truly godly, deceit would not so break their peace. What is there for societies to strive about, when the bone of contention is taken away, and godliness hath cast down the idol of the world, that did disturb them?

4. Godliness takes down the great disturbing and dividing principle in man's soul; and that is, selfishness. And it both commandeth and worketh self-denial. Every ungodly man hath a private end, and a private spirit and interest, that is dearer to him than any other. So many ungodly men as there are, so many ends and interests. And how then can there be a possibility of unity? The wisest law-givers could never yet contrive an effectual course for the uniting of all these. If selfishness were down, I scarce know what should trouble the peace of kingdoms, cities, families, or any other societies. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" or, "Thou shalt not covet," is the sum and conclusion of all the law of God, concerning our carriage one to another. And it is godliness, and nothing else, that perfectly teacheth and truly (though imperfectly here) effecteth this self-denial. But of this elsewhere.

5. Godliness hath the most perfect righteous laws; and therefore is best for all societies. If God can make better laws than man, then this is past all question. His laws require nothing but what is for men's good. They prescribe nothing that is dishonest or unjust. They promise the greatest rewards to the obedient. They drive on the backward by the threatening of the greatest punishments. Their authority is highest and most unquestionable. They all proceed from one absolute Sovereign, and are the same to all the people of the world. They change not, but are to endure to the world's end. Whereas all the laws of men are limited to their own dominions, and endure but while their power can enforce them. They are subject to error and injustice; and are not the same in one country as in another, or in one age as in the former; and their rewards and punishments are but temporal; and, therefore, though under the laws of God, they are necessary for the government of commonwealths, yet without God's laws they would be utterly insufficient.

6. The way of holiness is contrary to all evil whatsoever, and therefore hath nothing to disturb a commonwealth. It is true, we cannot say so of the persons, because they are but imperfectly sanctified.

Were they in all things such as their Lord, and rule, and religion do require, they would have nothing that might be injurious to any. But surely as a sick man, or a lame, is better than a dead corpse; and as a man of mean understanding is better than an idiot, and a mean scholar better than the illiterate; so a man imperfectly sanctified, is better in a commonwealth than the ungodly. You blame not the laws of this land, because that thieves and murderers break them. The laws are good, if they oblige men to nothing but what is good, though bad men break them. The rules of the christian religion are most perfect, and direct or command men nothing that is evil. There may be faults in us, but there is none in the holy laws which we desire and endeavour to obey. Religion, therefore, is the way to the perfecting and securing of all societies, and the want of it subverteth them.

7. Holiness doth not only tell men of a right way, and show them their duty, but also effectually disposeth their very minds to the performance of it, and causeth them to walk therein. The nature of it is, to be the very right disposition of the heart, and right ordering of the life. The truly gracious soul is habitually an enemy to all known sin, and addicted to obey in all known duties. And surely persons thus habituated are liker to live according to their dispositions, than others to live well that hate the good in their hearts which they should practise. Men's laws can command good, but cannot give men good hearts to practise it, as God doth by his servants. If you cannot tell whether wicked men that love sin, or godly men that hate it, are better members of a commonwealth, you know not what societies are for.

8. Holiness destroyeth the root of iniquity, and teacheth men to hate even secret sins, which are in the heart, or which none can see but God alone. The laws of men restrain the subjects but from open injuries; but holiness restraineth men from doing the most secret wrong to others, or once thinking, speaking, or contriving any evil against them. It reacheth the conscience; it cleanseth the heart, from whence all evil doth proceed, 2 Sam. xii. 12; Deut. xxvii. 24; Psal. xc. 8; Eccles. xii. 14. A man fearing God, as such, dare not deceive or wrong another, though he were sure that it would never be known on earth. For he knoweth that the Lord is the avenger of such things, 1 Thess. iv. 6.

9. Holiness cementeth the members of all societies with the strongest cement of endeared love. It bindeth them together in the bond of charity. He is not godly that loveth not all men, even his enemies, with that common love that is due to humanity, and that loveth not all that fear the Lord with a special love, Psal. xv. 4; John xiii. 34, 35; xv. 12, 17; 1 John iii. 14, 23; iv. 7, 11, 12, 20; Luke vi. 27.

10. Holiness maketh princes and rulers a double blessing to their people. It maketh them the more divine, and bear the most excellent image of God. How precious is the name of a David, a Hezekiah, a Josiah, a Constantine, a Theodosius, (though they had all their falls,) in comparison of the name of a Saul, a Jeroboam, an Ahab, a Nero, a Julian! Oh how sweet is the name of a godly king in the subjects' mouths! Even those that are enemies to godliness as in themselves, (because they cannot endure to be curbed and troubled with it,) do yet use to admire and honour it in their kings and governors. Authority and holiness conjunct are two such rays of the heavenly Majesty and Goodness as place man in the state of highest excellency on earth, and make him so much to resemble his Creator, as hath given such the highest place in the esteem and honour of

the world, of any mortals. And it is not easy for a people to value such holy and pious princes and governors too highly, or to be sufficiently thankful for them unto God.

(1.) Holiness effectually teacheth governors to rule for God. To set him highest, and make it their work to seek his glory, and to avoid all selfish contradictory interests; and to own nothing that stands at enmity with his honour; but to judge that they have most happily attained the ends of their government and lives, if they have promoted the gospel and kingdom of Christ, and the work of holiness in the world.

(2.) Holiness will cause rulers to prefer God's laws before their own; and to be examples to the subjects of obedience to God; and to desire that all men should stand in far greater awe of God than of them. It will make them careful to form all their laws and government to the pleasing of God, and promoting men's obedience to his laws; and to take heed that there be nothing in them injurious to Christ, or contrary to his will. It will teach them with David to inquire of God, and make him their counsellor. And with Josiah, to "search the book of the law," and humble themselves when they have violated it. And with Joshua, "not to suffer it to depart out of their mouths, but to meditate in it day and night, that they may observe to do according to all that is written therein." And then God hath promised to make "their way prosperous, and to give them good success," Josh. i. 8.

(3.) Holiness will cause the rulers of the world to love those that are holy, and to promote the communion of saints, and to be nursing fathers to the church, even that part of the holy catholic church, which they are intrusted with; and to protect them from the violence of men. It will keep them from the sins of Jeroboam, that corrupted God's worship, and put forth his hand against the prophet that spoke against it. Whereby God will be engaged to be their protector in peace and war. When princes and people that fall out without holiness and take part with the flesh, and set themselves against the servants, the worship, and the ways of Christ, do put themselves from under his protection, and put themselves under the battering and piercing strokes of his displeasure. And woe to him that striveth with his Maker, and that kicks against the pricks of his severity! Isa. xlv. 9; Acts ix. 5; xxvi. 14. The fatal ruin of the kingdoms of the world, or at least the final ruin of the persons, is from their enmity and rebellion against the Lord, and because they will not be his kingdoms, but hate and quarrel with his ways, and persecute his servants. And godliness preserveth princes and magistrates from this sin and ruin.

(4.) Holiness will cause the rulers to hate sin in themselves and others, and to remove the abominable thing from before the eyes of God's jealousy, and to "drive away the froward; and not to know the wicked and the proud, and to cut off the slanderer, and the wicked doers, and to set no wicked thing before their eyes," Psal. ci. "In their eyes a vile person will be contemned, but they will honour them that fear the Lord." By this means their kingdoms may be holy, and God will delight in them, and dwell among them, and it shall be said of them, as Jer. xxxi. 23, "The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness." And when Israel is "holiness to the Lord, all that devour him shall offend, evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord," chap. ii. 3. The holy examples and holy government of godly kings and magistrates, will draw the hearts of the people to holiness, and cause it to flourish in the land. Whereas the wicked ex-

amples and government of the ungodly tendeth to make all about them wicked. For as Solomon saith, Prov. xxix. 12, "If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked." And then they are fuel for the wrath of God, both as offenders, and as enemies. For they will be still rebelling and opposing him: and carnal interests and enmity will pervert them to use the reprovers as Asa, and Amaziah, and Jeroboam, and Jezebel, and Joash did; and to think with Saul that Doeg was the best subject that would kill the priests at his command, and those the worst that would not betray them or destroy them; and to say to false accusers, as he did to the Ziphites, 1 Sam. xxiii. 21, "Blessed be ye of the Lord, for ye have compassion on me." And saith the Lord, Isa. xxvii. 4, "Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together."

(5.) Holiness will save princes and rulers from the great and dangerous temptations of their riches, and honours, and power, and pleasures, and will teach them to mortify the flesh, and live after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1, 6, 13; and will keep them hereby from those sins that would subject them to the consuming wrath of the impartial God, and will bring them to heaven notwithstanding all the impediments of the world, even as a camel through a needle's eye, by the Power to which all things are possible. And doubtless that which maketh men most acceptable to God, and tendeth to the everlasting happiness of the persons, must needs be better for all societies than that which prepareth them for damnation, and keepeth them here under the indignation of the Lord. See 2 Sam. xxiii. 3; Lev. xxv. 43, 46, 53; Isa. xxxii. 1; Rom. iii. 4—6; xii. 8.

II. And as holiness thus maketh the most excellent princes and happy governors, so it maketh the most loyal and obedient subjects, and is the most powerful preserver of peace in all societies.

If any shall say, that the people that are accounted holy have caused as great contentions and rebellions in the world as any other, witness the wars in France, Savoy, Bohemia, Scotland, England, &c. I shall first prove undeniably from the nature of the thing, that true godliness must needs make the best subjects, and tend to the happiness of commonwealths, and then I shall more nearly answer the objection.

1. Holiness effectually teacheth subjects to know themselves; to know their weakness, and meanness, and unworthiness, and to know their places and their proper work. It kills that pride that makes men think that none are so fit to rule as they; and it makes them so humble as to think themselves unworthy of protection in the meanest station. And also it so takes them up with a higher ambition, and sets their hearts on the greater things, that they are dead to the ambition of the world, and can easily leave these things to others. Their kingdom is not of this world. They are taught to expect affliction and persecution, and not to aspire after crowns. No man can deny that this is the lesson set them by their Lord, and the covenant which they make with him when they become his servants. Whereas the ungodly having their portion in this life, and relishing and minding most the things of the world, will snatch, and scramble, and turn every stone, and do any thing within their reach, for worldly honours.

2. Holiness teacheth subjects to see God in their rulers, and honour and obey them as his officers, even with an honour and obedience participatively divine. And no men can give them a higher honour than they that thus honour them on God's account; and no men can give them so full, and firm, and constant obedience, as they that obey God in their governors.

No man can give them higher titles than they that take them to be the officers of God. Carnal men obey their governors merely as men that are able to do them good or hurt. If they were sure to receive no damage by contemning them, they cared not to trample them in the dirt. Though that people sinned in desiring a king, yet when they had chosen that kind of government, and Saul was set over them, those that went with him were such "whose hearts God had touched; but the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? and they despised him and brought him no presents," 1 Sam. x. 27.

3. Holiness causeth subjects to obey and submit for conscience' sake. They do it because God himself hath commanded them to do it. They pay tribute, and give honour and obedience, because it is part of their obedience to God required of them in the fifth commandment, which is the first with promise. Outward prosperity is especially promised to them that honour their parents and superiors. And the commands and promises of God, with the bonds of conscience, do tie men faster to their duty, and restrain them more effectually from disobedience, than the words of men alone can do. Conscience holdeth strongly and constantly; and it holdeth as well in secret as in public; so that if a man were sure to do a mischief and never be discovered, he would nevertheless abhor it, as being not unknown to God and conscience. A man that feareth not God and conscience, will never stick to do a mischief, if he may escape the eye and revenging hand of man. Faux will set fire to the train to blow up king and parliament, if he see but a probability of escape. But he that feeleth the bonds of God upon him, dare not rebel.

4. Holiness destroyeth self-love, which is the spring of all discontents and disobedience; and teacheth a man to own no ends or interests but what stand in due subordination to the honour of God and the common good; and in due co-ordination with the welfare of our neighbours. Whereas, the ungodly are every man of them an idol to himself. Self is the only lord and law, set up against God, and king, and country. And if God, or king, or country be served by them, it is but in subserviency to themselves, as they look to attain some wealth, or dignity, or honour by it. The self-seeking man is faithful and trusty to no man but himself. And the self-denying man hath no great temptation to be unfaithful.

5. Holiness doth partly consist of charity, and teacheth men to do as they would be done by. And how can it go ill with any societies where love prevaileth, and men are as loth to wrong as to be wronged, and to do hurt to others as to themselves?

6. Holiness brings down God's blessing on each particular subject; and maketh a people the delight of God; and brings them under the promise of his favour. "Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. What abundance of promises are there to the obedient! Isa. i. 19; Deut. iv. 30; Exod. xxiii. 22; Deut. xi. 27; xiii. 4; xxx. 2, 8, 20; Jer. vii. 23; xi. 4, 7, &c.

7. Holiness maketh men meek and patient, and teacheth subjects not to make too great a matter of any injury that is done them; nor to censure unwarrantably the actions of their superiors; nor to murmur and stir up discontents; but quietly to bear all in obedience to God, and for the common good.

8. Holiness disposeth men to unity and concord, and is as much against discord and division as healthful nature is against wounds and sickness. "Whence are wars, but from the lusts that war in your mem-

bers?" James iv. 1. The servant of the Lord must not strive. The new command of special love to one another, and the strange forbearance, concession, condescension, forgiving, and loving enemies themselves, required in the gospel, must needs do much if truly practised to preserve the peace of any nation.

9. Holiness assureth us of so great a reward to those that obey their superiors in things lawful, and offers us so much better things upon our patience and submission, than ever disobedience or rebellion can attain, that hereby it must needs tend to the quiet and benefit of societies. He that is bound to "rejoice and be exceeding glad" in his "persecution, because his reward in heaven is great," hath small reason to contrive, or fight, or sin to escape the persecution together with the reward, Matt. v. 11, 12.

10. Holiness teacheth men both to continue obedient and faithful against all temptations, and also to propagate the same resolutions, and to draw all others to obedience with us. It was the excellency of Christ's example, that he would be obedient even when he was falsely accused of treason, and charged as a usurper of Cæsar's right. If we should be called seditious, disobedient, and rebellious when we are most loyal, it must not move us from our loyalty at all. In all these ten particulars I have showed, that in the nature of the thing, it is undeniable that godliness is the strength, and beauty, and safety of kingdoms, and of all societies; in that it engageth the subject as well as the governors, in all that tendeth to their peace and welfare.

And now you may see by what is said, that there can be no weight in the objection which pretendeth from the case of the Waldenses, Albigenses, Bohemians, French, &c. to produce experience against what I am proving. Health may as truly be said to be the cause of sickness, as godliness to be the cause of treachery, rebellion, or disloyalty; there being nothing in all the world except God himself, so contrary to these as godliness is.

But you will ask, Whence is it that we have the foresaid instances? I answer, sometimes not authority, but malice and cruelty, driveth poor christians to a stone wall, and if they turn again when they can fly no further, accuseth them of rebellion; as it was with the Waldenses, the Bohemians, &c. Sometimes princes and states fall out among themselves, and cannot agree about their titles, and the bounds and degrees of their power. And then whoever the people are against, they are sure from that side to hear the most opprobrious titles, and be used accordingly if it be in their power. Sometimes the right of government is not easily or generally known; as in the contention between the houses of York and Lancaster here. And then as one party conquereth one year, and another the next, so the people must be called traitors and rebels by each party that prevaileth, if they obeyed and served the other party against them. And if they refuse to obey and defend either of them they will be condemned by both. Sometimes the polity of empires and commonwealths is so imperfect and obscure in the constitution, that the several parties that pretend to interest, cannot agree about their rights, nor the lawyers agree among themselves. And the people cannot be thought to be wiser than the lawyers in the affairs of their profession. If Nero and the senate of Rome had each of them commanded the christians to aid them against the other, it would not have been easy for the wisest and holiest of the christians then to know which part they should have adhered to and assisted. Paul thought not meet to decide any such controversy. He commanded every soul to be sub-

ject to the higher powers, and not resist; but he tells them not whether Cæsar or the senate was the higher powers in a case of contest and division. Sometimes a traitor usurpeth the government, and christians think when they see him settled and in possession, that, though they hate his usurpation, yet they are bound to honour and obey him as being possessed of the government. Thus Gregory the Great too hastily and flatteringly owned and applauded Phocas; and the christian bishops ordinarily subjected themselves to the emperors that came in by blood and violence. Thus the bishops of Rome, and of other churches in Italy and the adjacent parts, submitted themselves (I think too soon) as soon as they perceived him to be conqueror, to Theodoricus; and so they did to other conquerors. Sometimes, as the general councils of Basil, Constance, &c. determined that a council is above the pope, and declared the contrary to be a damnable heresy, and commanded the bishops and people to obey them against the pope; so senates, and parliaments, and the majority of statesmen and lawyers, may tell the people that are unacquainted with such law cases, that in this or that they are bound to obey them, upon highest penalties, and that they shall receive to themselves condemnation if they resist them; and so may mislead such as intend nothing but to obey the higher powers for conscience' sake. And though the error and commands of councils and parliaments excuse not *a toto* an illiterate laic that understandeth not those matters, yet surely *a tanto* it is some excuse.

And sometimes oppression maketh a wise man mad, Eccles. vii. 7. And sometimes impatience prevaileth with the weak to do things unwarrantable; and human passion blindeth reason, and sometimes temptations prevail in this as in other cases. And sometimes hypocrites, that never had any true religion, do show their carnal dispositions, and unmortified lusts, and passions, and pride, by their rebellion against their lawful governors; and then religion must bear the blame of the actions of that counterfeit religion, and of those crimes which it doth most prohibit and condemn.

In a word, be the accusation against any particular person just or unjust, nothing is more sure and clear than that he is most unjust that will charge the christian religion as guilty of countenancing any rebellions, conspiracies, sedition, disobedience, faction, or divisions. Christ went before us in his own example to pay tribute to Cæsar; and commanded us to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and their false accusing him and condemning him as an offender against Cæsar, did no whit move him from the duty of his state of humiliation. What can be more against all treason and perfidiousness, than that holy doctrine which commandeth us the exactest performance of every lawful promise, much more of our oaths, and duties of allegiance? What can be more against rebellion than that holy doctrine which teacheth us a life of patience and meekness, condemning private revenge, and commanding us rather to turn the other cheek to him that smiteth us, and to give our coat to him that taketh away our cloak, and to go two miles with him that would compel us to go one; that is, to suffer yet more, rather than revenge ourselves, or break peace, or order or raise wars, to escape such injuries. It is a crucified Christ that conquered by suffering, that is our example. And our religion is but our conformity to him in his sufferings and his holiness. He hath made it part of our duty to himself to obey kings and rulers, and all superiors, not only the good but the froward, and to take it patiently if we suffer for well-doing, and not to return so much as a reviling, dis-

honouring word, or murmuring, rebellious thought. It is not fighting for ourselves, but following him with the cross, and forsaking all that we have, that Christ hath made the work of his disciples, and the necessary condition of his promise of salvation, Luke xiv. 33. There is no master in all the world, that so strictly commandeth patience, and forbearance, and forgiving, and love, and peace, and submission to one another, as Jesus Christ doth. He sets the hearts of all his servants on another kingdom, and tells them they have greater things to mind than riches, or honours, or domination upon earth. He taketh the bone of contention from before them, and bids them leave such things as these to the men of the world, that have their portion in this life. You may as honestly say that the sun is the greatest cause of darkness, as that Christ and holiness are the cause of seditions, rebellions, treasons, or perfidiousness in the world. All the world set together hath not done so much as he hath done against them. If men threaten hanging and quartering to such offences, Christ threateneth damnation in hell-fire to them. And would you wish him to inflict a sharper punishment, or more severely to manifest his hatred of the crimes?

I tell you therefore, if you should find rebellion and sedition among christians, it is but as you may find corruption in the bodies of the living, which is contrary to life and health, and to be found much more among the dead. I am not here pleading for individual persons, but for christianity and godliness. If any professed christians forsake the way of patience and subjection, and turn to rebellion and disloyalty, they do so far forsake religion and godliness, and much more wrong and offend their heavenly Master, than their king and governors. Plead who will for the wickedness of such men, for my part I will not. I am sure Christ will not plead for their sin which he condemneth. He may justify them from it, upon repentance; but he will never justify them for it and in it. It is not because they are godly, but for want of godliness, that any men have ever been guilty of rebellions, or resisting lawful powers: as Dr. Ward hath fully proved in his sermon on Rom. xiii. 2. Nothing more tendeth to the ruin of rulers and people, than to hearken to the devil and the enemies of holiness, that would persuade the world into a conjunction with them in the enmity against the way of godliness and the faithful servants of the Lord, upon pretence that they are adversaries to the governors and government. It is a weighty truth that the foresaid doctor begins his sermon with: "Among all the stratagems of the devil, tending to the undermining of religion, and the subversion of the souls of men, though there cannot be any more unreasonable, yet there was never any more unhappily successful than the creating and fomenting an opinion in the world, that religion is an enemy to government, and the bringing sincerity and zeal in religion into jealousy and disgrace with the civil powers. It was by this jealousy blown into the heads of the high priests and the sanhedrim amongst the Jews, and of Herod and Pontius Pilate, that Christ himself was accused, condemned, and executed on a tree. By this the apostles were haled before the governors of provinces; forced from one city to fly to another. For this they endured bonds and sundry kinds of death. It was through this fancy that the christians for three hundred years together, endured the rage of heathen emperors, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented. Our Lord Christ was traduced as an enemy to Cæsar, a man refractory to the Roman laws, and a nonconformist to the religion and laws of his country." Thus and

more that author. So that it is no new thing for the most innocent, and holy, and excellent persons to suffer as enemies to the government where they lived; nay, it hath been the common case; not is it strange to hear religion and holiness charged with these crimes which they are most against.

As for the malicious slanders of the papists against the reformed churches, as if they had promoted all their reformations by rebellion, they have been confuted sufficiently by many. At this time, I shall only desire the reader that would be satisfied in this, and understand the protestant doctrine in these points, to read Bishop Bilson's "Difference between Christian Subjection and Unchristian Rebellion." Especially p. 382, and from 494 to 522. Also Hooker's "Eccles. Polit." the last book (lately published).

And if he would know whether it be an article of the very religion of the papists, that the pope may give away the dominions of temporal lords that deny transubstantiation, or hold such like points which he calleth heresy, or that will not exterminate all that hold them out of their dominions, and that he may discharge their subjects and vassals from their allegiance, I only entreat him with his own eyes to read the decrees of their approved general council at the Lateran under Pope Innocent III. and let him but believe his eyesight. And for their case and confutation, let him also read King James's Answer to Perron's Oration.

Having thus interposed an answer to their objection, that say religion hath brought forth rebellions, (which I confess that religion which teacheth rebellion hath done; but the christian religion which condemneth it, and engageth men against it as aforesaid, doth not,) I now proceed to some other proofs, that godliness is the greatest security and establishment to kingdoms and all societies.

12. Godliness above all things engageth men to be true to their covenants; to keep all their oaths and promises of obedience to kings and other superiors; and to be faithful and trusty in all their duties to one another. So horrid is the sin of perjury and covenant-breaking, that God hath condemned it, not only in the holy Scriptures, but also in the law of nature. He will not bear with it in the greatest princes; how then shall perfidious subjects escape? What fair excuses had Saul for his breaking the vow and covenant with the Gibeonites! He might have said, 1. They procured it from Joshua by a mere cheat, and therefore no benefit belonged to them from their own sin and fraud. 2. That Joshua not knowing who they were, *ignorantis non est consensus*. 3. That God had forbid to spare any of those nations. 4. That it was not Saul that made this oath and covenant, but Joshua. 5. That Saul did it in zeal for the people of Israel. Yet for all this in David's days there was a famine in the land for this sin of Saul, which was not expiated till seven of his sons (or posterity) were hanged at the Gibeonites' request. And though David might well see that he might be censured as contriving all this himself for the extirpation of the line of Saul, yet would he not forbear the execution, 2 Chron. xxi. And when the people murmured at Joshua, and the heads of Israel, for sparing them at first, they are answered with the obligation of the inviolable oath, Josh. ix.

So though Zedekiah was the king of Babylon's captive, force could not excuse his perjury and covenant-breaking, but God severely condemned and avenged it.

So that every subject that hath but bound himself in allegiance to his sovereign, is under such an obligation as to a true believer is more dreadful to violate, than it is to suffer death.

Yea, God hath written such a law against perjury, even in nature itself, that he must needs be afraid of it that is not a flat atheist, lest his appeal to God do bring the vengeance of God upon him. And in this life the perjured ordinarily meet with that divine revenge which is the forerunner of eternal vengeance. The perjured are unfit for human society; hated by God, and never more to be trusted by man, till sound repentance make a change. Which made Augustine determine, that he that urgeth another to forswear himself, is as much worse than a murderer, as killing the soul is worse than killing the body. Seeing then that religion doubleth these sacred bonds, and casteth hell-fire into the face of the perjured and perfidious, it must needs be a singular preserver of kingdoms and all societies, which fall in pieces where these bonds are loosed; and fall into the hands of God, who is a consuming fire, especially to perjured men.

13. Moreover, it is only godliness that obeyeth with true loyalty, and carrieth on all works methodically for the common good. As he that will obey every justice of peace in all things that he commandeth, without respect to the laws or will of the sovereign power, may be sooner a traitor than truly obedient (for every justice or lord may arm him against his prince); so he that will obey the princes of the earth, without respect to the will or interest of the eternal God, will be but a traitor to God, under pretence of obeying princes, that are but his officers and servants. But the godly begin at God in their obedience; and therefore they proceed methodically, and obey men upon right grounds and in their proper places. It is not the most absolute obedience to man that is the best. He that should command men causelessly to fire his country, or to destroy the innocent, or to ravish virgins or men's wives, were not to be obeyed, as Doeg obeyed Saul; but God is first to be obeyed. It is he that begins, proceeds, and ends with God, that is sure to do no wrong, nor be misled.

14. Holiness possesseth men with a public spirit, and maketh the case of others to be our own, and teacheth us to do as we would be done by; and giveth every man that hath it, a compassion to others in their distress, and an earnest desire after their welfare, and a rejoicing in it; when ungodly men are all for themselves, Psal. cxxxvii.; 1 Cor. xii. 25—27; xiii.; Acts ii. 44; Matt. vii. 12; Mark xii. 33.

15. Godliness engageth men in doing good, as the very business of their lives, which is to be rewarded with everlasting happiness. So that besides what is forced from men by law, they are to be still in the exercise of charity, and to be "zealous of good works;" and to make it their study to do all the good they can. And therefore they are certainly the profitable members in any society, that are most truly godly, Luke x. 29, 30, &c.; Deut. xv. 9; Luke vi. 38; Gal. vi. 9, 10.

16. Moreover, holiness teacheth men to forgive wrongs, and to love our enemies, and to let go our right, rather than to break peace and revenge our wrongs; and to forbear even going to law contentiously, and where our putting up injuries merely to ourselves may suffice for the avoiding of it, Luke vi. 27—29; Matt. vi. 14, 15; 1 Cor. vi. 7. And what contention can there be where these rules are practised, except when the interest of God or others is violated, which is not in our power to remit. If you say, that these things are good if they were practised, I answer, 1. You confess then that holiness is good; for the rule is good, whether it be practised or not. 2. I answer, that so much as any man is sanctified, he doth practise it. And therefore if any man live

not according to the rule which he professeth to live by, that is, from the remnant of that sin within him, which the wicked plead for, and for want of more of that godliness which you distaste. Make him more holy, and he will do all this.

17. Holiness secureth every society, and interesteth them in the most impregnable defence; even in the love and favour of the Lord; and in his many sure and precious promises. He hath engaged his almightiness and fidelity for such, and tendereth them as the apple of his eye, and hath promised that he will be their defence, (Zech. ii. 8; Psal. v. 11; vii. 10; lix. 9, 16, 17; lxii. 2.) whereas the ungodly are under his curse, Psal. i. 6; xxxvii. And which of these societies is liker to be happy.

18. Godliness is the surest way to furnish every society with all the blessings that are truly good for them. For they have the favour and promise of him that is the giver of them all, Rom. viii. 28; Psal. xxxiv. 10; lxxxiv. 11; xxiii. "Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8; vi. 6; Matt. vi. 33. But wickedness is the certain way to ruin. "Even one sinner destroyeth much good," Eccles. ix. 18. And one godly man hindereth much evil, as the case of Joseph, Moses, Daniel, and many others tell you.

19. Moreover, it is godliness that is the honour of all societies. Without this their wisdom is mere folly, and their riches are but the fetters of their slavery, and a canker to gnaw them and testify against them; and their greatest victories may be but murders which shall damn them; and their splendour in the world is but the sign of their misery in the eyes of all foreseeing men. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people," Prov. xiv. 34. What glory can be equal to the glory of our interest in God, and of our being his people, and doing his work, and having his presence?

20. Lastly, how can that be worst on earth, that is so good in heaven? The perfection of holiness hereafter, with the holy love, and praises, and enjoyments of the saints, will be their glory. If you think this worst in your societies on earth, what do you but renounce it? If heaven be worst for you, come not thither. If the participation of that which is the felicity of the glorified, be not the felicity of all societies, I desire none of their felicity.

What if saints from heaven would come down and dwell among you here on earth? I beseech you as men of reason, answer me these two questions.

(1.) Whether you do not know or verily believe, that they would be more holy, and pure, and exact, and strict, and more averse to all sin, than any of those are that now you dislike as too precise?

(2.) Whether you would therefore call them puritans, and hate them, and cast them out, or imprison them, or take them for the troublers of your countries, or rather for the honour and blessing of your countries? What you would do by them that do by those that come nearest to them among you.

CHAPTER V.

TIMES OF HOLINESS ARE THE BEST TIMES.

AND now I have given you all this evidence, I dare leave it to the judgment of any man that is fit to judge, whether it be the godly or ungodly that are the better magistrates, or better pastors of the

churches, or better members of the commonwealth, or of any society. Judge now whether the places and times are not best that are most godly. And whether it be the godly or the ungodly that are the troublers of the world.

And yet it hath ever been the practice of ungodly men, to charge it upon them that fear the Lord, that all the troubles of the world are long of them. We were all quiet (say they) before this religion and preciseness troubled us; and this is it, that since it came among us, hath set us all together by the ears. But if these men be yet reasonable, I desire them to consider,

1. That this hath always been the old complaint of the most wicked men, which God himself hath testified against. When Lot did but gently admonish the abominable Sodomites to forbear a villany not to be named; "I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly," Gen. xix. 7—9; what said they to him, and how did they take it? Why, "they said, Stand back; and they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge. Now will we deal worse with thee than with them." Is not this the case between us now? How are we unpeaceable? Because we are against sin? If we would hinder men from wronging God, and from condemning their own souls, and others, then forsooth, we are their troublers, and we judge them, and we disturb their peace? Just like the Sodomites, These precise fellows (say they) will needs be our judges, and we must be ruled by them; before they came among us we had none of this ado. But did not God, think you, decide the controversy aright? He first took Lot and his family away, that the Sodomites might be troubled with that precise and busy fellow no more; and then he sent fire from heaven on Sodom, and consumed them all, "making them an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," Jude 7. Or as it is fully set forth by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. ii. 6—9, "Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, he condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example to those that after should live ungodly. (Mark this.) And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished."

And now who is it that was troublesome, and the cause of evil? Was it Lot, or was it Sodom? Take heed lest God take the Lots that trouble you from among you, and when you are rejoicing that you are rid of them, he serve you worse than he served Sodom.

In the days of Noah no question but that preacher of righteousness seemed to the world a singular and a self-conceited fellow. But did not God decide the controversy whether it were Noah, or they, that were the troublers of the world? Saith Peter, 2 Pet. ii. 5, "God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

When Israel fell before the men of Ai, it was a doubt who it was that was the cause of that calamity; but God proved it to be Achan, who is stoned upon this sentence of Joshua; "Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day," Josh. vii. 25.

2. And consider, I pray you, what a quietness it is that you have, before you are troubled by the godly? It is a quietness in the highway to hell. You had the privilege of damning your souls without disturb-

ance from these precise controllers. Hath not Christ told us, that the devil is thus like "a strong man armed, that while he keepeth his palace his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoils," Luke xi. 21, 22. The hearts and the nations that are not conquered by Christ, are the devil's garrisons and possessions. Do you think that it is best that he possess them still in peace? or that the preachers of Christ, that plant his ordnance against them, and batter them, till they are forced to yield, are therefore busy, troublesome fellows? What is it for, but for your deliverance, that are Satan's captives at his will? 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

3. And might you not on this ground also account Christ himself the troubler of the world, as much, and a thousand times more than us? For he doth more to disturb men in their sins than any of us: and he doth more for holiness than all the world besides. And in this sense he confesseth and foretells us, that he came not to send peace but division into the world, into towns, and countries, and families, Luke xii. 51—53. If we can have no peace with you, unless we will disobey our Lord, and serve the devil and the flesh, and damn our own souls, and suffer you to do the like, then keep your peace among yourselves; we will none of that peace; we have no mind to buy your friendship and good words at such a rate! If your peace will stand with our peace with God, and peace of conscience, we will gladly accept of it: if it will not, we can be without it. Your souls are like sores that may not be searched, or a broken bone that must not be set, for fear of hurting you. You are like men that must have that which would kill them; or like children, that will cry if they be but taken out of their dung, or kept from fire or from knives. If we do but cross you in the way to hell, we trouble you, and we break the peace; yea, and if we will not cast away our souls everlastingly for company! And is this the case? Is this the breaking of your peace? The Lord will shortly be a righteous Judge between you and us, and tell you who it was that was the troubler of the towns and countries, and of the world.

You find Ahab and Elijah at this contest. Ahab takes him for the troubler of Israel when a heavy famine was among them. Elijah saith, No; but it was Ahab and his father's house that had troubled Israel by their wickedness, 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18. And which think you was in the right, the prophet or the king?

Why sirs, what is it that godliness doth, that it should be taken for the troubler of the world, when ungodliness is taken for your peace? Is it our persuading or hindering you from sin that troubleth you? And will not the everlasting fruit of it trouble you more? Then even say, that washing you, or sweeping your houses, or curing your sores, or sickness, or persuading you not to kill yourselves, is a troubling of you! Or is it (as the Lord hath told us it will be, Matt. v. 10, 11; John xv. 18, 19; 1 Pet. iv. 4, 5) because we are not such as you, and will not do as you do, and be of your opinion, and forsake our Lord to keep you company? Is it not with good reason, when we know you cannot save us harmless, and will not answer for us before the Lord? We know that every man must answer for himself, and therefore we durst not trust to you, if you would promise us to bring us off: it is best for you to study better how to answer for yourselves. But if you are resolved on it, that ungodly you will be, and that you will venture on hell to escape a holy life, why should you not give us leave to pity you, and to for-

bear your folly, and to save ourselves? Will it do you any harm that others should be saved, or that others should be godly? Your own sanctification indeed cannot stand with your lusts and fleshly pleasures; but another man's may. It will take none of your vain-glory, or wealth, or sensual delights from you, that another man is sanctified or devoted unto God. And therefore be not angry with us, if we obey the Holy Ghost, that calleth to us, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation," Acts ii. 40.

Object. O but (saith the ungodly crew) it was never a good world since there was so much religion, and preaching, and preciseness, and so much ado about serving God! It was a better world, when we had but a short service read on Sundays, and played and merrily talked together the rest of the day! There was more love and good neighbourhood then amongst men than there is now. There was not then so much deceit, and cozening, and oppressing, and covetousness in the world; there was more peace and plenty, and a better world it was than now.

Matters of peace and plenty change often in the same age. And certainly you have as little hinderance now, from being as good as you have a mind to be, as ever your forefathers had. Two things I have to say to your objection.

1. If this be true that the world is so bad, which part is it of the world that you mean? Is it all, or some? Not all, sure; that were too horrible censoriousness to say. Then God would presently destroy the world. Sodom had one Lot and his family in it. Well! it is but some then that are so bad. And which part is it? Is it the godly, or the ungodly? If godliness be naught, then heaven is naught, where there is nothing else; and then take it not ill to be shut out. If it be the ungodly that are naught, that is it that I am saying. It is time then to leave it, and to turn to God. Is it not you yourselves that make the complaint that are the men that make the world so bad? Is it not you that are so covetous and worldly that you have nothing for the poor, and no time to spare for the work that you were made for; nor scarce any room to think or speak of the life to come? Is it not you that have so little charity that you even hate men for loving and serving God, and seeking diligently to save their souls? It is true that there was never greater wickedness in the world than since there hath been so much preaching. But what is that wickedness, and in whom? It is the despising and disobeying the calls of God, and the hating and neglecting of a holy life. Those that are saved by the gospel, may say that it was a happy message unto them; but those that slight it, and wilfully sin in the openest light, may well say that it is a bad world with them; and worse it is, and will be for ever, if they be not converted, than if they had never heard the gospel. It is you, and such as you, that despise the mercies of the Lord, that make it a bad world; and then you impudently complain of it, and charge it on them that will not be as bad as yourselves; and take away the candle and shut the windows, that the light may not trouble you.

2. Well! but say you the world was better when there was less preaching, and less ado about the serving of God, and our salvation. I do not believe you, and I will tell you why, yea, why I am certain that your words are false.

1. Because you contradict the Lord. God saith those times are best when there is most of the light of the gospel, and most helps for our salvation, and when the people are most holy. The increase of light and holiness is a principal part of the glory of the kingdom of Christ, and of the promises to the

gospel church, as you may see, Isa. ix. 2; xxxvi. 26; xlii. 6; lx. 3; Matt. iv. 16; Luke ii. 32; John iii. 19, 20. The word of God is the greatest blessing under heaven, together with a heart to obey and practise it. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it," Luke xi. 28; Psal. i. 1, 2; cvi. 3; cxix. 1. God himself pronounceth them blessed that meditate day and night in his law, and that make it their whole delight; and because of the increase of light and holiness, extollet the times of the gospel far above those of the law, affirming the least in this kingdom of God to be greater, as to the honour and privilege of his station, than the prophets, or John Baptist, Matt. xi. 11, 12. And would you wish me to believe such ignorant men as you, before the God of heaven that contradicteth you?

2. I will not believe you, because your objection is nothing but a blasphemous accusation of the living God. If it were true that preaching is bad, it is Christ then that is bad that doth command it. But I am sure that Christ is not bad; and that such as blaspheme him do it to their cost. It is he that hath laid a necessity on us, and woe be unto us if we preach not the gospel! (1 Cor. ix. 16;) and that chargeth us to feed the flock of God, 1 Pet. v. 2. Yea, the Spirit chargeth us "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, that we preach the word, and be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." If any one be to be blamed for all this preaching and stir for heaven, it is Christ, that chargeth it so strictly upon us. And if thou dare lay the blame upon the Lord, speak out, and stand to it at judgment.

3. I know it is false that you say, that the world is the worse for all this preaching and godliness, because it is against the very office of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. Christ was a diligent preacher himself, and dare you accuse him for it? He came into the world to bring us the light of heavenly truth: and dare you say that it were better be without it? It is the work of the Holy Ghost to illuminate and sanctify men; and do you think that he doth us hurt? Christ died to wash and purify, by the word and Spirit, the church which is his body, that he might present it spotless to the Father (Eph. v. 26, 27); and darest thou say that Christ came to do us harm? By this despising of his benefits, thou showest that thou hast yet no part in him or in his saving benefits, but art in the gall of bitterness and bond of thy iniquities, and thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

4. Moreover you are not to be believed, because you speak against the experience of all the prophets and apostles of Christ. David had rather be "a doorkeeper in the house of God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness;" and judged "a day in his courts to be better than a thousand" (Psal. lxxiv. 10); and accounted them the blessed men that might even dwell in the house of God, and be daily taken up in holy praise and worship, Psal. lxxv. 4; xcii. 13; xxiii. 6. When he was forced from the house and public worship of God, it was his daily lamentation, and he fainteth, and panteth, and longeth after the house and worship of God again, Psal. xlii. Psal. lxxiv. 2-3, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.—Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them." The prophet Isaiah saith, "In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited

for thee : the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee ; with my soul have I desired thee in the night ; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early." This was the mind of all the prophets and apostles ; and God hath told us that it is the practice of all blessed men to "meditate on God's word day and night," Psal. i. 2. And yet will you say that it was a better world when there was less of this ? O self-condemning hypocrites ! Why do you so much profess to honour the prophets, apostles, and martyrs of Christ, if you think that they were the troublers of the world, and that their doctrine and practice makes us worse ? Why do you honour them with the name of saints, and yet despise both their doctrine and practice in those that do but endeavour seriously to imitate them ? Why keep you holidays in remembrance of the dead saints, and say that the world is the worse for the living saints ? Oh horrible hypocrisy ! to honour their names, and hate their doctrine and course of life, and say that the world was never good since it was troubled with such as they ! Do we trouble you with our preaching, and praying, and our stir for heaven ? How would Christ and his apostles have troubled you, that went so far beyond us in all these, and made a greater stir than we, and turned the world (as their enemies charged them) upside down ! Acts xvii. 6. So busy was Christ in preaching and doing the work of God, that he neglected to eat his meat for it, John iv. 34, and his fleshly kindred would have laid hands on him, as if he had been beside himself, Mark iii. 21. It seems if you had then lived, you would have been among the wicked enemies of Christ and of his disciples, and have said, It was never a good world, since these busy fellows made so much ado with their religion !

5. Moreover, you speak against the inward feeling and certain experience of all true christians in the world. They all have tasted and found that excellence in the holy ways and ordinances of the Lord, that they value them above all the world. With David they esteem them above gold and silver, Psal. cxix. 72. With Solomon they say that "all the things that we can desire are not to be compared to them," Prov. iii. 15 ; viii. 11. And with Job they value the word of God above their necessary food, Job xxiii. 12. And with Paul they "count all things loss and dung in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ," Phil. iii. 7, 8. They know that it is a thousand times better with them since God converted them to a holy life than it was before, as well as you know that you are better in your health than you were in sickness. Try whether you can make men that ever were among those where plague, and war, and famine reigned, to believe that it was never a good world since this plague, and war, and famine ceased. You may as soon make wise men believe this, as make experienced godly men, to believe that it is worse with them for their turning to the Lord, and living holy, heavenly lives. You can never by all your doting and self-conceited prating, make those believe whom God hath sanctified, that they were in a better case before, when they were the slaves of Satan, and served sin, and were under the wrath and curse of God. They feel that within them that will never suffer them to believe you. The health of their recovered souls ; their experience of the goodness of the ways of God ; the comforts they have had in the pardon of sin and the hopes of glory, do make them know that you talk distractedly, when you tell them that they were better before, or that the world is the worse for the grace of God.

6. And we cannot believe you, when you speak

evil of a holy course, because your words are against all religion and common reason ; and, much more, destructive of the christian faith. If God be not to be loved with all our hearts, and served with our greatest care, then he is not God ; or then there is no such thing as religion to be regarded. A God that is worse than the creature, is no God. If we must not "seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness" thereof, Matt. vi. 33, as Christ hath commanded, then it is in vain to seek it at all. If there be no heaven or hell, let us lay by all religion. But if there be, that man that thinks it not worth his greatest care and diligence to be saved, doth forfeit the reputation of his reason with his soul. Will you believe that man that saith he believeth that there is an everlasting glory to be sought, and made sure of in this life of our pilgrimage and warfare, and yet thinks it not worth our seeking for above all, and worthy all our cost and labour ? He speaks a gross and blockish contradiction. A heaven no better than earth, is no heaven. A heaven that is not worthy the labour of a holy life, is no heaven. And a God that is not worthy of all that we can do, is no God. Either plainly say that you are pagans and worse, and believe not any life but this ; or else live as christians, if you will be called christians : say not that you believe there is a hell, if you think a holy life too dear to escape it.

7. Yea this is not all, but your words do tend to brutishness itself. Pagans did believe (for the most part) a life after this. And Julian, that apostate infidel himself, doth prescribe to all his idols' priests a very strict and religious life, according to the religion which he owned, and professeth that all care, and temperance, and piety should be used to please God, and obtain the happiness to come. And shall men called christians take the very infidels for puritans, and be worse than heathens ? If we have not another life to look after, then what are we but beasts that perish ? If you think that you die like beasts, call yourselves beasts, and never more own the name of men. If you are not beasts, but men, then have you souls to save or lose, to be happy or miserable for ever. And is it not worth all our care and labour to look after them ?

8. Another reason why I will never believe you, that the world was better when there was less preaching and religion, is because you speak against the very end and nature of preaching and religion. For the word of God is written and preached to this very end, to make men better. And is that the way to undo the world, to persuade them to amend ? Oh impudent, malignant tongues ! What doth the word of God speak against but sin ? Doth it any where speak against any thing that is good ? or doth it any where command you any thing that is bad ? Let the bitterest enemy of God upon earth say so and prove it if he can. I here, in defiance of the devil, and all his instruments and servants, challenge them in their bitterest malice, to say the worst they can of the gospel, or of true religion, and prove that ever it encouraged men to sin, or that ever any was a loser by it ! Oh wonderful ! Must the God of heaven indite such laws against all evil, condemning it, and threatening damnation for it ; and yet will these wretches have the faces to say that it is long of the Scripture or of religion that the world is evil ? What ! will preaching against your wickedness make you wicked ? If it do, be it known to the faces of you, that it is you, and not preaching, that shall be one day found to be the cause, and be condemned for it. Must princes and parliaments make laws to hang thieves and murderers ; and when they have done, will you say it is long of them and their laws that

men are robbed and murdered? Why, this is not yet so impudently unjust as you deal with God. For they threaten but hanging, and he threateneth everlasting damnation against sin; and executeth it on all the unconverted, as sure as he threateneth it. And would you have him yet do more to testify his dislike of sin? Tell me, thou that blasphemest the holy commands of thy Creator, Wouldst thou have him do more than everlastingly to damn unconverted sinners to prove that he is no friend or cause of sin? What should he do more? Is there a greater plague than hell to threaten? Or wouldst thou have him do more to show how much he loveth goodness, than to command it, and persuade men daily to it, and to promise everlasting glory for their reward? Is there any greater reward to be promised? I tell thee, blasphemer, to the justifying of my Lord, that all the world hath never done the thousandth part against men's faults as God hath done. Never were there stricter laws against them, than his laws; and never more terrible executions. And yet wilt thou say, that it is long of God, or Scripture, or religion, that the world is naught? If thou stay a little longer impudently in thy blasphemy, till death have but given thee the mortal stroke, (and it is hard at hand,) thou shalt then be answered in another manner, and God will easily justify himself, and stop all such vile and arrogant mouths, and confute thee with an everlasting vengeance. Remember that thou wast forewarned.

9. Yea, furthermore, you are confuted and shamed by your own complaints. What is it that you quarrel with the law of God for? Is it not because it is so strict, and forbiddeth sin, and threateneth damnation for it? Is it not because it requireth so much goodness, and telleth you that none of the unconverted, ungodly shall be saved? And what is it that you quarrel with the godly for? Is it not for serving God, and because they will not be as bad as others? And yet the same tongues dare blaspheme the laws of God, and say the world is the worse for them! And the same tongue dares revile the godly as the cause that the world is so bad! What should one say to such unreasonable men, that will at the same time murmur at the holy word and ways of God, because they contradict the wickedness of the world, and threaten them with hell-fire because they repent not, and yet say it is long of this very word, and the preaching and obeying of it in a holy life, that the world grows worse? O impudent mouths! that at once revile the servants of Christ, because they will not be as bad as others, and yet say that it is they that make the world so bad. God will very shortly stop such unreasonable mouths.

10. And if your words were true, then it would follow that all God's greatest mercies are worth nothing, yea, that they are a hurt to us, and curses rather than blessings. What is the gospel worth, if the reading, and preaching, and practising of it do make the world worse, and only trouble men? What are all God's ordinances worth, if this be the fruit of them? And why hath he appointed pastors and teachers for his church, if this be all the good they do? Nay, what is Christ himself worth to the world, if those are the worst men that most obey him, and study his word, and diligently seek him? O unworthy souls! is this all your thanks to God for a Christ when you are lost by sin? and for the gospel that offereth you everlasting life? and for the ministry of your pastors that would teach you the way of life? May we not take up the prophet's exclamation, Isa. i. 2, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox know-

eth his owner and the ass his master's crib; but this people doth not know the Lord, nor consider." Your beast doth not take his provender to be naught for him, and rather choose to be without it. And you are worse than beasts in your dealing with the Lord; and when he hath provided you a Christ, a gospel, teachers, and holy ordinances, even the preciouslest things in the world, you unthankfully refuse them, yea, and reproach them; and take them to be naught for you, and say that it is long of them that the world is so bad! Oh horrid ingratitude! when miserable souls are in the captivity of sin and Satan, and within a few steps of everlasting fire, the God of mercy sends his Son, his word, and ministers, to help them out, and set them free, and save them from hell before it be too late: and what entertainment have they? They are reviled by these wretches as if they came to make them worse, and do them a mischief, and not to save them! Righteous is the Lord that condemneth such as would not be saved, and as took salvation for an injury. And just were God, if he should take away the gospel, and his ministers, and his people, from so unthankful and unworthy a generation as this that are weary of them, and say they are the troublers of the world, and think that they do them more hurt than good; and as the Gadarenes by Christ, desire him to depart out of their coasts, Matt. viii. 34. Be content awhile, unworthy souls! you shall not long be troubled with a Christ, or with the gospel, or with preaching, or with praying, or with the company of these precise people, that you so much dislike. Sleep on but a few nights more, and pass on but a few days further, and you shall come to a place before you look for it, where you shall never have their company more, and where you shall be out of the reach of preaching, and praying, and holiness, and hope. And in the mean time, were it not for the sakes of those whom God will convert and save, this troublesome gospel and holy people should be taken from you, and given to a people that will be more thankful and more fruitful, because "you put it from you, and have judged yourselves unworthy of everlasting life," Acts xiii. 46; Matt. xxi. 41. No thanks to you that England is not like the Indians, and as miserable as you would have it.

11. And why should we believe you when we see that you judge clean contrarily for your bodies, than you do for your souls? I have never heard any of you say, It was never good world since our land was fruitful, and since so much corn came to the market. It was a better world when men had nothing but roots to feed on. And yet would you be believed, when you say that it was better when men had not so much of the Scripture, and of Christ and holiness, the food, the life, the health of souls?

12. And I the less believe you, because I find that this hath been the common speech of others in all former ages. They that lived in the days of your fathers, said so of the former times, It was formerly a better world than now. And if you had lived in those days of your fathers' forefathers, you would have heard them say the same. It is common with men to feel the evil that is present, and to praise the days that are past, whose evil they felt not, or have forgotten. But hear what God saith, Eccles. vii. 10, "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun," chap. i. 9.

13. And little cause have we to believe you, when we have present experience that your words are

false. We see that those are the best that are most godly. He is blind that seeth not an exceeding difference betwixt them and such as you that speak against them. Do not we see that they are sober, when some of you are drunken? and that they are seeking heaven, when you are seeking the world? and that they are providing for their souls and pleasing God, and employed in the most sweet and heavenly works, while you are pampering the flesh, or making provision to satisfy its lusts? Do we not hear their speeches are of God, and their salvation, and things that edify, while you curse or swear, or talk filthily, or idly and unprofitably, like dreaming or distracted men? And yet would you make us believe that you are as good as they, and that religion makes men worse?

But you say, that for all this they are secretly as bad as others. Foolish malice! If it be secret how do you know it? If you know it how is it secret? and it is marvel that you do not make it known! Is it not easy to say so by a Job, or a Samuel, or by Christ himself, if saying so may serve turn, and a wicked tongue may pass for proof? You may say that in secret I commit all the sins imaginable; and how can I disprove you, when I have no witness, but only by desiring you to prove it if you can? But oh happy are the servants of the Lord, that are even in secret always in the presence of their Judge, who will bear witness for them, and justify them against malignant tongues!

But you say, that they are as covetous as other men, though they are more religious. But this is as shameful a falsehood as the former. Do we not see the contrary in the open fruits? Covetous men are the forwardest to call others covetous, because they would have nobody hinder or cross them in their covetous desires or designs. And then they are saying, O such a professor used me thus, and such a one did thus; and usually they partially relate the case as their own covetous hearts incline them passionately to judge it. And perhaps they may meet with a worldly hypocrite, that seemeth religious; which is no more to the disgrace of religion, than Ham was in the family of Noah, or Absalom in the house of David, or Judas in the family of Christ. Do not you call yourselves christians yourselves? And yet christianity is never the worse, because you are wicked that profess it. But sure I am that the servants of Christ are not comparable to you in covetousness. For as I find God describing them in his word, to be a people "dead to the world, whose conversation is in heaven," so I see that they can spare time from worldly business, while "they and their household serve the Lord;" and so cannot you. They are seeking heaven, when you are seeking earth. And we may know what a man loveth, if we know what he seeketh. And again I must bear witness from my own experience, that in this place where I live, I have reason to believe, that where other men of their ability give a penny to the poor for charitable uses, those that you call precise, and think too religious, do give six, if not twice six, and some of them much more than I will express. There are few weeks but we have occasion to try it by voluntary collections for some needy persons, or charitable uses; and therefore we have much opportunity to know; besides contributions at sacraments, and other public occasions.

But you say, that in former times there was more love among neighbours than is now. Then there was more familiarity and kindness, and less hatred, and malice, and contention, than now. I answer, Am I not sure by constant experience, that there is far more love among the godly than among you?

Do I not see how dear they are to one another, and how sweetly and familiarly they converse together, and join in prayer and holy exercises, and confer about their everlasting state? Do I not see that they are ten times more liberal to relieve each other in distress than you are? Many and many a time I have seen them give ten or twenty shillings in collections to relieve godly people in distress, when those of you that are richer give but two-pence or a groat to your companions in the like collections. And what makes them be so much together, if there be not love among them? I profess to you I never yet saw any thing that is worthy the name of love and peace among any other sort of men.

But perhaps you will say, that there are contentions and differences among them about religion, which the world was never troubled with before. To which I answer, 1. What differences or contentions do you see among them in this town or parish? Among five hundred people that you count precise, what one is there among us that is either anabaptist, or separatist, or antinomian, or Arminian, or of any other sect? What one that separateth from any ordinance of public worship? What differences do you know among us? Is there here any more churches than one? Do you hear any contentings? Do you see any thing like a difference among us all? For my part, I know of none. Nor but of one in the parish, (that is turned from us,) which is a simple, ignorant, harmless man, that turned anabaptist. For as for the apostate infidels that join with you that are ungodly, we have nothing to do with them, but lament their misery.

14. Another thing that hindereth our belief of you, is, that we see that it is only ignorant or wicked men that are of this opinion, and say that the world is the worse for godliness, or the preaching of the gospel. Not a man saith so that knoweth what he saith, and that ever felt the power and sweetness of the gospel upon his soul. But only those that are blinded by the world and serve the flesh, and are drowned in lust, and know not what they speak against. And shall we regard the judgment of such men?

15. And moreover, when you say that the world was better when there was less godliness and teaching, you contradict all history, and therefore are not to be believed. You know not well what is before you; much less do you know what hath been in your forefathers' days. Be it known to you, we have as full advantage to know that as you have. Many and many a large volume have I read concerning the state of the world before us, which tells us of far greater wickedness in our forefathers' days than are in these. If you will not believe me, I will show it to any of you, that can read and understand, at any time when you will come to me. I will show you the words of the chroniclers and historians of those ages, that make more lamentable complaints of the vices of those times, and tell us of far more evil then, and of a far greater scarcity of good, than can be truly spoken concerning us. And are you that never saw those days, to be believed before them that saw them?

16. And I am sure also that you speak falsely, because you make the most barbarous heathens to be most happy, and the worst of men to be the best. If it be best where there is the least religion, and least teaching, or meddling with holy things, then are the naked Indians the best, and the cannibals that live on the flesh of men. These be they that are least troubled with preaching and religion. And if you think that these miserable souls are best and happiest, I pray you go to them, and be happy with

them. And by my consent the magistrate shall promote your happiness and send you thither.

17. And would you have us believe you, when you contradict yourselves? Out of your own mouths will we silence or condemn you. It is Christ that teacheth us to be holy. And do you not pretend yourselves to believe in Christ? That which you dislike as a troublesome or needless thing, is nothing but serious christianity itself. And do you not say yourselves that you are christians? Do not you profess the articles of the christian belief? And what do we but practise that which you profess? We do but obey that God whom you say you believe in, as the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and all things. We do but love the Lord our Saviour, whom you say you believe in as your Saviour. We do but obey the Holy Ghost that sanctifieth all that God will save, whom you also profess to believe in yourselves. We practise that communion of saints which you deride, and yet profess that you believe. We seek after the remission of sin, and that life everlasting, which you take on you to believe yourselves. And will you profess to believe these things, and yet say they are naught, or that it was never a good world since they were regarded and practised? And do you not profess to take the ten commandments for the law of God, which all men should obey? And what do we but endeavour to obey them? All that which you hate as too much preciseness, is nothing but the obeying of these ten commandments. And oh that we could do it better! And do you not use in the saying of the Lord's prayer, to pray that the name of God may be hallowed, and his kingdom come, and his will be done, yea even as it is done in heaven? And yet will you say with the same mouth, that it was never a good world since God's name was hallowed, and since his kingdom was advanced, and his laws so much regarded, and his will obeyed? O hypocrites! Is this your praying? and do you look such prayers should be accepted which you hate and speak against yourselves? You pray that you may not be led into temptation, but delivered from evil; and yet you run into temptation, and take that evil to be good. How oft have I heard men, when the commandments have been repeated, which require us to take the Lord only for our God, and not to take his name in vain, and to remember to keep holy the sabbath day, to join to it as their prayer, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;" and when they come home, revile those people that are willing to keep it, and that will not take God's name in vain, and forbear the keeping holy his day, as they do themselves. Either give over professing the christian belief, and using the Lord's prayer, and praying that you may keep the commandments of God, or else give over reviling those that do it. Either say plainly that you are heathens and no christians; or else never say that a christian life is hurtful to the world, nor make it the matter of your reproach.

18. And I must needs say that I am the more assured that your words against religion are false, because I know that they please the devil, who is the father of lies; and are just such as he would have you speak, and would speak himself if he had but liberty, and his appearance would not mar his cause. When thou art railing at godliness, and saying that this religion is the trouble of the world, and that the servants of Christ are but a company of busy hypocrites, just so would the devil have thee speak. I can prove it fully from the Scriptures, and from his nature and designs. You could not speak

more agreeably to his mind. If he had hired you, and written down every word which he would have you speak, you could not more punctually obey him. Do you plead against holiness, and for a careless and ungodly life? Do you despise the righteous, and justify the wicked? Just so would the devil have you do. If he stood by you, and prompted you, (as indeed he doth, though you do not know it,) those are the very words that he would have you say. Indeed when he is compelled the devil himself speaketh better than you, as in Acts xvi. 17, he saith, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." These are better words than yours. But when he is left to himself, and speaketh of his own, he speaketh just as you do. And shall we believe you when the devil sets you on, and you speak the words of the lying spirit?

19. And I the less believe you, when you say that the world is the worse for preaching and religiousness, because I know from whence this comes. You take that to be the best, that is the worst; and that to be the worst, that is indeed the best. You judge after the flesh, and take those for the best times when you have most prosperity, and may sin with least contradiction and molestation, and be least troubled in your sensual course. These are your good days, which wise men know to be your slavery and misery. It is never a good world with you, when your consciences are troubled, and your sores are lanced, and Satan cannot keep his garrison in peace; and when you cannot be permitted to drink, and swear, and game, and revel without control. And if this be your good world, I had rather have a prison or a pair of stocks with Christ and the gospel which you despise, and with the means and hopes of the world to come, than to have your good world, which is but the quietest passage to damnation. You are not yet to be believed. Stay till you see the end, and what becomes of it, and then tell us which was the good world.

20. Lastly, If all this will not serve, I will silence you and shame you, if you have any shame left. If religion and so much serving of God do make the world worse, and those be the worst times where there is most of these, then heaven would be worse than earth or hell, even the worst place in all the world. For no place hath so much holiness as heaven. No where is there so much ado about the praise and service of God, as there is in heaven. There they do nothing else but that which you revile, and that in highest fervour and perfection. They rest not day or night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," Rev. iv. 8. Dost thou know the man on earth that is most precise, and holy, and diligent for God? Why the lowest of the saints in heaven go quite beyond him. And in good sadness, dost thou take heaven to be the worst place? and think that so much holiness will make it troublesome? Bear witness then against thyself. Out of thy own mouth art thou condemned. How canst thou expect to be admitted into heaven, that takest it for so bad a place? Thou teachest God to thrust thee back, and say to thee, Begone; here is nothing but holiness, which you could not abide. You shall go to a place where religion and holiness shall not trouble you.

Well, sirs, consider now as men of reason, of all these twenty reasons which I have given you, and then tell me, whether that be not the better world, and the better soul, where there is most faith and holiness.

CHAPTER VI.

HOLINESS IS THE ONLY WAY OF SAFETY.

I HAVE proved to you that holiness is best for commonwealths, and given you general undeniable evidences, to prove that it is best for all men in particular. I shall now come to the particular evidences, and show you wherein it is that it is best for all men.

There are three sorts of good that men have to look after. The first is the security of their life and being; the second is their moral well-being; and the third is their natural well-being. This last also is divided into three branches, and consisteth in our profit, our honour, and our pleasure.

So that here are five several sorts of goodness to be considered of, and you will find that holiness is best, beyond all comparison, in each respect. 1. In respect of safety. 2. In point of honesty. 3. In point of gain. 4. In point of honour. And, 5. In point of pleasure or delight. If I prove not every one of these, then tell me, I promised more than I could perform. But if I do prove them, I look that you that read it, should promise presently to come in to God, and a holy life, and faithfully perform it.

1. And that HOLINESS IS THE SAFEST WAY, I prove thus. 1. That man is in a safer state that is delivered from the power of Satan, than he that is in his bondage, and taken captive by him at his will. But all the unsanctified are in this captivity, and all the sanctified are delivered out of it; as the Scripture most expressly tells us, Eph. ii. 1—3, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom we also had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind," &c. So 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26, "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." And Acts xxvi. 17, 18, "I send thee to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." And Col. i. 13, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Satan is the ruler and the jailer of the ungodly, that leadeth them to sin, and so to destruction, and keepeth them for torments at the day of wrath. And is he safe that is in the devil's power? If he should appear to thee, and lay hold of thee, thou wouldest not think that thou wert safe. But his possession of thy soul is far more dangerous. Thou dost not believe that thou art in his power. But thy blindness sheweth it; and thy enmity to the way of holiness sheweth it; and thy ungodly life doth fully show it; and the Scripture affirmeth it of all such; and what need there any further proof? But the sanctified are all delivered from this slavery; and though the devil may rage against them, he shall not prevail.

2. Moreover, those that are united to Jesus Christ, and are become the living members of his body, are certainly safer than those that are yet strangers to him, and have no special interest in him. But all that are sanctified are thus united to Christ, and made his members; and all the unsanctified have no part in him. "He that hath the Son hath life,"

and he that hath not the Son hath not life," 1 John v. 12. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love," John xv. 6, 7, 9, 10. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," ver. 14. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. No man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 25—27, 29, 30.

Judge by these passages whether the sanctified are not safe. If the love of Christ, and his merits, and his power, cannot keep them safe, then nothing can. If the Saviour cannot save them, none can. Is not the very flesh of Christ safe? Are not the members of his body safe? Are not his friends, his spouse, and beloved safe? If Christ can save us we are safe. For who can conquer him? or who can take us out of his hands? John x. 28. If he "be for us, who shall be against us?" and if he justify us, who shall condemn us? Rom. viii. 33—35.

But is it so with the ungodly? No; they have no part nor lot in this matter, but are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, because "their heart is not right in the sight of God," Acts viii. 21, 23.

Moreover, he that hath escaped the curse of the law, and hath his sins forgiven him, and is justified from all things that could by the law be charged on him, is safer than he that is under the curse, and hath all his sins yet lying on his soul. But the first of these is certainly the case of the sanctified, and the other of the unsanctified. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 10, 13. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Rom. iii. 23. And Mark iv. 12, shows, that the unconverted have not their sins forgiven them. "He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already," John iii. 18. And Acts xxvi. 18, "To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me." "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1. Abundance more such passages of holy Scripture do assure us that all the unsanctified are unpardoned, and all the sanctified are justified and delivered from the curse. And which of these are in the safer state?

Did one of you owe ten thousand pounds more than he were worth, or had you committed twenty known felonies or murders, would you think yourselves safe without a pardon? Would you not be looking behind you, and afraid of almost every man you see, lest he came to apprehend you? Oh what a case is that man in that hath so many thousand sins to answer for! and hath such a load of guilt upon his soul! and so many terrible threatenings of the law in force against him! Do you not fear every

hour, lest death arrest you, and bring you to the prison of the bottomless pit? But the sanctified is delivered from this danger. A thousand sins indeed were against us; but we have a pardon of them all to show. In Christ we have "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," Col. i. 14. The law hath nothing now against us, and therefore we are safe.

4. Those are safer that are dearly beloved of the Lord, and reconciled to him, and taken for his children, than those that are his enemies, and hated by him, and under his displeasure. But most certainly the former is the state of all the sanctified, and the latter is the state of the ungodly.

You shall see both in the words of God: "Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all the workers of iniquity," Psal. v. 4, 5. "My defence is of God which saveth the upright in heart. God judgeth the righteous; and God is angry with the wicked every day," Psal. vii. 10, 11. "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness," Psal. xlv. 7. "Those mine enemies that would not I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me," Luke xix. 27. "We were by nature the children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3. A hundred more such places show you the state of the unsanctified.

But how different is the case of the renewed, upright soul! "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," 2 Cor. vi. 16—18. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God," John i. 12. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 16, 17. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him," Mal. iii. 17. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more," Heb. viii. 12. "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and unrepvable in his sight," Col. i. 21, 22. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile," Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye," Zech. ii. 8.

Judge now by these plain expressions from the Lord, who it is that are in the safer state, the godly or the ungodly. Is he the safer that is hated by the God of heaven, or he that is most dearly loved by him? He that is under his displeasure, or he that is his delight? Why, man, if God be against thee, thou art no where safe! not in the strongest castle! not in the greatest army! not in the highest dignity! not in the merriest company! Thou knowest not but a commission is gone out for death to strike thee in thy next recreation, or fit of mirth! How knowest thou but death is ready to strike, while thou art eating, or drinking, or talking, or sleeping? Thou hast no security from an angry God. Till he be reconciled, thou art no where safe! This may be thy fatal day or night for aught thou know-

est. And if once the mortal blow be struck, and thy soul be taken from thy body unrenewed, O man, where then wilt thou appear? O wonderful stupidity! that thou dost not eat thy bread in fear, and do thy work in fear, and sleep in fear, and live in fear, till thou be sanctified!

But to the soul that hath God for his security, what can be dangerous? or what condition (while he keeps close to God) can be unsafe? "The Father that gave us unto Christ is greater than all, and no man can take us out of his hands," John x. 28, 29. Conquer heaven, and conquer the saints! There is their city, their garrison, their conversation, Phil. i. 20; Heb. xi. 10, 16. What enemy, what policy, what power can endanger him, that God will save and hath undertaken for? We were never safe one day or hour, till we were friends with God. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," Deut. xxxiii. 27. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.—God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early.—The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge," Psal. xli. 1, 2, 5, 7. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in him will I trust," Psal. xci. 1, 2. This is the confidence, and joy, and glory of the saints. "I will sing of thy power, yea I will sing aloud of thy mercies in the morning, for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for my God is my defence, and the God of my mercy," Psal. lix. 16, 17. "Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation, Psal. lxxxix. 26. See Psal. xxvii. 5; lxi. 2; lxii. 2, 6, 7; xciv. 22. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous run into it and are safe," Prov. xviii. 10. "Safety is of the Lord," chap. xxi. 31. Quietly may we repose ourselves to rest, for it "is the Lord only that maketh us dwell in safety," Psal. iv. 8. But is it thus with the ungodly man? O no! When "they say peace and safety to themselves, suddenly destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape," 1 Thess. v. 3. "For their rock is not like our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges," Deut. xxxii. 31. Why else do they desire in times of danger that they were in the case of the servants of the Lord? If they thought themselves as safe as the regenerate, why do they wish at the hour of death, that they might but "die the death of the righteous, and their latter end might be as his?" Numb. xxiii. 10.

Moreover, he is certainly more safe, that is heir of the promises, and hath the word of God engaged for his safety, than he that hath no promise from God at all, nor any such security to show. But all the faithful have interest in the promises, in which the ungodly have no share. Surely he is safe to whom the Lord hath promised safety. Oh what a precious treasure might I here open, to show you the safety of true believers? I will cull out but a few of the promises for a taste. "The turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whose hearkeneth unto me, shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil," Prov. i. 32, 33. "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe," chap. xxix. 25. "My son, let them not depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion; so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace unto thy neck: then shalt thou

walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken," chap. iii. 21—23. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him, the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders," Deut. xxxiii. 12. "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee, he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved," Psal. lv. 22. "God is in the generation of the righteous," Psal. xiv. 5. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their trouble. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of all. He keepeth all his bones. — Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate," Psal. xxxiv. 15, 17, 19, 20. "For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off," Psal. xxxvii. 28. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him," ver. 37—40. "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever," Psal. lxxiii. 26. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will not I forget thee," Isa. xlix. 15. "He hath said, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink," &c. Matt. vi. 25. "Fear not them which kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul.—The very hairs of your head are all numbered," Matt. x. 28, 30. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness," Isa. xli. 10; see ver. 13, 14. "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt," &c. chap. xlii. 1, 2. "The Lord preserveth the way of his saints," Prov. ii. 8. "O love the Lord, all ye his saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful," Psal. xxxi. 23. "He preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked," Psal. cxvii. 10. "The Lord is high unto all them that call upon him; to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desires of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy," Psal. cxlv. 18—20. "Say not, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he will save thee," Prov. xx. 22. "He is faithful that hath promised," Heb. x. 23.

I hope the believer will not be weary to read over all these precious promises, which are his security from God, for soul and body. I sum up all in that one, 1 Tim. iv. 8, "Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Judge whether godliness be the safest state. Can a man of so many

promises be unsafe? But instead of these the ungodly are threatened with everlasting vengeance.

6. He is safer that hath continually a guard of angels, as certainly all the faithful have, than he that hath none, but is prisoner of the devil, as the ungodly are.

Hear the Scriptures: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them," Psal. xxxiv. 7. "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone," Psal. xci. 11, 12. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven thy angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven," Matt. xviii. 10. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14. And have the wicked any such attendance for their security? No: but a fearful captivity to the devil.

7. Lastly, That is the safest state where man is safe from the greatest evil. Everlasting misery is the great evil which the godly are initially saved from. They are liable to afflictions as well as others, but not to damnation, and therefore they are safe. They must be sick and die as well as others; but they shall escape eternal death. Yea, they are already "passed from death to life," (1 John iii. 14,) and have "eternal life begun within them," John xiv. 3. "He that hath the Son hath life," 1 John v. 12. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life," John v. 24. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation," ver. 28, 29. "The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish," Psal. i. 4—6.

If yet you are unresolved whether godliness be the only way of safety, I dare say it is because you believe not the holy Scriptures; for there the doubt is as fully decided as any one in all the world. Oh how blessed is the state of the poorest, most afflicted saint, that may always say, My soul is safe! If my health, or wealth, or friends be gone, yet am I safe from everlasting misery. Other things I shall have as God seeth best for his honour and my spiritual good; but salvation I may be sure of, if I abide in Christ. What needs he fear, that hath escaped hell! But oh the dreadful case of the ungodly! that are passing to damnation when they never think of it! Their bodies may be strong, their riches great, and they may fare sumptuously every day, Luke xvi. 19; but oh what a case are their poor souls in! and where will they be when this mirth is ended? ver. 25. They are not safe from hell one hour.

CHAPTER VII.

HOLINESS IS THE ONLY HONEST WAY.

WE have tried whether the way of godliness or ungodliness be the safest. Let us next try which is the honestest, of which one would think we

should never meet with a man so shameless as to make a question. But experience telleth us, that such there are, yea, and that they are very common. Even in their reproaching of a holy life, they will join the boastings of their own honesty, and say, Though we swear or are drunk now and then, and make not such a stir about God's service and our salvation, yet we are as honest as these precisers people, that make more ado, and censure us as ungodly. As truly and wisely as if a common whore should say, I am as honest as these precisers people that will not play the harlot as I do. And as wisely as if a thief should say, Though I steal for need, I am as honest as these precise people that will not steal. But yet we have this advantage by these shameless boasts, that still the name of honesty is in credit, and the worst men honour it by pretending to it, while they dishonour themselves by their renouncing the thing itself, and by the impudency of their pretences.

Honesty is nothing but true virtue, or the moral goodness of the mind or actions. An honest man and a good man is indeed all one, *καλὸς ὁ καλοκαγαθός*, with the Greeks; one that is both inwardly virtuous, and manifests it in the cleanness and integrity of his life, in the sight of men. All men, for aught I can perceive, would be accounted honest. This reputation honesty hath among its vilest enemies, that they approve the name, and would not appear to be its enemies, till they have put some other name upon it. While they hate honesty, and persecute it, they would be called honest men themselves. And therefore by the consent of all the world, friends and foes, that is the best way which is the honestest.

Oh that you would all but stand to this, in the choosing of your course, and in your daily practice! Will you all agree upon a holy life, if I prove it, past all doubt, to be the honestest? Oh that you would! Yea, if I prove that there is no man truly honest in the world, that is not truly godly. If you would stand to this, you would soon be changed. Indeed it is nothing but dishonesty that we would have you changed from. And if you will not stand to this, but will refuse honesty when you know it, for shame lay by the name of honesty, and wish not men to call you honest any more. Either be what you would be called; or give men leave to call you as you are. Let us come then to the trial, and see who is indeed the honest man, the godly or the ungodly.

I. I have already told you, that God, who is the most infallible Judge, hath given his sentence on his people's side. If you will think yourselves that it is not those that thieves and harlots call honest that are so likely to be honest, as those that wise men and virtuous men call so; we have then far greater reason to conclude, that it is not those that you call honest, that are so fit to be judged such, as those that God calls so. How say you? Will you not freely give us leave to take God's judgment or word before yours? If not, we will take leave. And God calls all the ungodly by the name of evil and wicked men! and the godly are they that he calleth upright, good, and honest. The whole Scripture, you know, if you know any thing of it, speaketh in this language, It is they that "hear the word and keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience, that receive it into honest and good hearts," Luke viii. 15. This is the life that is "acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, which is in all godliness and honesty." These are inseparable, godliness and honesty, 1 Tim. ii. 2, 3. Indeed the Greek word here is, that which signifieth gravity and seemliness of behaviour; but that which is frequently translated good, is it which signifieth the truly honest. And

you know none of the ungodly are ever called good in Scripture, but clean contrary. "The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them; but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness," Prov. xi. 6. So ver. 18—20, "The wicked worketh a deceitful work, but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. As righteousness tendeth to life, so he that pursueth evil doth it to his own death. They that are of a froward heart are an abomination to the Lord; but such as are upright in their way are his delight." Every where you see how God abhorreth the ungodly, and extolleth those that love and fear him. Christ calleth the ungodly "evil men, that out of the evil treasure of their hearts do bring forth evil things," Matt. xii. 35. All is evil; the life evil, the heart evil, and the man evil. "The righteous man is more excellent than his neighbour, but the way of the wicked seduceth them," Prov. xii. 26. And Psal. xvi. David called the godly "the excellent in whom is all his delight." It is an excellent spirit that is in them, (Dan. iii. 12, 14; vi. 3,) and an excellent way in which they go, (1 Cor. xii. 31,) and an excellent knowledge which the Spirit's illumination causeth them to attain, Phil. iii. 18; Eph. iii. 18, 19. You have God's judgment of the case, if that will satisfy you, who is it that is the best and honestest man, the holy or the unholy.

2. Do you think that man is an honest man, that will deny you your due, and rob you of all that is your own? or rather, is not the just man the honest man, that will give every man his own? I know you will give your voices for the latter. O then take heed lest you condemn yourselves! If you be not holy, your own testimony doth condemn you. For it is only the godly that give God his own, when the ungodly rob him of it. Hast thou not thy life, and time, and maintenance from God? Hast thou not thy reason, and thy affections, and all thy faculties from him? And should not all thou hast be employed for him? Thou art a dishonest man that grudgest, yea, deniest him one day in seven, when thou owest him all. Thou art a dishonest man that givest away thy Maker's due unto his vilest enemies; that wastest thy means or strength on sin; that spendest thy precious time on vanity; that abusest his creatures to the satisfying of thy lusts, and that livest to thy flesh when thou shouldst live to God. Thou robbest him of all which thou givest to his enemies, and of all which thou dost not use for his service. It is less dishonesty to rob thy master that trusteth thee with his goods, than to rob the Lord that trusteth thee with thy time, and parts, and all things. O blind, unworthy sinners! what makes you think him an honest man that robbeth his Maker, or denieth him his own, when you call him a dishonest man that robbeth but such silly worms as you, that in respect of God have nothing of your own? Art thou better than God, that it should be called dishonesty to wrong thee, and no dishonesty to wrong him, or deny him that which is his own? God hath an absolute title to you, and that on more accounts than one. You are his own, as you are his creatures. "All souls are mine," saith the Lord, Ezek. xviii. 4. And he hath title to thee by redemption, as well as by creation. For "to this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living," Rom. xiv. 9. "We are not our own; we are bought with a price; and therefore should glorify God in our bodies and our spirits which are his," 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. "For if one died for all, then were all dead, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them and rose

again," 2 Cor. v. 44, 45. And as you yourselves are God's own as he is your Creator and Redeemer, so all that you have is his own as the Bestower, or as your Master that trusteth it in your hands. "Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people; for all the earth is mine," Exod. xix. 5. And saith God to Job, "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine," Job xli. 11. "Every beast of the forest is mine: the wild beasts of the field are mine: the world is mine, and the fulness thereof," Psal. l. 10—12. "What hast thou which thou didst not receive?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. Thou hast not a minute of time which thou owest not to God; nor a thought, nor a word, nor a farthing of thy estate. And is it not the basest injustice and dishonesty to give these to thy flesh, and deny them to him, and think his service an unnecessary thing? If thou wilt give the world and thy lusts any thing, let it be that which thou canst truly call thine own. As God saith to the idolaters, Ezek. xvi. 18, 19, "Thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them; my meat also which I gave thee," &c. so may he say to thee. It is his time which thou hast consumed in idleness and in sinful delights; and his provision by which thou hast fed thy lusts. But the sanctified man is devoted to God. His study is to give him his own. All the business of his life which you account his overmuch strictness and preciseness, is nothing but his honesty to God, in giving him his own. You look your horse should travel for you, and your ox should labour for you, and your servant work for you, because they are your own. And shall not we give up all that we have to God, that are much more his own? Will you hang them that take your own from you, and count them honest that deal worse with God? Say not, If Christ were here we would give it him; for he hath told you how you should use all his talents in his laws; and if you deny them to the poor, or any holy use that he requireth them, you deny them unto him. Read Matt. xxv. and x. 40—42.

3. Do you think that an unnatural man is an honest man? one that will abuse his father or mother, and scorn the bowels from which he sprung? All the world is agreed on it, that such are dishonest. "Honour thy father and mother," is called "the first commandment with promise," Exod. xxi. 17. "He that curseth his father or mother shall surely be put to death." See Prov. xx. 20. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it," Prov. xxx. 17. To be "without natural affections," is the brand of the highest wickedness, Rom. i. 31; 2 Tim. iii. 3.

And do you not know that it is worse to be without holy affections to the God that made you, and the Christ that bought you, and to despise, forsake, or abuse the Lord? Thou hadst thy being more from him than from thy parents. They knew not how thy parts were formed! It was he that gave thee thy immortal soul: it is by him that thou hast lived until now; much more than on the food thou eatest, or the air thou breathest in. And art thou so unnatural as to be ungodly, and deny him thy love, and care, and service, that hath made thee? and to call a holy, heavenly life, a needless toil? "Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is he not thy Father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" Deut. xxxii. 6. If an unholy man be an honest man, that is so unnatural as to cross the end of his creation, and deny his service to the Lord that made him; then he is honest that spits in his father's face, and despiseth his mother that brought him forth.

4. Do you think that he is an honest man that is unthankful? It is agreed on by all the world, that unthankfulness is a principal point of dishonesty. He is no honest man that will abuse or despise those by whom he liveth, or that have engaged him by kindness. If you were so used yourselves by one whose life or estate you had preserved, would you not say, What an unworthy wretch is this! have I deserved this usage at his hand? Why, all the unthankfulness against men in the world, is not to be compared to thy unthankfulness against God. What are the benefits which man hath given thee in comparison of his? Did ever man do any thing for thee that is comparable to thy creation, and redemption, and offering thee salvation from everlasting misery, and a room with angels in everlasting glory; besides every hour's mercy that ever thou hadst here in this world? And is that an honest man that will requite this God with profaneness and ungodliness, and return him sin for all his mercies, and refuse to live a holy life? Doth thy flesh deserve all thy care and labour, and is this God unworthy of it, and dost thou call his service a needless work? If ingratitude can make a man dishonest, thou art then a dishonest man. But it is the business of the godly to give up themselves to him that made them, and to exercise their thankfulness in their capacities, for these greatest mercies.

5. Do you think that a cruel, unmerciful man, or a loving and merciful man, is the more honest? Surely I shall here have all your voices. He that hateth those that hurt him not, and would kill them, and set their houses on fire, and carrieth malice in his face and speech, will be called an honest man but by few. And he that is loving, and studieth to do good to all about him, will be counted honest. Why, try the ungodly and the saints by this. No more malicious men in the world than the ungodly. They have an enmity even to the God that made them, Col. i. 21, and to the Christ that bought them, Luke xix. 27, and to the word of God that offereth them salvation, and would lead them to eternal life; and hate the knowledge of the way of life, Prov. i. 22. They are enemies to the servants of the Lord, and hate the upright that desire their salvation, and would but draw them from their sins, Prov. xxix. 10; ix. 8. They curse those that bless them, and persecute those that pray for them, Matt. v. 44. The first wicked man that was born into the world, did "kill his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous, 1 John iii. 12.

But this is not their greatest cruelty: they are enemies to their own salvation. They will run into hell in despite of Christ and all the preachers in the world. For there is but one way thither, the way of ungodliness, and that way they will go. Yea, that is not all, but, bloody wretches, they would have all the country do as they do, and be damned with them. They are angry with a man if he will not live an ungodly life, and tittle, and swear, and do as they. They revile him if he will not give over his diligent serving of the Lord, which is all one as to fall out with men because they will not forfeit heaven, and run from God, and damn their souls, and all for nothing! When they might more mercifully scorn us because we will not give over eating, or that we will not cut our own throats. And are these cruel persons honest men? Is that merciless wretch an honest man, that is not content to cast away his own everlasting happiness for nothing upon his fond conceits, but must needs have others do so too? that is not content to wrong the Lord, but would have others wrong him also? The devil is honest if these be honest.

But for the godly, it is their desire, their care, their work to save themselves, and further the salvation of all others. Oh how they long to hear of the conversion of towns and countries! and how glad are they when they hear it! not for any worldly commodity to themselves, but because they rejoice at the good of others. And what would they not do to promote it, which they could do?

6. Do you think that a perfidious, unfaithful man, or a faithful man that will not be hired to break his word, is the honestest man? Sure this is no hard question neither. A knight of the post, that will say and unsay, swear and forswear, and will betray his dearest friend for a groat, is taken by few for an honest man, in comparison of him that will rather die than lie or be unfaithful. Why, nothing is more plain, than that all you that are ungodly are treacherous to the Lord himself. You are perfidious covenant-breakers: you owe him yourselves wholly on the grounds that I before expressed; and yet you are unfaithful to him: you have all from him, and you serve his enemy with it. You call him your God, and will not love, nor honour, nor serve him as your God, Mal. i. 6. You bound yourselves to him in your baptism, and many a time since, by a solemn vow or covenant; but you live in the treacherous breach of it continually. You covenanted to take the Lord for your God; and yet you will not seek him nor be ruled by him. You covenanted to take Jesus for your Saviour; and yet will not be saved by him from your sins, Matt. i. 21. You covenanted to take the Holy Ghost for your Sanctifier, to purify your hearts and lives; and yet you resist his holy motions, and hate his sanctifying word and work, and some of you will mock at sanctification and the Spirit. And can the soul of man be guilty of greater unfaithfulness or treachery? You covenanted to forsake the flesh, the world, and the devil; and now you serve them more than Christ, and think your time is better bestowed for them, than in the service of the Lord! And is this your covenant-keeping? No traitors, no perjured wretches in the world are dishonester men, if these be not dishonest.

But now it is the care of godly men to keep the covenants they have made with God. All that which you reproach them for as too much preciseness, is but the performance of their baptismal vow. And if you be against the keeping our covenants with God, should you not be against the making them? Are you not ashamed to be so forward to engage your children to God in baptism, and when you have done, would have them be ungodly, and break the vow they make? Will you by your profession of christianity, and coming to the Lord's table, renew your covenants with Christ yourselves, and yet make no conscience to break them, and plead against the keeping of them? We promise holiness, and the serving of God, and forsaking the world, at every sacrament, and whenever we promise but to be christians. And are you for the making of these promises, and yet for the breaking of them, and revilers of those that endeavour but to keep them? O fearful impudence! Is this your honesty? And would you have us all as faithless and dishonest, even with God? This was the perfidiousness of the Jews, Ezek. xvi. 8, "I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine." We are married in baptism to Christ; and is adultery with the world, and forsaking our Husband, no dishonesty? Why then what is?

7. Moreover, do you think that a murderer is an honest man? I know you will say, no. Why, nothing more sure than that ungodly men are murderers of themselves, and, as I said, would undo others. They

"hate their own souls," saith God, Prov. xxix. 24. They destroy themselves, Hos. xiii. 9. There is but one way to hell, and that they will take, and that when they are plainly told of it. Not a man in hell, but brought himself thither. And oh how many do their mocks, and persuasions, and evil examples keep out of heaven, and bring to the same misery! And are these honest?

8. Do you take them to be honest men that are common cheaters or deceivers, and that in matters of greatest value? I think you do not. Why, such are the ungodly. They deceive and are deceived, 2 Tim. iii. 13. They deceive themselves, by "thinking themselves something, when they are nothing," Gal. vi. 3. They make themselves believe that they have honesty and saving grace when they have none; and that they are in a state of safety and in the favour of God, when they are near to everlasting misery, and in God's displeasure. And thus they will think, though their souls are at the stake, and the mistake be the greatest hinderance of their conversion; and though God have plainly told them in his word, whom he will save, and whom he will not. Yea, against all the plain discoveries in the Scripture, and all the marks of death upon themselves, and the open ungodliness of their lives, and all the warnings of their teachers, they will needs believe that their state is safe, and that they may be saved without conversion. What wilful self-deceivers are these! Their hearts are "deceitful above all things," and they know them not, Jer. xvii. 9. And thus they are hardened by the deceitfulness of their own sin, Heb. iii. 13; sin first deceiveth them, and so killeth them, Rom. vii. 11. If they were not foolish and deceived, they would not serve their lusts and pleasures, 2 Tim. iii. 3. These miserable men did never yet learn that lesson, 1 Cor. iii. 18, which one would think they should willingly learn, "Let no man deceive himself." They will needs think that they are christians, and have so much religion as will save them, when God expressly telleth the curser, swearer, railer, scorner, and all that live in wilful sin, Jam. i. 26, that "If any man seem to be religious and bridle not his tongue, (and so for other wilful sins,) but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain."

And as they deceive themselves, so they are the common cheaters of the world. They tell them as smooth a tale as if all were fair and right, when they are pleading against God, reasoning men out of their faith and reason. When Eve had sinned, she tempted Adam. The drunkard will tempt others to be his companions; and so will the fornicators and voluptuous sensualists. The ungodly will persuade those about him to be ungodly; and when he hath not a word of solid reason to speak against the holy diligence of the saints, a jeer or scorn shall serve to deceive instead of reason. And if he dare not stand to what he saith to the face of a minister, or any but the ignorant that cannot gainsay him, he will take his time, and speak when none are present that can contradict him. Oh how many thousands are now in misery that were cheated thither by the scorns and cavils of ungodly men! and how many thousands have lost all hopes of heaven by their deceits! Could you but ask many thousands that are now in misery, How came you to choose so unhappy a way? they would tell you, We were deceived by the words of wicked men! The cavils and scorns of ignorant sinners have cheated us of our salvation. The very calling a diligent servant of Christ by the name of a puritan or precisian, hath kept many a thousand, even in England, from the fear and diligent serving of the Lord. And surely this is a silly argument. And are these honest

men that are the factors of Satan the great deceiver, in cheating themselves and others into hell?

But the godly deal plainly with themselves and others. They are willing to know the truth of their condition, and not to make themselves believe that which God never made them believe. They promise not salvation to themselves on any lower terms than God hath promised it. They have no hope of being saved without holiness. They set not God's mercy against his truth, nor the merits of Christ against his covenant. They know that God is better acquainted with the ways and effects of his own mercies than we are. And therefore though they hope to be saved by God's mercy, it is by his sanctifying mercy, and not to be saved without sanctification; that is, without salvation itself and the necessary means. They know that it is abundant mercy to be saved in a way of holiness, and desire no other saving mercy. Yea, they know that sanctification and glorification both, are greater mercy than glorification alone, if it were possible to be alone. This is the doctrine that the godly do believe, and this they practise, and this they teach others, and this they have learnt of God; and therefore they are no deceivers.

9. Moreover, do you think that he is an honest man that is an enemy to the public good? or rather he that is a common benefactor? The best of the heathens thought it one of the highest parts of virtue, to be serviceable to many, and devote ourselves to the common good. But wicked men are the very plagues of a land. For their sakes it is that judgments come upon us. It is they that would let in the plague of sin which would undo us. He that sets fire to the thatch, doth do no worse against your towns, than wicked men that would kindle the fire of the wrath of God by their crying sins. Read the Scriptures, and see who it was that caused Israel to perish in the wilderness, but unbelieving sinners. Who troubled Israel, and made them fly before their enemies, but one Achan? Josh. vii. And what but sin was the cause of their captivity and present desolation? Was it Lot or the Sodomites that brought down from heaven the fire of vengeance? Was it Noah or the world of the ungodly that brought down the flood? Are these honest men that provoke God to forsake the land, and are the vermin and destroyers of our peace and happiness? But you know that God hath promised his blessing to the godly, and to the places where they live oftentimes for their sakes, as Joseph's case and others tell us.

10. That man can be no honest man that wanteth the very principle of honesty, and that intendeth not the end that is necessary to make any action truly honest: but such are all ungodly men.

(1.) The principle of true honesty is the high esteem of God and everlasting life in our understandings, and the belief of God's revelations necessary to the attaining of that life, and the prevailing love of God in the heart, and the love of man for his sake. Without these principles of honesty, no man can be honest. How can he be an honest man that believeth not his Maker? He that taketh God for a liar, hath no reason to be taken for any better himself. For would he be thought better than he takes God himself to be? Nor can he in reason be expected to believe any man else: for none can be better than God. And is that an honest man that professeth himself a liar, and taketh all men to be so too?

And how can that be an honest man, that loveth not God so well as his fleshly lusts and pleasures? And this is the case of all the wicked. If they did not love their riches, and honour, and sensual pleasures more than God, they would not keep them

against his command, nor lose his favour rather than lose them, nor seek them more carefully than they seek him and his kingdom, and think of them and speak of them with more delight. And certainly he that loveth his riches, or honours, or filthy sins, better than God and heaven itself, must needs be thought to prefer them before his nearest friends, or the common good. And is that an honest man that would rather cast off father or mother than cast off his filthy sins? and that would rather forsake his chiefest friend, than forsake his vices? and would sell his friend, or the commonwealth, for a little gain or pleasure, even for a whore, or for drunkenness, or such like things? I think you would none of you say that this were an honest man, that would not leave so small a matter for the life of his friend, or for the preservation of the commonwealth. And can you expect that he should prefer any friend before God and his salvation? If he will sin against God, and sell his salvation for his sin, can you think he should more regard any man, how dear soever? There is no true honesty in that man where the love of God doth not command.

2. Moreover, if the honouring and pleasing of our Lord, and the saving of our souls, be not the end and principal motive of our actions, there can be no true honesty. It is essential to honesty that God be our end. If you would know what a man is, first know what he intendeth, and maketh the end and mark of his life. And so you must do if you would judge of his actions. The end is the principal ingredient that makes them good or bad. If a thief love God because he prospereth him in stealing, or because he giveth him strength and opportunity; this is a wicked love of God. If a drunkard love God for giving him his drink, and a whoremonger love God for strengthening him in his lust, will you call this honesty? Every wicked man doth make his sensual, present pleasure his principal end through all his life. If he love his neighbour, it is but carnally, as a dog loveth him that feedeth and stroketh him. If he seem to be a good commonwealth's man, it is but for vain-glory or carnal accommodations; and he fighteth for his king or country but as a dog doth for his bone. If he give to the poor, it is but that which he can spare from his belly; and it is either in a common pity, or for vain applause, or he thinks by it to stop the mouth of justice, that God may let him alone in his sins, or save him after all his wickedness. This is no more an honest man, than he that makes a trade of stealing, and will pay tithes of all that he steals, or give some part to the church or poor, that God may pardon him, and save him when he hath done. All the religion and all the charity of wicked men, is but for themselves; and that which hath no higher end than carnal self, is truly no religion or charity. It is only the sanctified man that is honest; for it is only he that is devoted to God, and doth the works of his life to please and glorify his Maker. There is more honesty in the very eating and drinking of the sanctified, than in the prayers, and sacrifices, and alms-deeds of the ungodly. Or else God would never have said as he hath done, that "unto the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled," Tit. i. 15; and that "every creature is sanctified by the word of God and by prayer," 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5; and that the prayer and the sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord, and he abhorreth and loatheth them; when the prayer of the upright is his delight, Prov. xv. 8; xxi. 27; Isa. i. 13; Prov. xxviii. 9; viii. 7; xi. 20. For the sanctified in their very eating and drinking do make it their end to glorify God, and to

be fitted for his service, 1 Cor. x. 31. But the ungodly do all, even in their duties that seem most holy, but for a selfish, carnal end. So that it is plain that he that wanteth the necessary principles and end, that must inform an honest mind and life, can have no honesty of mind or life. "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," 1 Tim. i. 5.

But perhaps you will say, that there hath been honesty found among heathens; and therefore this doctrine cannot hold. To which I answer, 1. If this were true, yet it is proved, that there is no comparison between their honesty and the true christian's. 2. But indeed, there was never true honesty found in any ungodly man. But something that is like to honesty they may have. Materially they may do the same outward acts that honest men do; and this the world accounteth honesty, that seeth not the inside, and the ends, and therefore give the name to the matter without the form. And such may be honest *secundum quid*, but not *simpliciter*. An analogical honesty they may have, and be less dishonest than some others. And so as Robin Hood was called an honest thief that would rob none but the rich, and sometimes bring a yoke of oxen that he had stolen, and give them to the poor that had none; so may a heathen and ungodly man be honest. But men must be denominated (and so must their actions) according to what is predominant in them. And therefore we must say, if we will speak properly, that no ungodly man is honest.

If you ask, How then it comes to pass that such are accounted honest men, and that the world discerneth not the honesty that consisteth in a holy life? I answer, 1. Because that all the ungodly have an enmity to holiness. And malice blindeth men, that they cannot see the good that is in those they hate. 2. Because they do not know what godliness is, and therefore know not the honesty of it appearing in its principle, ends, and rule. For it is not effectually known by any but those that have it. 3. Because all carnal men do judge after the flesh; and as they are to themselves their highest end, so they do judge of all things else, according to that end. He is an honest man with them that is for them, and furthereth their commodity, or answereth their desire. Mark them whether they judge not those to be the honestest men, that suit themselves most to their minds and wills, and say and do as they would have them. And so among thieves there are none so honest men as their companions, nor among drunkards none so honest as they that will sit with them, and waste their time, and prate like idiots over a pot of ale, forgetting that death and judgment are posting toward them while they sit there. And among harlots their mates seem honest. So that dishonest men are not fit judges of honesty. That which is fitted to their corrupted mind is best with them. And this is their honesty.

By this time you may see, if you are not wilfully blind, that the way of godliness is the only honest way; and therefore you must either be godly or dishonest; and pretend not any longer that you are honest while you are ungodly; unless you will increase your shame by your contradictions. The Scripture description of one that is honest is, that "in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he hath his conversation in the world," 2 Cor. i. 12. The honesty which the gospel teacheth, and which God will own, is this, "That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the

glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ," Tit. ii. 12, 13. "A godly seed" is opposed to the fruit of adultery, Mal. ii. 15. And when David lamenteth the decay of honesty in the world, his language tells you whom he took for honest men: Psal. xii. 1, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men;" and ver. 8, you may perceive what he thinks of others; "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted." To "serve God with reverence and godly fear," is the true honesty, Heb. xii. 28. And now choose you whether you will be honest or ungodly; but be sure that it is the godly that are esteemed honest, and accepted by the Lord; and however the world judgeth, "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself," as he tells you, Psal. iv. 3.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOLINESS IS THE MOST GAINFUL WAY.

WE have certainly found out already the SAFEST way, and the HONESTEST way. We are next to inquire which way is most profitable. And one would think that this should be as easily resolved as the rest. I am sure if God be wiser than man, and his holy word to be believed, the question is decided, and beyond dispute. Saith Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 5, 6, "Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, suppose that gain is godliness," or that it is better than godliness, and therefore their godliness to be suited to their worldly gain. "But (it is) godliness with contentment which is the great gain." Yea, "godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8.

But to what end should I cite more words of Scripture, for a point which all the Scripture proveth? It is not possible that any man can be unresolved in this, that understandeth and believeth the word of God. But yet because I see that commodity is so much looked after in the world, and almost all are for the gainful way, as they apprehend it, and therefore it is plain that godliness is not practically believed to be the most gainful way (or else men would follow it as eagerly as they do their worldly gain); I shall therefore open to you somewhat of that gain that godliness doth bring; and if you can say that any other course will prove as gainful, and make it good, then take that course. But if you cannot, consider what you have to do; and do not refuse your own commodity.

1. The first part of our gain, which is the sum of all the rest, is God himself, who is become our God, through Jesus Christ. He is in covenant with all the saints, (Psal. i. 5,) and this is the covenant, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people," Jer. vii. 23; Ezek. xxxvi. 28; Jer. xi. 4; xxx. 22; Lev. xxvi. 45; Ezek. xi. 20; xxxvii. 23, 27; 2 Cor. vi. 16. He is a God to others, as a king is a king to traitors, whom he will condemn. But he is a God to his people, as a king is related to his faithful subjects, and a father to his dearest child. When he calleth himself our Father, he speaketh so much of his children's happiness, as is their admiration as well as their joy. But when he calleth himself our God, he speaks as much as can be spoken.

To be our God, is to be the infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness engaged to us for our good,

and to be ours according to our necessity and capacity.

This, O ye worldlings, is the riches of the saints! This is the wealth that we will boldly boast of. Boast you of your houses, and lands, and money, and we will boast of our God. Have you houses, and towns, and countries at command? Be it so; but the saints have the God of the world to be their God. Have you kingdoms and dominions? We have the God of all the earth; the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Set all your riches in the balance against him, and try what they will prove. Set all the world, and the kingdoms, and glory, and wealth of it in the balance, and try whether they are any more to God, than one dust or feather to all the world; yea, they are "nothing, and less than nothing; vanity, and lighter than vanity itself," Isa. xl. 16, 17. This one jewel containeth all your treasure. He is ours that hath all things. "What then can we need?" Psal. xxiii. 1. He is ours that knoweth all things. Who then can overreach us, or undo us by deceit? He is ours that can do all things. What then should we fear? and what power shall prevail against us? He is ours that is goodness and love itself. How then can we be miserable? or what imperfection can there be in our felicity? "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, (nor himself,) that he should live for ever, and not see corruption," Psal. xlix. 6, 7, 9. "But God will redeem us from the power of the grave; for he shall receive us," ver. 15. Let "the workers of iniquity boast themselves" awhile, Psal. xciv. 4; let "the wicked boast of their heart's desire, and bless the covetous whom the Lord abhorreth," Psal. x. 3; it is "the Lord that is King for ever and ever; that heareth the desires of the humble; that prepareth our hearts, and prepareth his ear to hear," ver. 16, 17. "Our souls shall make their boast in God," Psal. xxxiv. 2. "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." But you cannot say truly, Blessed is the man that hath lands and lordships; blessed is the man that hath crowns and kingdoms. Yea, truly may you say, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and withdraweth his heart from the Lord," Jer. xvii. 5. "Fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him," Psal. xxxiv. 8—10. But when you have all the world, you cannot say that you have no want. "Confounded then be the covetous idolaters, that boast themselves of their idols," Psal. xcvi. 7. "But in God will we boast all the day long, and praise his name for evermore," Psal. xlv. 8. What have you but the gleanings of our harvest, and the crumbs that fall from the children's table? Our God is he that giveth you your prosperity. He droppeth you the leavings, from the redundancy of his goodness, when he hath given himself, his Son, and all things to his own. All that we want, and all that our souls desire, is in God. "We have none in heaven but him, nor any in earth that we desire besides him," Psal. lxxiii. 25. "His loving-kindness is better to us than life," Psal. lxxiii. 3. "Our flesh and our heart faileth us, (and all the creatures fail us,) but God is the strength of our hearts and our portion for ever," Psal. lxxiii. 26. Verily, the riches of all the princes of the earth is less in comparison of him that is the treasure and portion of the saints, than a straw is to all the earth, or a little dung to the shining sun.

2. Would you yet hear more of the riches of believers (though more than God there cannot be). "The Lord Jesus Christ is their Head and Husband; their Saviour and Intercessor at God's right hand."

They are married to him. His merits are theirs for all those uses to which they need them. "It is he that justifieth. Who then shall condemn them? He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32, 34. "Christ is the pearl of infinite value," for whom we have willingly sold all, Matt. xiii. 45, 46. And what are all your treasures to this treasure? Ask Paul, and he will tell you, that had tried both. "His gain he counteth loss for Christ; yea, all things he accounted but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ," Phil. iii. 7, 8. It is love incomprehensible, surpassing knowledge, that is revealed to us in Christ, Eph. iii. 18, 19. "The riches of Christ are unsearchable riches," ver. 8. It is Christ that bindeth up our broken hearts; that is the Peace-maker and Reconciler of our souls to God. What he hath done for us, and what he will do, I shall tell you anon. But the ungodly have no part in him, nor have they any such treasure, that will do for them what Christ will do for us. Their treasure is the wrath of God, which they are "heaping up against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 5. "All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ," Col. ii. 3. And he hath them for us, according to our measure, as being our Treasury, our Head, and made of God to "us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. They are "exceeding riches of grace" that are showed in the kindness of God through Jesus Christ, to all that are sanctified by that grace, Eph. ii. 6—8. Yea, that you may see there is no comparison, even that which you abhor in a christian's case, and account his misery and the worst of Christ, is better than the best of your condition, and than that for which you lose your souls. For the "very reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures of the world," Heb. xi. 26. And it is the reproach that we undergo for Christ that you most abhor, and the treasures of the world that you highest esteem. It is greater riches to be one of them that are scorned and derided for the sake of Christ, than to be one of them that hath the wealth of the world at his dispose. And if the reproach of Christ be greater riches than all yours, what then is his life, and love, and benefits; his grace and glory?

2. Would you have the riches of the saints yet further opened to you? Why, the Holy Ghost is in covenant with them as their sanctifier and comforter. And he is not only theirs himself, by covenant and relation, but he also dwelleth in them by his graces, and restoreth the image of God upon them. They are the "temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in them," 1 Cor. vi. 19. And by the Spirit, and by faith, Christ dwelleth in their hearts, Eph. iii. 17; Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 16. God himself doth dwell in them, and converse with them, and write his law in their hearts, and teach them himself by this his Spirit, 2 Cor. vi. 16; Heb. i. 10; x. 16. "Hereby we know that he dwelleth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," 1 John iii. 14. Yea, "he that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17. For "the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," 2 Cor. iii. 17. "We are an habitation of God through the Spirit," Eph. ii. 22. "Because we are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6. By this Spirit the saints have "access unto the Father," Eph. ii. 18; and by this it is, that they are quickened to prayer and holy worship, and their infirmities are helped, Eph. vi. 18; Rom. viii. 11, 26. By this they "fight

against the flesh, and overcome it," Gal. v. 17, 18; Rom. viii. 13. In this they "live, and walk, and work," Rom. viii. 1, 5; Gal. v. 16, 25. This Spirit is the "testimony of their adoption," Rom. viii. 16, and the "seal and earnest of their heavenly inheritance," 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5; Eph. iv. 30. By this they "are new born," John iii. 5, 6. "And put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and being renewed in the spirit of their minds, do put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 22—24. By the illumination of this Spirit, they have a new understanding, and are brought "out of darkness into the marvellous light of Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 9, that they "may know what is the hope of the christian vocation, and what is the riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance in the saints," Eph. i. 18. In a word, by this Spirit their sins are mortified, their souls renewed, and made like to God, and they "become a holy priesthood, a peculiar people unto Christ, and in this Spirit have communion with him," Rom. viii. 13; Tit. iii. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 9; Tit. ii. 14; 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And what is all the riches of this world, to this heavenly treasure, the Spirit of the Lord? They that have this Spirit, are taught by it to set light by all your riches, and to esteem one day's communion with Christ above all the gold and glory of this world. And that which sets the soul of man so far above riches, is better than those riches. As your lands and honours do set you above the pins and points that children take for their treasure, and set as much by as you do by yours; so the Spirit of Christ and the life of faith, doth set the souls of true believers a thousandfold more above your riches, than you are above your children's toys.

If yet you see not the riches of saints, consider but the wonderful expression, 2 Pet. i. 4; that they "have exceeding great and precious promises given them, that by these they may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." And can there be more on earth bestowed on man, than to be made partakers of the divine nature? As it would be a greater gift to a brute to be made a man, and have manly riches, than to have store of provender suited to his brutishness; so is it greater riches to the ungodly to be sanctified and made partakers of that nature that is called divine by God himself, than to have provision for unmortified lusts, and to have all the contentments of a fleshly mind. It were a greater gift to an idiot, to be made a wise and learned man, than to be furnished with feathers or sticks to play with. So is it here.

4. Every truly sanctified man is restored from the misery that he was brought into by sin. He hath all his sins forgiven him, and is freed from the curse of the law, by the merits of Christ, and the promise of the gospel. "For in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," Col. i. 14. "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts xiii. 39. "When we were dead in our sins, we were quickened with Christ, and had all our trespasses forgiven us," Col. ii. 13. Ask a wounded conscience that groaneth under the weight of sin, and under the sense of God's indignation, whether forgiveness of sin be a treasure or not? I am sure they that now are past forgiveness, and feel what sin is in the bitter fruits, would give ten thousand worlds, if they had them, for the pardon of their sins: and would account forgiveness a greater mercy than all the riches and kingdoms of the world. What a heavy curse did the Spirit of God pass upon Simon Magus, for

thinking that money was a valuable thing to purchase the Holy Ghost with! "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased by money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness," &c. Acts viii. 20, 21. The name of Simon Magus is odious to us all; and yet I doubt that most among us exceed him in the sin for which he is thus cursed. For he thought the gift of the Holy Ghost to be better than his money, or else he would not have offered his money for it. But most men take money to be better than the gift of the Holy Ghost. If he that would have purchased the Holy Ghost, yea, a lower and less necessary gift of the Spirit, was pronounced wicked, and cursed with such a heavy curse, what are they that set more by their money than by the special gift of the Holy Ghost, yea that hate and deride it, and plead against its sanctifying work? The time is near when your riches will fail you, and your prosperity die, and your sins will live; and then there is none of you all but will say that pardon and grace are greater riches than all the world.

5. Moreover, the godly have angels to attend them and be their guard, as I have proved to you before. And are horses, and kine, and oxen, think you, greater riches than the guard and ministration of the angels of God? Heb. i. 14; Psal. xci. 11, 12.

6. And surely the very communion of saints and ordinances of God which in the church we here enjoy, are greater riches than all the world. We are now "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God," Ephes. ii. 19. We are members of that well tempered body, where all the members are obliged and disposed to have the "same care one for another," that if "one suffer all suffer, and if one be honoured all rejoice," 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26. As weak as christians are, and as worthless in your eyes, one of their hearty, spiritual prayers, and one word of their holy, savoury conference, doth profit us more than all your treasures will ever profit you. While the divine nature is in them, somewhat divine will proceed from their mouths, and be seen in their lives, which is worth more than all the riches of the world. And oh how fruitful are the holy ordinances which we partake of, both in the church's communion, and alone in our retirements! A poor christian can get more in a sermon which you sleep under, or deride, than you will get by your trades or livings while you live. He findeth greater treasures in one chapter of the Bible, or in one good book, than you can get out of all your lands or labour. The best of your livings will not yield you so much commodity in seven years, nor in seven thousand years, if you could so long keep them, as a believing soul can get from God in one hour's prayer, even in secret, where he is not by man observed. You do not believe this, that are ungodly. I know you do not heartily believe it; for else you would try it, and not continue in your ungodliness. But they that try it, know it to be true, or else what makes them continue in it, and live upon their holy communion with God and his servants, more resolutely than you do on your lands and labours? Somewhat you may conjecture they find in holy duty, that makes them so instant in it as they are.

7. Another part of our commodity by holiness, is the promise and assurance of the love of God and of our salvation; and the peace of conscience that followeth hereupon. All true believers have objective certainty; that is, the thing is certain in itself, whether they perceive it or not. And they may have

subjective or actual certainty in themselves if they do their parts. And is not a certain title to a lordship or a kingdom greater treasure than the possession of a straw? Much more is God's promise of everlasting glory a greater treasure than all your wealth. As heaven is infinitely better than earth, so the promise of God is the best security. Though we be not with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and do not yet see the face of God, yet have we a promise that speedily we shall be there, and shall see that which they see, and enjoy all that which they enjoy. The poorest christian hath all that in promise under the hand of God himself, which angels and glorified saints have in possession. They can show you a better title to heaven, though they are unworthy in themselves, than any of you can show to your lands or houses, in your deeds or leases. As poor and simple as that godly man is whom you despise, he is an "heir of heaven, and a fellow-heir with Christ," Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iii. 29; Heb. i. 14; xi. 9. When we had "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and were justified by grace, we were made the heirs of eternal life, according to the hope" that is given us by the gospel, Tit. iii. 5, 7. And God that hath given them those "better things that accompany salvation, is not unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love, if they do but show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, and be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," Heb. vi. 9-12. "For this cause was Christ the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first testament, they which are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance," Heb. ix. 15. And "we know that he is faithful that hath promised." And if your bills, and bonds, and deeds, and leases, be part of your riches, we shall much more take the promise of God for our everlasting happiness in heaven, to be far greater riches.

8. And yet we may put this among our riches, or at least as the overplus given us by God, that we have better advantage even for the matters of this world, than the ungodly have. For we have a promise that we shall lack nothing that is good for us, Psal. xxiv. 10. And so have not they. We have warrant to cast all our care on God, who by promise is engaged to care for us, 1 Pet. v. 7. We are commanded to be (anxiously) "careful for nothing, but in all things to make known our requests to God," as little children that care not for themselves, but go to their father for what they want, Phil. iv. 6. It is enough for us, whatever we want, that our heavenly Father knoweth that we want it, Matt. vi. 32. Who hath charged us to disburden our minds of these vexatious cares, and to "seek first his kingdom, and the righteousness thereof," and promised us that "other things shall be added to us," Matt. vi. 33. We have also a promise that "other things shall work together for our good," Rom. viii. 28. And therefore we shall have more from the things of this life, than the ungodly have. Yea, more by the want of them than they by the possession. For if they do us good in our graces and communion with God, and in the matter of our salvation, they help us to that which is of far higher value than themselves. Poverty to a true believer, is better than riches to the ungodly, that destroyeth himself by them, when the believer is helped by his poverty. Imprisonment to Paul and Silas was better than liberty to their persecutors. And thus in the fruits and saving benefits, "all things are ours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. We have the love of God with what we possess, be it more or

less, when the wicked have his wrath with it. And who would have their riches on such terms?

9. Another part of the gain of godliness is, that it puts us into a readiness to die, and a fitness to appear before the Lord. Though all the godly have not so great a readiness as to desire to be presently dissolved, yet all of them are in a safe condition, and are so far ready, that death shall pass them into a blessed state. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. And God, who hath given us the earnest of his Spirit, hath wrought in us, to be always confident, (or at least given us cause,) knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. (For we walk by faith, and not by sight.) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 5-9. Though the abode of the godly in the flesh is usually more needful to those about them, yet to themselves their death is gain, and therefore they have cause to "desire to depart, and be with Christ, as being far better," Phil. i. 21, 23, 24. For sin, which is the sting of death, is mortified, and the curse of the law, which is the strength of it, is relaxed or nullified to us by the gospel; so that the believer may triumph and say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 55, 56;) and "to give thanks to God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ," ver. 57. Verily I would not exchange my part (though alas too small or dark a part) in this one privilege of true believers, for all the wealth and dominions on earth. O the face of death will soon make the glory of all your greatness to vanish, and the beauty of your flourishing estates to wither; and all that thou now glory in to appear as nothing. And then how glad would you be to change portions with the holy servants of the Lord, whom you now despise! When once you hear, "Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul! and whoso then are all those things that thou hast provided?" (Luke xii. 20;) then in a moment you will change your minds, and cry out of the world as nothing worth, and wish you had busied your hearts and hands in laying up a better treasure. This is one difference, O ungodly wretch, between a holy servant of God and thee! Death cannot undo him, but it will undo thee. It cannot take his riches from him; for his God, his Christ, his holiness, the promises are his riches; but it will separate thee and thy wealth for ever. It will put an end to all his troubles, and fears, and griefs; and it will put an end to all thy prosperity, and to all thy mirth and hope for ever. A godly man dare die; or if he ignorantly fear it, yet shall it be the end of all his fears; but thou dar'st not die, and yet thou must; or if thou ignorantly hope of a happiness after it, yet will it nevertheless end all thy hopes. Oh what a mercy it is to be ready to die!

10. But the great, unspeakable riches of the saints is in the life to come. We have here the hope and the foretaste; but it is only there that we shall have our portion. You see what a poor christian is according to his outward appearance. But you see not what he will be to eternity. There is the kingdom for which we hope, and for which we run, and wait, and suffer. If God be true, and his gospel true, then heaven shall be the portion of the sanctified. But if it were otherwise, then we would confess their hopes are vain. Heaven is our riches, or we have none. There have we laid up all our hopes; and in

these hopes we will live and die, as knowing they will not make us ashamed, Rom. v. 5; ix. 33; 1 John ii. 28. We believe that we shall live with Christ in glory, "shine as stars in the firmament of our Father," and be "made like to the angels of God," and shall see his face, and praise his name, and live in his everlasting love and joy; for all this he himself hath promised us, 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18; Dan. xii. 3; Matt. xiii. 43; Luke xx. 36; Rev. xxii. 4; Matt. xxv. 21.

And now, poor worldling, what is all your gain and riches in comparison of the least of these? Do you think in your judgments that there is any comparison? Or rather doth not sin and the world even brutify you, and make you lay by the use of your reason, and live as if you knew not what you know? Your treasure is all visible, when ours is unseen, and therefore I may bid you bring it forth, and let us see it, whether indeed it be better than the treasure of the saints. Let us see what that is that is better than God and everlasting glory. What! is a little fleshly ease or mirth; a little meat, and drink, and pleasure; a little more money, or space of ground to use than your neighbours have; are these the things that you will change for heaven, and prefer before the Lord that made you? O poor miserable sinners! are you not told that you have your good things here? But what will you have hereafter when this is gone? Luke xvi. 25. When your wealth is gone, and your mirth is gone, your souls are immortal, and therefore your misery and horror will continue, and never be gone. As the wealth of the godly is within them, and above the reach of their enemies, and surer than yours, so is it the more durable, even everlasting. When all your riches are upon the wing, even ready to be gone, and leave you in sorrow, when you are most highly valuing them; you have it now, but it is gone to-morrow. "And what is the hope of the hypocrite though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?" Job xxvii. 8, 9. Let the words of Christ decide the controversy, if indeed you take him for your Judge. "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works," Matt. xvi. 24-27.

Well, sirs, you that are all for getting, and for wealth, judge now if you have not lost your reason, whether a holy or unholy, a heavenly or an earthly life be the more profitable way! I would not draw you to any thing that you should lose by. If I speak not for your gain, reject my words as contemptuously as you please. But if I do, then be not against your own commodity. Will such silly gain as the world affords you, do so much with you as it doth; and shall not the heavenly inheritance do more? Shall all this stir be made in the world for that which you are ready to leave behind you, and will you not lay up a treasure in heaven where rust and moths corrupt not, and where you may live for ever? Matt. vi. 20. What profit now have all those millions of souls that are gone from earth, by all the wealth they here possessed? Hear, sinners, and bethink you, in the name of God. You are leaving

earth and stepping into eternity, and where then should you lay up your riches? Would you rather have your portion where you must stay but a few days, than where you must dwell for ever? O, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth," in comparison of "that which endureth to everlasting life, which Christ will give you," if you will follow him, John vi. 27. Make you friends of this wealth that the world abuseth to "unrighteousness, that when all fails below, you may be received into the everlasting habitations," Luke xvi. 9. Make not yourselves a treasure of corruptible riches, and set not your hearts on "gold and silver, lest the rust of it be a witness against you, and eat your flesh as it were fire; and lest ye heap up" another kind of treasure than you dream of against the last days. How many of you have cause to weep and howl for your approaching miseries, even then when you are glorying in your prosperity? James v. 1-5. Are you for commodity? Refuse not then the best commodity. Be not enemies to them, or to those holy motions, that make for your everlasting profit. Take but the gainfullest course for yourselves, and we are pleased. If you know any thing better than God and glory, and any riches that will endure any longer than eternity, why do you not show it us, that we may join with you? But if you do not, why will you not hearken to the servants of the Lord, and join with them? "Wherefore, saith the Lord, do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, come unto me, hear, and your souls shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you," Isa. lv. 2, 3. If there be not more to be gotten by Christ, and by prayer, and by the promises, and a holy life, than there is by sin, or than there is by all your friends, or lands, or trades, or care, or labour here, then take your course, and turn your back on God, and spare not. But if you are ashamed to say so, be ashamed to think so, or to live so.

Verily, sirs, if the gospel be true, you must be every man of you saints, or miserable. Holiness is the only thriving way. Yea, the only saving way. If you forsake this way, you are losing while you are gaining, and losing by your gains. You are but making Achan's bargain, that by his gold did purchase a storm of stones that dashed out his brains, Josh. vii. You are running after Gehazi's gains, that thought he had got riches, and it proved a leprosy. You are trading with the devil, though you see him not, and will not believe it, even as certainly as the miserable witches, that sell him their souls for a few fair promises, and when they have done have the miserablest life of any. You are laying up but Judas's treasures, which quickly grew too hot to hold, and too heavy for his conscience to bear; and he would fain have rid his hands of it if he knew how; and because he cannot he hangs himself, and rids himself out of the ashes into the flames. O covet not such undoing gains, which you all know, as sure as you breathe, that you must let go. Believe but your Redeemer, and you shall know that there are greater and better things before you. Gather not stones when you may be gathering pearls. Hear me, poor sinner! if God and heaven, if grace and glory, seem not better riches than this world, thou judgest thyself to have no part in them.

CHAPTER IX.

HOLINESS IS THE MOST HONOURABLE WAY.

WE are resolved, if Scripture and reason can resolve us, that godliness is the safest, the honestest, and the gainfullest course. I shall next show you that it is the most honourable course. I know the world thinks otherwise of it. In most places it is a matter of reproach to be but serious and diligent in God's service. And though in this place, and at this time, through the great mercy of God, it is not so with us, unless it be with here and there a sottish drunkard, yet there are too few places that are so much freed from this plague. And it is not yet I fear forgotten of God, since the very practice of a godly life was a matter of greater scorn and derision, than to have been the profanest swearer or drunkard. If a man would not have gone to the ale-house with them, nor sworn or spoke profanely as they did; and if he made any serious mention of the Scripture, or the life to come; if he reprov'd any gross offender, if he prayed and instructed his family, and spent the Lord's day in holy exercises; this was enough to brand him with the name of puritan or precisian, and make him the common by-word of the town, and (let him be never so conformable to bishops and ceremonies) if once he went under the name of puritan, he was looked upon as Lot in Sodom, by the open enemies of piety, who insulted over them, and lived securely in open wickedness. This is the chiefest sin that God hath been scourging this nation for, if I am able to understand his judgments. I know men are apt to interpret providences according to their own interests and conceits. But I take the help of the Scripture and the experience of former ages for my interpretation; and I am verily persuaded (not excluding other sins) that the great sin for which God hath plagued England by a sharp and bloody war, was the common scorn that was cast upon his service, it being made the derision of too many in the land. I never came into any place, where mere serious diligence for salvation was not branded with the name of puritanism and too much preciseness; and those that abstained from iniquity were as owls among their neighbours, even the very wonder and the reproach of those about them. When this is made a principle that all must hold that ever hope to be accepted with the Lord, in Heb. xi. 6, that "he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This is the next point in our faith, to the believing that there is a God. And yet among us that called ourselves christians, the diligent seeking of the Lord was so far from being thus esteemed of, that it was the surest way to make a man contemptible and odious unto many. The jealous God did long endure this horrible indignity, but would not still endure it from us. Must he make a holy law for the government of the world, and shall the obeying of it be derided? Is he our sovereign Lord, having by creation and redemption the right of ruling us, and shall we scorn them that will be ruled by him? Those that will not have Christ rule over them, will surely be destroyed, Luke xix. 27. And shall those escape that scorn his service? Holiness is the image of God, and unholiness the devil's image. And when the image of God is made a scorn, and the devil's image had in honour, and that by them that call themselves christians, was it not time for God to arise to judgment? Was it not enough that God was slighted by them, and his service turned out of doors, but it must be made a by-word? Is there but one way pleasing

unto God, and but one way that leadeth to salvation, and must that one way be the common scorn? For these things God had a controversy with this land; and he hath pleaded his cause with fire and sword, and spoke by a voice that will not be derided. He hath entered into judgment with priests and people. He will not always support and maintain a people to deride him. O England! hadst thou none to make the football of thy scorn, but the servants of the most high God? Did he not tell thee that they were his jewels? Mal. iii. 1. And that "he that touched them did touch the apple of his eye?" Zech. ii. 8. Will he give his Son for them, and will he glorify them with himself, and make them equal to the angels? Luke xx. 36. And didst thou think he would give thee leave to make them the scorn and offscouring of the world? Hadst thou none to make the football of thy contemptuous sport, but the sons of God, the spouse of Christ, yea his members, and the heirs of heaven? O foolish nation, hadst thou none to deride and make thy by-word but Christ himself? Yea, it was Christ himself, though thou wilt not believe it! "Inasmuch as thou didst it to one of the least of these his brethren, thou didst it unto him," Matt. xxv. 40. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted," Isa. lxiii. 9; and therefore in all "their reproaches he was reproached." All those that were derided for holiness, were derided upon Christ's account. If holiness be vile and to be scorned, then God himself is vile and to be scorned, and consequently is no God; and what greater blasphemy could be uttered by the tongue of man? For God is holiness itself. In us it is but a beam, from him the shining, glorious Sun. If a little in us imperfect worms be hated by thee, how wouldst thou hate the perfect holiness of God! And if we deserve thy scorn for our obedience, (alas, our too imperfect obedience,) it must fall upon him that made the law, and gave us these commands. If he be too precise that imperfectly obeyeth God, what will you say of God himself that commandeth more than any of us all performeth, and that chargeth us on pain of damnation to obey him? O how much wiser would you do, if you daily studied, and diligently obeyed those laws yourselves! If the rulers of the earth would remember him that is the King of kings, and did serve the Lord with fear, and rejoiced before him with trembling, and kissed the Son to prevent his anger, and their perishing in the way! Psal. ii. 11, 12. O England! had thy disobedient inhabitants never heard, how vain their rage and imaginations would be, when they "set themselves and took counsel against the Lord and his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us?" Did they never hear that the deriders were derided by him that sitteth in the heavens; and how he will shortly speak to them in wrath, that speak against his ways in malice, and will vex them in his sore displeasure, that vexed his servants for the doing of his pleasure? Will they not believe, till hell have taught them, that in despite of all his enemies, he will set his Son the King of saints upon his holy hill of Sion? Psal. ii. 1-9. Had they never heard how hard at last it will prove for them to kick against the pricks? Acts ix. 5. And will they not know by any other means but feeling, that he will destroy those as his enemies that "would not have him to reign over them?" Luke xix. 27; and that he will "break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel?" Psal. ii. 9. O scornors! did you never read his words, 1 Sam. ii. 30, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed?" Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and

perish! for this word shall be fulfilled upon you, and the work be wrought which you would not believe when God foretold it, and will not yet understand and believe though it be declared to you, Acts xiii. 41. Think not that the infirmities of the godly do justify your contempt of godliness. Think not that a Judas in Christ's family will justify you for making a scorn of his family, and persecuting his disciples! or that a Ham in the ark, or the sin of Noah, will warrant you to make them as bad as the destroyed world, whom God had done so much to save! Think not when you have jeered at a holy life, that God will take it for a good excuse, to tell him that you had found a fault in his servants, or a hypocrite crept into his church. He hateth their faults much more than you; but will you therefore hate their goodness? Condemn the breaches of his laws, and spare not; but will you therefore condemn the keeping of them? O England! if thou hadst had the grace or wit to use Christ better in his ways and servants, he would have used thee better, and dealt more gently with thy inhabitants, and thy flames and calamities might have been prevented. Often wast thou told from 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, what it was that captivated Israel, and made their priests and people to be the heathens' slaves. "When the Lord God sent unto them by his prophets, because he had compassion on his people and his dwelling-place, they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." But alas, thou hast gone much further than this. Israel mocked the prophets; but I remember not that it is ever said of them, that the way of godliness itself was made a common scorn among them; but still they gloried in the Lord, and in the law, and in the temple, and the holy worship. But here, if a man did but talk of heaven, or of any holy subject, or reprove a swearer, or not join with them in their impieties, the common cry was, This is one of the holy brethren; here is one of the saints: it will never be well till we are rid of these puritans and precisians. How oft have I heard almost the same words from Englishmen, as Lot did from the Sodomites! "This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge," Gen. xix. 9. When they lived "in their lasciviousness, lusts, excess of drink, revellings, banquetings, and abominable profanation of holy things, they thought it strange that we ran not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of us," but forgetting the account that their Judge was ready to require of them, 1 Pet. iv. 3-5.

Well! have you yet taken warning by the judgments of the Lord? God hath begun to take away the reproach of holiness, and through his great mercy to us it is more honourable in England than formerly it hath been. Is it honoured by you? or are you hardened to perdition? Fearful is the case of him, whoever he be, that after all the gentle and terrible warnings of the Lord, dare think or speak reproachfully of a holy life! Yet hear the calls of the Eternal Wisdom; "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof," Prov. i. 20-22, &c. But mercies and judgments are lost on the hard-hearted. "Let favour be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. When the hand of the Lord is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at his people, and the enemies' own fire shall devour them," Isa. xxvi. 10, 11. And then as they "set at nought his counsel, and would none of

his reproof," but mocked them that fear God; so will he also "laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord," Prov. i. 25-27, 29.

I will add but this one word of terror. To scorn at holiness is to scorn at the Holy Ghost, whose office or work it is to sanctify us. As the Father hath commanded us to be holy as he is holy, 1 Pet. i. 16, and made it his image on us; and as the Son hath come to destroy unholiness, 1 John iii. 8, and give us an example of perfect holiness, and sanctify to himself a peculiar people, Titus ii. 14; so is it the undertaken work of the Holy Ghost, as sent therefore from the Father and the Son, to make holy all that God will save. And though I say not that it is the unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, to scorn his very work and office, yet I say it is a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost so near that which is unpardonable, that the thoughts of it should humble all that have been guilty, and make men fear so horrible a sin. But "blessed is he that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Surely he scorneth the scornors, but he giveth grace unto the lowly," Prov. iii. 33, 34. These are the true sayings of the Lord.

I thought not meet to pass by this necessary reproof of the contempt of holiness, which this land hath been so guilty of, and which hath undone so many souls, and made such desolations in the land. And now you shall see that I am able to make good the grounds of this reproof, and that holiness is no dishonourable thing.

I. The holy servants of the Lord have the most honourable Master in all the world. This only is sufficient to weigh down all the honours of the world, if it were ten thousand worlds. When the builders of the temple were asked their names by the officers of king Darius, Ezra v. 10, 11, their answer was, "We are the servants of the God of heaven, and earth." No king on earth, no angel in heaven, hath a more honourable master. To be the highest officer of the greatest prince, is a title as much more base than this, as man is baser than the Infinite God. If God cannot put sufficient honour on those that are related to him, tell us who can? When Moses went to Pharaoh for the Israelites' deliverance, he was to speak in the name of the Lord; and when Pharaoh spake contemptuously of the Lord, as one that he knew not and would not obey, how wondrously doth God vindicate his honour and his people! Let other men be called knights, and lords, and kings, and emperors; may I but be truly called the servant of the God of heaven, I shall not envy them their honours! Our relation to so glorious a Majesty doth put an inexpressible honour upon the poorest person and the lowest works. A servant of the Lord is more honourable in rags, in a smoky cottage, or the meanest state, than the emperors of Constantinople or Tartary are in all their wealth and worldly glory. And if you think not so yourselves, why do you so much honour them when they are dead? What were Peter and Paul, and the rest of the apostles, but poor despised men in the world, that travelled about to preach the gospel? and what was their honour but to be the holy servants of the Lord? Yet now they are dead, you are desirous to keep holy-days in an honourable memorial of them, and kings and princes reverence their names. What

were the martyrs whose memories are now so honourable with us, but a company of hated, persecuted men, that were used by others as butchers do their beasts, and worse? But because they were the servants of the Lord, and suffered for his truth and cause, their names are honourable, and the names of their greatest persecutors do even stink. It is said of Constantine the Great, (who was himself greater by his holiness than his victories,) that he was wont to reverence the bishops that had been sufferers for Christ, and kissed the place where the eye abode that one of them had lost for the gospel's sake. The christian princes that ruled the world, were wont to honour the poorest, mortified, retired servants of Christ, that had cast off the world, as perceiving that he is more honourable than contentment it, than he that enjoyeth it. The nearest to God undoubtedly are the most honourable.

2. Consider, that as it is God that the saints are thus related to, so their relation is so near, and their titles so exceeding high, which God himself hath put upon them, that it advanceth them to the greatest height of honour that men on earth can reasonably expect. Yea, with holy admiration we must say it, so wonderful is the honour which the glorious God hath put upon his poor, unworthy servants, that they durst not have owned it, nor thought such titles meet for men, if God himself had not been the author of them! Nor could they have believed that God would so advance them, if he had not both so revealed it, and given them faith to believe his revelation. As if it were not enough for us to be his servants, he calleth us his friends: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you," John xv. 13—15.

(1.) Abraham "was called the friend of God," James ii. 23.

(2.) And they are all called the Lord's jewels, Mal. iii. 17.

(3.) They are called his beloved, and dearly beloved, Deut. xxxiii. 12; Psal. lx. 5; cxvii. 2; Cant. ii. 16; vi. 3; vii. 10. Holy and beloved are inseparable. "Beloved of God, called to be saints," Rom. iv. 7. "The elect of God, holy and beloved," Col. iii. 12. They are the dearly beloved of his soul, Jer. xii. 7; for they are "accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6; even in the "beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased," Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5.

(4.) They are called children, or adopted sons, Gal. iv. 6; John i. 12. And he disdained not to be called their Father, Heb. xii. 9; Matt. xxiii. 9. 2 Cor. vi. 18, "I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Mal. iii. 17, "He will spare them, as a man spareth his son that serveth him."

(5.) They are called also the heirs of heaven, Rom. viii. 17. A more honourable heritage than earth affords.

(6.) They are called "a peculiar people to the Lord," Tit. ii. 14; and his "peculiar treasure," Exod. xix. 5; Psal. cxxxv. 4.

(7.) They are called "kings and priests to God," Rev. i. 6. They are a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," 1 Pet. ii. 9.

(8.) The sanctified are called the spouse of Christ, Cant. iv. 8—13; because of the similitude of the holy covenant which they make with Christ to a

marriage covenant; and because of the dearth of his love to them, and the nearness and sweetness of his communion with them, Matt. xxii. 2, 4, 9. The Lord is said to be married to them, Jer. iii. 14. And their Maker calls himself their Husband Isa. liv. 5.

(9.) Yea more, they are called the members of Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 15; xii. 12. They are the "body of Christ and members in particular," ver. 27. We are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, loved and cherished by him, as a man doth his own flesh," Eph. v. 25, 28—30, 32. They are kept by the Lord as the apple of his eye, Deut. xxxii. 10. And he that "toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 8. What nearness, what dearth do those terms express!

(10.) Yea, they are said to be one with Christ: "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17. "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.—That they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one," John xvii. 21—23. Not that they are made in one Godhead, or personality, or office with Christ, but most nearly conjoined as subjects to their prince, that make one body politic, and as a wife to a husband; and nearer than these can express, in that they have the communications of his Spirit.

Judge now by all these wonderful titles, whether any but an atheist or infidel can deny, that the godly are the most honourable people in the world? If it be not a contemptible thing to be the son of a king, much less to be the sons of the Eternal King. Deny the honour of those that are so nearly related to him, and you deny the honour of himself, and consequently deny him to be God. Atheism is the beginning and end of all.

3. Moreover the servants of the Lord have the most honourable natures or dispositions in the world. And the honour that ariseth from a man's intrinsic disposition, is far greater than that which accrueeth to him from his parentage, or wealth, or worldly greatness, or any such extrinsic accidents. Many a proud and worthless person doth boast of the nobility of their ancestors, and tell you what blood doth run in their veins; when they have debased souls, and nothing advanced them or their ancestors, but their riches, or the pleasure of some prince; and they know that the beggars at their doors did come from Noah as well as they. The surgeon findeth no purer blood in their veins, than in the beggars'; nor are their carcases any more sweet or lovely; and therefore if their manners are worse, they are more base than honest beggars. It is the mind that beareth the true stamp of nobility. They are the noblest that have the noblest souls. All the silks and velvets in the world, will not make an ape as honourable as a man, nor an idiot as a wise man. Solomon in all his royalty was not clothed like some of the flowers in the field, (Matt. vi. 28, 29,) and yet he was more honourable than they. A corpse may be most sumptuously adorned; a crown may be set on the head of an image. Such as the mind is, such is the man. And that the souls of the sanctified are more nobly qualified than those of other men is easily demonstrated. For,

(1.) Christ dwelleth in them by faith, and by his Spirit, Eph. i. 17; ii. 22. We are the temples of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 19. The new nature of the saints hath no meaner an Author than the Lord himself. It is the divine power that giveth us all things that pertain to life and godliness, 2 Pet. i. 3.

As it is the honourable work of God the Father to be our Creator, and of God the Son to be our Redeemer; so it is the honourable work of God the Holy Ghost to be our Sanctifier. And therefore as it is a blaspheming of the Creator to vilify the creation, and a blaspheming of the Redeemer to vilify the redemption; so it is a blaspheming of the Sanctifier to vilify sanctification. Though I say not that it is the unpardonable blasphemy, yet a fearful blasphemy it is. Oh that those wretches knew their crime, that mock at the special work of the Holy Ghost!

(2.) The new creature is illuminated with a heavenly light, and cured of its former mortal blindness, and is "brought out of darkness into marvellous light," Eph. i. 18; Acts xxvi. 18; Col. i. 13; 1 Pet. i. 9; and is taught of God, John vi. 45; 1 Thess. iv. 9; 1 John ii. 27. And it is more honourable to see, than to be blind, and to live in the open light, than in a dungeon. And it is the highest matters in the world that the gracious soul is savingly acquainted with. It is more honourable to have the knowledge of the profoundest sciences, than of some low and poor employment. And it is more honourable to have the saving knowledge of God, and of the life to come, which the poorest sanctified person hath, than to have the most admired fleshly wisdom, or all the common learning in the world. What high, and excellent, and necessary things doth grace acquaint the christian with! He knoweth him that is the cause of all things else, having himself no cause. He knoweth him that is knowledge itself, and that knoweth all things. He knoweth him that is eternal, that never began, and shall never end; that is greater than the whole world; that is more glorious than the sun; that can do all things because he is Almighty, and yet can do no evil, because he is most good and holy. He knoweth him that made the world and all things, and holdeth them in the hand of his omnipotency, and ruleth them by his wisdom, and doth all things according to the good pleasure of his will. He knoweth him that is man's felicity, to know whom is eternal life. He knoweth the Redeemer, and the riches of his grace and promises. He knoweth the diseases of his own soul, and their danger and cure. He knoweth what end he hath to aim at, and the work that he was made and redeemed for to do; the temptations which he must resist; the enemies which he must conquer; the duties which he must perform. He knoweth his Redeemer's laws and covenants; what he commandeth, promiseth, and threateneth, and to whom. He knoweth what will be hereafter, and where he shall live when this life is ended; and what he shall do ten thousand years hence, yea, unto all eternity. He knoweth what will become of all the godly and ungodly (that die such) in the world, and where they shall be for evermore. In a word, he knoweth whence he came, whither he is going, and which way he must go. He knoweth God as his Maker, Governor, and End. He knoweth that God that he must please, and how to please him, and how to be saved, and to live with God for ever. This is the honourable knowledge of the sanctified; which no men have but they alone. The cunning politicians of the world have none of it (as such). The speculators of nature, the great mathematicians, the learned doctors, famous for their skill in languages, philosophy, and the theory of divinity, are oft without it. They have more of the words, and notions, and forms, and methods, than unlearned saints have; but they want the thing that these are made for. They have the signs, and the godly have the thing signified. They have the body of theology, and the godly

christian hath the soul. The ungodly doctors have better skill to break the shell, but the godly christian only knows how to eat the kernel. The learned may be better at the office of a cook, to dress the meat; but only the godly do feed on it, and digest it. Knowledge is to be valued (as all creatures are) according to its usefulness. As it is more honourable to know how to govern a kingdom, command an army or navy, or save men's lives, than to make a fiddle or a hobby-horse; so it is ten thousandfold more honourable, to know how to order our hearts and lives, and to walk with God, and obtain the everlasting glory, than to know how to get the riches, and pleasures, and vain-glory of the present world.

(3.) The sanctified are made alive to God, when other men are dead in sin, Rom. vi. 11, 13; Eph. ii. 1. And the poorest man alive is more honourable than the carcass of an emperor. "A living dog is better than a dead lion," Eccles. ix. 4.

(4.) The sanctified are cleansed from the filthiness of their sins, which are the most odious defilements in the world: and they are purified by the blood and Spirit of Christ, 1 John i. 7, 9; Eph. v. 26; 2 Cor. vii. 1. The "word of Christ hath made them clean," John xv. 3. Their hearts are "purified by faith," Acts xv. 9; 1 Pet. i. 22; 1 John iii. 3; and therefore the most odious part of their dishonour is removed. "Sin is a reproach to any people," Prov. xiv. 34. Whatever it may seem before ungodly men, it is sin that is your shame before the Lord. And this reproach the godly are now cleansed from. Though it be a dishonour to them that they were ungodly once, it is their honour that now they are not such; and that they are clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

(5.) The holy nature of the saints disposeth their hearts, and inclineth their wills, to the highest and most honourable things. As in their knowledge, so in their inclinations, they are above the baseness of the world. The nature of man is not to feed as beasts, and horses, and dogs do: he is above their food; and above their converse and kind of life. That will not content him that contenteth them. And the new nature of a sanctified man, is above the delights and contents of the ungodly. His heart cannot endure to take up with their kind of life. To mind nothing but this world, and to have no pleasure but to the flesh, and live as an utter stranger to God, and not to feed on the heavenly delights, and riches of the gospel, but live as if there were no such things, this sensual life is below his inclination, as feeding on dross, or conversing only with swine or cattle, is below the nature of a man. The noble soul is that which is inclined to the noblest objects; even to God, and holiness, and everlasting life, and cannot endure the poor, and low, and sordid life of men, that have their portion here, Psal. xvii. 14. Nothing that is corporeal, or transitory, yea nothing below God, can satisfy a holy soul. It is this holy disposition that fits men for holy duties, and that is their fitness for eternal happiness. If angels were not holier than devils, and godly men than the ungodly, heaven could not hold them, nor could they any more see or enjoy the Lord, than they that are cast into outer darkness. And therefore if you dare say that the holy are no more honourable than the unholy, you must say that the holy angels are no more honourable than the devils, which sure you will scarce be so desperate as to speak.

(6.) Holiness in the godly is the image of God, in which we were created, and according to which we are renewed by the Holy Ghost, Eph. iv. 24; Col.

iii. 10; Gen. i. 27. And what can be spoken more honourable of a creature, than that he hath his Maker's image, unless as to the degree, that some have more of it than others? It is the honourable title of the Son himself, that he "is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." This is above the honour of any, or of all the saints. But to have the image of God in wisdom and holiness, as all have that are sanctified, is a wonderful dignity to be given to a creature, and so low and unworthy creatures as we are. His commands tell us what are the qualifications of his people. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. For it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy," 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. And how high a command and strait a rule is that given us by Christ, Matt. v. 48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Well may it be called an exceeding righteousness, surpassing the scribes' and Pharisees', which all have that enter into the heavenly kingdom, ver. 20. There is nothing under heaven that is known to man so like to God, as a holy soul. Remember this the next time you reproach such. All you that are the serpent's seed, remember when you spit your venom against holiness that it is the image of God that your enmity is exercised against. Oh what a strange conjunction of malignity and hypocrisy appeareth in the enemies of God among us! A picture of Christ that is drawn by a painter, or a forbidden image of God that is carved by an image-maker in stone, that hath nothing but the name of an image of God, these they will reverence and honour (though God hath forbidden them to make such image of him). The papists will pray before them, and the profane among us are zealous for them; when in the mean time they hate the noblest images of God on earth. Forbidden images of God have been defended, by seeking the blood of his truest images. Do you indeed love and honour the image of God? Why then do you hate them, and seek to destroy them? and why do you make them the scorn of your continual malice? Can you blow hot and cold? Can you both love and hate, both honour and scorn, the image of God? Search the Scripture, and see whether it be not the sanctified, heavenly, diligent servants of the Lord that are the honourable images which he owneth, and magnifieth, and glorieth in before the world. If this be not true, then go on in your hatred of them and spare not. These are not images of stone, but of Spirit; not images made by a carver or a painter, but by the Holy Ghost himself. Not hanged upon a wall for men to look on, but living images, actuated from heaven, by spiritual influence from Christ their Head, and shining forth in exemplary lives to the honour of their Father whom they resemble, Matt. v. 16. It is not in an outward shape, but in spiritual wisdom, and love, and holiness of heart and life, that they resemble their Creator. Whether you will believe it now or not, be sure of it, you malignant enemies of holiness, that God would shortly make you know it, that you choose out the most excellent image of your Maker under heaven, to pour out your hatred and contempt against. And inasmuch as you did it unto his noblest image, you did it unto him.

(7.) If all this be not enough to show you the honourable nature of holiness, I will speak the highest word that can be spoken of any created nature under heaven, and yet no more than God hath spoken; even in 2 Pet. i. 4, where it is expressly said, that the godly are "partakers of the divine nature." I know that it is not the essence

of God that is here called the divine nature that we partake of; we abhor the thoughts of such blasphemous arrogance, as if that grace did make men gods. But it is called the divine nature, in that it is caused by the Spirit of God, and floweth from him as the light or sunshine floweth from the sun. You use to say the sun is in the house when it shineth in the house, though the sun itself be in the firmament. So the Scripture saith that God dwelleth in us, and Christ and the Spirit dwelleth in us, when the heavenly light, and love, and life, which streameth from him, dwelleth in us; and this is called the divine nature. Think of this, and tell me whether higher and more honourable things can easily be spoken of the sons of men. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 John iv. 16. Oh wonderful advancement! high expressions of a creature's dignity! Blessed be that eternal love that is thus communicative, and hath so ennobled our unworthy souls! With what alacrity and delight should we exalt his name by daily praises, that thus exalteth us by his unspeakable mercies! "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of our strength; and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For the Lord is our defence, and the Holy One of Israel is our king," Psal. lxxxix. 15—17; lxxv. 10. "Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent: his glory is above the earth and heavens. He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints," Psal. cxlviii. 13, 14. He hath "first exalted our blessed Head, even highly exalted him by his own right hand, and given him a name above every name," Acts ii. 33; v. 31; Phil. ii. 9; and with him he hath wonderfully exalted all his sanctified ones. "For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," Heb. ii. 10, 11. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ," 1 Cor. xii. 12. What greater honour can man on earth be advanced to? And the honour of the just is communicative to the societies of which they are members. The churches are called holy for their sakes. "By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted; but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked," Prov. xi. 11. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people," chap. xiv. 34. Let therefore both the persons and congregations of the saints continually exalt the name of God. "O bless the Lord for ever and ever, and blessed be his glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise," Neh. ix. 5. "The Lord liveth, and blessed be our Rock, and exalted be the God of the rock of our salvation," 2 Sam. xxii. 47. "I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up," Psal. xxx. 1. "And now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord," Psal. xxvii. 6. "The Lord is their strength, the saving strength of his anointed. He will save his people, and bless his inheritance, and feed them also, and lift them up for ever," Psal. cxlviii. 8, 9. "The Lord lifteth up the meek, and casteth the wicked down to the ground," Psal. cxlvii. 6. Thus shall it be done to them whom God doth delight to

honour. "He will deliver them and honour them," Psal. xci. 15.

4. And as the sanctified have the most honourable dispositions, so have they the highest and most honourable designs. The end of their lives is incomparably above other men's. The rest of the world (though they may talk of heaven, and wish for it rather than hell, when they can live no longer) do indeed drive on no greater trade, than providing for the flesh, and feathering them a nest which will quickly be pulled down; and like the spider, spinning themselves a web, which death will shortly sweep away. But the design and daily business of the godly is for everlasting glory. "They look for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.—They confess themselves strangers and pilgrims on earth, thereby declaring that they seek a country. And truly if they were mindful of that (deceitful world) which they came out of, (and have forsaken,) they may have opportunities (and too many invitations) to return to it. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city," Heb. xii. 10, 13—16. This noble end ennobleth both the persons and conversations of believers. To rule a kingdom is a nobler design than to play with children for pins or points. But to seek the everlasting kingdom is far above all the highest designs that are terminated upon earth. If everlasting glory with God in heaven be a nobler state than a worldly life, then must the seeking it be a nobler design. Paul sheweth you the difference very pathetically, Phil. iii. 18—20, "For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven." That is, we live as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and not as those that are here at home. It is heaven that sanctifies persons' minds; that they study and care for, and labour and live for in the world. And therefore though in their natural capacity they are but as other men, yet in their moral and relative capacity, I think I may say without hyperbole, that they are much more advanced above the dignity of the great, unsanctified princes upon earth, than reason, and learning, and manly designs advance a man above a beast. It is the nobleness and baseness of the end that doth honour or debase the agent; and therefore none are truly honourable but those that seek the spiritual, the high eternal honour.

5. The employment, as well as the designs, of the godly, do prove them to be the most honourable. Both the end and matter do show the excellency of their work. As the end honoureth the person, so doth it honour all the works that are means thereto. The first thoughts of a godly man when he awaketh, and the last when he lieth down, (if he observe his rule,) are usually for heaven. When you are conversing with worldly men, about these common worldly things, they are in prayer or holy meditation conversing with God, about the matters of his service, and their salvation. Their hearts are toward him; their thoughts are on him; they are devoted to him; their daily business is to serve him. "When I awake (saith David, Psal. cxxxix. 23) I am still with thee." "I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel. My reins also instruct me in the night season. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved," Psal. xvi. 7, 8. The life of the godly is called in Scripture, "a walking with God." Such

was the course of Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, Gen. v. 22, 24; vi. 9; xvii. 1; xxiv. 40. "They walked before God," (Gen. xlviii. 15,) and in his ways, Deut. xxviii. 9. They "love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul (as to the sincerity of it); and walk after him, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and serve him, and cleave unto him," Deut. xiii. 3, 4. And can an inhabitant of this world have a more honourable employment than to serve the Lord? and a more honourable state than to walk with God? Should we not have thought such words intolerable to be used of the best on earth, if God had not been himself the author of them, and put them into our mouths? Hear more of his own expressions concerning the conversations of his servants: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. i. 9. "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3. By fellowship is not meant here, a society of equals. God forbid we should think so blasphemously. But it is a communion of the beloved, sanctified creature with his blessed Creator, agreeable to his distance. In their secret addresses, his servants have communion with him. Their prayer is nothing else but a humble speaking to the living God, for the supply of all their wants. In their praises and thanksgivings it is God that they deal with; and the "words of their mouths, and the meditation of their hearts, are acceptable in the sight of their Redeemer," Psal. xix. 14. They pour out their souls before him, and he openeth his ears and his bosom unto them, Psal. lxxi. 8; x. 17. "He will feed his flock like a shepherd: he will gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Isa. xl. 11. And in the public worship of God in the holy assemblies, his servants also have communion with him. It is him that they hear, whoever be the messenger. It is him that they adore, and praise, and magnify. "Come (say they) and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.—Come, and let us walk in the light of the Lord," Isa. ii. 3, 5. "We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple," Psal. xlviii. 9. "In his temple doth every man speak of his glory," Psal. xxix. 9. Yea, the common employments of the godly are sanctified, and thereby advanced above the highest actions of the wicked. For it is God and glory that is in all their ultimate ends. "Whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, they do it to his glory," 1 Cor. x. 31. That is, they intend his glory as their end, and they do it in reverent obedience to his will, and in a holy manner behaving themselves as may honour him whose work they do. And he that hath the face to say, that prayer, praise, thanksgiving, meditation, holy conference, and other works of holiness and righteousness, are not a more honourable employment than the sordid drudgery of the world, must say also that the life of a worldling is more honourable than the life of the holy angels and the heavenly host. They are obeying and praising God, and living in the sense of his dearest love, while you are sinning and scraping in this earth. And can you believe that your life is more honourable than theirs? If not, you must confess that the godly that come nearest the work of angels, do live a more honourable life than you. When Christ called Peter to leave his fishing and follow him, and be his servant, he tells him that he will make him a fisher of men, as intimating that it was a more honourable work to catch souls by the gos-

pel, and win them to God and to salvation, than to catch fishes. To please God and save our souls, and further others in obeying him to their salvation, is the highest work that the sons of men are capable of while they live in flesh.

As the priests were sanctified to draw nearer unto God than the common people, and to be employed in his most holy service, so are the godly separated by grace from the ungodly world, and brought nearer God, and used by him in the noblest works. "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood, and of earth, and some to honour, and some to dishonour," 1 Tim. ii. 20. "If a man therefore purge himself from sin, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work," ver. 21. The vessel that swine are fed in, is not so honourable as that which is used at a prince's table. If you would know what use the godly are employed in, read 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9, "As lively stones they are built up a spiritual house: they are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God, which shall be acceptable by Jesus Christ. They are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." The holy Scriptures tell you the work of saints. Compare them with the work of the drunkard, the glutton, the gamester, the fornicator, or the covetous or ambitious worldling, and let your reason tell you which is the more honourable. "O fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him," Psal. xxxiv. 9. "O love the Lord, all ye his saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful," Psal. xxxi. 23. "The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him," Psal. lxxxix. 5, 7. These are the employments of the saints.

6. Moreover the godly have the most honourable entertainment by the God of all the world. They are bid welcome when others are rejected. The door is opened to them that is shut against the wicked. They are familiar with Jesus Christ, as the children of the family, when others are strangers whom he will not know. "I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity," Matt. vii. 23. "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish," Psal. i. 6. The faithful are feasted by him, when the rest are examined with a "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness," Matt. xxii. 12, 13. They are called the children that have the bread, and the rest are called the dogs; of which some are without, and those within do feed but on the "crumbs that fall from the children's table," Matt. xv. 26, 27; Rev. xxii. 15. Hear the Lord's invitation and his promise: "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good; and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me, hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you," Isa. lv. 2, 3. Who is it that is admitted into the "tabernacle of the Lord, and who shall dwell in his holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.—In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord," Psal. xv. 1, 2, 4. "The upright shall dwell in the presence of the Lord," Psal. cxl. 13. "God will save Sion,—and the seed of his

servants shall inherit it, and they that love his name shall dwell therein," Psal. lxi. 35, 36. And "blessed is the man whom thou choosest, O Lord, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: he shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple," Psal. lxxv. 4. Saith David, "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. Yea, Christ entertaineth faithful souls with a spiritual feast of his own flesh and blood. His flesh to them is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, John vi. 55. And "he that eateth and drinketh these shall live for ever," ver. 54, 56. The returning prodigal is met with joy, and quickly embraced in his father's arms; the fatted calf is killed for him; a ring and new apparel is provided for him; and music must express the joy of his recovery, Luke xv. Oh how welcome are converted sinners to the God of mercy! And as they are welcome at their first return, so are they in all their attendance on him, and addresses to him, and service of him, while they continue in his family. They have boldness now "to enter into the holiest, by the new and living way that is consecrated;" and are invited "to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," Heb. x. 19, 22. "In Christ we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him," Ephes. iii. 12. And "God hath made us accepted in the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of his grace," chap. i. 6. "We are living sacrifices, acceptable unto God," Rom. xii. 1. And our services, though weak, are "sacrifices acceptable and well-pleasing to him," Phil. iv. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 3; v. 4. When the "prayers of the wicked are abhorred of the Lord, his people serve him acceptably in reverence and godly fear," Heb. xii. 28. He answereth their prayers, and often speaketh peace unto them, and signifieth his acceptance of them. If they could bring him a house full of gold and silver, they would not be so welcome to him as they are in bringing him their hearts, their humbled hearts, their broken, tender, melted hearts, that burn in love to him, and flame up towards him in desires and in holy praise. "To this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word," Isa. lxvi. 2. This is the honourable entertainment of the saints.

7. And they are members of the most honourable society in the world. The church is the kingdom of Jesus Christ, Luke i. 33; Col. i. 13; the kingdom of God, Luke xvii. 21; xviii. 17; the kingdom of heaven, Matt. iii. 2; xiii. 31, 33, 44. It is the school of Christ, or his university, in which believers are his scholars, learning to know him, and serve him, and praise him for ever, and trained up for everlasting life, Acts xi. 26; Luke vi. 13; Matt. v. 1, 2, &c. It is the family or household of God, Eph. ii. 19; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Heb. x. 21; 1 Pet. iv. 17. It is the spouse, yea the body of Christ, Eph. v. 25. So loved by him, that he gave himself for it, becoming the price of our redemption, and thought not his life too dear a ransom, nor his blood too precious to cleanse and save us, ver. 25, 26; Tit. ii. 4. The church, which every godly man is a living member of, is a society chosen out of the world, to be nearest unto God, and dearest to him, as the beloved of his soul, to receive the choicest of his mercies, and be adorned with the righteousness of Christ, and to be employed in his special service, 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, 9; John xv. 19; Eph. i. 4; Psal. cxxxii. 13; cxxxv. 4; Eph. v. 1. The Lord that redeemed them is their King and Head, and dwelleth in the midst of them, and walketh among them, as the people of his

special presence and delight, Psal. ii. 6; lxxxix. 18; cxlix. 2; xlv. 5; Isa. xii. 6; Jer. xiv. 9; Zeph. iii. 5, 15, 17; Rev. i. 13; ii. 1; Psal. xcv. 2. The church is a heavenly society, though the militant part yet live on earth. For the God of heaven is the Sovereign and the Father of it. The glorified Redeemer is their Head. The Spirit of Christ doth guide and animate them. His laws, revealed and confirmed from heaven, direct and govern them. Heaven is their end; and heavenly are their dispositions, employments, and conversations. There is their portion and treasure, Matt. vi. 20, 21. And there is their very heart and hope. "They are risen with Christ," and therefore "seek the things that are above. For their life is hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 2-4. Their root is there; and the noblest part of the society is there. For the glorified saints, and in some sort, the angels, are of the same society with us, though they are in heaven, and we on earth. The whole family in heaven and earth is named from one and the same head, Eph. iii. 15. "We are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling," &c. Heb. xii. 22-24. This is the honourable society of saints, the eye, the pearl of the whole creation.

8. Moreover, the godly have the most honourable attendance. The creatures are all theirs: though not in point of civil propriety, yet as means appointed and managed by God their Father, for their best advantage. The angels of God are ministering spirits for them; not as our servants, but as God's servants for our good; as ministers in the church are not the servants of men, but the servants of God for men. And so, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or to come, all are ours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. The shepherd's servant is not the servant of the sheep, but for the sheep. And so the angels disdain not to serve God in the guarding of the weakest saints. As I formerly showed from Heb. i. 14, and Psal. xci. 11, 12, and xxxiv. 7. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. For he giveth his angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways: they shall bear us up in their hands lest we dash our foot against a stone." Sun and moon, and all the creatures, are daily employed in our attendance. Oh how wonderful is the love of God to his unworthy servants, in their advancement! Remember it, when thou art scorning at the servants of the Lord, or speaking against them, that those poor, those weak, despised christians, that thou art vilifying, have their "angels beholding the face of God their Father in the heavens: take heed, therefore, that you despise not the least of these." It is the warning of Christ, Matt. xviii. 10. The same blessed spirits that attend the Lord, and see his face in blissful glory, do attend and guard the meanest of the godly here on earth. As the same servants use to wait on the father and the children in the same family, or the bigger children to help the less.

9. And it is the honour of the godly, that they that are themselves most honourable do honour them. To be magnified by a fool, or wicked flatterer, is small honour; but to be magnified by the best and wisest men, this is true honour. We say that honour is in him that giveth it, and not in him that receiveth. But it is God himself that honoureth his saints: it is he that speaketh all these great and

wondrous things of them which I have hitherto recited. Search the texts which I have alleged, and try whether it be not he. And surely to have the God of heaven to applaud a man, and put honour upon him, and so great honour, is more than if all the world had done it. Yet we may add, (if any thing could be considerable that is added unto the approbation of God,) that all his servants, the wisest and the best, even his holy angels, are of the same mind, and honour the godly in conformity to their Lord.

And here, christian, I require thee from the Lord, to consider the greatness of thy sin and folly, when thou art too desirous of the applause of men, especially of the blind, ungodly world; and when thou makest a great matter of their contempt or scorn, or of their slanderous censures. What! is the approbation of the eternal God so small a matter in thy eyes, that the scorn of a fool can weigh it down, or move the balance with thee? If a feather were put into the scales against a mountain, or the whole earth, it should weigh as much as the esteem or disesteem of men, their honouring thee or dishonouring thee, should weigh against the esteem of God, and the honour or dishonour that he puts upon thee (as to any regard of the thing itself; though as it reflecteth on God, thou mayst regard it). He is the wise man that God calls wise; and he is the fool that God calls fool; (and that is every one that "layeth up riches for himself, and is not rich towards God," Luke xii. 20, 21.) He is the happy man that God calls happy; and he is a miserable man that God counts miserable: and who those are you may see in Psal. i. and many scriptures before cited. Hear the words (and you that are believers lay up the blessed promise) of Christ himself, John xii. 26, "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour." And who cares then for all the dishonours of all the wicked of the world? Our "tried faith as precious than gold, will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 7. See 2 Tim. ii. 21. We must learn therefore to imitate our Lord; and not to receive our honour from men, John v. 41; and not to imitate the wicked, "that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God," ver. 44. There is enough for us in God's approbation. And yet all his servants do imitate their Lord; and his judgment is their judgment; and whom he honour-eth, them do they honour: angels, and saints, and all that enter into the tabernacle of the Lord, do "contemn the vile, and honour them that fear the Lord," Psal. xv. 4. And though no man's judgment or praise be valuable in comparison of the Lord's, yet the honour and praise that is given by the wise and godly, is more than a thousand times as much from ignorant, ungodly men. If the Athenian orator regarded the censure of Socrates more than of all the rest of his auditors, we have cause to judge the eulogies of experienced holy men a greater honour than of thousands of the wicked, and greater than all their contempt or scorn is able to weigh down. The applause of the wicked is oftentimes a dishonour in wise men's eyes. Was it not Balaam's chiefest honour to hear from Balak, "I thought to promote thee to great honour, but the Lord hath kept thee back from honour," Numb. xxiv. 11. The honour that God keepeth a man from is no honour; but it is an honour to be kept from such honour by the Lord. Innocent poverty is incomparably more honourable than riches by iniquity, which is the greatest shame.

10. Lastly, it is unspeakable, everlasting honour that holiness doth tend unto, and which holy men shall enjoy with God. The very relation of a godly

man to his everlasting glory, is an honour ten thousand times surpassing the honour of all the kingdoms of the world. If you did but know that one of your poor neighbours should certainly be a king, would you not presently honour him even in his rags? You may know that the saints shall reign with Christ, as sure as if an angel from heaven had told you so, and more; and therefore how should a saint be honoured! If God had but legibly marked out some among you for salvation, and written in their foreheads This man shall be saved, would not all the parish reverence that man? Why, a heavenly mind, and the love of God, self-denial, and holy obedience, are heaven-marks infallible, as true as the gospel, and written by the same hand as the gospel was, I mean by the Spirit of God himself. If a voice from heaven should speak now of any person in the congregation, and say, This man shall reign in heaven for ever, would it not be an honour above all your worldly honours? Why, holiness is God's image, and the Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, and beareth witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God, and have the promise, and seals, and oath of God for our certainty; yea, and the knowledge of God in Christ is the beginning of eternal life, John xvii. 3. And what would we have more? The presence of Christ in a little of his glory upon the mount, transported the three disciples; and the glimpse of the glory of God which Moses saw, did make his face shine that the Israelites could not behold it. The approaches of the saints to God in holy worship here on earth, are exceeding honourable, because they participate of heaven, and it is upward that they look. "Glory and honour are in his presence: strength and gladness are in his place," 1 Chron. xvi. 27. The soul that is beholding God by faith, and conversing with the heavenly inhabitants, is quite above all earthly things; and as angels are more honourable than men, and heaven than earth, so are believers that converse in heaven with angels, yea, with Christ himself by faith, more honourable than terrestrial, carnal men.

But the great honour is behind; yet near at hand; when the promised crown is set upon their heads. O mark the honour that is promised them by the Lord of truth. The soul itself before the resurrection of the body, shall be with Christ, Phil. i. 23; even present with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 1, 8. "If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my servant be," John xii. 26. And at the resurrection Christ that hath "loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it—will present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish," Eph. v. 25, 26. Will they not be honourable even in the eyes of the ungodly world, when they hear the sentence of their Lord, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 34; and ver. 23, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" when Christ "shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe?" 2 Thess. i. 10. Mark here, that it is one end of the coming of Christ, to be glorified and admired in his saints: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him," Jude 14, 15. "Our hearts shall be established, unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints," 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13. We shall

then praise him "that hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests to God," Rev. i. 5, 6. "He that overcometh shall be clothed with white raiment, and confessed by Christ before the Father and the angels of heaven," chap. iii. 5. Yea, he shall be a pillar in the temple of God, and go out no more: and Christ will write on him the name of God, and the name of the city of God, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God, and his own name, ver. 12. Yea, he will "grant to him to sit with him in his throne, as he himself hath overcome and is set down with the Father in his throne," ver. 21. And he will honour his saints to be judges of angels, and of the world, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. And "they that overcome and keep his words unto the end, to them will he give power over the nations, and they shall rule with a rod of iron, and break them to shivers as the vessels of a potter; even as Christ received of his Father; and he will give them the morning star," Rev. ii. 26, 27. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear" the glorious things that are promised to the saints. "The high praises of God shall be in their mouths, and the two-edged sword in their hands—to execute on the wicked the judgment written: such honour have all his saints," Psal. cxlix. 6, 9. Then shall we hear the praises of the heavenly society, saying, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned: and the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldst destroy them that dwell on the earth." "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear," Matt. xiii. 43. Yea, "they shall be equal to the angels of God," Luke xx. 36. This is the inheritance of the saints in light, of which God is now making us meet to be partakers, Col. i. 12. If "all that sat in the council against him, saw Stephen's face as it had been the face of an angel," (Acts vi. 15,) what shall be the glory of the saints when themselves shall see the face of God, and his name shall be written in their foreheads, (Rev. xxii. 4,) when the ungodly world shall know that holiness was the most honourable state?

But perhaps some will say, that this language will make them proud. To tell them that they are the most honourable persons in the world, is the way to make them the proudest persons.

To which I give you a manifold answer, that your objection may not have the least pretence that it is unsatisfied.

1. Worldly honours are of a more swelling nature than heavenly honours; and yet it would scarcely be taken well, if this conclusion should pass for current, that the most honourable are the most proud. For then it would follow that none are so vile, so like the devil, so unlike God: and so the princes and nobles of the earth would become the most despicable persons in the world, and their very honour itself would be their dishonour, and so no honour. And if worldly honours will not warrant you to conclude the persons to be most proud, much less will the heavenly honour.

2. There is the more need and the less fear of the honour of the godly, because it is the blessing of a humbled soul. God casts them down before he lifts them up. It is only the humble that he exalteth. They feel their sin and misery before they know their honour. A broken heart hath need of healing,

and a fainting soul is fittest for a cordial. You need not fear when you refresh the sick, lest it should make them wanton, as it may do the sound. A comfortable word to one that is lamenting over the dead, and weeping at a grave, is not likely to make them proud, as to others in prosperity. A drooping and discouraged soul is hardly raised high enough, and kept from sinking. They have had the sentence past upon them, and have had the rope as it were about their neck; they have been at the very gates of hell; they have seen by faith what work, what woes there are for sin in the life to come, and therefore these souls have need to hear of their felicity.

3. Moreover, they have a great deal of work to do; and their strength and courage is too small; and the work is such as flesh and blood cannot away with, much less afford them sufficient strength for. Such labourers must have encouraging, strengthening food. Their work is such as will keep them under. God doth not keep his servants idle; and therefore they are in the less danger of waxing proud and wanton. "They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God," Isa. xxxv. 2-4. And why is this foretold them? "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you." "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed," Heb. xii. 12, 13. We are commanded, 1 Thess. v. 14, as to "warn them that are unruly, so to comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak."

4. Moreover, the godly have the greater need of such encouragements, because they have much suffering to undergo. They have all your hatred and scorns to suffer, and all the adversities of the world, with which their Father shall please to exercise them. And he that layeth the burden on them, will give them strength by strengthening means. God's net hath corks as well as leads. If birds had not feathers as well as flesh, they would be unable to fly. As Christ himself was encouraged to endure the contradiction of sinners, and to "bear the cross, and despise the shame, by looking at the joy that was set before him, and so for the suffering of death was crowned with glory and honour," Heb. xii. 2, 3; ii. 9; so will he have his people tread in his steps, and take up their cross and follow him, and deny themselves and all the world; yet so as to "look at the recompence of reward, and seek for glory, honour, and immortality," and by these to be animated to the work and patience of the saints, as expecting to be glorified with him, when they have suffered with him, Matt. xvi. 24; x. 38; Heb. xi. 26; Rom. ii. 7; viii. 17, 18. As the angel said to Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 7, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee;" so God encourageth his servants by his honours and rewards, because the journey, the labour, the suffering is too great without such encouragement to be cheerfully undergone. And in the strength of these consolations they bear the cross.

5. The objection is most against the Lord. If it be an error to honour and extol the godly, as tending to make them proud, it is God himself that is the owner of it. The words that I have recited to you are his own words. Do we devise these sayings? or do we not show them you in the Scripture? And dare you charge God with error, or encouraging pride? Do you think he knew not what he said, when he spake such honourable things of his servants? Did he need you to have taught him to have

indited his word, and to have warned him that he make not his servants proud? as if he hated not pride as much as you.

6. Yea, God will do more than this for his servants; he will advance them to salvation, and yet he will not make them proud. There is no pride in heaven, though there be the greatest glory. The angels are most glorious, and yet least proud. If you would not wish God to keep men out of heaven lest it make them proud, you should not grudge at his honouring them on earth, with the mention of their heavenly titles upon that account.

7. The exaltation of the saints is a spiritual exaltation, which is not so apt to make men proud as carnal exaltation is. Charity puffeth not up, as airy knowledge doth. It is selfishness that is the life of pride (which consisteth in excessive self-esteem, and desire of an excessive esteem with others, and to be magnified by them). And nothing but grace can subdue this selfishness, and therefore nothing else can destroy pride.

8. Moreover, the honour of the saints is the less like to make them proud, because humility is part of the grace that is bestowed on them. To be proud and holy is to be sick and well, to be light and dark; they are plain contraries. No man is proud but for want of holiness; and therefore that holiness should efficiently make men proud is impossible, any more than health can make men sick, or darkness can be caused by light. And if objectively any be proud of his holiness, that is but in such a measure as he is unholy. Holiness doth ever mortify pride, and contain humility and self-denial, as an essential part. All Christ's disciples learn of him in their measure to be meek and lowly.

9. Let experience try you whether it be not some worldly honour, or parts and gifts, that are the much commoner objects of pride than holiness. I have oft heard talk of men being proud of their humility and holiness; but the temptations of my own soul have comparatively lain but little that way; nor have I observed in the common case of others, in any proportion with other kinds of pride. Riches and honours, and beauty and dignity, I see people ordinarily proud of. And I see many proud of counterfeit graces, that have none that is sincere (as far as may be perceived by others) to be proud of. And I see many proud of their learning, and knowledge, and nimble tongues, a hundredfold more than ever I found true christians proud of the love of God and a heavenly mind. Alas, we have much ado, for the most part, to discern that we have any of this at all, and to find so much of it in ourselves as is necessary to our support and thankfulness.

10. Lastly, Consider what abundance of means the Lord hath adjoined as antidotes with his servants' honours to keep them from being puffed up with pride; and then tell me whether you dare charge God with error or want of wisdom in this thing.

1. The nature and life of holiness consisteth in the soul's retiring home to God, and adhering to him, and walking as before him. And there is not a more powerful means in the world, to keep humble the soul, than the knowledge of God. Oh, when a poor sinner hath but any lively apprehensions of the greatness and glory of the Lord, it amazeth him, and levelleth him with the dust, and abaseth him in his own esteem, and maketh him say with Job, "Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," Job xl. 4-6. One glimpse of God were

enough to humble any soul that truly knoweth him. A godly man hath still to do with that Majesty that continually aweth him. His heart is with him; his thoughts are on him; his work is with him. It is his word that he readeth, and heareth, and discours-eth of, and therefore as his word, with reverence and godly fear, as knowing that our God is a consuming fire," Heb. xii. 28, 29. It is God that he prayeth to, that he meditateth on, and he praiseth, and hath still to do with. And therefore no wonder if he walk humbly with so holy and great a God.

2. The sin and misery that once they were in, while they knew not God, will do much to keep humble a gracious soul as long as they live. Though God so forget our sins as to forgive them, yet we can scarce forgive ourselves, or at least can never forget them. Though he see no sin in his servants as he seeth it in the world, nor so as to hate and condemn them for it; yet they see that once they were as bad as the world, and were children of wrath as well as others. They condemn themselves when God doth justify them; and set their sins before their faces, which God doth cast behind his back. Oh, those dark, those ungrateful, and those perilous days, will never be forgotten by the renewed soul! The thoughts of them shall ever keep us humble; when we look on the wicked, miserable world, to think that such were many of us, though mercy have washed, and sanctified, and justified us.

3. Moreover, God hath so contrived the way of their salvation, that they shall have all by a Redeemer, and by freest grace, and none shall be justified by the works of the law, nor by any merit of his own; but boasting is excluded by the law of faith, Rom. iii. 19, 27, 28. And we shall have nothing but what we receive besides and contrary to our desert.

4. And alas too much corruption still remaineth in us. We have "flesh that fighteth against the Spirit," Rom. vii. 24; Gal. v. 17. "We know but in part," and love God but in part, and serve him with such constant weakness, that these things are usually such humbling matters to a gracious soul, that were it not for the Comforter, they would be unable to look up. Oh to feel how dark we are! how far from God! how strange to heaven! how little we believe, and know, and love! these are humbling thoughts indeed to a soul that is acquainted with itself. No poverty, beggary, or the reproach in the world, would be so humbling to them. To find such remnants of that odious sin, that cost them dear, and had cost them dearer if it had not cost their Lord so dear, this is constant matter of humiliation.

5. And too often do their corruptions get advantage of them, and produce some actual sin, of thought, word, or deed: and this also must be grievous to them.

6. The very bodily infirmities of believers are a constant help to keep them humble. They have all this "treasure but in earthen vessels," 2 Cor. iv. 7. Their souls are here so poorly lodged in corruptible tabernacles of earth, and so meanly clothed with frail, diseased, mortal flesh, that it is madness to be proud.

7. And the many and great afflictions of the godly, are medicines that are purposely given them by their Physician to cure pride, and keep them humble. Why else must their sufferings be so many, and why must they daily bear the cross, but that they may be conformed to the image of Christ?

8. And to the same end it is that God doth let loose upon them so many enemies. All Satan's temptations and the world's allurements and vexations, and all their disappointments here, and all

the scorns and mocks of the ungodly, and the censures and slanders of wicked tongues, and often bitter persecutions, what are they but the bitter medicines of God, (permitted and ordered by him, though caused by the devil and wicked men,) to save the servants of the Lord from the sin and danger of being lifted up? Do you say, that their honour will make them proud? Why, you that thus oppose them and despise them, are curing them of their pride, and do not know it; as scullions scour the rust off the vessels for their master's use; and as leeches draw out the blood that causeth the disease; and as the Jews by their sin promoted the redemption of the world by the death of Christ. When God seeth his servants in danger of being lifted up above measure, he oft sendeth a messenger of Satan (who may be an executioner of God's chastisements) to buffet them, 2 Cor. xii. 7, sometimes by slanders, sometimes by reproaches, sometimes by imprisonments or greater sufferings, and sometimes by horrid, troublesome temptations.

9. The very foresight of death itself is a humbling means: and the last enemy death is yet unconquered, and our bodies must corrupt in dust and darkness, and be kept in the grave as common earth, till the resurrection, that the soul may not grow proud that hath such a body.

10. And the day of judgment is so described to us in the Scripture, as tends to keep the soul in awe and in humility. To think of such a day, and such a reckoning, before such a God, methinks should humble us.

11. And our absolution and glorification at that day, is promised us now but conditionally (though God will see that the condition be performed by all that he will save). And therefore the poor soul is oft so far to seek about the certain sincerity of his own faith and repentance, that most of the godly are kept in fears and doubtings to the death. Yea, and humility and self-denial are part of this condition; and all their honour and glory with Christ is promised to the humble only. Humility is commanded them in the precept; humility is it that they are exhorted to by the ministers; and pride is threatened with everlasting wrath, and described as the devil's image. So that holiness hath all the advantages against pride that can be here expected.

12. To conclude; the godly know that as they have nothing but from God, so they have nothing but for God: so that their own honour is for him, more than for themselves; and it is essential to their holiness, to make God their end, and set him highest, and refer all to his pleasure and glory. So that you see now that we may honour them that fear the Lord, (Psal. xv. 4,) without being guilty of making them proud; and that we must not deny them the honour that God hath given them as their due, for fear of their being proud of it. Though this, as all things else, must be prudently managed to particular persons, according to their various states.

And therefore let me here warn all you that profess the fear of God: take heed lest you be proud of any thing that God hath honoured you with; for if you be, you see what an army of reasons and means you sin against; and consequently how great your sin will be. And your consciences and the world shall be forced to justify God, and his holy ways, and to prove against you that it was not long of them that you were proud, and that none in the world was more against it than God and holiness; and that it was not because you were so religious, but because you were no more religious. And if pride of knowledge, gifts, or whatsoever, be unmortified in you, it will certainly prove that you are

none of the sanctified; when your profession of sanctity will never prove that sanctity was a cause or confederate in your sin.

And now I have showed you the honour of godliness, let us briefly (and but briefly) consider of your honour that reject it, and see then whether the godly or ungodly are more honourable.

1. Ungodly men have the basest master in the world. Would you know who? Let Christ be judge; "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do," John viii. 44. They are "taken captive by the devil at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26, that is, to do his will. It is he that stirreth you up to filthy talking, to speak against godliness, to curse and swear, and you do his will. His will is that you should neglect a holy life, and you do his will. His will is that you live not after the Spirit, but after the flesh, and you do his will. O poor souls! do you think it is only witches that expressly covenant with him, that are his miserable servants? Alas! it is you also, if you do his will. For (if you will believe either God or common reason) "to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness," Rom. vi. 16. The godly themselves were the servants of sin, till they "obeyed from the heart the doctrine of the Lord," ver. 17. And are you not come to fair preferment, to be the devil's drudges? Though he should clothe your bodies with purple and fine linen, and feed you sumptuously every day, yet indeed you are no better, as the case of that miserable man may tell you, Luke xvi. It is the greatest baseness to have so base a master.

2. And it is but an ignoble, base design that the ungodly carry on in the world. What is it but to provide for and please their flesh? It aimeth at nothing beyond this life. And a beast can eat, and drink, and sleep, and play, and satisfy his lust, as much as they. A swine can carry a mouthful of straw to his lodging, and a bird can build a nest for her young ones. And what do ungodly men more in the world, whether gentlemen or beggars, the flattered gallants or the poor day-labourers, if they be not such as first seek heaven, and live to God, what do they but make a pudder in the world, about a little dirt or smoke? and find themselves somewhat to do that is next to nothing, instead of that for which they were created? and busy themselves about nothing till their time is gone, and the night is come when none can work? If you would judge of a man's designs, foresee his attainments. If you can tell what end it is that they come to, you may know how to judge of their intentions and their course. Their corpses, you know, have no greater a happiness, (after a few foolish merry hours,) than to lie in the earth as filth or dust. You can see no honour attained there. It is a child indeed that thinks a gilded monument over a rotten carcass is any great matter of honour or benefit to it. And if you look after the soul, (by the prospective of the word of God,) alas, it goeth to far greater dishonour. And is this it that worldlings make such a stir for?

3. The work also that they are employed in, is like the design. Sin, which is the basest thing in the world, is their employment. The work of a scullion, or the basest honest trade you can imagine, is a thousand times less dishonourable than sin. Yet flattered gallants believe not this, when they can please their flesh without losing the reputation of worthy gentlemen! Nor will our common ungodly people be persuaded of it, that are more ashamed to

be found praying than sinning, and to be called puritan than a good fellow or a swearer; and that think they are as good men as others, when up to the ears in the drudgery of the devil: as if the filth of sin were no dishonour to them, which nothing but the Spirit and blood of Christ is able to wash out. These are the men that Paul mentioneth with weeping, that mind earthly things, "whose god is their belly, and who glory in their shame," Phil. iii. 18.

4. Moreover, it is a base disposition that ungodly men are possessed with. Though their natures are essentially noble, as being the work of God, and capable of most glorious things; yet have they made them dispositively vile; they are fleshly-minded, earthly-minded, ignorant of heavenly things, not savouring the things of the Spirit, but like the serpent, crawling on earth, and feeding on the dust. Grass is sweeter to a horse than junkets; and a little money or vain-glory is sweeter to a fleshly mind than God and glory, and all the treasures of saints and angels. A swine never thinks of God or heaven, but of his draft and sty. Ease, and good cheer, and money, and the flattery of men, are the god and the heaven of sensual men. And are not these men of base, dishonourable spirits? Unworthy men! might you have an everlasting life, and will you prefer a few days' fleshly pleasure? As sure as you may know the baseness of a swine or dog by what they feed upon, so surely may you know the baseness of a carnal mind, by the baseness of its desires and delights.

5. It is also a base society that ungodly men are members of. They are in the "kingdom of darkness," Col. i. 13; Acts xxvi. 18. And are "dead in sin, in which they walk according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom they have their conversation," Eph. ii. 1-3. Devils are their invisible companions, and wicked men their visible; but they have none of the presence and favour of the Lord, nor any communion with him in the Spirit.

6. The greatest dishonour of the ungodly is, that the God of heaven refuseth to honour them; yea, he despiseth them, yea, he dishonoureth them with most contemptuous titles. And certainly God knoweth what he saith of them; and it is impossible that he should do them wrong. Yet doth he call them the seed of the serpent, that stand at enmity with his flock, Gen. iii. 15. He calls them his enemies, and accordingly will use them, Luke xix. 27. He calls them dogs and swine, and the children of the devil, John viii. 44; Matt. vii. 6. They dishonour and despise him, and he will dishonour and despise them, and hath resolved that their very names shall rot, Prov. x. 7.

7. But it is the everlasting shame that will tell us what was the honour of the ungodly. When Christ shall be ashamed of them before his Father and the heavenly angels, Matt. viii. 38, and shall tell them that he never knew them, Matt. vii. 23. When all their former pomp and splendour will be turned into perpetual shame and sorrows, then where is the honour of the ungodly world? where then are their flatterers? Who boweth to them, and calleth them right honourable and right worshipful any more? Where now are their sumptuous houses and attendance? Now they have other kind of servitors, and other language, and other usage than they had on earth. And the poor wretches that stormed at a faithful minister for foretelling these woeful changes to them, and speaking so dishonourably of them, as to tell them of their sin, are at last saying a hundred-fold worse of themselves, than ever we did say

against them. Then they shall need none to call them fools, and vile, and wretches, but their own consciences, that will speak it out, and speak it again ten thousand times, and never be bribed to forbear. Oh how base a despicable generation will the ungodly then be, (that now speak so stoutly and look so high,) when God shall everlastingly frown them into contempt and misery, and the glorified saints shall look down upon them without compassion, even praising the justice that for ever doth torment them! Then let the kings and nobles of the earth maintain their ancient honours if they can. Or let them take comfort in the remembrance of their former dreams, and try whether this will be to them instead of a drop of water.

Well, sirs, I have faithfully told you from the word of God, of the honour of the godly, and the baseness of the ungodly, that you may be resolved which is the better part. If yet you will not see, you shall see and be ashamed, Isa. xxvi. 11. When you have heard your last and dreadful doom, and seen the Lord make up his jewels; "then shall you discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not," Mal. iii. 17, 18.

CHAPTER X.

HOLINESS IS THE MOST PLEASANT WAY.

I HAVE proved beyond all reasonable contradiction, that holiness is the safe, the honest, the profitable, and the honourable state and course. But my hardest task is yet to be done; and that is, to prove it the most pleasant way. And the difficulty of this is not at all from the matter, but from the persons with whom I have to do. For nothing is pleasant unto men but what is suitable to their natures, and apprehended by them to be for their good, or in itself more excellent than their good. That is pleasant to one man that is loathsome to another. As the food and converse is delightful to a beast, that is loathsome and as bad as death to man, so one man's pleasure is another's pain. Even about the common matters of this life, variety of complexions, educations, customs, and dispositions, doth cause a variety of affections; the difference between the sanctified and unsanctified, the spiritual and the carnal mind doth cause a greater contrariety. If therefore the error of wicked minds, or the distemper of your souls, do make the best things seem the worst, and the sweetest things to seem most bitter, this is no confutation of my argument, that proves the way of godliness most pleasant. If I would prove that wine is pleasanter than vinegar, or bread than dirt or ashes, I mean not to appeal to the appetites of the sick; it is the sound and healthful that must be judges. If a man will suffer his mind to be possessed with prejudice and base thoughts of God himself, no wonder if he cannot love him, nor take any delight in him.

And if men have a malignant enmity to godliness, no reason will persuade them that it is most pleasant, but what persuades them from that enmity. No reason will persuade a slothful person that labour is better than sleep and idleness; no reason will persuade a drunkard, glutton, or voluptuous wretch, that abstinence and continence are the sweetest life. Could we change their hearts, we should change their pleasures. Such as men are, such are their delights. But the thing that I undertake, is, to manifest to any competent discernor, that holiness is

the most pleasant course; and that all the pleasures of the earth are nothing to the pleasures which the godly find in God, and in a holy life. And if any be not of this mind, it is because his soul's diseases have made him an incompetent judge. And that godliness is the most pleasant state of life, will appear to you, I. From the nature of the thing itself. II. From the encouragements and helps with which it is attended. III. From the effects and fruits.

I. The nature of holiness is to be found, 1. In the understanding. 2. In the wills and affections. And, 3. In the practice of men's lives. And in all these I shall show you that it is the most delightful course.

1. Knowledge in itself is a pleasant thing to human nature. Ignorance is the blindness of the soul. It is not so pleasant for the eye to behold the sun, as for the mind of man to discern the truth. To know good and evil had never been the matter of so strong a temptation to Adam, if knowledge had not been very desirable to innocent nature. How hard do many even ungodly persons study to know the mysteries of nature. And nothing hath more strongly tempted some wretches to witchcraft or contracts with the devil, than a desire of knowing unrevealed things, which by his means they have hoped to attain. A studious man hath far more natural, valuable delight in his reading and successful studies, than a voluptuous epicure hath in his sensual delights.

But it is a special kind of knowledge that holiness doth (initially) consist in, which transcendeth in true pleasure all the common wisdom of the world. For,

1. How pleasant a thing must it needs be to know things of so high a nature! To know the Almighty, living God; to behold his wisdom, goodness, and power, in his glorious works; to be led to him by all the creatures, and hear of him by every providence, and find his holy, blessed name in every leaf of his sacred word; how sweet and pleasant a thing is this! To know his divine nature, persons, attributes, and will; to know the mystery of the incarnation, of the person, natures, undertaking, performance of the blessed Mediator, Jesus Christ; to know his birth, his life, temptations, conquests, his righteousness, his holy doctrine and example, the law and promise, the law of natures and the covenant of grace; the sufferings, resurrection, ascension, glorification, and intercession of our Lord; to know his kingdom, laws, and government, and his judgment, with his rewards and punishments; to know the sanctifying works of the Holy Ghost, by which we are prepared for everlasting life; and to know that life (though but by faith) for which we are here prepared; how high and pleasant a thing is this! If it be pleasant to know the course of nature, in those higher parts that are above the vulgar reach, what is it to know the God of nature, and the true use and end of nature? What high things doth the poorest christian know! He knoweth the things that are invisible.

Think not that faith is so void of evidence as not to deserve the name of knowledge. We know the things which we do believe. Nicodemus could say from the evidence of miracles, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man could do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him," John iii. 2. "We know that God spake to Moses," (chap. ix. 29,) say the Jews. We know that the Scripture testimony is true, chap. xxi. 24. "We know (even by believing) that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1. "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you

in me, and I in you," John xiv. 20. We know that no whoremonger or such like shall inherit eternal life," Eph. v. 5. We know that our "labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58. Many such passages of Scripture tell us, that faith is a certain knowledge, and that invisible things revealed by God are certainly known. We know what saints and angels are now doing in the highest heavens; for God hath told us. We know the most high and glorious things revealed by God, which we never saw. And is not the pleasure of such knowledge greater than the pleasure of all the wealth, the honour, and sensual enjoyments in this world! I durst almost refer the case to one of you that are most befooled by your own sensuality. If you could go to-morrow and meet with a soul from heaven, or with an angel, that could tell you what becomes of souls, and what is done in another world, would you not rather go to such a conference, than go as far to a drinking, or a bowling, or some such recreation? I think you would, if it were but to satisfy your curiosity and desire of knowing. Why then should not the servants of Christ more delight in the reading and hearing the words of Christ, that came from the bosom of the Father, that hath seen God, and is with God, and is God himself, that telleth them more certainly of the invisible things than any saints or angels can tell them? Why should not this, I say, be sweeter to them than all the fleshly pleasures in the world? Oh that I could know more of God, and more of the mystery of redemption, even of an obedient, crucified, glorified Christ; and more of the invisible world, and of the blessed state of souls, on condition I left all the pleasures of this world to sensual men! Oh that I had more clear and firm apprehensions of these transcendent, glorious things! How easily could I spare the pleasures of the flesh, and leave those husks to swine to feed on! Oh could my soul get nearer God, and be more irradiated with his heavenly beams, my mind would need no other recreation, and I should as little relish carnal pleasures, as carnal minds do relish the heavenly delights. As earthly things are poor and low, so is the knowledge of them. As things spiritual and heavenly are high and glorious, mysterious and profound, the knowledge of them is accordingly delightful. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached to the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory," 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. It is far pleasanter by faith to see the Lord, than to see any creature by the eye of flesh; and sweeter by faith to see heaven opened, and there behold our glorified Lord, than to see a horse-race, or stage-play, or any of the fooleries of the world.

2. The knowledge of things to come is specially desired, and godliness containeth that faith which knoweth things to come. How glad would men be to be told what shall befall them to the last hour of their lives! The woman of Samaria, John iv. called out her neighbours with admiration to see Christ, as one that had told her all that she had done. But if he had told her all that ever she would do, for the time to come, and all that ever should befall her, it might have astonished her much more. Believers know what hath been, even before the world was made, and how it was made, and what hath been since then, and they know what will be to all eternity. A true believer knows from Scripture, whither men's souls go after death, and how their bodies shall be raised again, and how Christ will come to judge the world, and who shall then be justified,

and who shall be condemned; and what shall be the case of the godly and the ungodly to all eternity. And is it not more pleasant to know these things, than to possess all the vain delights of the earth? Can the flesh afford you any thing so delightful?

3. Especially, it is desirable and pleasant to know those things that most concern us. Needless speculations and curiosities we can spare. There is a knowledge that brings more pain than pleasure; yea, there is a knowledge that will torment. But to know our own affairs, our greatest and most necessary affairs; to know our threatened misery to prevent it, and to know our offered happiness to obtain it; to know our portion, our honour, our God, what can be more pleasant to the mind of man? Other men's matters we can pass by. But to know such things concerning our own souls, as what we must be and do for ever, and what course we must take to be everlastingly happy, must needs be a feast to the mind of a wise man. Ask but a soul that is haunted with temptations to unbelief, whether any thing would be more welcome to him, than the clear and satisfying apprehensions of a lively faith? Ask any one that lieth in tears or groans, through the feeling of their sin, and the fears of the wrath of God, and doubtings of his love, whether the satisfying knowledge of pardon, and reconciliation, and divine acceptance, would not be more pleasant to them, than any of your merriments can be to you? Ask that poor soul that hath lost the apprehension of his evidences of grace, and walks in darkness, and hath no light, that seeks, and cries, and perceives no hearing, whether the discovery of his evidences, the assurance that his prayers are accepted, and the light of God's countenance shining on him, would not be better to him than any recreation, or any pleasure the earth affords? Ask any man at the hour of death, that is not a block, whether now the knowledge of his salvation would not be better and more pleasant to him, than all the lust, or sport, or honours of the world?

4. The knowledge of the best and joyfulest matters must be the best and pleasantest knowledge. And nothing can be better than God and glory. Nothing can be sweeter than salvation; and therefore this must be the sweetest knowledge. I had rather have the pleasure of one hour's clear and lively knowledge of my salvation, and of the special love of God, than to be exalted above the greatest prince, and to have all the pleasures that my senses can desire. The delights of the flesh are base and brutish, and nothing to the spiritual, heavenly delights of the renewed mind.

5. The manner of our holy knowledge maketh it more delightful. 1. It is a certain and infallible knowledge. It is not a may be, or bare possibility. It is not, it is possible there may be a heaven and happiness hereafter. But it is as true as the word of God is true. We have his own hand, and seal, and earnest for it; even his precious promises, and oath, confirmed by miracles, and fulfilled prophecy, and bearing his own image and superscription, and shining to us by its own light. We have in our hearts the spirit which is God's earnest, by which we are sealed up to the day of our final full redemption. And if the soul yet stagger at the promise of God through the remnants of unbelief, that shall not make the promise of God of none effect; but his foundation shall still stand sure. His word shall not pass till all be fulfilled, though heaven and earth shall pass away. A message by one that were sent to us from the dead, were not more credible than the word of God. And this certainty of holy faith and knowledge is a very great contentment to the soul.

When the glory of the saints is a thing as sure as if we saw it with our eyes, and as sure as these things which we daily see, it is a great pleasure to the soul, when it can but apprehend this joyful certainty.

2. And that there is a certain easiness and plainness in the great and necessary points of faith, as to the manner of revelation, doth add much to faith's satisfaction and delight. The points that life and death lie on, are not left so obscure as might perplex us, lest we did not know the meaning of them. But they are so plain, that he that runs may read them; and the simple, that are but honest-hearted, may certainly understand them; which quiets, and pleaseth, and satisfies the mind.

3. And yet there is an exciting difficulty in many things that are offered to our knowledge, which doth but make our holy studies the more delightful. If the word of God were so plain and obvious to all, that it might be all understood at the first reading, the plainness would bring our sacred knowledge into contempt, as being an easy, common thing. Things common and easily got are little set by. But when the plainness is such as may prevent our despair and dissatisfaction, and yet the difficulty such, that it may hold us in study, and prevent our contempt, it makes the most delightful knowledge. It is pleasant to find some daily addition to our light, and to be on the gaining and thriving hand, and this upon our diligent search. Successes are as pleasant as a present fulness of supplies. The daily blessing of God upon our studies, and humble learning, addeth to our delight. So that all this set together, may show you how pleasant a thing it is to have the knowledge of a saint.

Especially if you add that he hath an experimental, and so a sweeter knowledge than the most learned men have that are ungodly. He hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, and he hath tasted the sweetness of his love, and of all the riches of his grace in Christ, and of his full and precious promises, and of the inward powerful workings of his Spirit. His experimental knowledge is the most delightful knowledge.

The pleasure of natural knowledge is great, but the pleasure of saving knowledge is much greater. I do not believe that ever any of the ambitious troublers of the world, that let go heaven that they may rule on earth, have half the pleasure in their greatness and usurped dignities, as an honest student hath in his books, and studious exercises and successes. But if you compare the pleasures of their greatness and commands with the pleasure of a true believing soul, in his life of faith, and sweet forethoughts of his heavenly inheritance, I must plainly tell you that we disdain the comparison. Again I say, that if you will compare the drunkard's, the fornicator's, or the ambitious or covetous man's delight, with the solace that I find in my retired studies, even about natural, common things, I disdain the comparison. But if you compare their pleasure with that little, alas too little pleasure that I find in the believing thoughts of life eternal, I do not only disdain your comparison, but detest it.

Were I minded to be long, I would show you from these twelve particular instances, the abundant pleasure of holy knowledge.

1. What a pleasant thing is it to know the Lord, the eternal God, in his blessed attributes! The dimmest glimmering knowledge of God is better than the clearest knowledge of all the mysteries of nature.

2. How pleasant is it to know the works of his creation! how, and why, and when he made the world, and all that is therein!

3. How pleasant is it to know the blessed Son of

God, and to behold the face of his Father's love that is revealed in him as his fullest image!

4. How pleasant is it to know the law and gospel, the matter and the method, the literal and spiritual sense; to see there the mind and will of God, and to see our charter for the heavenly inheritance; and read the precepts, and the promises, and the examples of the faith and patience of the saints!

5. How pleasant is it to know the heavenly operations of the Holy Ghost, and the nature and action of his several graces, and the uses of every one of them to our souls; and especially to find them in ourselves, and to be skilled in using them!

6. How pleasant is it to know the nature and frame of the church of Christ which is his body, and to know the difference and use of the several members! To understand the office of the ministry, and why Christ hath set them in the church, and how much love he hath manifested therein; that they should preach to us, and offer us reconciliation in his name and stead, (2 Cor. v. 19.) and marry us unto Christ in baptism, receiving us in his name into the church and holy covenant; and that in his name and stead they should deliver us his body and blood, and absolve the penitent sinner from his sins, and deliver him a sealed pardon, and receive the returning, humbled soul into the church of Christ, and communion of his saints.

7. How pleasant is it to know the nature and use of all Christ's ordinances. The excellences of his holy word; the use of baptism, and the refreshing, strengthening use of the supper of the Lord; the use and benefit of holy prayer, and praises, and thanksgiving, and church order, and all parts of the communion of the saints!

8. Yea, there is a holy pleasure in knowing our very sin and folly. When God bringeth a sinner to himself, though his sin be odious to him, yet to know the sin is pleasant; and therefore he prayeth that God would show him the bottom of his heart, and the most secret or odious of his sins.

9. And it is pleasant to a christian to know his duty. It very much quieteth and delighteth his mind, when he can but know what is the will of God. When the way of duty is plain before him, how cheerfully can he go on, whatever meets him! and how easily doth it make his labour and his suffering!

10. Yea, it is pleasant to a believer to understand his very danger. Though the danger itself be dreadful to him, yet to know it, that he may avoid it, is his desire, and his delight.

11. And how pleasant is it to understand all the helps, encouragements, and comforts, that God hath provided for us, in our way! and how many more are for us than against us!

12. But above all, how pleasant is it to know by faith, the life that we must live with God for ever, and what he will do for us to all eternity, in the performance of his holy covenant!

I do but briefly name these instances of delightful knowledge, which are sweeter to the holy soul than all the pleasures of sin to the ungodly. Do you think that any of you hath such solid pleasure in your sins, as David had in the law of God, when he meditated in it with such delight, and saith, "How sweet is it to my mouth! even sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb." Surely you dare not compare with him in pleasures.

2. Another part of holiness that is pleasant in the nature of it, is that which is subjected in the heart and affections. And here is the chiefest of its sweetness and delights.

1. The very compliance of the will with the will

of God and its conformity to his law, doth carry a quieting pleasure in it. That soul is happiest that is nearest God, and likeliest to him; and that soul may well be fullest of delights that is most happy. And that soul is nearest and likeliest unto God, whose will is most conformed to his will. The trouble of the heart is its unsettledness, when it is not bottomed on the will of God. When we feel that God's will doth rule and satisfy us, and that we would fain be what he would have us be, and rest in his disposing will, as well as obey his commanding will, this gives abundant pleasure and quietness to the soul.

2. The holy workings of charity in the soul, are exceeding pleasant. All the acts of love to God and man are very sweet. This is the holy work that is its own wages.

1. The love of God is so sweet an exercise, that verily, my soul had rather be employed in it with sense and vigour, than to be lord of all the earth. Oh could I but be taken up with the love of God, how easily could I spare the pleasure of the flesh! Might I but see the loveliness of my dear Creator with a clearer view, and see his glory in his noble works; might I but see and feel that saving love which he hath manifested in the Redeemer, till my soul were ravished and filled with his love, how little should I care who had the pleasures of this deceitful world! Had I more of that blessed Spirit of adoption, and more of those filial affections to my heavenly Father, which his unutterable love bespeaks; and were I more sensible of his abundant mercy, and did my soul but breathe and long after him more earnestly, I would pity the miserable tyrants of the world, that are worse than beggars while they domineer, and taste not of that kingdom of love and pleasure that dwelleth in my breast. All the pleasures of the world are the laughing of a madman, or the sports of a child, or the dreams of a sick man, in comparison of the pleasures of the love of God.

2. And the love of holiness, the image of God, hath its degree of pleasure. And so hath the love of the holy servants of the Lord. There is a sweetness in the soul in its goings-out after any holy object, in spiritual love. Yea, more, our very common love of men, and our love of enemies, hath its proportion of pleasure, far better than the sensual pleasure of the ungodly. To feel so much of the operations of grace, and to answer our holy pattern, in loving them that hate us, doth give much ease and pleasure to the mind. The exercises of love to God and man, and that for his sake, are the exceeding pleasure of a gracious soul.

And here by the way, you may take notice of one reason why hypocrites and ungodly men find no such sweetness in the exercises of religion; because they let alone the inward pleasant work of love, which is the soul and life of outward duty. This inward work is the pleasant work; while they are strangers unto this, their outward duties will be but a toil, and seem a drudgery or a wearisome employment.

3. There is a pleasure even in holy desires; when a christian feelth his heart enlarged, in longing after the welfare of the church and the good of others. Though the absence of the thing desired be a trouble, yet the exercise of holy desire (which is an act of love) is pleasant to us. If the lustful have a pleasure in their vile desires, and the ambitious and the covetous have a pleasure in their vain and delusory desires, the wise, well-guided desires of a true believer must needs be pleasant.

4. Especially when desire is accompanied with hope. All the pleasures of this world are far short of affording that rest and quiet to the soul, as the

hope of glory doth to the believer. O happy soul, that is acquainted by experience with the lively hopes of the everlasting happiness! It is not the hope of corruptible riches, nor of a fading inheritance, but of the crown that fadeth not, and of the precious, certain, durable treasure! It is not a hope in the promise of a deceitful man, but in the word of the everlasting God! The soul that hath this anchor, needs not be tossed with those fears, and cares, and anxieties of mind, that worldly men are subject to. This hope will never make them ashamed. If a man were in a consumption, or sentenced to death, would not the hopes of life, upon certain grounds, be pleasanter to him, than sport, or mirth, or lustful objects, or any such present sensitive delights? Much more if, with the hopes of life, he had the hopes of all the felicities of life, and of the perpetuity of all these. Oh may I but be enabled by faith to lift up the eye of my soul to God, and view the everlasting mansions, and by hope to take possession of them, and say, All this is mine in title, even upon the promise of the faithful God! What greater pleasure can my soul possess, till it enter on the full possession of those eternal pleasures! O poor deluded, worldly men! what is the pleasure of your wealth to this? O brutish sinners! what is the pleasure of your mirth and jollity, your meat and drink, your pride and bravery, your lust and filthiness, in comparison of this? O poor ambitious, dreaming men, that make such a stir for the honour and greatness of this world! what is the pleasure of your idol-honour, and short vain-glory, in comparison of this? While you have it, you have no hope of keeping it; you are troubled with the thought of leaving it. Had we no higher hopes than yours, how miserable should we be!

5. The trust and repose of the soul on God, which is another part of the life of grace, is exceeding pleasant and quieting to the soul. To find that we stand upon a rock, and that under us are the everlasting arms, and that we have so full security for our salvation as the promise and oath of the immutable God, what a stay, what a pleasure is this to the believer! The troubles of the godly are most from the remnants of their unbelief. The more they believe, the more they are comforted and established. The life of faith is a pleasant life. Faith could not conquer so many enemies, and carry us through so much suffering and distress, as you find in that cloud of testimonies, Heb. xi. if it were not a very comfortable work. Even we that see not the salvation ready to be revealed, may yet greatly rejoice, for all the manifold temptations, that for a season make us subject to some heaviness, 1 Pet. i. 5, 6. And we "that see not Jesus Christ, yet believing can love him, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," ver. 8. The God of hope doth sometimes "fill his servants with all joy and peace in believing, and makes them even abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 13.

6. Yea, joy is itself a part of the holy qualification of the saints, and of the renewed state that grace hath brought them into. "For the kingdom of God, as it consisteth in righteousness, so in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17. Believers "receive not the spirit of bondage again to fear;" that is, they are not under the bondage of the law, nor have the spirit or state of mind which is suited to those legal impositions and terrible comminations: but they "have received the Spirit of adoption by which they cry, Abba, Father;" that is, as they are brought under a more gracious dispensation, and a better covenant and promises, and God is revealed to them in the gospel as a reconciled Father through

his Son, so doth he treat them more gently as reconciled children, and the Spirit which answereth this gracious covenant, and is given us thereupon, doth qualify us with a child-like disposition, and cause us with boldness, love, and confidence, to call God Father, and fly to him for succour and supply in all our dangers and necessities. And how pleasant it must be to a believing soul, to have this Spirit of adoption, this child-like love and confidence, and freedom with the Lord, methinks you might conjecture, though it is sensibly known by them only that enjoy it. Gal. v. 22, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c. When the word is first received by believers, though it may be in much affliction, through the persecutions and cross that attend the gospel, yet is it ordinarily "in the joy of the Holy Ghost," 1 Thess. i. 6. The Holy Ghost is the comforter of true believers; and if he have taken it upon him as his work, he will surely do it, in the degree and season fittest for them. And if joy itself be part of the state of grace and holiness, you may see that is the most delightful, pleasant course.

7. Yea, that we may have a pleasant and comfortable life, the Lord hath forbidden our distracting cares, and fears, and doubts, and our inordinate sorrows; and commanded us to cast our care on him, and promised to care for us, 1 Pet. v. 7; and he hath bid us "be careful for nothing, but in all things make our wants known to him," Phil. iv. 6. And can there be a course of life more pleasant than that which doth consist in faith, and love, and hope, and joy, that is built on God, and animated by him, and that excludeth inordinate cares and sorrows, as health doth sickness? where it is unlawful to be miserable and to grieve ourselves, and no sorrow is allowed us, but that which tendeth to our joy; where it is made our work to "rejoice in the Lord, yea always to rejoice?" ver. 4. A servant or tradesman will judge of the pleasure of his life by his work. If his work be drudgery, his life is tedious and filled with grief. If his work be pleasant, his life is pleasant. Judge then by this of a holy life. Is it care, and fear, and anguish of mind that God commandeth you? No; it is these that he forbideth. "Care not: fear not" are his injunctions, Isa. xxv. 4; xli. 10. Do you fear reproach? Why, you do it contrary to the will of God, who biddeth you "Fear not the reproach of men," Isa. li. 7. Do you fear the power and rage of enemies? Why, it is contrary to your religion so to do. God biddeth you "fear them not," chap. xliii. 5, 13, 14; xlv. 2, 8. Do you fear persecution or death from the hands of cruel violence? Why, it is contrary to the will of God that you do so. "Fear not them which kill the body," &c. Matt. x. 26, 28, 31. O blessed life! where all that is against us is forbidden, and all that is truly joyous, and delightful, and necessary to make us happy, is commanded us; and made our duty; which is contrary to misery, as life to death, and as light to darkness. Come hither, poor deluded sinners, that fly from care, and fear, and sorrow. If you will but give up yourselves to Christ, you shall be exempted from all these, except such as is necessary to your joy. You may do any thing, if you will be the servants of the Lord, except that which tendeth to your own and other men's calamity. Come hither, all you that call for pleasure, and love no life but a life of mirth. Let God be your master, and holiness your work, and pleasure then shall be your business, and holy mirth shall be your employment. While you serve the flesh, your pleasure is small, and your trouble great; vexation is your work, and unspeakable vexation is your wages. But if you will be the hearty servants of the Lord, rejoicing shall be your

work and wages. If you understand not this, peruse your lesson, Psal. xxxiii. 1, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright." "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness," Psal. xcvi. 11, 12. "Let all those that trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee," Phil. iii. 1; Psal. v. 11. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart," Psal. xxxii. 11. "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout for joy," Psal. cxxiii. 9. "I will also clothe her priests with salvation; and her saints shall shout aloud for joy," ver. 16. Such precepts and promises abound in Scripture, which tell you, if you will be saints indeed, that joy and gladness must be your life and work. I know objections will be stirring in your minds. But forbear them but a while, and I shall fully answer them anon.

2. I have told you wherein the inward part of holiness is delightful. I shall briefly show you that the outward part also is very pleasant, and fit to feed these inward joys. And, 1. Let us view the duties that are more directly to be performed unto God. And, 2. The works of charity and righteousness unto men.

1. How sweet is it to be exercised in the word of God! in hearing or reading it with serious meditation! for the man that hath been revived by it, renewed, sanctified, saved by it, to hear that powerful, heavenly truth; by which his soul was thus made new! for the soul that is in love with God, to hear or see his blessed name on every leaf! To read his will, and find the expressions of his love, his great, eternal, wondrous love; how sweet this is, experience tells the saints that feel it. If you that feel no sweetness in it, believe not them that say they feel it, at least believe the word of God, and the professions of his ancient saints. "Oh how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as in all riches. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors. I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved, and I will meditate in thy statutes. The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver. Unless thy law had been my delight, I had perished in my affliction. I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. I rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great spoil. Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them," Psal. cxix. 14, 16, 24, 47, 72, 92, 93, 97, 103, 111, 117, 162, 165.

I should but weary you to recite one quarter of the expressions of holy men in Scripture concerning the sweetness and pleasures which they found in the law of God. In a word, it is the work and mark of the blessed man, that "his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night," Psal. i. 1, 2. Do you think that an unpleasant, tedious life that doth consist in such employment?

2. Another holy duty is prayer, both secret and with others; in families, and public assemblies. And do you think it is a grievous, tedious work for

a needy soul to beg of God, that is so ready to relieve him? for a guilty soul to pray to God, that is so ready to forgive him? for a sinful soul to return to God, (and confess his sins, and beg for mercy,) that is so ready to meet him and entertain him? for a loving soul to converse with God, when there is a mutual complacency between them? Is it grievous for a child to speak to his father? or are you weary of the presence of your dearest friend? What is there in holy prayer that should grieve or weary us? Sure it is not his company that we speak to; for it is his presence that makes heaven. And sure it is not the employment; for it is but asking, and asking for the best and choicest thing, and asking in our necessities for that which we must have, or we are undone for ever. And is it unpleasant to pray to a bounteous God, in our necessity, and that for the best and pleasantest things? Perhaps there may be some of you that think it is but labour lost, and that you could better spend those hours, and that God regardeth not our prayers, and that indeed we speed never the better for them, and therefore you have no pleasure in them. And no wonder! If you are atheists and believe not that there is a God, you cannot love him, or rejoice in him. If you believe not his promises, how should they give you any comfort? If you believe not that he regardeth prayers, no wonder if you have no heart to pray. They that say, "It is vain to serve the Lord, and it is no profit to us to keep his ordinances," Mal. iii. 14, will also say, "What a weariness is it!" chap. i. 13; and will give him but a lame and lifeless service. If you did believe your friend to be your enemy, you would have small pleasure in him. Misconceits may easily make you loathe the things that are most delightful. The thoughts of heaven itself yield little pleasure to them that believe not that there is a heaven, or what it is. The light is not pleasant to the blind; nor any object of our taste or smell to those that have lost these senses. Is music unpleasant because it delighteth not the deaf? For shame do not charge the sweet and blessed ways of God with that which is the fruit of your own corruption. If your lungs be rotten, you may be out of breath with speaking the most delightful words, or walking in the most pleasant fields or gardens. But the cause of the weariness is within you. If you have the hearts of infidels, or graceless, stupid, worldly sinners, you are so unfit to approach the most holy God in holy prayer, that I marvel not if you go to it as a bear to the stake, or as an ox to the yoke, or as an offender to the stocks. For the God that you pray to, is a hater of all the workers of iniquity, and a consuming fire; and therefore no wonder if his terrors should meet you, and leave you but little delight in prayer. (Though it is wonder that they do not follow you, and meet you in all your ways, and leave you less delight in the omission of it.) But if you had the hearts of believing, holy men, and had tasted in prayer what they have tasted, and had their experience of the success, you would then be easily persuaded that prayer is neither a vain nor an unpleasant work. Surely it is not unpleasant to a burdened soul to disburden itself before the Lord; nor to a sinner that hath felt the weight, the smart, the sting of sin, to cry for mercy and healing to him that is able and willing to show mercy; nor is it unpleasant for him that knows the worth of grace and glory, to lie upon his knees in begging them of the Lord. All those that have felt how good it is to draw near to God, had rather have leave to pray in hope, than to please their senses with any delights that earth affordeth. There is force in prayer (through the grace that hath appointed and doth

accompany it) to procure comfort to the distressed mind, and safety to them that are in danger; relief to them that are in want, and strength to them that are in weakness. Prayer is good for all things that are good; and good against all things that are evil. It is good against temptations, dangers, enemies, and sin. It is good against sorrows, fears, and cares; yea, against poverty, shame, and sickness. For the God that prayer goes to, and makes use of, is sufficient against all, and our only help. Turn away now from God if you dare, and cast off earnest, constant prayer, as if it were a tedious, unpleasant thing; but be sure the time is coming when thou, even thou that thus despisest it, wilt betake thyself to prayer, and cry, Lord, Lord, when it is too late, or when anguish and terror seize upon thee. Sickness and death, and the terrors of the Lord, will teach thee to pray, as useless and tedious as now you think it. Yea, and teach you to do it earnestly, that now put off all with a few frozen, heartless words. But oh it is seasonable, believing prayer that is comfortable; it is the prayer of faith, and love, and hope that is pleasant: but the prayer of too late repentance in hell, and the prayer of despair and horror, that cannot procure a drop of water, afford no pleasure, as they procure no relief.

3. Another duty that holiness consisteth in, is thanksgiving and praise to the God of our salvation. He that knows not that this work is pleasant, is unacquainted with it. If there be any thing pleasant in this world, it is the praises of God, that flow from a believing, loving soul, that is full of the sense of the mercies, and goodness, and excellences of the Lord; especially the unanimous conjunction of such souls, in the high praises of God in the holy assemblies. Is it not pleasant even to name the Lord? to mention his attributes? to remember his great and wondrous works? to magnify him that rideth on the heavens, that dwelleth in the light that cannot be approached, that is clothed with majesty and glory, that infinitely surpasseth the sun in its brightness; that hath his throne in the heavens, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him; and yet he delighteth in the humble soul, and hath respect to the contrite; yea, dwells with them that tremble at his word? Is any thing so pleasant as the praises of the Lord? How sweet is it to see and praise him as the Creator, in the various wonderful creatures which he hath made! How pleasant to observe his works of providence, to them that read them by the light of the sanctuary, and in faith and patience learn the interpretation from him that only can interpret them! But oh how unspeakably pleasant is it to see the Father in the Son, and the Godhead in the manhood of our Lord, and the riches of grace in the glass of the holy gospel, and the manifold wisdom of God in the church, where the angels themselves disdain not to behold it! Eph. iii. 10, 11. The praising of God for the incarnation of his Son, was a work that a choir of angels were employed in as the instructors of the church, Luke ii. 13, 14. There is not a promise in the book of God, nor one passage of the life and miracles of Christ, and the rest of the history of the gospel, nor one of the holy works of the Spirit upon the soul, nor one of those thousand mercies to the church, or to ourselves or friends, that infinite goodness doth bestow, but contain such matter of praise to God, as might fill believing hearts with pleasure, and find them most delightful work: much more when all these are at once before us, what a feast is there for a gracious soul!

O you befooled fleshly minds, that find no pleasure in the things of God, but had rather be drinking, or gaming, or scraping in the world, awaken

your souls, and see what you are doing! With what eyes do you see, with what hearts do you think of the works, and word, and ways of God, and of the holy employments that you are so much against? For my own part, I freely and truly here profess to you, that I would not exchange the pleasure that my soul enjoyeth in this one piece of the holy work of God, for all your mirth, and sport, and gain, and whatever the world and sin affords you: I would not change the delights which I enjoy, in one of these holy days and duties, in the mentioning of the eternal God, and celebrating his praise, and magnifying his name, and thinking and speaking of the riches of his love, and the glory of his kingdom, no not for all the pleasure of your lives. Oh that your souls were cured of those dangerous diseases, that make you loathe the sweetest things! You would then know what it is that you have set light by, and would marvel at yourselves, that you could taste no sweetness in the sweetest things! Can you think that your work or your play, your profits or your sports, are comparable for pleasure to the praises of the Lord? If grace had made you competent judges, I am sure you would say there is no comparison. Hear but the testimony of a holy soul, yea, of the Spirit of God by him. "Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely," Psal. cxlvii. 1. "Praise ye the Lord: sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth," &c. Psal. cxlix. 1, 2, 4—6. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods," Psal. xc. 1—3. "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people: for the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised.—Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary," Psal. xcvi. 1—4, 6. Did not this holy prophet find it a pleasant work to praise the Lord? Yea, all that love the name of God should be joyful in him, Psal. v. 11. Every one of his upright ones may say with the prophet, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robes of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations," Isa. lxi. 10, 11. It is a promise of joy that is made in Isa. lvi. 6—8, "To the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer." What a joyful thing is it to a gracious soul, when he may see the reconciled face of God, and feel his fatherly reviving love, and among his saints may speak his praise, and proclaim his great and blessed name, even in his temple, "where every man speak-

eth of his glory!" Psal. xxix. 9. If the proud are delighted in their own praise, how much more will the humble soul be delighted in the praise of God! When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and faith doth set us as before his throne, or at least doth somewhat withdraw the veil, and show us him that lives for ever; and when the force of love doth open our lips, that our mouths may show forth his praise, it is pleasant both to God and us. The Lord himself doth put on joy, as delighting in his people's praise; and when they join obedience with holy worship, they are pleasant in his eyes, Jer. ii. 24; Isa. xlii. 1; lxii. 4; Zeph. iii. 17. "He meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, and that remembers him in his ways," Isa. lxiv. 5. Would you taste of the sweetest life on earth? Learn then to delight yourselves in God. Do you want recreation? Be acquainted with his praise. Is there not a better cure for melancholy here among the servants of the Lord, than in an ale-house, or in the company of transgressors? Their carnal pleasures are unwholesome for you, like luscious fruits that will make you sick. But the delights of faith are safe and healthful. Fleshly pleasure is windy and deceitful, and weakeneth and befools the soul: but the joy of the Lord is our strength, Neh. viii. 10. A little may be too much of fleshly pleasures; and it is of very hard digestion, and leaves that behind that spoils the sport: but the further you go in the delights of faith, the better they are, and the sweeter you will find them. You may quickly catch a dangerous surfeit of your fleshly pleasures; but of spiritual delights, the more the better; for they are curing, reviving, and much confirm and exalt the soul. Our spiritual pleasures are so heavenly, and have so much of God and glory in them, that they must needs prepare the soul for heaven, and be excellent helps to our salvation.

O therefore, if you would live a pleasant life, draw near to God, and by faith behold him, and by love adhere to him, and take a view of his infinite goodness and all his perfections, and behold him in his wondrous works, and then break forth into his cheerful praises, and you shall taste such pleasures as the earth affordeth not. Launch forth into the boundless ocean of eternity, and let your hearts and tongues expatiate in the praise of the heavenly Majesty, and use this work, and ply it close, and be not too seldom, or customary, or careless in it, and you shall find the difference between the pleasures of faith and of the flesh, of a holy and of a sensual life. "Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises to his name, for it is pleasant," Psal. cxxxv. 2, 3. "Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day," Psal. lxxi. 8. "Sing unto the Lord: bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary," Psal. xcvi. 2, 6.

Oh that the Lord will but shine upon my soul with the light of his countenance, and open my heart to the entertainment of his love, and hold a gracious communion with my soul by his Holy Spirit, and keep open these doors to me, and continue this liberty of his house and ordinances which we enjoy this day, that I may join with a faithful, humble people, in holy communion, and in his praise and worship, and that with a heart that is suitable to these works! I shall then say with David, "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage," Psal. xvi. 6. I will ask for no greater pleasures, or honours, or advancement in this world! Let who will surfeit on the pleasures of the flesh; here doth

my soul delight to dwell! "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his holy temple. For in the time of trouble he will hide me in his pavilion; and in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me: he shall set me up upon a rock. And then shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy, I will sing, yea, I will sing praises to the Lord," Psal. xxvii. 4—6. Till I come to the promised everlasting pleasures, I shall ask of God no greater pleasures. These would be as much as my soul in the prison of flesh can bear. Till I come to the land of promise, may I but have these clusters of its grapes in my present wilderness, I shall not repine: "My heart here shall be glad, and my glory shall rejoice, and at death my flesh shall rest in hope." For as the Lord now showeth me the "path of life," so in his "presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore," Psal. xvi. 9, 11.

4. Another pleasant holy duty, is our holy communion with Christ and his church in the Lord's supper.

This is a holy feast that is purposely provided by the King of saints, for the entertainment of his family, for the refreshing of the weary, and the making glad the mournful soul. The night before his bitter death, he instituted this sacramental feast. He caused his disciples to sit down with him, and when they had partaken of the passover, the sacrament of promise, and had their taste of the old wine, he giveth them the new, even the sacrament of the better covenant, and of the fuller gospel-grace. He teacheth them that his death is life to them; and that which is his bitterest suffering, is their feast; and his sorrows are their joys; as our sinful pleasures were his sorrows. The slain Lamb of God our passover that was sacrificed for us, that taketh away the sins of the world, was the pleasant food which sacramentally he himself then delivered to them, and substantially the next day offered for them. The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. He is "the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that he giveth is his flesh, which he hath given for the life of the world. Except we eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, we have no life in us. Whoso eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood, hath eternal life, and he will raise him up at the last day. For his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. He that eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood, dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him. As the living Father hath sent the Son, and he liveth by the Father, so he that eateth him, shall live by him. This is that bread that came down from heaven: not as the fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever," John vi. 33, 50, 51, 53—58.

I know that to an unbelieving, carnal wretch, the sacrament is but a common thing. For Christ himself and his gospel is no better in his eyes. He discerneth not the Lord's body; he only quieteth and deludeth his conscience with the outward form. He hath not faith to feed on Christ. But to a lively faith what sweetness doth such a feast afford!

We have here communion with the blessed Trinity, in the three parts of this eucharistical sacrament! As the Father is both our Creator and the offended Majesty, and yet he hath sent his Son to be our Redeemer; so in the first part, which is the

CONSECRATION, we present to our Creator the creatures of bread and wine, acknowledging that from him we receive them and all, and we desire that upon our dedication, by his acceptance, they may be made sacramentally and representatively the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

In the second part of the eucharist, which is the COMMEMORATION of the sacrifice offered on the cross, we break the bread and pour forth the wine, to represent the breaking of Christ's body, and shedding of his blood for the sin of man; and we beseech the Father to be reconciled to us on his Son's account, and to accept us in his Beloved, and to accept all our sacrifices through him. So that as Christ now in heaven is representing his sacrifice to the Father, which he once offered on the cross for sin, so must the minister of Christ represent and plead to the Father the same sacrifice, by the way of commemoration, and such intercession as belongeth to his office.

The third part of the eucharist is the OFFER and PARTICIPATION; in which the minister representing Christ, doth by commission deliver his body and blood to the penitent, hungry, believing soul; and with Christ is delivered a sealed pardon of all sin, and a sealed gift of life eternal. All which are received by the true believer.

An unbeliever knoweth not what transactions there are between the Lord and a holy soul in this ordinance, where the appearances are so small. A bit of bread and a sup of wine are indeed small matters; but so is not this communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. What a comfort is it that the offended Majesty will accept a sacrifice at our hands, and enter a treaty of peace with the offenders! Yea, that he will provide the sacrifice himself, and the preciousness in the whole world; that he will signify this his acceptance of the sacrifice, and how he is pleased in his well-beloved Son; and that he accepteth his Son's intercession in the heavens, and his ministers' intercession and his church's prayers on earth through Christ! Seeing Christ must be glorified with his Father, and not continue visible among us, what could we desire more from him, than the threefold representative which he hath left behind him, to supply the room of his bodily presence? Even the representation of himself by the sacrament, by his ministers, and by the Holy Ghost, which is his substitute within for the efficacy of all. Oh what unspeakable mysteries and treasures of mercy are here presented to us in a sacrament! Here we have communion with a reconciled God, and are brought into his presence by the great Reconciler. Here we have communion with our blessed Redeemer, as crucified, and glorified, and offered to us, as our quickening, preserving, strengthening Head. Here we have communion with the Holy Ghost, applying to our souls the benefits of redemption, drawing us to the Son, and communicating light, and life, and strength from him unto us; increasing and actuating his graces in us. Here we have communion with the body of Christ, his sanctified people, the heirs of life. When the minister of Christ by his commission representeth a crucified Christ to our eyes, by the bread and wine appointed to this use, we see Christ crucified as it were before us, and our faith layeth hold on him; and we perceive the truth of the remedy, and build our souls upon this rock. When the same minister, by Christ's commission, doth offer us his body, and blood, and benefits, it is as firm and valid to us, as if the mouth of Christ himself had offered them. And when our souls receive him, by that faith which the Holy Ghost exciteh in us, the participation is as true as that of our

bodies receiving the bread and wine which represent him. O do but ask a drooping soul, that mourns under the fears of God's displeasure, how he would value a voice from heaven, to tell him that all his sins are pardoned, and that he is dear to God, and judge by his answer what is contained and offered in a sacrament! Ask him how he would take it, if Christ should speak those words himself to him, which he hath given his ministers commission in his name to speak? "Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you." It is the same Christ, the same pardon and salvation, that is offered us by the messengers of Christ, and which he personally offered himself to his disciples. When you must all appear at the bar of God, O what would you not give for a sealed pardon, which in a sacrament is given freely now, to the believing soul! Judge now by this whether it be a joyous ordinance; when the poorest christian this day receiveth that, which the greatest prince, that is ungodly, would then give all the world for if he had it! For want of that pardon, christian, which thou must now receive, many thousands will tremble at the bar of God, and be overwhelmed with his wrath for ever! Ask a soul that groaneth under the languishings of his grace, and the burden of any strong corruption, how he would value the mortifying and quickening grace of the Holy Ghost, that would break his bonds, and give him light, and life, and strength; and by his answer judge of the value of a sacrament. We have here the greatest mercies in the world, brought down to us in sensible representations, that they might be very near us, and the means might be suited to the frailty and infirmity of our present state.

If the sealed message of God's reconciliation with us, and a sealed pardon of all our sins, and a sealed grant of everlasting life, be not more pleasant and desirable to your thoughts, than all that earth and flesh can yield you, it is because you are alive to sin, and dead to God, and want that spiritual sense and appetite, by which you might be competent judges. If God, if Christ, if grace, if the foretastes of glory can afford no pleasure to the soul, then heaven itself would not be pleasant. But if these are sweet, the sacrament is sweet that doth convey them.

Well, poor stubborn, carnal sinners! you have been invited to this feast as well as others; we are sent to call you, and even compel you to come in, (though upon the terms and in the way of Christ,) but you have no great list; but somewhat else doth please you better. And will it prove better indeed to you at the end? Well, take your own choice! If an ale-house be better than the table of the Lord; if your merry companions do please you better than the communion of the saints; or if you cannot submit to the order and discipline of the family of Christ, that you may partake of his provision, you may follow your own corrupt desires, and see whither they will lead you! But here it is that I shall choose my pleasures, till I reach the everlasting pleasures. And though in this low communion of imperfect saints, we see but in a glass, and have but some small imperfect tastes of the glorious things which hope expecteth; yet this is more than all that earth and flesh can yield; and it is most perfect pleasure that by these is revealed, sealed, and represented. Sacraments can assure us of perfect joys, though they give us but little joy in hand.

Object. But if sacraments be so pleasant, why then (saith a disconsolate soul) have I found no more pleasure or comfort in them? *Ans.* Even in the soul that is made alive by grace, diseases may much corrupt the appetite, and make the sweetest thing seem bitter. Are not sacraments sweet to you? and

do you not delight in the communion of God, and of his saints? I will not say much to you, lest it seem digressive, but briefly ask you these few questions.

Quest. 1. Are the thoughts of God, of Christ, of heaven sweet to you? If they be, methinks the ordinances should be sweet! If they be not, it is no wonder that you set light by sacraments, if you can set light by Christ and heaven itself.

Quest. 2. Is not sin grown sweet to you? If it be, the ordinances will not be sweet; no, nor unless your sins grow bitter.

Quest. 3. Doth not the world grow sweet to you, and your condition or expectations, and your thriving state, more pleasant to you than heretofore? If so, no wonder if sacraments and all spiritual things do lose their sweetness.

Quest. 4. Have you been faithful in your preparation, by free confession, true humiliation, strong resolution, hungering and thirsting after Christ, and all this furthered by diligent self-examination? An unprepared soul must blame itself, if it find not the sweetness of the ordinance. The holy appetite and relish, that is necessary to your delight, must be stirred up much in your preparations.

Quest. 5. Are you careful and conscionable, humble and holy in your lives? If you neglect God in your ordinary conversations, and walk not with him on other days, you are unlike to meet him comfortably here. And if you are slight and careless in your ordinary duties, you will find here that God took notice of it.

Quest. 6. Do you faithfully endeavour to exercise faith, repentance, love, and all sacramental graces in the use of the ordinances? You come not to a mere receiving, but to a work. Have your souls been adorned with the wedding garment, and do you come hither for a meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you see him by faith, and take all that is here represented to you, as if you had seen the things themselves? Do you remember that your Lord is coming, and do you lift up your heads in the expectation of your redemption, and do this in remembrance of him till he come? An idle loitering in God's work is not the way to find the sweetness of it.

Clemens Alexandrinus Strom. lib. i. init. gives it as a reason why every one took his own part of the bread of the sacrament in those times, because man being a free agent must be the chooser or refuser of his own happiness; the papists on the contrary do but gape, and the priest doth pop the bread into their mouths (having first persuaded them that it is not bread). Do you not expect to receive the spiritual benefits, just as the papists do receive the bread, as if you had nothing to do but gape? as if your presence here were as much as is to be expected from you for your edification! How can you taste the sweetness that is offered, when you do not exercise your spiritual senses?

Quest. 7. Do you exercise faith, as well as feeling, in judging of the benefit of sacraments? Pardon, and justification, and title to salvation are benefits which in themselves you cannot feel. It is by believing the promise that you must know them. If God have promised a blessing on his ordinance, it is sure to the faithful soul as if we felt it, though perhaps we may seem long without it. Heaven itself, which is the principal end of ordinances, will not be attained in this life, and yet the ordinance is not in vain.

Quest. 8. Have you the true understanding of the use of sacraments, of the abundant love that is here set forth, and the freeness and fulness of the promise here sealed? If not, no wonder if you taste not the sweetness, when you know not how to break the

shell, that you may feed on the kernel of the ordinances.

Quest. 9. Have you not troubled your own souls, and muddled your comforts, by causeless doubts and ignorant scruples, about the gestures, or manner, or persons that you joined with, or some such circumstances as these? If so, no marvel if you lose the comfort.

Quest. 10. Or at least, have you not been negligent in the review, and after improving of the ordinances, and have you not thought that all was done when you had received? Any one of these miscarriages may make this pleasant duty bitter, or at least deprive you of the most of the delight. But if your hearts be suited to the work, and you deprive not yourselves of the offered consolation, you shall find that God deals bountifully with you, and will feast you even with angels' food.

5. The public worship being all thus sweet, how sweet are the Lord's days, these holy seasons that are wholly consecrated to this work! How light is the christian, that hath this day cast off his worldly cares, and business, and cogitations, and hath set himself apart for God, as if there were no world to mind! On the week-days he doth walk with God! but so that his necessary worldly business doth frequently divert and distract his mind. But what a sweet and happy day is this, when he may strip himself of these distractions, as he doth of his work-day coarser clothes, and may wholly apply himself to God? As the bee goes from flower to flower, labouring at all, but with a pleasant labour, to gather honey, and prepare for winter, so doth the christian, especially on the Lord's day, employ himself in labour and delight; and the more he laboreth the more is his delight. From prayer he goeth to reading, and to the instructing of his family if he be a superior, or learning if he be an inferior, and have help. From private worship to public, and from public to private again; and gathering honey (food and sweetness) to his soul from all.

Tell me, you childish, brutish wantons, do you think in your hearts, that you have as much solid joy and pleasure in a play-day, or in your idle games, or in spending the Lord's day in idleness, or sports, as we have in the holy works of God? Do you think our delight is not more than yours? To our shame, but to the praise of God, we must say that we have tried both ways. We know what it is to play away much of the Lord's day, and what it is to employ it in waiting on the Lord. But since we knew the latter, we wish we had never known the former. That is our recreation which is your toil, and that would be our prison, and stocks, and toil, which is your sport and recreation.

6. Another delightful portion of our work, is holy conference with the experienced servants of the Lord. There are many things considerable in holy conference that make it delightful.

1. It is the conference of dearest friends. The special love that all the godly have to one another, doth exceedingly sweeten their communion. The very presence of those that we most dearly love, is a pleasure to us. Much more their sweetest, edifying discourse.

2. Their conference proceedeth from the Spirit of grace, and therefore is gracious, savouring of that Spirit: and all the breathings and manifestations of that blessed Spirit are very acceptable to those that have the Spirit themselves, and so can savour spiritual things.

3. Their conference is about the highest, the most necessary, God and his several attributes; his

will, works of creation, and disposing providence of nature and grace. About the wonderful mysteries of redemption; the person, life, and sufferings of the Redeemer, his offices, and the performance of them, on earth, and in heaven, in his humiliation and his exaltation; and of the sweet relations that we and all his church do stand in, to Christ our Head, our Saviour, and Redeemer; as also about the gracious workings of the Holy Ghost, in first begetting an increase of holiness. To open to each other the powerful workings of that grace that hath raised them above all the creatures, and brought them to a contempt of earthly glory, and set their hearts on the invisible God, and on eternal things, that hath renewed them in the inner man, and made them hate the things they loved, and mortified their oldest, strongest sins, and quickened them in the exercise of every grace; all this is edifying, sweet discourse to gracious souls.

4. And the rather because it is about the most pertinent affairs. They are things that do so nearly concern us, that we are glad to speak with those that understand them. It is our own case, which we hear our brethren open. They speak our very hearts, as if they had seen them; because it is the same work of the same Spirit that they describe. Yea, when they complain of their infirmities, it is with our complaints, and they tell us of that which we are troubled with ourselves; and we perceive that we are not singular in our troubles, but that our case is the case of other servants of the Lord.

5. And it is the more pleasant to converse with the godly, because they speak not by hearsay only, but by experience. They tell us of the discoveries that illuminating grace hath made to their own souls; and of the many evils they have been saved from; and the communion they have had with God, and the prayers which he hath heard, and the many and great deliverances he hath granted them. They relate their conflicts with temptations, and their conquests; their strivings against their ancient lusts, and how they have overcome them; and the sweet refreshings which their souls have had in the exercise of love, and faith, and hope. They can dive into the ocean of mercy, and speak of the abundant kindness of the Lord, and earnestly awaken and invite each other to praise him for his goodness, and to declare his wondrous works for the children of men. They can direct each other in their difficulties, and encourage each other in holy ways, and strengthen one another in holy resolutions, and comfort one another with the same comforts that they themselves have been comforted with by the Lord. And may not our hearts rejoice and burn within us, while we discourse of such important things as these, in such a serious, experimental, edifying manner? They can discourse together of their meeting before the throne of Christ, and of the blessed converse which they shall have in heaven, with the Lord himself, and with the holy angels, and where they shall be, and what they shall do, to all eternity, in the presence of God where is fulness of joy, and before him where are the eternal pleasures.

O christians! did not your graces languish by your own neglects, and your souls grow out of relish with these spiritual and most excellent things, your speeches of them would be more savoury; you would be more frequent, lively, and cheerful in your discourse of holy things; and then your converse would be more edifying and delightful to each other. We show so little of grace in our conference, that makes it to be but little different from other men's. And (which is the commonest case, and very doleful) we most of us remain so ignorant and imprudent,

that we mar holy conference by our mixtures of unwise expressions, and disgrace it to others by our injudicious weakness. This is the bane of christian discourse; even the want of holy skill and wisdom, and of understanding to speak of the things of God, according to their transcendent worth and weight, as much (and more) than the want of zeal. But if we could discourse of these holy matters aright, with wisdom and with seriousness, how sweet, how fruitful would the company of holy persons be! We should be still among them, as in the family of God, and should hear that which our souls do most desire to hear; and we should preach to one another the riches of grace in our familiar discourse; and souls might be converted by the conference of believers, and not all left to the public ministry. Every man would be a helper to his neighbour. "For the tongue of the just is as choice silver, though the heart of the wicked is little worth: the lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of wisdom," Prov. x. 20, 21. "The lips of the wise disperse knowledge," chap. xv. 7. "Righteous lips are the delight of kings," chap. xvi. 13, "and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning," ver. 21. "The lips of knowledge are a precious jewel," chap. xx. 15. "A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth, and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled," chap. xviii. 20. "The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment; the law of his God is in his heart," Psal. xxxvii. 30, 31.

Tell me, I beseech you, you that can be so merry in an ale-house, or in any vain and idle company, why should you think that it is not to us a far sweeter thing to talk of holy, edifying matters, than it is to you to talk of vanity? Is the subject of your discourse more fit to delight a man of wisdom? Do you talk of better things than God, or of higher things than heaven? or of things that nearer concern you, than the matters of everlasting consequence?

When I have heard such people talking and laughing as if they had been the merriest people in the world, I have sometimes hearkened to their discourse, to hear what talk it was that made them so merry; and it hath been nothing but impertinence and folly, like a man's talking in his sleep; enough to make a man's head ache to hear them. I should be quickly tired of their delights. The blowing of the wind, or the falling of the rain, or as Solomon saith, "the cracking of thorns in the fire," hath as much in it to please my ear, and much less to displease it, than such men's discourse.

Go to a company of merry fellows, as you take them, and to a company of serious, godly, prudent people, and secretly write down all the words that you hear from both companies, and read them over together when you come home, and tell me which is the pleasanter discourse. What a hodge-podge of nonsense, impertinence, levity, immodesty, worldliness, pride, and folly shall you find in one! and what savoury, necessary, edifying, encouraging, and comforting speeches will you find you have gathered from the other!

It is far pleasanter to be among the singing birds, the bleating sheep, yea the chattering daws, than these idle, prating, foolish companions. For with the former, you shall have some natural good, without any mixture of sinful evil. But in foolish, prating company, what shall you perceive, but how nature is depraved, how sinners are beside themselves, how Satan doth befool them, and how God is forgotten while he is present with them, and they are laughing in the devil's chains, and at the very

brink of death and hell! And can a man be merry to hear such mirth as this? It is a sad spectacle to see men laugh in Bedlam; but much more to see them merry in the fetters of their sin, and under the threatenings and wrath of God. Were you but men of right composed minds, I durst refer it to yourselves, whether holy company and discourse be not like to be much pleasanter than yours.

Do you think that the discourse of learned men, about arts and sciences, history, and the like, is not more pleasant than your idle talk? Much more is the holy discourse of saints about the things of their salvation. Whether do you think the company and discourse of Christ, and his prophets and apostles, or of your merry companions, should be the more delightful? Can you for shame say, that the latter were the best? Why, you know that Christ, and his prophets and apostles, had no such idle talk as yours. It was holy things that they discoursed of.

Can you for shame say, that you love God above all, and yet have more pleasure in prating over a pot of ale than in speaking reverently of God? Or would you be believed when you say, that your hearts are set on heaven, when you have more delight in talking of any earthly trifle? Well, I shall leave it to your consciences, and to the judgment of any that will speak with reason, whether the holy converse and conference of the godly, be not in itself a more delightful thing than all the merriments, the dotages, and fooleries of the ungodly. If you think not so, it is because your relish and appetite is depraved, the devil hath deluded you, and sin bereaved you of your wits.

3. I have told you of the pleasantness of the duties of holiness, which are to be performed more directly toward God. Let us now consider of the rest of a christian life; which consisteth in our duties to be performed towards men. And these are all comprehended in the works of charity and of justice.

1. And certainly the works of charity are delightful. There is not a pleasanter work in the world than to do good. Even proud men find a great delight in the reputation or name of doing good; that they may be accounted the great benefactors of the world, that is, to be as earthly gods among their neighbours, and as the sun is to the lower world, that all may be below them, and live by their influence. This is the top of that prosperity that sinful ambition doth aspire to. And if the name of well-doing be so pleasant to the proud, the conscience of the thing itself should be more pleasant to the upright. Open bounty is the hypocrite's glory; but to do good in secret is the believer's pleasure, "for their Father which seeth in secret, shall reward them openly;" yea, the very delight of doing good, and especially a great or public good, a spiritual and everlasting good, is a reward unto itself. It is the speech of Christ recited by Paul, Acts xx. 35, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

There are many things concurring that make it very pleasant to do good. It proceeds from the power of love; and the exercise of love is pleasant. And love makes our brethren to be to us as ourselves, and consequently their welfare is as our own, and rejoiceth us as if ourselves received all that they receive. And what abundant pleasure then hath a believer! When so many thousands of his brethren do receive so many thousand benefits daily from God himself, and all these are to the christian, through the union and power of love, as if he had received them all himself. But especially when he himself is the instrument of conveyance. The poor have comfort in receiving of relief; but nothing in comparison of his

that gives it, if it be done for the sake of Christ, in uprightness of heart. A poor man receiveth from the giver perhaps but an outward small commodity; but the upright giver receiveth from God the sense of his acceptance, and peace of conscience, with the promise of an everlasting recompence. A mite, or a cup of cold water, given to a prophet in the name of a prophet, or to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall certainly be rewarded," Matt. x. 40-42.

A true believer is covetous to do good, as others are to receive it, and studieth for opportunities of laying out his gifts and wealth for God, as others study to gather it for themselves. As a worldling studieth for a good bargain, that he may grow rich; a true believer studieth for opportunities to lay out that he hath for God, and to improve his Master's stock to the best advantage. The covetous doth not more long to get more, than believers do to be rid of that they have, in the way, and on the terms, as may do most good, and be best accepted. And they are even afraid lest opportunities of doing good should overslip them, and the seed-time should pass by. A believer knows that, as his life and soul, so his worldly riches, are no where sure but in the hand of God. And therefore if they can procure his security, and get him to receive it, and return it them in heaven with the promised advantage, they have then secured it indeed. All is lost that God hath not, in one way or other; and all is secured that he hath, and for which we have his promise. This is "laying it up in heaven," Matt. vi. 21. While we keep it, we cannot secure it from thieves. When we have disposed of it according to the will of God, upon the warrant of his promise, it is then in his custody, and then it is safe. Neither rust nor moth can then corrupt it, nor the strongest thieves break through and steal. To be good and do good is to be likest unto God; and therefore must needs be the sweetest life.

2. Works of justice also have their pleasure; for they demonstrate the justice of God himself, from whom they do proceed. That which is most pleasant to God, should be most pleasant unto us. And as he hath bid us "not forget to do good and to communicate, because with such sacrifice he is well pleased," (Heb. xiii. 16,) so he hath told us that he "delighteth in the exercise of loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth," Jer. ix. 24. "He hath showed us what is good: and what doth he require of us, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with our God?" Mic. vi. 8. And therefore he commandeth Israel, Hos. xii. 6, "Turn thou to thy God. Keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually." Private justice between man and man, and family justice between parents and children, masters and servants, and political justice between the magistrates and the people, do all maintain the order of the world, and procure both public and private peace. It is selfishness and injustice, tyranny, oppression, disobedience, and rebellion, that procure the miseries of the world. But righteousness is safe and sweet.

3. You have heard of the pleasure of holy actions, both internal and external. The truth is evident also from the objects of these acts, and the matter from which a believer may derive his pleasures. And oh what an ocean of delight is here before us! Were our powers, capacities, and acts but answerable to the objects, we should presently have the joys of heaven.

1. A believer hath the ever blessed God himself to derive his comforts from. He hath his nature and attributes to be his comfort. He hath his near relations to afford him comfort; and this is more than

to have all the world. It is a God of infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, that we believe in, that we love, and worship, and obey. It is also a Father reconciled to us, that hath taken us in covenant to him as his people, through Jesus Christ. And where shall we find comfort if not in God? It is in vain to look for that from any creature, that is not to be found in him. Poor worldlings! you have nothing that is worth the having, but the crumbs that fall from the children's table. God is our portion, and the world is yours; and yet you have less even in this world than we. You have the shadow, and we have the substance: you have the shell, and we the kernel: you have the straw and chaff, and true believers have the corn: your comforts are shaken with every storm, and tossed up and down by the justice of God, or the pride of man. But God that is our portion is unchangeable; yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever. We have "a kingdom that cannot be moved," Heb. xii. 28. Persecutors cannot take our God from us, nor can any thing separate us from his love, Rom. viii. 36. They may separate us from our houses, from our countries, from our friends, from our riches, our liberties, our lives; from our books, our company, and ordinances; but not from God, who is our great delight. In poverty, in persecutions, in sickness, and at death, we have still our interest in God. A christian is never in so low a state, but he hath a God to whom he may go for comfort, who is more to him than your sweetest pleasures. Is it not a pleasure to have such a God as can cure all diseases, supply all wants, overcome all enemies, deliver in all dangers, and hath promised that he will do it so far as is for our good? If he want water that hath the sea, or he want land that hath all the earth, or he want light that hath the sun, yet doth he not need to want delight that hath the Lord to be his God, if he do but keep in the paths of grace. And are you yet unresolved, whether godliness be the most pleasant life? Take all your pleasures, and make the best of them, may I but have the Lord to be my God, and I hope I shall never desire to change with you.

2. A holy life is therefore pleasant, because we have a full sufficient Saviour, from whom we may daily fetch delight. The eternal Son of God is become the healer of our wounds, our Peace-maker with the Father, the Conqueror of our enemies, the Ransom for our sins, the Captain of our salvation, the Head of his church, and the treasure of all our hopes and joys! Sin and misery are the works of Satan which Christ came into the world to destroy. If hypocrites can steal a little peace to their consciences, from a false conceit that they have a part in Christ, what comfort may it be to the true believer, that hath a sure and real interest in him! That is the sad and miserable life when you are out of Christ, and strangers to his covenant, and cannot say his benefits are yours, but you are yet in your sins, without his righteousness. But when we have a special interest in him, the foundation of our everlasting joy is laid, and the heart of sin and misery is broken. What fear or sorrow can you name, that I may not fetch a sufficient remedy against from Christ? What can the prince of darkness say to our discomfort, which we may not answer by arguments from Christ? By this judge of the comfort of a holy life. If the godly overlook the grounds of joy that are laid in Christ, and live in a mistaken sorrow, that is not for want of reasons and warrant to rejoice, but for want of a right discerning of those reasons. But what have you that are ungodly, to answer against all the terrors of the law? or to answer against all the accusations of your consciences? or to comfort you

against the remembrance of your approaching misery? While you have no part in Christ you have no right to comfort. One thought of Christ to a believing soul, may afford more delight than ever you will find in a sinful life.

3. Moreover, we have the Holy Spirit of Christ, that is purposely given us to be our Comforter. And if that be not a pleasant life that is managed by such a guide, and that be not likeliest to be a joyful soul that is possessed by the Spirit of joy itself, there is no joy then on earth to be expected. Hath God promised his Spirit to comfort you that are wicked in your sin? No; it is the malicious, deceiving spirit that is your comforter, that by his comforts he might keep you from solid, spiritual, everlasting comforts. But the repenting, believing soul that is united unto Christ, and hath already had the Spirit for his conversion, it is he that hath the promise of the Spirit for his consolation. And if that be not the most comfortable life, where the God of heaven becomes the comforter, we cannot then know the effect by the cause. If life itself will quicken, if light itself will illuminate, the comforting Spirit will certainly comfort in the degree and season as God seeth meet, and the soul is fitted to receive it.

4. Moreover, we have the whole treasure of the gospel to go to for our delight. And little doth the sensual, unbelieving soul know what sweetness, what supporting pleasures, may be from thence derived. I had rather have the holy word of God to go to for contents, than the treasures of the rich, or the pleasures of the sensual, or the flatteries and vain-glory of the ambitious man. All that the world doth make such a pudder about, which they ride and run for, which they so much glory in, will never afford them so much content, as one Scripture promise will do to a truly faithful soul. I must profess before angels and men, that I had rather have one promise of the love of God, and the life to come, which is contained in the holy Scriptures, than to have all the riches, pleasures, and honours of this world. My God, this was my covenant with thee, and to this I stand. Oh blessed be the Lord, that hath provided us such a magazine of delight as is this heavenly, sacred book! The precepts appoint us a pleasant work. The strictest prohibitions do but restrain us from our own calamities, and keep out of our hands the knife by which we would cut our fingers. The severest threatenings do but deter us from running into the consuming fire; and hedge about the devouring gulf, lest we should foolishly cast ourselves therein. And these are the bitterest parts of that holy word. But then we read the promises of a Saviour, and the wonderful history of his incarnation, and of his holy, self-denying life, his conquests, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and his promise to return; when we read of the foundation which he hath laid, and the building which he intends to finish, of his rich, abundant promises to his chosen, what provision do we find for our abundant joys! No strait can be so great, no pressure so grievous, no enemies so strong, but we have full consolation offered us in the promises, against them all. We have promises of the pardon of all our sins, and promises of heaven itself; and what can we have more? We have promises suited to every state, both prosperity and adversity. What do we need which we have not a promise of? And the word of God is no deceit. What but a promise can comfort them that are short of the possession? May I not have more joy in sickness with a promise, than the ungodly without a promise in their health? A promise in prison sets a man as at liberty.

A promise in poverty is more than riches. A promise at death is better than life. What I have a promise of, I may be sure of; but what you possess without a promise, you may lose (and your souls and hopes with it) this night. There is no condition on earth so hard to a man that hath interest in the promises, in which he may not have plentiful relief. We live by faith, and not by sense. And we reckon more on that as ours, which we hope for, than which we do possess. We are sure that there is no true felicity on earth. If then we have a promise of heaven, when infidels lie down in the dust with desperation, have we not a more comfortable life than they?

5. Moreover, we have heaven itself to fetch our comfort from. Not heaven in sight, or in possession; but heaven in promise, and seen by faith. And if heaven will not afford us pleasure, whence shall we expect it? Even sensual men can rejoice as well in what they see not, if they are assured it is theirs, as in what they see. And why then may not believers do so much more? A worldling, when he seeth not his money in his chest, or at use, or his lands and cattle that are from him, can yet rejoice in them as if he saw them. And should not we rejoice in the certain hopes of heaven though yet we see it not? When I am pained in sickness, and roll in restless weariness of my flesh, if then I can say, I shall be in heaven, may it not be the inward rejoicing of my soul? You know where you are, but you know not where you shall be. The believer knoweth where he shall be, as truly as he knoweth where he is (unless it be one that by his frailty hath not reached unto assurance, who yet hath reached unto hope). What great matter is it if I lay in the greatest pain, if I can say, I shall have everlasting ease in heaven? or if I lay in prison, or in sordid poverty, and can say, I shall shortly be with Christ? or if I had lost the love of all men, and could say, that I shall everlastingly enjoy the love of God?

Most of your comforts do come in by the way of your thoughts. And what thoughts should so rejoice the soul as the thoughts of our abode with Christ for ever? If a day in the courts of God be so delightful, what is ten thousand millions of ages in the court of glory; and all that as fresh as at the first day? There it is that our sin will be put off; our carnal enmity laid by; our temptations will be over; our enemies will all have done; our fears and sorrows will be at an end; our desires will be accomplished; our differences be reconciled; our charity perfected; and our expectations fully satisfied; and hope turned into full fruition. Oh may I but be able, with stronger faith, and fuller confidence, to say that heaven is mine, and when this tabernacle is dissolved I shall be with Christ, my life and my death will be delightful, and I need not complain for want of pleasure. Let who will take the pleasures of the flesh, may I but have this. In prayer, in meditation, in holy conference, in every duty, it is the expectation of approaching blessedness that drops in sweetness into all. No wonder if it can sweeten a course of duty when it can make light the greatest sufferings, and turn pain into pleasure, death into life, as being unworthy to be compared unto the glory which shall be revealed.

But the wicked have none of these delights, unless they steal a little by self-deceit. They may make their best of their present pleasures, and of the cup while it is at their mouths, and of their wealth and honour while it is in their hands. But it is little pleasure that they can fetch from heaven! The thought of it may rather feed their terrors. What pleasure they can pick out of the dirt let them

make their best of. But heavenly pleasures are above their reach.

So much for the objects of a holy life, from whence a believer may fetch his pleasure.

Object. But you tell us only of the pleasant part; but the troublesome and bitter part you say nothing of.

Ans. Come on, and say your worst of a holy life, and tell us which is that bitter part.

Object. The Scripture requireth us to mortify the flesh, to renounce the world, to forbear our pleasures, to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross and follow Christ; and will you call this a pleasant life?

Ans. And do you indeed think this so sad a business? Here are three things contained in this objection, as the matter that seemeth so displeasing to you. 1. The parting with your sins. 2. The sufferings that are principally for sin. 3. The sufferings that are principally for the cause of Christ.

1. And do you think sin is so lovely a thing that a man cannot live merrily without it? Sin is the breach of the laws of God, and the injury of the heavenly Majesty, and the provocation of his hot displeasure, and the poison and sickness of the soul. And is it your sport to abuse the Lord? Is your pleasure gone, if you may not injure the God that made you? What natures, what sinful hearts have you, that must have such pleasures! Cannot a man live merrily unless he may provoke the God of heaven, and trample upon mercy, and despise salvation? Can you not live in pleasure unless you may drink poison, or keep your sickness, or tumble in the dirt? One would think that mischief to ourselves or others should be small pleasure to an honest mind. It is no pleasure to you to spit in the face of your dearest friends, or to abuse your parents, or to provoke your neighbours: and is it such pleasure as you cannot forsake to abuse the Lord, and wrong your souls? The pleasure of sin do tend to pain. Some pain doth usually attend it here, and much more hereafter. God would prevent your pain and misery, by preventing or destroying your sin. And do you accuse his sword, because it would keep you from so costly, so bitter, so dangerous delights? It is for your pleasure that this pleasure is forbidden you. The sweetness of the poison of sin will be soon gone, when the gripings of the tormented conscience do remain. You will forbear the most delightful fruits or drinks, if your physician tell you they will hazard your life, or torment you afterwards. You are short-sighted and short-witted, and look but to the present relish of things, and choose them if you taste them sweet; but God looks to your everlasting pleasures. So that you may well reckon it among the pleasures of a holy life, that you have such preservatives against the greatest sorrows; and that you are kept from the pleasures that will be bitterness in the latter end.

Yea, at the present hath not drunkenness more trouble attending it than sobriety? Reckon up the consuming of men's estates, the troubles of their families, the sicknesses of their bodies, the shame and contempt that it bringeth on them here, and the wounds of their consciences, and tell me whether it were not more pleasure to forbear those cups than to drink them. And hath not gluttony more trouble attending it than temperance? By that time the charge be paid, the sickness that fulness breedeth be endured, the physician paid, and all the effects of gluttony overcome, you will find that the pleasure was little to the pain. The like I may say of uncleanness, worldliness, passion, pride, and all other sins that usually bring a punishment with them.

2. And then for castigatory sufferings, it is not godliness that is the cause of them (as sufferings).

Sin less, and suffer less. Provoke not God, and he will spare the rod. Do you hurt yourselves like careless children, and then blame God for bidding you take heed? God doth not punish men for holiness and well-doing. It is for want of holiness that you are punished. I think therefore that it is part of the pleasure of a holy life, that it keeps men out of the way of punishment. You must have pain, and unpleasant physic, when once you have taken a surfeit of sensual delight, and made yourselves sick with too much of the creature. Holiness would have prevented this. And when that is too late, it would cure it by the cheapest means that your health will bear. Is it not then unreasonable, when you have troubled yourselves, to blame your physician for troubling you in order to a cure?

3. And for those sufferings that are principally for Christ, consider, 1. That they are also originally from sin, and therefore you may know what to blame for the bitter part. Though the time, and place, and manner, and measure of your sufferings may proceed from the gracious providence of your Lord; yet that supposeth that sin had brought you into a state of suffering in general before; which Christ did not presently and plenary remit and take off, but disposeth of them by his wisdom, as may make most for his glory and your good. 2. And will you grudge at a little transitory pain, that is usually requited with comforts in this life, and rewarded with pleasures unspeakable hereafter? You grudge not to cast away your seed in hope of an increase at harvest; nor do you murmur at your daily labour if it be but blessed with success. And will you grudge to pass through sufferings to glory, to sow in tears that you may reap in joy? It is but few that suffer martyrdom, or any great matter for the cause of Christ, especially in our days. And those few have usually more joy than sorrow. If you knew the joys of martyrs, you would never so shrink at the sufferings of martyrs. And for a few mocks and scorns of foolish men, it is scarcely worth the name of a suffering. Nor is it so much as wicked men suffer in their sin. As godliness is a shame among the foolish, wicked men, so wickedness is a shame among all that are pious, wise, and sober. And why should not the shame of sin be more loathed than the undeserved shame of honesty? Alas, all this is nothing to the sorrows of the ungodly. A little of the vinegar of affliction will make us relish our prosperity the better, and through our frailty is become a necessary sauce to that luscious state that we are so apt to surfeit on! Do you not see what lamentable work prosperity, victories, honour, and worldly wealth and power have made in the world? and shall we grudge at that necessary, moderate affliction that saveth us from the like overthrows? Oh how few are able to withstand the temptations of great or long prosperity! Experience of the frequent, woeful falls of prospering men, that seemed once as firm as any, hath made me fear when I hear of the exaltation of my friends, and the less to grieve for their adversity or my own. Holiness therefore is the most pleasant way, notwithstanding the afflictions that do attend it. And if God will give me an increase of holiness, (of faith and love and a heavenly mind,) though it be with an increase of my afflictions, I hope I shall take it as an increase of my pleasure, and give him the praise of so merciful a dispensation. And thus I have proved to you from the nature of holiness, that it is the most pleasant way.

II. I should next show you the delights of holiness from the helps and concomitants that promote our pleasure. But because I am afraid of lengthening my discourse too much, I shall only name a few things of many.

1. God being our God in covenant, his love is to the holy soul, as the sun is to our bodies, to illuminate, warm, revive, and comfort them; and did not sin cause some eclipses, or raise some clouds, or shut the windows, we should rejoice continually, and find how sweet a thing it is, being justified by faith, to have peace with God.

2. We are in covenant with Jesus Christ, who intercedeth for our peace with God. And the Father always heareth his intercession, John xi. 42. And therefore that measure of comfort which he seeth suitable to our present state, we shall be sure of. "Who shall condemn us? when it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," Rom. viii. 34. "We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, even Jesus the Son of God; one that is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are, but without sin;" and therefore through him we may "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 14—16. What comforting words hath he spoken to us in the gospel, and what comfortable relations hath he put us into! He calleth us his friends, if we do his commandments, as if servants were too low a title, John xv. 14, 15. "Peace he leaveth with us: his peace he giveth to us; not as the world giveth, commanding us that we let not our hearts be troubled or afraid," chap. xiv. 27. To those that love him, he hath promised his Father's love, and that they will "come to him, and make their abode with him," ver. 23. "If any man serve him, let him follow him; and where Christ is, there shall his servant be: if any man serve Christ, him will the Father honour," chap. xii. 26.

3. That we might have sure consolation, the Spirit of Christ is given to be our Comforter; and we are in covenant with him also, who surely will perform his covenants.

4. The servants of Christ have his holy image, the mark of his children, which is the indwelling evidence of his love, to assure them of their happiness.

5. They have manifold experience of the kindness of their Father, in hearing their prayers, and helping them in their straits, and delivering them in their distresses.

6. They have also the help of the experience of others, even of all the godly with whom they do converse, who can comfort them with their comforts, and tell them how good they have found the Lord.

7. They have the ministers of Christ appointed by office to be the helpers of their faith and joy; to be the messengers of glad tidings to them, and to tell them from God of the pardon of their sins, and of his favour to them in Christ; and to heal the broken-hearted, and preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, &c. Luke iv. 18. To have a deputed officer of Christ to absolve the penitent, and deliver them pardon in the name of Christ, and to pray for them, and direct them, and resolve their doubts, and show them the promises that may support them, and help to profligate their temptations, must needs be much to the comfort of believers; as the care of a father is the comfort of the child; and the care of the physician is a comfort to the sick.

8. They have all the ordinances suited to their comfort; the word read, preached, and meditated on; the sacraments, and the public praises of God, and communion of the saints (of which before).

9. They have multitudes of mercies still about

them, and every day renewed on them, to feed their comforts.

10. They have a promise that "all things shall work together for their good;" and that so all their afflictions themselves shall be their commodities, and death itself shall be their gain, Rom. viii. 28; Phil. i. 21; and all their enemies shall be subdued by Christ the Prince of their salvation.

So that from this much you may see, that for joy and pleasure there is no life that hath the advantages that a holy life hath. "As for the ungodly, they are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away," Psal. i. 4. These pleasures grow not in their wicked way, nor do such strangers know believers' joys.

III. Lastly, I should also have showed you the pleasure of holiness by the effects; but here also, to avoid prolixity, I will but name a few.

1. Holiness is pleasing to God himself; and therefore it must needs be pleasant to the saints that have it. For it is their end and chiefest pleasure to please God. They know that this is the end for which they were created, redeemed, and renewed; and therefore that is the most pleasant life to them, in which they find that God is best pleased. And therefore "they labour, that whether present or absent, they may be accepted of him," 2 Cor. v. 9. They are "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 5.

2. Holiness must needs be pleasant to the soul, because it is the spiritual health of the soul, and the means and certain evidence of its safety. And health is a constant, sensible delight. And to know that our souls have escaped the danger of the wrath of God, and everlasting misery, must needs be a greater pleasure than any the matters of this world can afford. One serious thought of the salvation, which holiness is the earnest of, may give that true contentment to the soul, that all the wealth and glory of the world can never give.

3. Holiness removeth fears and troubles, and therefore must needs be a pleasant state. It removeth the fears of the wrath of God, and of damnation, and the fears of all destructive evils. It tends to heal the wounded soul, and pacify the clamorous conscience, and abate all worldly and groundless sorrows, for which the wicked have no true cure.

4. Holiness is the destruction of sin, and sin is the cause of all calamities, and therefore holiness must needs be pleasant.

5. Holiness doth consist in rejoicing graces, that are exceeding pleasant in the exercise; as faith, hope, love, patience, &c. yea, it consisteth in joy itself, Rom. xiv. 17.

6. It fits the soul for communion with God, who is the fountain of delights; and it brings us near him, and acquaints us with him as a God of love; and therefore must needs be a pleasant state.

7. You see by experience, that when once men have tried a holy life, they think they can never have enough of it. The more holy they are, the more holy they would be. He that hath most would fain have more. And the weakest desireth no less than to be perfect. And do you think men that have tried it, would so long after more and more, if it were not pleasant?

Judge also by the labour and diligence of the godly, who "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and make it the principal business of their lives. Would they make all this ado for nothing? or for that which is a matter of no delight?

Judge also by the delights which they voluntarily forsake, when they let go all their sinful

pleasures, and renounce all the glory of the world; would they make this exchange if they had not found a more pleasant course, and that which tends to everlasting pleasure?

8. You see also that the truly godly, when once they have tried a holy life, will never go back again to their former pleasures, but loathe the very remembrance of them. It is not all the honours, and riches, and pleasures in the world, that can hire them to forsake a holy life. Sure therefore they find it the most pleasant course; if not in sensible delights, yet at least in easing their consciences, and securing their minds from the terrors that sinful pleasures would produce. If they found that godliness answered not their expectation, they have leisure enough, and temptations too many, to turn back into the state from whence they came. But how would they abhor such a motion as this!

9. If holiness were not a pleasant thing, it could not help us to bear up under all afflictions, nor make us rejoice in tribulation, as it doth. That which can sweeten gall and wormwood must needs be very sweet itself. That which can make reproach, and scorn, and poverty, and imprisonment, either sweet or tolerable, is sure itself a pleasant thing.

10. Lastly, if holiness were not pleasant, it could not make death itself so easy, nor take off its terrors, nor cause the martyrs to suffer so joyfully for Christ. Death is the king of terrors, and so bitter a cup, that it must needs be a pleasant thing indeed, that can sweeten it.

Besides all this that hath been said, let me briefly have some general aggravations of the delights of holiness; and compare it as we go with the delights of the ungodly.

1. The delights of holiness are the most great, and glorious, and sublime delights. They are fetched from the most great and glorious things. It is God, and his grace, and everlasting glory that feed our pleasures. Whereas the delights of sensual men are fed with trifles. What do they rejoice in but the fooleries of sin, and the filthiness of their own transgressions? What is it that contenteth them, but a dream of honour, or the good will and word of mortal men, or a brutish sportfulness, or the pleasing of the itch of lust, or the provision that they have laid up for the flesh? The treasures of a kingdom excel not the treasure of a child's pin-box the thousandth part so much as heaven excels the treasures of the ungodly. Judge therefore by the matter that feeds their pleasure, which of the two is the more pleasant life; to sport in their own shame, and laugh at the brink of misery with the ungodly, or to delight ourselves in the love of God, and rejoice in the assured hope of glory with the true believer.

2. The delights of holiness are the most rational, well-grounded, sure delights. They are not delusory, nor grounded on mistakes or fancies. They are warranted by the truth and all-sufficiency of God, and the certainty of his promise, and the immutability of his counsels, and the sure reward prepared for his saints. None but a lying, malicious devil, or his instruments that participate of his nature, or a blind, corrupted, partial flesh, will ever go about to question the foundations of our faith and comforts. The hopes and comforts that are built upon this rock, will never fall, nor make us ashamed.

But the ungodly rejoice in their own delusions. It is ignorance and error that they are beholden to for their mirth. They laugh in their sleep, or as mad men in their distraction. Did they know that Satan rejoiceth in their joys, and that an offended God is always present, and how poor a matter it is that

they rejoice in, it would mar their mirth. If they saw the hell that they are near, or well considered where they stand, and what a case their souls are in, they would have little list to play or laugh. If they knew aright the shortness of their pleasures, and the length of their sorrows, and in what a doleful case their wealth and fleshly delights will leave them, it would turn their laughter into mourning and lamentation. So that they rejoice but (as a sick man in a frenzy, or as a fool upon some good news to him that is false) upon mere mistake.

3. The delights of holiness are the most pure delights, and most entire and complete. There is no evil in it mixed with the good, and therefore nothing to interrupt the joy. Our joys indeed are too much interrupted; but that is not from any hurt that is in a holy life, but by the contrary sin, which holiness must work out. If men take poison, let them not blame nature that strives against it, if they are sick; but let them blame themselves, and the poison, that puts nature to expel it. In holiness itself there is nothing but good, and therefore nothing that should grieve us.

But it is far otherwise with sensual delights. As they are sinful, they are wholly evil. As they are natural, feeding upon the creature alone, they are as it is, a mixture of vanity and vexation. Every creature hath its unsuitableness and imperfection, by which it disturbeth even where it pleaseth, and troubleth where it comforteth, and frustrateth and disappointeth more than it satisfieth. The more we love it, usually the more we suffer by it. That thing which we most excessively love, is ordinarily our sharpest scourge. That friend whom we most excessively love, is usually our greatest sorrow; either by their failing our expectations, or by our failing theirs, or our insufficiency to accomplish the good which we desire of them. If they prove unkind, it is more grievous than the unkindness of many others. If they prove faithful, how deeply do we suffer with them in all their sufferings! Their wants do pinch us as our own. Their reproaches are our shame. Their losses take as much from us. Their sickness paineth us. Their death half killeth us. And he that is so happy as to have many such friends, is so unhappy as to have more burdens, fears, and griefs to suffer, and more deaths to die, than other men. But especially to ungodly men, these earthly comforts are uncomfortable, because they have none of the divine delights that are the kernel and the spirits, but take up with the shell or husk; and because their mirth is mixed with their own misery, which conscience sometimes gripes them for with such deep remorse as cools their comforts. And some thoughts of the shortness of their pleasures will be stepping in, and ending them before their time. So that the bitterness of worldly things surpasseth the delight.

4. The delights of holiness are deep and solid, and therefore do establish and corroborate the hearts. But sensual delights are like children's laughter; they are slight, and outside, and fitting, and vain. As children laugh in one breath, and cry in the next; so worldly joys are followed at the heels by sorrows. For they lie not deep, and fortify not the heart against distresses, as the delights of faith and holiness do.

5. The pleasures of the saints are the gift of God, and allowed of by him; commanded by his word, and promoted by his promises and mercies, and are but the fruits of his everlasting love. And being so divine, they must needs be excellent.

But the pleasures of ungodly, worldly men are partly forbidden and condemned by God, and partly

contradicted and confounded, by his terrible threatenings, and the discovery of his wrath. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked," Isa. xlviii. 22; lvii. 21. God doth disown and protest against their peace. If they will keep it, and make it good, it must be against his will. He forbiddeth joy to a rebellious people. "Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God," Hos. ix. 1. He calleth them to "weeping and mourning, and rending of the heart," Joel ii. 12, 13. Hear what God saith to them in their great pleasures, James v. 1-5, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days:—Ye have lived in pleasure on earth, and been wanton. Ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter—" A man would think it should either turn them, or torment them, and fill their hearts with continual horror, to find God thus solemnly protesting against their peace, and sentencing them to woe and sorrows.

6. The pleasures of the godly are clean and noble, and honest and honourable. They delight in things of the greatest worth, for which they had their natures, their time, and all. But the pleasures of sinners are base and filthy. They delight as swine in wallowing in the mire; and as the dog to eat his own vomit, 2 Pet. ii. 22. They delight to wrong the God that made them, and by whom they live, and to cross the ends of their lives and mercies; and to drive away all true delights, and to undo themselves. This is the matter of their delight.

7. The devil is a great enemy to the delights of holiness; which is a sign that they are excellent. He doth what he can to keep men from the holy state, lest they should meet with the happiness that attends it. And if he prevail not in this his chief design, he doth what he can to fill up the lives of believers with calamities. All the enemies that he can raise up against them, shall by temptations, scorn, or injuries, assault their comforts. All the storms that he can raise shall be sure to fall upon them. How busy is he to fill them with fears and doubtings! and to cast perplexing thoughts into their minds! or to mislead them into some perplexing ways! and fasten on them entangling doctrines, or disquieting principles! How cunningly and diligently will he argue against their peace and comforts, and seek to hide the love of God, and dishonour the blood, and grace, and covenant of Christ, and cross the comforting workings of the Spirit! How subtly will he question all our evidences, and extenuate all God's comforting mercies, and do all that he can that the godly may have a hell on earth, though they shall have none hereafter. It is sure an excellent joy and pleasure, which Satan is so great an enemy to.

8. The delights of holiness do make us better. They are so far from disordering the mind, and leading us to sin, that they compose and purify the mind, and make sin much more odious to us than before. No man hates sin so much as he that hath seen the pleased face of God, and tasted most the sweetness of his grace, and tried the pleasant paths of life. And therefore it is, that when a believer comes from fervent prayers, or from heavenly conference or meditation, or from hearing the blessed word of life, laid open plainly, and applied powerfully to his soul, he would then abhor a temptation to sensual delights, if they were set before him.

Till we lose the relish of holy things, and suffer our delight in God to fade, we are seldom taken in the snares of any fleshly vanities. Money is dirt to us, and honour a smoke, and lust doth stink, as long as we maintain our delight in God. He is the best and highest christian, that hath most of these spiritual delights.

But fleshly pleasures make men worse. They intoxicate the mind, and fill it with vanity and folly. They are the snares to entrap us; and the harlots that do bewitch us, and defile the soul that should be chaste for God. The noise of this sensual, foolish mirth doth drown the voice of God and reason, so that in the needfullest matters they cannot be heard. In their hunting and hawking, dicing and carding, drinking and revelling, feasting and dancing, how little of God or heaven is on the sinner's mind! Seldom is the soul so unfit for duty, so incapable of instruction, so hardened against the word and warnings of the Lord, as in the depth of sensual delights. Then it is that they are "foolish, disobedient, and deceived," when they are "serving divers lusts and pleasures," as Paul that had tried both ways confesseth, Tit. iii. 3. None so unlike to be the servants of Christ, as they that are "clothed in purple and fine linen, and that fare sumptuously (or deliciously) every day," Luke xvi. To live "in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in strife and envying, and to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof," is the description of one that walks not honestly, and is far from a christian's life and hopes, Rom. xiii. 13, 14. It is those voluptuous, sensual sinners, that most obstinately shut out all reproofs, and refuse him that speaketh to them from heaven, and will not so much as soberly consider of the things that concern their everlasting peace; and therefore are oft so forsaken of grace, that they grow to be scornors of the means of their salvation, and "being past feeling do give themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness," Eph. iv. 19. Which then is most desirable? the healing or the wounding pleasure? the quickening or the killing mirth? the wholesome or the poisonous sweet? the delights that mend us and further our salvation, or corrupting pleasures that drown men in perdition?

9. The delights of holiness are of kin to heaven. They are of the same nature with those that saints and angels have with God (though we must acknowledge an unconceivable difference). It is the same God and the same glory that now delighteth us as seen by faith, which shall then delight us when seen by intuition with open face. We are solacing ourselves in love and praise, with the same employment that we must have in heaven. And therefore if heaven be the state of the greatest joy and pleasure, the state of grace, and work of holiness, that is likeliest to it, must needs be next it.

But sensual pleasures are bestial and sordid, and so far unlike the joys of heaven, that nothing more withdraws the mind, or maketh it unmeet for heaven.

10. Lastly, The delights of holiness are durable, even everlasting. The further we go, the greater cause we have of joy. It is not a mutable good that we rejoice in, but in the immutable God, the Ancient of days, and in that Christ that loveth his spouse with an everlasting love; and in the sure and faithful promises; and in the hopes of the kingdom that cannot be moved. The spring of our pleasure is in heaven, and our rejoicing is but the beginning of that which must there be perpetuated. Death cannot kill the joys of a believer; the grave shall not bury them; millions of ages shall not end them! Here may they be interrupted, because the

pleased face of God may be eclipsed, and sin and Satan may cast malicious doubts into our minds; and the neighbourhood of the flesh will force the mind to participate of its sufferings. But still God will keep their comforts alive, at least in the root, and help them in the act, as we have need of them, and are fit for them. And in the world of joy for which he is preparing us, our joy shall be perfected, and never have interruption or end. Holy festivals and ordinances, and sweetest communion of saints, and dearest love of truest friends, and perfect health and prosperity in the world, and all other comforts set together that this world affords, are but short emblems and small foretastes of the joys which the face of God will afford us, and we shall have with Christ, his saints and angels, to all eternity.

But sensual pleasures are of so short continuance, that they are gone before we feel well that we have them. The drunkard, the glutton, the fornicator, the gamester, are drinking but a sugared cup of poison, and merrily sowing the seeds of everlasting sorrow: Satan is but scratching them (as the butcher shaves the throat of the swine) before he kill them. One quarter of an hour ends the pleasure, and leaves a damp of sadness in its room; he that hath had forty or fifty years' pleasure, hath no relish of it when it is past; but it is as if it had never been, and much worse. He that hath spent a day, or month, or year in pleasure, hath no more at night, or at the year's end, when it is gone, than he that spent that time in sorrow. The bones and dust of thousands lie now in the churchyard, that have tasted many a sweet cup and morsel, and have had many a merry, wanton day; and are they now any better for it, than if they had never known it? and are not the poor and sorrowful there their equals? And doubtless their souls have as little of those pleasures as their dust. In heaven they are abhorred: in hell they are turned into tormenting flames, and remembered as fuel for the devouring fire. There are gluttons, but no more good cheer: there are drunkards, but no more drink: there are fornicators, but no more lustful pleasures: there are the playful wasters of their time, but no more sport and recreation: there are the vain-glorious, proud, ambitious souls, but not in glory, honour, and renown; but their aspiring hath cast them into the gulf of misery, and their pride hath covered them with utter confusion, and their glory is turned to their endless shame. Those that are now overwhelmed with the wrath of God, and shut up under desperation, are the souls that lately wallowed here in the delights of the flesh, and enjoyed for a season the pleasure of sin; and now what fruit have they of all their former seeming happiness? He that is feasted and gallantly adorned and attended to-day, is crying for a drop of water in vain to-morrow, Luke xvi. 23—26. Christ tells you the gain of earthly riches, and the duration of earthly pleasures, to the ungodly, Luke vi. 24, 25: "Woe to you that are rich! for you have received your consolation: woe to you that are full! for you shall hunger: woe to you that laugh now! for you shall mourn and weep:" that is, You that live a sensual life, and take up your pleasure and felicity here, shall find that all will end in sorrow. But, "blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled: blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh," ver. 21; that is, You that are contented to pass through sorrows and tribulation on earth, to the kingdom where you have placed your happiness and hopes, shall find your sorrows will end in joy; and therefore you are blessed while you seem miserable to the world. "Ye shall weep and lament; but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be

sorrowful; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy," John xvi. 20. "Now you have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you," ver. 22. We have a constant interest in the Fountain of all joy; and if our sun be clouded, it is but for a moment. "Our Maker is our Husband; the Lord of hosts is his name: and our Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth.—For a small moment may he forsake us, but with great mercy will he gather us. In a little wrath he may hide his face from us for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will he have mercy on us, saith the Lord our Redeemer. As he swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so hath he sworn that he will not be wroth with his people, nor rebuke them. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed; but his kindness shall not depart from us, nor the covenant of his peace be removed; saith the Lord, that hath mercy on us," Isaiah liv. 5—19. "For his anger endureth but for a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," Psal. xxx. 5. Storms may arise that may affright us; but how quickly will they be over? "Come, my people, (saith the Lord, Isaiah xxvii. 20.) enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

And as the momentary sorrow of the godly is forgotten in everlasting joy, so the joy of the wicked is but for a moment, and is drowned in everlasting sorrows. "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he? He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night: the eye also which saw him, shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him," Job xx. 4—9. "They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organs: they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave," Job xxi. 12, 13.

It would grieve a considerate believer to look on a worldly, sensual gallant in the midst of his vain-glory, or any unsanctified man in his mirth and pleasure, and to think where that man will shortly be, and how the case will be altered with him, and where his sport and mirth will leave him. As it would sadden our hearts to see one of them struck dead in the place, or to see the devil fetch them away, and spoil the game; so should it grieve us to foresee the stroke of death, and the condemnation of their souls to everlasting misery. And can that man much value the pleasure of ungodly men, that doth foresee this end? Would you not laugh at him that were a prince but for a day, and must be the scorn of the world to-morrow? or that would choose one day of mirth and pleasure, though he knew it would fill the rest of his life with pain and misery? If folly and stupidity were any wonder, it were a wonder that ungodly men can be merry, when their consciences tell them that they are not sure to stay one hour out of hell; nor to hold on their mirth till the end of the game. But while they are saying, "Soul, take thy ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" they may suddenly be told from God, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee;" and then whose is thy wealth? and then where is thy sport and mirth? Luke xii. 19, 20. As the tender

flowers and roses of the spring do fall before the nipping frosts, and will not live in winter storms ; no more will your fading mirth endure the frowns of God, the face of death, nor scarce a serious forethought of the day that you are near. And such matter of horror is continually before you, while you are under the wrath and curse of God, in a carnal, unregenerate state, that you are beholden to folly, security, and stupidity for that ease which hindereth your everlasting ease.

So that all things considered, I must seriously profess, that (however the ungodly have some pleasant dreams, and may live awhile in carelessness and stupidity, or flee in the face, while the beginning of hell is in their consciences, yet) I must judge, that a life of faith and holiness are unspeakably sweet, if it were but for this, that they save the conscience from the gripes, and fears, and terrible thoughts, that either sometimes feed on the ungodly, or are ready to devour their mirth and them. So sad and frightful a thing it is to be unsanctified, and in a state of sin, that it is a high commendation of the delights of holiness, that they so much deliver us from those grievous terrors, and are so powerful an antidote to preserve the heart from the wicked's pangs and desperation. Believe it, when conscience, death, and judgment are the messengers to declare your endless sorrows, you will then wish, and ten thousand times wish, that you had some of the faith and holiness of the saints, to be a cordial to your sinking hearts ; and then you would take it as a matter of unspeakable joy, to be found in such a state as you now count sad and melancholy. Ask but a dying man, whether fleshly pleasure or godliness be the sweeter thing ? Now when the delusions of prosperity are gone, which do men most relish, and which is it that they would own ? By the consent of all the wise men in the world, I may well conclude that a holy life is incomparably the most pleasant.

But I know there are many things that seem to cross all this that I have spoken, which will be the matter of the objections of ungodly men, and therefore must have an answer, before we pass any further. And the principal objection is from the too common case of those that fear God, who walk so sadly, and doubt, and complain, and mourn so frequently, and show so little cheerfulness and joy, when many of the ungodly live in mirth, that you will think I speak against experience, when I say that a life of holiness is so pleasant, and therefore that it is not to be believed. You will say, Do we not see the contrary in the sadness of their faces, and hear it in their sad, lamenting words ?

To this I must give many particulars in answer, which when you have laid together, you may see that all this makes nothing against the pleasantness of the ways of God.

And, 1. You must difference between the entrance into holiness, and the progress ; and between a new beginner, that is but lately turned from his ungodliness, and one that hath had time to try and understand the ways of God. Those that are entering, or but newly come in, must needs have sorrow. But what is the cause of it ? Not their godliness, but their ungodliness. I mean, it is their ungodliness which they lament, though it be godliness that causeth them to lament it. Can you expect that an ingenuous man should see his sin, and look back on so many years' transgressions, and not be grieved ? To see that he hath so long abused God, and lost his time, and neglected his salvation, and that he hath lain so long in so miserable a state, must needs cause remorse in the conscience that hath any feeling. And will you

say that godliness is unpleasant, because it makes a man sorrow for his ungodliness ? If a man that hath killed his dearest friend, or his own father, be grieved for the fact when he cometh to repentance, will you blame his repentance or his murder for his grief ? Will you say, What a hurtful thing is this repentance ! or rather, what an odious crime was it that must be so repented of ! Would you wish a man that hath lived so long in sin and misery, to have no sorrow for it at his return ? especially when it is but a healing sorrow, preparing for remission, and not a sorrow joined with despair, as theirs will be that die impenitently ? Observe the complaints of penitent souls, whether it be their present godliness, or their former ungodliness, which they lament ? Will you hear a man lament his former sinful, careless life, and yet will you lay the blame on the contrary course of duty, which now he hath undertaken ? You may as wisely accuse a man for landing in a safe harbour, because he there lamenteth his loss by shipwreck while he was at sea. Or as wisely may you blame a man for rising that complaineth how he hurt himself by his fall. And as honestly may you accuse the chastity of your wife, because she lamenteth her former adultery ; or the fidelity of your friend or servant, because he lamenteth his former unfaithfulness.

But though the pangs of the new birth be somewhat grievous, and we come not into the world of grace without some lamentation, yet this is not the state of the holy life into which we enter ; nor are those pangs to continue all our days.

2. You must distinguish between the weaker and the stronger sort of christians, and consider that children are apt to cry ; but it is not therefore better to be unborn. Sickness is querulous, and the weak are froward ; but it is not therefore better to be dead. The godly are not perfectly godly. They are sinners while they are saints. They have holiness, but they have corruption with it. Their sin is conquered, but yet not totally rooted out. The relics do remain though it do not reign. And it is the remnant of their unholiness that they lament, and not their holiness. They grieve not that they are godly, but that they are no more godly. It troubleth them not that they are come home to Christ, but that they have brought so much of their corruption with them. Hearken whether they complain of their humility, or their pride ; of their faith, or their unbelief ; their confidence, or their distrust ; their repentance, or their hardness of heart. It is not their heavenly-mindedness that troubleth them, but their earthly-mindedness. Nor is it their spirituality, but their carnality. Nor is it the duties, but the weakness and faultiness of their souls in duty. Not that they do it, but that they do it no better. It is more holiness that they beg for, and lament the want of. And will you say that holiness is unpleasant, because men would so fain have more of it ? You would reason with more wisdom in another case. If a man that hath tasted meat or drink, complain because he hath no more, you would not blame his food for that ; nor gather from thence that it is unpleasant, or that famine is more delightful.

3. You must distinguish between those christians that have fallen since their conversion into any great and wounding sin, or nourish some vexatious distempers ; and those that walk more uprightly with God, and maintain their integrity and peace. No wonder if David, after his sin, complain of the breaking of his bones and heart ; and if Peter go out and weep bitterly. The servants of Christ do know so much of the evil of sin, that they cannot make so light of it, as the blind and obdurate world that are

past feeling. That sin which hath cost them formerly so dear, and hath cost Christ so much dearer on their behalf, must needs cost some smart in the penitent soul. Sickness is felt because it supposeth the subject to be alive; but the dead feel not that they are dead and rotten. And it doth not follow that therefore death is more desirable than sickness. It is because they are so like to the ungodly, that the servants of Christ do grieve and complain. But so far as they feel the healthfulness of their souls, and are conscious of their sincerity and upright conversations, they have greater comfort than the world can afford them.

4. You must distinguish between those christians that by misapprehensions are unacquainted with their own felicity, and those that better understand their state. If a man be never so holy, and know it not, but by temptations is brought to doubt, whether he be not yet in his unsanctified state, no wonder if this man be grieved with these fears. But his grief is not because he is sanctified, but because he is afraid lest he be unsanctified. And this shows that holiness is most lovely in his eyes; or else why should he be so much troubled, when he doth but doubt whether he be holy or not? If a rich man by a false report should believe that he is robbed of his goods and treasure, or that his houses are burnt, when it is not so, he will mourn or be troubled till he know the truth. And will any be so foolish as to conclude from thence, that riches are more uncomfortable than beggary? Had you not rather be rich, though for a time you know it not, than to live in certain, continual want? If a man that is in health be persuaded by mistake that he is in a consumption, he will be troubled by his mistake. But will you thence conclude that sickness is more comfortable than health? Is it not better to have health with those mistaken fears, than to live in sickness? Methinks you should rather argue on the contrary side, How sweet is health, when the fear of losing it is so troublesome! and how bitter is sickness and death, when the very fear of them is so grievous! And so you should say, How sweet is holiness, when it is so troublesome to those that have it so much as to fear lest they have it not! and, how miserable a life is it to be ungodly, when it is so grievous to the servants of Christ even once to fear lest they are ungodly!

But go to those christians that know themselves, and are truly acquainted with their sincerity and their privileges, and see whether they walk so uncomfortably as those mistaken, doubting souls. You will find them in another case, and hear other kind of language from their mouths; even the joyful praises of their Redeemer, and the thankful acknowledgments of his abundant love. How sweet unto their souls is the remembrance of kindness! and how delightful a work is it from day to day to magnify his name!

5. You must also distinguish between those weak, mistaken christians, that understand not the extent of the covenant of grace, and those that do understand it. If a believer by mistake should think that the grace of the gospel extendeth not to such as he, because he is unworthy, and his sins are great, no wonder if he be troubled: as you would be if you should conceive that your lease were not made to you, but to another; or as a malefactor would be if he thought his pardon belonged not to him, but to another man. But hence you should rather observe the riches and excellences of the gospel, and the happiness of the heirs of promise, than dream that it is better be strangers to the holy covenant still. They are better that have a promise of life and understand it not, than they that have none. But those

that know the freeness and fulness of the promise, and study with all saints to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 18, 19, do use to walk more comfortably according to the riches of that grace which they do possess.

6. Consider, also, that most of these complaining christians are glad that they are in any measure got out of their former state, and therefore apprehend their cause to be better than it was before: or else they would turn back to the state that they were in; which they would not do for all the world. And therefore they take a godly life to be far more pleasant to them than that do attain it.

7. Moreover, the sorrow of believers is such as may consist with joy. At the same time while they are grieved that they are no better, they are gladder of that measure of grace which they have received, than they would be to be made the rulers of the world. While they are mourning for the remnant of their sins, they are glad that it is but a remnant that they have to mourn for. Yea, while they are troubled because they doubt of their sincerity and salvation, they are more sustained and comforted with that little discerning which they have of their evidences, and with their hopes of the everlasting love of God, than they could by all your sinful pleasures. Try the most dejected, mournful christian, whether he would change states and comforts with the best and greatest of the ungodly. The soul of man is so active and comprehensive, that it can at once both rejoice and mourn. While they mourn for sin, and feel affliction, believers can have some rejoicing taste of everlasting life.

8. Yea, the godly sorrow of a believer is the matter of his joy. He is gladder when his heart will melt for sin, than he would be to be your partner in your carnal pleasures. He would not change the comfort that he findeth in his penitent tears for all your laughter.

9. The joy of a believer is intimate and solid, as I said before, according to the object of it, and not like the feeling of a fool, or the laughter of a child, or the sensual mirth that Solomon called madness. And therefore it is not so discernible to others as carnal mirth is. And therefore you think that the servants of Christ are void of pleasure when they have much more than you. It is little ridiculous accidents and toys that make men laugh; but great things give us an inward, sweet content and joy, which scorns to show itself by laughter. And what can be a fitter object of such great content, than to be a member of Christ, and an heir of heaven.

10. Moreover this sorrow of the godly is but medicinal, and a preparative to their after-joys. It doth but work out the poison of sin, which would mar their comforts, and drive them to Christ, and fit them to value him, and taste the sweetness of his love and grace.

11. And as it is not the state and life of a christian, but his fasting-days, or time of physic, so the comforts of the godly ordinarily do far exceed their sorrows, at least in weight, if not in passionate sense. They have their hours of sweet access to God, and of heavenly meditation, and delightful remembrance of the experiences of his love, and perusal of his promises, and communion with his people; and of the exercise of faith, and hope, and love. And with those christians that have attained stability and strength, these comforting graces are predominant; and their life is more in love and praise, than in vexatious fears and sorrows. And it should be so with all believers. Love is the heart of the new

creature. It is a life of love, and joy, and praise, that Christ calls all his people to; and forbids them all unnecessary doubts and sorrows; and keepeth them up so strictly from sin, that he may prevent their sorrows. And if you will judge whether holiness be a pleasant course, you must go to the prescript, and consider the nature and use of holiness, and look at those that live according to the mercies of the gospel; and not look at the dejections and sorrows of those that grieve themselves by swerving from the way of holiness; as if you would judge that health is unpleasant because you hear a sick man groan. And yet even these weak and mournful christians usually have more joy than you. The very preservation of their souls from that despair which sin would cast them into if they had not a Christ to fly to, and the little tastes of mercy which they have felt, and the revivings that they find between their sorrows and the hopes they have of better days, are enough to weigh down all your pleasures, and all their own sorrows.

12. Lastly, consider that this is not the life of perfect joy, and therefore some sorrows will be intermixed. Comfort will not be perfect till holiness be perfect; and till we arrive at the place of perfect joy. What is wanting now while we live in a troublesome, malignant world, shall shortly be made up in the heavenly Jerusalem, when we have admittance into our Master's joy. And then all the world shall be easily convinced, whether sin or duty, a fleshly or a holy life, hath the greater pleasures and contents.

Object. But it is not only the weakness of professors, but the very way that is prescribed them, that must bear the blame. For they are commanded to fast, and weep, and mourn.

Ans. 1. That is but with the medicinal necessary sorrow, for preventing of a greater sorrow; as bitter medicines, and blood-letting, and strict diet, are for the prevention of death. God first commanded them to take heed of sin, the cause of sorrow. But if they will fall and break their bones, they must endure the pain of setting them again.

2. And doth not Christ command his servants also to rejoice? and again rejoice, and always to rejoice? Phil. iii. 1; iv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 16. Doth he not command them to live in the most delightful works of love and joy, and thankful mention of his mercies? I tell you, if christians did but live as God requireth them, and by his plenteous mercies doth encourage them to live, they would be the wonder of the world for their exceeding joy; they would triumph as men that are entering into rest, and make the miserable, ungodly princes and great ones of the world observe their low, contemptible condition, and see by the comfort of believers, that there are far higher joys than theirs to be attained. Did christians live as God would have them, according to their dignity and felicity, they would make the world admire the spirit, and hopes, and comforts that do so transport them. They would be so taken up in the love and praise of their Redeemer, that they would scarce have leisure to observe whether they be rich or poor, or to regard the honours or dishonours of the world. These little things would scarce find room in their affection, they would be taken up so much with God. If they were sore with scourging, and their feet were in the stocks, they would there sing forth the praise of him that hath assured them of deliverance and everlasting joy, as Paul and Silas did, Acts xvi. They would rejoice in poverty, in disgrace, in pain, and nothing would be able to overcome their joy. They would pity the tyrants and sensual epicures that have no sweeter pleasures than those that the flesh and this deceitful world affords.

Oh the joy that believers would have in their secret prayers, in their heavenly meditations, in their holy conference, in the reading of the promises, and much more in their public praises and communion, if they did but follow more fully the conduct of that Spirit that hath undertaken to be their comforter! What makes believers slight this world, and take all your pleasures to be unworthy of their entertainment or regard, but that they have had a taste of sweeter things, and by faith are overgrown these childish vanities? If God and his favour be better than such worms as we, and the heavenly glory better than these transitory toys, you may well conceive that the believer's joy, that is fed by these, must be greater (at least in worth and weight) than all the pleasures of this sublunary world. If therefore you love a life of pleasure, come over to Christ, and live a holy, heavenly life; and believe one that hath made some trial, yea believe the Lord himself, that holiness is the only pleasant life.

And now as we have seen it plainly proved, that the life of holiness is the most pleasant life, so from hence we may see two sorts proved, that (in different measures) are found to be transgressors.

The first is, those blind, ungodly wretches, that can find no pleasure in a holy life, when they can find pleasure in their worldly drudgery, and in their sensual uncleanness and their childish vanities. They have the God of infinite goodness to delight in; but to their impious hearts he seemeth not delightful. They have his power, and wisdom, and holiness, and truth to love, and admire, and trust upon, and his excellent works to behold him in, and his holy laws and gracious promises to meditate on; but they have small delight in any such employment. They have leave as well as any others to open their hearts to God in secret, and in prayer and praise to recreate their souls, and to hold communion with the saints of God, and to be exercised both in public and private in his worship, and to order their families in his fear, and to manage their affairs according to his word; but they find no pleasure in such a life as this, but are as backward to it as if it were a troublesome and unprofitable business, and are weary of that little outside worship which they do perform. They have heaven set before them to seek after, and to make their portion and delight, but they have small delight to think or speak of it. Their hearts are unsuitable to these high, holy, and spiritual things. They are matters that they are strange to, and have no firm and confident belief of, but an uncertain, wavering, weak opinion: and therefore they are too far off to be their delight. "They say to God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy way. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" Job xxi. 14, 15. If they do come to the public assemblies, and join there in the outward part of worship, they find little life and pleasure in it, because they are strangers to the reward and spiritual part, which is the kernel. They look more at the preacher's gifts, and the manner of his doctrine and delivery, than at the spiritual necessary matter that is delivered. They have some pleasure in a neat composed speech, that seemeth not to accuse them any more than others, and grateth not on their tender ears with plain and necessary truth; but suffers them to go home as quietly as they came thither. But if the preacher touch them to the quick, and endeavour faithfully to acquaint them with themselves; or if he have no eloquence or accurateness of speech to please them with, but be guilty of any unhandsoneness of expression, or modal imperfections, they are weary of hearing him,

and think it long till the glass be run, and perhaps instead of tasting the sweetness of wholesome truth, they make it the matter of their derision and contempt.

But let them be at cards or dice, at hawking or hunting, at any idle sports and vanities, and they can hold out longer with delight. At drinking, or feasting, or idle talking, they are not so weary. Yea, in the labours of their calling, when their bodies are weary, their minds are more unwearied; and in their fields and shops they have more delight than in the spiritual, holy service of the Lord. They are never so merry as when there is least of God upon their hearts and in their ways. And it is one of the reasons that hindereth their conversion, lest it should deprive them of their mirth, and cause them to spend the remainder of their days in uncomfortable heaviness. If sin were not sweet to them, conversion would be more easy. The pleasure which they find in creatures by their sin, is the prison and fetters of their soul's captivity. If this be thy case that readest these lines, I beseech thee lay to heart these following aggravations of thy sin.

1. How blind and wicked is the heart that can find more pleasure in sin than holiness! Is the creature pleasant to thee, and God unpleasant? What a shame is this to thy understanding and thy will! It proclaimeth thy pernicious folly and impiety. If thou hadst no more wit than to be pleased more with stones than gold, with dung than meat, with shameful nakedness than clothing, thou wouldest not be judged wise enough to be left to thy own dispose and government. But the folly which thou dost manifest, is unspeakably greater. Darkness is not so much worse than light, and death is not so much worse than life, as sin is worse than holiness, and the world than God. And is the worst more pleasant to thee than the best? It is a fool indeed, to whom "it is a sport to do mischief," Prov. x. 23, and so great a mischief as sin is; and yet hath no delight in understanding, chap. xviii. 2. "Delight is not seemly for such fools," chap. xix. 10.

And how wicked is that heart, as well as blind, that is soaverse to God and holiness! Doth not this show thee, 1. The absence of God's holy image? 2. And the presence of Satan's image upon thy soul?

Nothing doth more certainly prove what a man is, than the complacency and displacency of his heart. If you know what it is in yourselves or others, that pleaseth and displeaseth most, you may certainly know whether you have the Spirit and grace of Christ or not. This is the durable, infallible evidence, which Satan shall never be able to invalidate, and which the weakest christians can scarce tell how to deny in themselves. Could they be more holy, it would please them better than to be more rich. Could they believe more, and love God more, and trust him more, and obey him better, it would please them more than if you gave them all the honours of the world. They are never so well pleased with their own hearts, as when they find them nearest heaven, and have most of the knowledge of God, and impress of his attributes, and sense of his presence. They are never so well pleased with their lives, as when they are most holy and fruitful, and may fullest be called "a walking with God." They are never so much displeased with themselves, as when they find least of God upon their hearts, and are most dark and dull, and undisposed to holy communion with him. They are never so much weary of themselves, as when their lives are least fruitful, holy, and exact. And this is a certain evidence of their sincerity. For it shows what they love, and what it is that hath their hearts or wills. And it is

the heart or will that is the man in God's account. God takes a man to be what he sincerely would be. As he is, so he loveth and willeth; and as he loveth and willeth, such he is. His complacency or displacency are the immediate sure discoveries of his bent or inclination. This certain evidence poor doubting souls should have oft recourse to, and improve.

And on the contrary, it is as sure an evidence of your misery, when you "savour not the things of the Spirit," Rom. viii. 5—7; and when it pleaseth you more to be great, than to be good; to be rich, than to be religious and righteous; to serve your lusts, than to serve the Lord. When you set more by the applause of men, than by the approbation of God; and had rather be far from God than near him, and be excused from a holy life than used to it and constant in it. When you take the world and sin for your recreation or delight, and a godly life for a melancholy, wearisome, and unpleasant course. This certainly shows that you have yet the old corrupted nature, and serpentine enmity against the Spirit and life of Christ, and are yet in the flesh, and therefore can no more please the Lord, than his holy ways are pleasing unto you, Rom. viii. 6—8; and it proveth that you are yet in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of your iniquity, and that your hearts are not right in the sight of God, and that you are the slaves of Satan, whose nature you partake of, by which you are thus alienated from the Lord.

Didst thou know God as faith doth know him, his loving-kindness would be better to thee than life itself, Psal. lxxiii. 3. If thou didst love him, (as it is like thou wilt pretend thou dost,) it would be meat and drink to thee to enjoy his love, and do his will. And if thou know him not by faith, nor cleavest to him by unfeigned love, how canst thou pretend to have his image?

How would you judge of that man's heart, that were no better affected to his friend, to his parents or children, or other relations, than you manifest yourselves to be to God? If he can take no pleasure in the company of his wife or children, but is glad when he is far from them, in the company of strangers, or harlots, or prodigals, would you not say this man had a base, unmanly disposition? Express but such an inclination in plain words, and try how honest, sober men will judge of them. Much more would it be odious to christian ears, if you should tell God plainly, We can find no pleasure in thee, or in thy holy ways; thy word and service are unsavoury and wearisome unto us. We had rather be talking or busied about the matters of the world. We have far more pleasure in recreations and sensual accommodations, than in remembering thee and thy kingdom, and than we find in the life that is called holy. Would not such words as these be called impious by every christian that should hear them? And is not that an impious heart then, which speaketh thus or is thus affected, and that an impious life that manifesteth it, though dissembling lips are ashamed to profess it.

If God be not more to be loved and delighted in than any thing or all things else, he is not God. If heaven and holiness be not sweeter than all the pleasures of earth and sin, let them have no more such honourable names. Let sin and earth then be called heaven; but woe to them that have no better!

2. What monstrous ingratitude is that man guilty of, that when God hath provided, and Christ hath purchased, such high delights, and freely tendered them to unworthy sinners, will say, I find no pleasure in them, and take them for no delights at all? When the Lord beheld thee wallowing in thy filth, and

laughing in thy misery, and making a sport of thine own perdition, he pitied thee, and provided and offered to thee the most noble and excellent delights that thy nature is capable of enjoying. And wilt thou cast them back unthankfully in his face, and say, They are unpleasant, tedious things? If your child did so by his meat or clothes, yea or a beggar at your door did so by his alms, you would think it proved his great unworthiness. If he throw away the best you can give him, and say, It is naught, there is no sweetness in it, would you not think it fit that want should help to mend his relish, and cure his ingratitude? And will you do so yourselves by Christ and holiness, and say as those, Mal. i. 13, "What a weariness is it!" Take heed lest you provoke the Lord to cast you into a state in which you shall have more cause to be weary. If you are weary of reading, and praying, and hearing, and other holy exercises, and weary of heart-searching, penitent meditations, will you not be wearier of hell-fire, and of the dolorous reviews of this your folly, and of the endless, easeless, remediless sense of the wrath of God, and gripes of your own self-tormenting consciences! How just is it with God to give those men somewhat that they have cause to be weary of, that will be thus weary of his sweetest service, and reject the greatest mercies he can offer them, as if they were some burdensome, worthless things!

3. Will you have any pleasure at all, or will you have none? If any, in what then will you place it, and whence will you expect it, if not from God in a holy life? If God be thy trouble, what then is fit to be thy delight? Darest thou say in thy heart or with thy tongue, that sin and sensuality is better? Darest thou say that a good bargain, or other worldly gain, or cards, or dice, or other sports, or ease, or good cheer, or an ale-house, or a whore, are pleasanter things than walking with thy God in faith and holiness, and expectation of the everlasting joys? Heaven and earth shall bear witness against thee, and common reason shall bear witness against thee, for this inhuman, impious folly and ingratitude, if ever thou appear at the bar of God, with the guilt of such unreasonable sin. What! is God no better in thine eyes, than a filthy, brutish, sinful pleasure? And is the love of God no sweeter a work than the love of sensual delights? Saith blessed Augustine, "He that will sell or exchange his soul for transitory commodities, doth censure Christ to be a foolish merchant, that knew no better what he did, when he gave his life for those souls that you will not lose a sin for." So I may say here. Hath Christ bought for you holy and everlasting pleasure, at the price of his own most bitter pains and precious blood, and do you now think them no better than your fleshly, bestial delights? Is it Christ or you, think you, that is mistaken in the value of them? Did he shed his blood to purchase you that which is not worth the parting with a cup of drink for, or the parting with your pleasure or unjust commodity for? Sure he that judgeth thus of Christ, is far from believing in him, with any true christian, saving faith.

4. If you can find no pleasure in God and in a holy life, you may be sure that he will have no pleasure in you. Wonder not if you find in your greatest need, that you are abhorred and loathed by the Lord, when you loathed the very thoughts and mention of him, in the day of your visitation. Marvel not if the most holy God do take no pleasure in a loathsome sinner, when the sinner is so ungodly, that he takes more pleasure in the most sordid, fading trifles than in God. You may offer the sacrifice of your heartless, hypocritical prayers and praises unto God, and he

will count them abomination, and cast them back as dung into your faces, and tell you that he hath no pleasure in the sacrifice of such fools. Read in his own words, Prov. xv. 8; xxi. 27; Isa. i. 13; Eccles. v. 4. As you are weary of serving him, so he is weary of your services, and it is a "trouble to him to bear them; and when you spread forth your hands he will hide his eyes from you, yea, when you make many prayers he will not hear," Isa. i. 14, 15. When the Jews offered their deceitful sacrifices, and said, "Behold what a weariness is it!" God sent them word that he hath no pleasure in them, nor would regard their persons, nor accept a sacrifice at their hands, Mal. i. 8—10; and their solemn feasts he counteth dung. And dung would be no acceptable present or feast to yourselves, if it were offered you instead of meat, Mal. ii. 3. "My soul (saith the Lord) loathed them, and their soul abhorred me," Zech. xi. 8. As he "that despiseth him shall be lightly esteemed by him," 1 Sam. ii. 30, so he that loatheth him shall be loathed by him. "If any man draw back, (saith the Lord,) my soul shall have no pleasure in him," Heb. x. 38. "For he is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him: the foolish shall not stand in his sight: he hateth all workers of iniquity," Psal. v. 4, 5. And little do you now imagine what a horror it will be to you in the day of your extremity, for God to tell you that he hath no pleasure in you. When you look before you into an eternity of woe, which you have no hope to escape but by the mercy of the Lord, and he shall dash that hope by telling you that he hath no pleasure in you, it will give your souls the deadly wound that never shall be healed. In vain then shall you wish that you had chosen in time the durable delights, and not the pleasures of filthy sin for so short a season; and to your torment you shall know whether God or the world was more worthy of your sweetest affections and delights; and how deservedly they are "all damned that obey not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thess. ii. 12. "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them," Rom. i. 32. If you will count it your pleasure to riot in the daytime, rather than to walk and work by the light, you must look to receive the due reward of such unrighteousness, 2 Pet. ii. 13. If it be your sport to sin, and to do mischief, (Prov. x. 23,) you shall have small sport in suffering the punishment of your wilful folly.

5. If God and holiness seem not pleasant to you, then heaven itself cannot seem pleasant to you, if you consider it truly as it is. For the heavenly felicity consisteth in the perfection of our holiness, and the perfect fruition of God himself, by sight, and love, and joy for ever. If the little holiness be unpleasant and irksome to you which appeareth in the imperfect saints on earth, what pleasure could you take in that supereminent holiness which is the state and work of the celestial inhabitants? If the thoughts and mention of God be unpleasant to you, and his holy praises do seem to you as matters of no delight, what then would you do in heaven where this must be your everlasting work? And if heaven seem a place of toil and trouble to you, how just will it be that you are everlastingly shut out! How can you for shame beg of God to glorify you, when you take the glory that he hath promised for a misery? If you think that there is a heaven of such sensual pleasures as you desire, or that any shall be saved that only choose heaven as a less and more tolerable misery than hell, you will shortly find your expectations deceived.

Lay all these five considerations together, and you may perceive what miserable souls those are, that can find pleasure in perishing trifles of the world, and none in a holy and heavenly life. Be assured of this, whosoever thou art, that if God, and heaven, and a holy life, be not a thousand times sweeter and more delightful to thee, than any thing that this world can afford to thy contentment, it is not for want of matter of superabundant delight to be found in God and in his holy ways; but it is for want of reason, or faith, or consideration, or a suitable heart in thee, which may make thee fit to know and taste the pleasures which now thou art unacquainted with. And is it not a pity that such infinite delights should be set before men, and they should lose them all for want of a heart and appetite to them? and should perish by choosing the lowest vanities before them?

I do therefore earnestly beseech thee that readest these words, if thou be one of these unhappy souls, that canst find no pleasure in God and holiness, that thou wouldst speedily observe and lament that blindness and wickedness of thy heart, that is the cause of this infatuation and corruption of thine apprehension and rational appetite; and that thou wouldst presently apply thyself to Christ for the cure of it. To which end I advise thee to these following means.

Direct. 1. If you would taste the pleasure of a holy life, bethink you better of the necessity and excellency of it; and cast away your prejudice and false conceits, which have deceived you, and turned your minds against it. A child may be deluded to take his own father for his enemy, if he see him in an enemy's garb, or be persuaded by false suggestions that he hateth him. A man may be persuaded to hate his meat, if you can but make him believe that it is poison; or to hate his clothes, if you can but make him believe they are infected with the plague. If you will suffer your understandings to be deluded, so far as to overlook the amiable nature of holiness, and to think the image of God is but a fancy, or that a heavenly life is nothing but hypocrisy, and that it is but pride that maketh men seek to be holier than others, and that makes them they cannot go quietly to hell in despite of the commands and mercies of the Lord, as others do. I say, if the devil, the great deceiver, can possess you with such frantic thoughts as these, what wonder if you hate the very name of holiness? How can you find pleasure in the greatest good, while you take it for an evil? If you will believe all that the devil and his foolish, malicious instruments say of God and of a holy life, you shall never love God, nor see any loveliness, or taste any sweetness in his service.

Direct. 2. Come near and search into the inwards of a holy life, and try it a little while yourselves, if you would taste the pleasure of it: and do not stand looking on it at a distance, where you see nothing but the outside; nor judge by bare hearsay, which giveth you no taste or relish of it. The sweetness of honey, or wine, or meat is not known by looking on it, but by tasting it. Come near and try what it is to live in the love of God, and in the belief and hope of life eternal, and in universal obedience to the laws of Christ, and then tell us how these things do relish with you. You will never know the sweetness of them effectually, as long as you are but lookers-on. It was the similitude which Peter Martyr used in a sermon which converted the noble Neapolitan Marquis of Vicum, Galeacius Caraccioli, who forsook wife, and children, and honours, and lands, and country, and all, for the liberty of the reformed religion of Geneva. Saith he, If you see the motion of dancers afar off, and hear not the music, you will think they are frantic. But when you come near

and hear the music, and observe their harmonical, orderly motion, you will take delight in it, and desire to join with them. So men that judge at a distance of the truth and holy ways of God, by the slanderous reports of malignant men, will think of the godly, as Festus of Paul, that they are beside themselves; but if they come among them, and search more impartially into the reasons of their course, and specially if they join with them in the inwards and vital actions of religion, they will then be quickly of another mind, and not go back for all the pleasures or profits of the world. In the works of nature (and sometimes of art) the outside is so far from showing you the excellences, that it is but a comely veil to hide them. Though you would have a handsome cover for your watch, yet doth it but hide the well-ordered frame and useful motions that are within. You must open it, and there observe the parts and motions, if you would pass a right judgment of the work. You would have a comely cover for your books; but it is but to hide the well-composed letters from your sight, in which the sense, and use, and excellency doth consist. You must open it, if you will read it and know the worth of it. A common spectator when he seeth a rose or other flower or fruit-tree, thinketh he hath seen all, or the chiefest part. But it is the secret, unsearchable motions and operations of the vegetative life and juice within, by which the beauteous flowers and sweet fruits are produced, and wonderfully differenced from each other, that are the excellent part and mysteries in these natural works of God. Could you but see these secret, inward causes and operations, it would incomparably more content you. He that passeth by and looketh on a beehive, and seeth but the cover, and the laborious creatures going in and out, doth see nothing of the admirable operations within, which God hath taught them. Did you there see how they make their wax and honey, and compose their combs, and by what laws and in what order their commonwealth is governed, and their work carried on, you would know more than the outside of the hive can show you. So it is about the life of godliness. If you saw the inward motions of the quickening Spirit upon the soul, and the order and exercise of every grace, and by what laws the thoughts and affections are governed, and to whom they tend, you would then see more of the beauty of religion than you can see by the outward behaviour of our assemblies. The shell is not sweet, but serves to hide the sweeter part from those that will not storm those walls, that they may possess it as their prize. The kernel of religion is covered with a shell so hard that flesh and blood cannot break it. Hard sayings, and hard providences to the church, and to particular believers, are such as many cannot break through, and therefore never taste the sweetness. The most admired feature and beauty of any of your bodies, (which fools think to be the most excellent part of the body,) is indeed but the handsome, well-adorned case that God by nature doth cover his more excellent inward works with. Were you but able to see within that skin, and but once to observe the wonderful motions, heart, and brain, and the course of the blood in the veins and arteries, and the several fermentations, and the causes and nature of chylifications, and sanguifications, and the spirits, and senses, and all their works; and if you saw the reason of every part and vessel in this wondrous frame, and the causes and nature of every disease; much more if you saw the excellent nature and operations of that rational soul, that is the glory of all, you would then say that you had seen a more excellent sight than the smooth and beauteous skin that covers it. The invisible soul is

of greater excellency than all the visible beauties in the world. So also if you would know the excellences of religion, you must not stand without the doors, or judge of it by the skin and shell, but you must come near, and look into the inward reasons of it, and think of the difference between the high employments of a saint, and the poor and sordid drudgery of the ungodly; between walking with God in desire and love, and in the spiritual use of his ordinances and creatures, and conversing only with sinful men and transitory vanities; between the life of faith and hope, which is daily maintained by the foresight of everlasting glory, and a life of mere nature, and worldliness, and sensuality, and idle compliment and pomp, which are but the progenitors of sorrow, and end in endless desperation. Come near, and try the power of God's laws, and of the workings of his Spirit: and think in good sadness of the place where you must live for ever, and the glory you shall see, and the sweet enjoyment and employment you shall have in the presence of the eternal Majesty: and think well of all the sweet contrivances and discoveries of his love in Christ; and how freely they are offered to you; and how certainly they may be your own; peruse the promises, and sweet expressions of love and grace; and exercise your souls in serious meditation, prayer, thanksgiving, and praise; and withal remember, that none but these will be durable delights; and tell me whether a life of sport, and pride, and worldliness, and flesh-pleasing, or a life of faith and holiness, be the better, the sweeter, and more pleasant life.

Direct. 3. If you would taste the pleasures of a holy life, you must apply yourself to Christ in the use of his appointed means, for the renewing of your natures; that this Spirit may give you a new understanding and a new heart, to discern and relish spiritual things: for your old corrupted minds and hearts will never do it. They are unsuitable to the things of God, and therefore cannot receive them nor savour them, nor be subject to the holy laws, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15; Rom. viii. 5—8. The appetite and relish of every living creature is agreeable to its nature. A fish hath small pleasure in the dry land, nor a bird in the deeps of water; grass and water is sweeter to an ox than our most delicate meats and drinks. Corruption and custom have made you so vicious, that your natures are not such as God made them at the first, when he himself was man's desire and delight; but they are now inclined to sensual things, being captivated by the fleshly part, and have contracted a strangeness and enmity to God. And therefore those hearts will never relish the sweetnesses of a life of faith and holiness, till faith and holiness be planted in them, and they be born again by regenerating grace. For that "which is born of the flesh is flesh," (and but flesh; and therefore doth reach no higher than a fleshly inclination can move it,) "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;" and therefore will relish and love things spiritual.

Direct. 4. Lastly, if you would taste the pleasures of a holy life, you must forbear those sinful, fleshly pleasures, which now you are so taken up with. For these are they that infatuate your understandings, and corrupt your appetites, and make the sweetest things seem loathsome to you. As the using of vain sports and filthy lusts abroad, doth make such persons weary of their own relations, and families, and business at home; so all the glutting of the mind with vanity, and using yourselves to sinful pleasures, is it that turns your hearts from God, and maketh his word and ways unsavoury to you. You must first, with the prodigal, Luke xv. be brought into a famine of your former pleasures, be denied

the very husk, and then you will remember that the meanest servant in your Father's house is in a far better case than you, having bread enough, while you perish through hunger. And hence it is that God doth so often promote the work of conversion by affliction; and by the same means carrieth on the work of grace in most that he will save. Cannot you tell how to leave your sensual pleasures? What will you do when sickness makes you weary of them? weary of your meat, and drink, and bed? weary to hear talk of that which now doth seem so sweet; and to say, I have no pleasure in them? Cannot you spare your friends, your sports, your bravery, your wealth, and other carnal accommodations? What will you say of them, when pain disgraceth them, and convinceth you of their insufficiency to stand you in any stead? These things that you are now so loth to leave, may shortly become such a load to your souls, as undigested meat to the stomach that is sick, that you can have no ease till you have cast them off.

Away therefore with these luscious vanities betimes, which vitiate your appetites, and put them out of relish with the things that are truly pleasant. Oh what a shame it is to hear a man say, I shall never endure so godly, and spiritual, and strict a life; when he can endure and take pleasure in a life of sin! You may wiselier lie down in the dunghill or the ditch, and say, I shall never endure a cleaner diet; or company only with enemies and wild beasts, and say, I shall never endure the company of my friends. What! is God worse than the creature, and heaven than earth? and so much worse, as not to be endured in your thoughts and affections in comparison of them? You will never know your friends till you forsake these deceivers; nor ever know the pleasures of a holy life, till you will let go the poisonous pleasures of sin. And then you may find that sanctification destroyeth not, but changeth and recovereth your delights, and giveth you safety for the greatest peril, health for sickness, friends for enemies, gold for dross, life for death, and the foretastes of rest for tiring vexation.

2. The second sort that are hence to be reprov'd, are those weak and troubled servants of the Lord, that live as sadly as if they found more grief than pleasure in the ways of God.

Indeed it is to be lamented that few of the heirs of life do live according to the happiness and dignity of their calling; nor are the great things that God hath done for them so apparent in the cheerfulness and comforts of their lives as they should be. But some that are addicted to dejectedness, do in a greater measure wrong Christ and themselves, being always feeding upon secret griefs, and torturing themselves with doubts and fears, and acquainted with almost no other language but lamentations, self-accusations, and complaints. These poor souls usually discover honest hearts, that are weary of sin, and low in their own eyes, and long to be better, and do not disregard the matters of their salvation as dead-hearted, ungodly sinners do. Their complaints show what they would be; and what they would be sincerely, that they are in God's account. But yet they live so far below the sweet delights which they might partake of, and so far below the provisions of their Father's house and the riches of the gospel, that they have cause to lament their excessive lamentations, and more cause to reform this sad distemper, and no cause to indulge it, as usually such do. And though with the most of them some natural passions and weaknesses, and some melancholy distempers, are so much the cause, as may much excuse them; yet because it is an evil which must be disowned, and reason must be the means, where people have the free use of reason,

I shall lay down some of the great inconveniences of this sad distemper, and beseech those that tender the honour of God, and would do that which is most pleasing to him, and love not their own calamity, that they will soberly consider of what I say, and labour to regulate their minds accordingly.

1. I desire the dejected christian to consider, that by his heavy and uncomfortable life, he seemeth to the world to accuse God and his service, as if he openly called him a rigorous, hard, unacceptable Master, and his work a sad, unpleasant thing. I know this is not your thoughts: I know it is yourselves, and not God and his service, that offendeth you; and that you walk heavily not because you are holy, but because you fear you are not holy, and because you are no more holy. I know it is not of grace, but for grace, that you complain. But do you not give too great occasion to ignorant spectators to judge otherwise? If you see a servant always sad, that was wont to be merry while he served another master, will you not think that he hath a master that displeaseth him? If you see a woman live in continual heaviness ever since she was married, that lived merrily before, will you not think that she hath met with an unpleasant match? You are born and new-born for God's honour; and will you thus dishonour him before the world? What do you (in their eyes) but dispraise him by your very countenance and carriage, while you walk before him in so much heaviness? The child that still cries when you put on his shoes, doth signify that they pinch him; and he dispraiseth his meat that makes a sour face at it; and he dispraiseth his friend, that is always sad and troubled in his company. He that should say of God, Thou art bad, or cruel, and unmerciful, should blaspheme. And so would he that saith of holiness, It is a bad, unpleasant, hurtful state. How then dare you do that which is so like to such blaspheming, when you should abstain from all appearance of evil? 1 Thess. v. 22. Canst thou find in thy heart thus to dishonour and wrong the God whom thou so much esteemest, and the grace which thou so much desirest? For a wicked man that is far from God, to go heavily or roar in the horror of his soul, is a shame to his sin, but no dishonour to God and holiness. But for you that are near him, in relation, engagement, and attendance, to walk so heavily, reflects on him to whom you are related, and from whom you look for your reward.

2. Consider, also, what a lamentable hinderance you are hereby to the conversion and salvation of souls? Your countenances and sad complainings do affright men from the service of the Lord, and as it were call to them, to keep off and fly from the way that you find so grievous. You gratify Satan, the enemy of Christ, and holiness, and souls, and become his instruments (though against your wills) to affright men from the way of life. As the papists keep their deluded proselytes abroad from truth and reformation, by giving them odious descriptions of the protestants, as if they were heretics, proud, frantic, mad, and scarcely men, and when they burn them they adorn them with pictures of the devil; even so doth Satan keep poor souls from entertaining Christ and truth, and entering the holy paths, by making them believe that the servants of Christ are a company of distempered, melancholy souls, and that godliness is the way to make men mad; and that he that will set his heart on heaven, must never look more for a merry, comfortable life on earth. Hence comes the proverb of the malignant formalists and profane, that A puritan is a protestant frightened out of his wits. And will you confirm this slander of the devil and his instruments? Will you

entice men to believe him! Will you make yourselves such pictures of unhappiness, and wear such a visor of calamity and misery, as shall frighten all that look on you and observe you, and discourage them from the way which they see accompanied with so much sorrow? As you hang up dead crows in your field to frighten the rest from the corn, and as murderers are hanged in irons to terrify all that see them from that crime, or as the heads of traitors are set up to the same end, as proclaiming to all passengers, Thus must you be used, if you will do as they; just so would Satan fill you with terrors, and overwhelm you with grief, and distract you with causeless doubts and fears, that you may appear to the world a miserable sort of people; and then all that look on you will be afraid of godliness, and think they see it as it were written in your foreheads, Such drooping, pitiful creatures must all be, that will lead so precise and heavenly a life. Do you think your carnal neighbours and acquaintance will not be deterred from a holy life, when they see that since you turned to it, you do nothing but complain, and droop, and mourn, as if you were worse than you were before? And was it not enough that you hindered their conversion before, when you were in your ignorance and sin, by your wicked examples and encouragements, but you must hinder it still by your dejected, discouraging countenances and conversations? Yea, perhaps your later excessive troubles may do more to hinder their conversion, than your persuasions and examples did before. And can you find in your hearts to lay such a stumblingblock as this in the way of your miserable acquaintance, to keep them from salvation? Will it not grieve you to think that you should have so great a hand in men's damnation, even since you are returned to God yourselves? I know by your sorrows and complaints, that the perdition of a soul is no small matter in your eyes. O therefore take heed of that which may procure it. The use that Satan would have you make of these very words is, to go away with more dejection, and to say, What a wretch am I! even unmeet to live, and that by my griefs am not only miserable myself, but also hinder the salvation of others. And thus he would draw thee to grieve over all thy griefs again, and because thou hast exceeded in thy sorrows, to be more excessive; and so to add one sin unto another; and to do more, because you have done too much. So that grief is all that he can allow thee; and one grief shall be made the reason of another, that thou mayest run thus in a round of misery, and stop in grieving, and go no further: whereas thou shouldst so grieve for such grief, as may call thee off, and stay thy grieving; and thy repenting should be the cure and forsaking of thy sin, and not the renewal of it.

But on the other side, if thou couldst live a heavenly, joyful life, that the glory of thy hopes might appear in thy countenance, thy conference, and conversation, how many might hereby be drawn to Christ, and caused to think well of the ways of God! Did the godly but exceed the rest of the world, in holy joy and cheerfulness of mind, as much as they exceed them in happiness and in the causes of true joy, what an honour would it be to Christ and holiness, and what an attractive to win the ignorant to embrace the motions of salvation! How easily would they let go their sinful pleasures, their gluttony, and drunkenness, and filthiness, and gaming, if they did but see by the carriage of believers, that they were like to exchange them for much greater joys! You cannot expect that ignorant men, that never tried a holy life, and have a natural enmity against it, should see the excellency of it immediately

in itself; but they will judge of religion by the persons that profess it. That shall seem to them the best religion, that hath the best and happiest professors; and those seem to them the happiest and best, that have the greatest comforts, and conquer most the troubles of their minds. You can expect no other, but that country people, that know not the nature of medicines themselves, should judge of them by the success, and think that he followeth the best advice, who is most healthful, and of longest life. And so will the ignorant judge of the holy doctrine and commands of God, by the lives of those that seem to follow them. O therefore behave yourselves in the church of God, as those that remember that they live in the presence of a world of men, whose happiness or misery hath much dependence on your lives. If you were debating the case with a sensual wretch, would you not tell him that holiness is a state of greater pleasure than his sin? Tell him so then by your example, as well as by your words: let him see as well as hear of the confidence and comforts of true believers. Were christianity exemplified in the lives of christians, how excellent a state would it appear! Were we but such as the holy doctrine and christian pattern requireth us to be, even the blind, malicious world would be forced to admire the attainments of the saints: though they might hate them, yet they would admire them. Were we such as Stephen, that was full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and could stedfastly look up to heaven by faith, and see there the glory of the living God, and Jesus standing at his right hand, till we were raised to his boldness in defence of the truth, and his quiet submission to the greatest sufferings, the world would not then be able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which we speak, but the faces of believers would sometimes appear to the terror of their persecutors as the faces of angels, as Acts v. 5, 10, 15; vii. 51, 55, 56, 60. They are high and glorious things that are assured to us in the promises of the gospel. Did but these things appear, in the stedfast faith, the confident hopes, desires, and joys of us that do expect them, believers then would be the wonder of the world; and our joys would so shame their dreaming, childish, brutish pleasures, that doubtless multitudes would flock in, to see what it is that so delighteth us, that they might be made partakers of our joys. Even as Simon Magus himself, when he saw the miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost, would fain have bought that gift with money; so men that are yet carnal, in the gall of bitterness and bond of their iniquities, will yet see a desirable excellency in the joy of the Holy Ghost, and wish they were partakers of such joys, though yet they are unacquainted with the way to attain it.

I do therefore entreat you, all that believe and hope for an everlasting crown, that you will show the poor deceived world the preciousness of your faith and hopes, and the high prerogative of the saints, in your answerable cheerfulness and joy, and live not with dead and uncomfortable hearts, as those that have nothing but a vexatious, transitory world to comfort them; much less to be more dejected than these wretched souls. Do you not desire the conversion of your carnal friends, and all about you? Would you not be glad if you could further it? Oh that you would try this pleasant way! and show them that you have found the invaluable treasure! And as the rich live in greater pomp and at higher rates than the poor, so you that speak of the riches of grace, and live in the family of the Lord, O show the world the dignity of your state, by your holy courage and comfortable behaviour, and by your living above the pleasures and griefs of unbelievers! When

they glory in their prosperity, do you glory in the Lord; when they boast themselves in their riches or reputation, do you imitate holy David, who profeseth, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together," Psal. xxxiv. 1-3; and Psal. xli. 8, "In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever." By such spiritual joyfulness your lives would be a continued sermon; and you might thus preach home more souls to Christ, than the most excellent preacher by bare persuasions. Poor sinners would begin to pity themselves that live so far below the saints; and they would think with themselves, It is not for nothing that these men rejoice, and are comfortable even in the loss of all those things that we take all our comfort in! For the honour of your dearest Lord, and for your own felicity, and for the sake of the miserable souls about you, I beseech you, christians, do your best to reach this sweet and joyfullest life, and to avoid those inordinate troubles and despondencies which are like to cross these blessed ends. And pray for me and the rest of his servants, that the Lord will forgive us our dishonouring of his name, our wronging our own souls, and our discouraging the world from living unto God, by our living so far below his mercies, and so unanswerable to the unspeakable treasures of his saints; and that for the time to come, we may lay this duty more to heart, and by the comforting Spirit may be elevated to the performance of it.

But I suppose some will say, To tell me how I should live for the encouragement of others is but to draw me to a hypocritical affection and counterfeiting of joy and courage; as long as I am unable inwardly to rejoice, and can see no sufficient cause of my rejoicing in myself.

Ans. 1. I shall by and by show you that you have sufficient, yea, unspeakable cause of joy. 2. And now I shall only say that you are not to suspend and forbear your comfort, till you have full assurance of your own sincerity; your probabilities, and weakest faith and hope, will warrant a more comfortable life than you can live. And it is not hypocrisy, but a necessary duty, to do the outward actions that are here commanded us, though we cannot reach to that degree of inward comfort that we desire: for we do not hereby affirm ourselves to have the joy which we have not; (I am not persuading any man to lie;) but only we express as fully as we are able that little, which we have. And a little, indeed a very little, of such a high and heavenly nature, grounded on the smallest hopes of everlasting life, will allow you in the expression of it, to transcend the greatest delights of the ungodly. And as we do perform the external part, both as a commanded duty, and as a means to further the inward rejoicing of the soul; so outward solemnity and feasting in days of thanksgiving, as well to further inward joy, as to express it. Even as mean attire, and fasting, and humblest prostrations before the Lord, on days of humiliation, are as much to further inward humiliation as to express it. The behaviour of the body hath an operative reflection on the mind, and therefore should be used not only for the discovery, but for the cure of the soul. If you cannot restrain your anger as you desire, it is no hypocrisy, but your duty, to hide it, and to refrain from the sinful effects. And if you can but use yourselves sometimes to behave yourselves in your anger as if you had no anger, in meekness of speech and quietness of deportment, anger itself will be the quicker subdued, and in time will be the easier kept out. If you cannot re-

strain your inordinate appetite to meat or drink, for quality or quantity; it is yet no hypocrisy, but your duty, to hold your hands, and shut your mouths, and refrain the things to which you have an appetite. And if you will but use yourselves a convenient time to forbear the thing, you will subdue the appetite. If the drunkard will forbear the drink, and the glutton his too much desired dish, and the sportful gamesters their needless and sinful recreations, they will find that the fire of sensuality will go out for want of fuel. As the too wanton poet saith concerning wanton love,

"Intrat amor mentes usu: dediscitur usu:
Qui poterit sanum fingere, sanus erit."

Use kindleth it, and use quencheth it. He that can but live as a sound man, shall at last become a sound man. If you cannot overcome your inward pride as you desire, you must not therefore speak big, and look high, and swagger it out in bravery, and accompany with gallants, to avoid hypocrisy: but you must speak humbly, and be clothed soberly, and accompany with the humble. And, 1. This is the performance of one part of your duty. 2. And it is the expression of your desires to be more humble, and consequently of some humility contained in these desires. 3. And it is the way to work your hearts to that humility which you want, or the way in which you must wait on God for the receiving of it. So if you cannot overcome the love of the world as you desire, do not therefore forbear giving to the poor, for fear of hypocrisy; but give the more, that you may perform so much of your duty as you can, and may the sooner overcome your worldly love. Some trees will be killed with often cropping. But if they will not, it is better that a poisonous plant should live only in the root, than sprout forth and be fruitful.

Even so, if you cannot overcome your inward doubts, and fears, and sorrows, as you desire, yet let them not be fruitful, nor cause you to walk so dejectedly before the world, as to dishonour God and your holy profession. And if you have not the inward comfort you desire, express your desires, and the hopes and smallest comforts that you have, to the best advantage for your Master's honour. And you will find that a holy cheerfulness of countenance, expression, and deportment, will at last much overcome your inordinate disquietments, and much promote the joys which you desire. But yet that you may see cause for the cheerfulness to which I now exhort you, I next add,

3. If thou have but one spark of saving grace, it is not possible for thee now to conceive or express the happiness of thy state, and the cause thou hast to live a thankful, joyous life. If thou have no grace, thou art not the person I am now speaking to. If thou have no grace, whence is it that thou so much desirest it? What is it that causeth thee to lament the want of it, and walk so heavily, but because thou art so much in doubt of it? If thou truly love it, thou hast it (for it is only grace that causeth an unfeigned love of grace). And if thou love it not, why canst not thou more quietly be without it? Why dost thou make so much ado for it? But if thou have it in the least degree, and so art born again of the Spirit, thou hast with it an unspeakable treasure of delights. The God of life and love is thine; the Lord Jesus Christ is thine; the Spirit is thine; the promises are thine; and heaven itself is thine in title, and shall be thine in full perpetual possession. The God that made and ruleth all things, is reconciled to thee, and is thy Father; having by grace in Christ adopted thee to be his

Son, Rom. v. 1, 2, 10, 11; viii. 1, 16, 17; Gal. iv. 6; 2 Cor. vi. 18. The Son of God is become thy Head, and thou art become a member of his body, as "flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone," (which no man ever yet hath hated,) Eph. v. 23, 27, 29, 30. Thou art become the temple and residence of the Holy Ghost. Thy title to heaven is incomparably more sure than any man's human title to his possessions or inheritance on earth. And what rejoicing can be too great for a man in thy condition? Oh what a life should that man live! with what sweet delight should he be transported, that hath the Spirit of Christ now living in him, to prepare him and seal him up for an endless life with Christ! He that shall be shortly so full of joy, should not be empty now, when he remembereth what he must shortly be. Doth it beseem him now to dwell in grief, and refuse consolation, that must in a few days be swallowed up with joy? If thou that sittest here in heaviness, wert assured that shortly thou shouldst be with Christ, and made a blessed companion of angels, and possessed of thy Master's joy, a joy that hath no bounds or ends, would not thy conscience then tell thee, that thou greatly wrongest such abundant mercy, in that thou art no more affected with it? and that thy want of joy doth express thy too much want of thankfulness? Dost thou sit there like a child of God, like an heir of heaven, and a co-heir with Christ? Rom. viii. 16, 17. Doth that sorrowful heart, and that dejected countenance, become one that must live with Christ for ever, in such resplendent glory as thou must do; and that hast but a few more days to live, till thou takest possession of these endless joys? The Lord pardon and heal our unbelief. Did faith more effectually play its part, as it is the evidence of things not seen, and withdraw the veil, and show us, though but in a glass, the glory which we must see with open face, it would be but wine to our hearts, and oil to our countenances, and make our poverty, sickness, and death, more comfortable than the wealth, and health, and life of the ungodly.

I know you will say still, that you could rejoice if you were sure all this were yours; but when you rather think you have no part in it, it can be but small comfort to you.

Ans. 1. But who is it long of that you have still such fears? Have you not in your souls that love to holiness, that desire after it, that hatred and weariness of sin, that love to the searching, discovering use of the word of God, that love to the brethren, which are the evidences of your title, and to which God hath plainly promised salvation? If then you have your title in the promise, and your evidences in your hearts, and yet will be still questioning whether you have them or no, and whether the kingdom shall be yours, your weakness and inconsiderateness causeth your own sorrows. And when you have sinfully bred your doubts, will you insist on them to excuse your following sins?

2. Are you not sure that Christ and his benefits are yours? I am sure they are yours, or may be if you will; and nothing but your continued refusal can deprive you of them. For this is the very tenor of the promise. And if you will not have Christ and his offered benefits, why do you so dissemble as to take on you to mourn because you have them not? But if you are willing they are yours.

Object. But (you will say) if we had nothing but cause of comfort, we could rejoice: but we have cause of sorrow also. How can we live comfortably under so much sin and suffering?

Ans. 2. By this account you will never rejoice till you come to heaven; for you will never be free from

sin and suffering till then. Nay, it seems you would have no man else rejoice, and so would banish all comfort from the world. For there is no man without sin and suffering.

But what can there be of any weight to prohibit a sincere believer from reasonable, spiritual rejoicing? Have you sin? It is not gross and reigning sin. And sinful infirmities the best of the saints on earth have had. As your sin must be your moderate sorrow, so the pardon of it, and the degree of mortification which you have attained, and the promise you have of full deliverance, should be the matter of your greater joy. Are your graces weak? Be humbled in the sense of that your weakness, but rejoice more that they are sincere and will be perfect. Are your afflictions great? Be humbled under them. But rejoice more that they are but fatherly chastisements, proceeding from love, and tending to your greater good; and that you are saved from the consuming fire, and shall live in everlasting rest, where affliction shall be known no more. Is it possible for that man that hath the love of God, and shall have heaven for ever, to have any sufferings that should weigh down these, and be matter to him of greater sorrow than this of joy? Can you imagine that there is more evil in your infirmities and sufferings than there is good in God, and happiness in heaven? Is it reason and equity that you should look at sin only, and not at grace? and at what you want only, and not at what you have received? Seeing you have more cause of joy than sorrow, should you not distribute your affections proportionably as there is cause? I dissuade you not from reasonable, moderate sorrows. But should not your joy be much greater, as long as the cause of it is much greater?

4. And here I would entreat you to consider well of the tenor of God's commands concerning this matter in the gospel, and of the examples of the saints there left on record. And then tell me which course it is that God is best pleased with, your cheerful or your dejected course of life? I find that though I pity the sad and miserable, yet I had rather myself have a cheerful than a drooping, grieving, troubled companion and friend. Because I desire one suitable to myself in the state I would be in; and I delight in the welfare, and not in the distress and misery, of my friend. And surely God that is love itself, and hath created joy in man to be his happiness, and hath placed so much of misery in sorrow, can never be so delighted in our distress and trouble, as in our content and joy. As he hath sworn that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they repent and live; so we may boldly conclude that he takes no pleasure in the anguish and dejectedness of his children, but rather that they walk in love and cheerful obedience before him. But his word will fully and plainly tell you what temper it is that is most pleasing to him. It is a light and easy burden that Christ doth call us to bear; and it is his office to ease us, and give us rest that labour and are heavy laden with burdens of our own, Matt. xi. 28, 29. He was anointed to preach the gospel, or glad tidings of salvation, to the poor; and sent to "heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," Luke iv. 18, 19. When he was to leave the world, how carefully did he provide for the comfort of his disciples! Commanding them not to "let their hearts be troubled," John xiv. 1, and promising to send the Comforter to them, and that he would come to them, and not leave them comfortless, ver. 16, 18, 26. Repeating it again, ver. 27, 28, "Peace

I leave with you: my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither be afraid." Nay, he engageth them as they "love him to rejoice, even because he went unto the Father." He engageth them in the dearest love to one another, that their lives might be the more comfortable. He foretelleth them of his sufferings and of their own, lest being surprised their sorrow should be the more. He promiseth them that their "sorrow shall be turned into joy," John xvi. 20; and that "in him they shall have peace, when in the world they shall have tribulation," ver. 33; directing them to prayer, and promising to hear them, that "their joy may be full," ver. 24; and promiseth that "none shall take it from them," ver. 22; telling them of the "mansions that he prepareth for them," and that it "is his will that they be with him, and behold his glory," that nothing might be wanting to their joy, John xiv. 2, 3; xvii. 23, 24. When he appeareth to them after his resurrection, his salutation is, "Peace be unto you," chap. xx. 19, 21, 26. The abounding and multiplying of his holy peace, is the desire and salutation of Paul to the churches in all his epistles, Gal. vi. 16; Eph. vi. 23; Rom. xv. 33; 1 Cor. i. 3; Rom. i. 7; Gal. i. 3; Phil. i. 2; Col. i. 2; 2 Thess. i. 2; 1 Tim. i. 2; Tit. i. 4; Philem. 3. So Peter, 1 Pet. i. 2; ii. 1, 2 John 3; 3 John 14. The gospel itself is a message of glad tidings, Luke viii. 1; Acts xiii. 32. And it is the work of the ministers of Christ, to preach peace to the sinful world through him, chap. x. 36, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, and to bring peace to the houses where any of the sons of peace abide, Matt. x. 12, 13; Luke x. 6. Triumphant joys and proclamations of peace were the entrance of Christ's kingdom. The angels proclaim, chap. ii. 14, "Glory be to God in the highest: on earth peace: good will towards men." This the new inspired disciples proclaim, chap. xix. 37, 38, "The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." What abundance of commands for rejoicing are in the Scripture! "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright," Psal. xxxi. 1. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness," Psal. cxvii. 11, 12. "Rejoice evermore," 1 Thess. v. 16. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord," Phil. iii. 1. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice," chap. iv. 4. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God," ver. 6. And thus are the godly ordinarily described, even in their deepest sufferings and distress. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God—and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation," Rom. v. 1, 2. It is the description of a regenerate man "to worship God in spirit; to rejoice in Christ Jesus; to have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. It is the description of believers "to rejoice greatly in a Christ not seen, even with joy unspeakable and full of glory; though for a season, if need be, they may be in heaviness through manifold temptations," 1 Pet. i. 6, 8. Even in the fiery trial we must rejoice, "as being partakers of the sufferings of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy," 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13. "When all manner of evil is

spoken of us falsely, for the sake of Christ, and when we are hated of all men, and reproached, we must rejoice and be exceeding glad, and leap for joy, as knowing that our reward in heaven is great, Luke vi. 22, 23; Matt. v. 11, 12. The apostles were "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing: as having nothing, and yet possessing all things," 2 Cor. vi. 10. Rejoicing in their suffering for believers, Col. i. 24; even when they were "beaten rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ," Acts v. 39, 40. The rich must "rejoice in that he is made low," as well as the "brother of low degree in that he is exalted," James i. 9, 10. The eunuch, when he was but newly converted, "went on his way rejoicing," Acts viii. 39. "There was great joy in Samaria, when they had received the word of God," Acts viii. 8. "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous. The statutes of God are the rejoicing of their heart," Psal. cxix. 111; xix. 8. "All those that trust in God should rejoice and shout for joy, and all that love his name should be joyful in him," Psal. v. 11; xxxiii. 21. "Let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice," Psal. lxxviii. 3. "Let us therefore desire to see the good of his chosen, and rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and glory with his inheritance," Psal. cvi. 5. "Sing unto the Lord: sing psalms unto him: talk of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord," Psal. cv. 1—3. "The saints shall shout aloud for joy," Psal. cxxxix. 9, 16. "Be glad in the Lord, O ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart," Psal. xxxii. 11. "Behold, my servants shall rejoice; but ye shall be ashamed. Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart; but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit," Isa. lxx. 13, 14.

Abundance such passages tell you what manner of persons it is that God delighteth in, and what he would have you be and do. These I have recited to shame the godly out of their unbecoming troubles and dejectedness, as you would show a child his face in a glass when he crieth, that he may see how he deformeth it. The very "kingdom of God consisteth in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." If you would live as is most pleasing unto God, and as becometh those that are indeed believers, let the joy of believers be (as far as is possible) your ordinary frame. And if by sin you wound your souls, and bring smart upon yourselves, dwell not in that wounded, smarting state; but go to your Physician, and beg of God that he will "restore to you the joy of his salvation, and make you to hear the voice of joy and gladness," that your "broken heart and bones may rejoice," Psal. li. 8, 12.

And take notice throughout all the Scripture, whether you find the servants of God so much complaining of their want of assurance, and of their frequent doubtings of their own sincerity and his love. I think you will find this a very rare thing in the ancient saints. They were sensible of sin as well as we; and they were as sensible of God's afflicting hand, and oft (as Job, David, Hezekiah, &c.) complained under it, perhaps with some excess, and too much questioning God's favour to them, as if he had forsaken them. But (besides and without any such affliction) to live in ordinary trouble of mind through the doubting of their sincerity, and of God's special love, and to be exercised in the complaining and disconsolate way, as now abundance of christians are, this I find little in the Scripture saints. The

reason was not because they had more holiness and less sin than many that now are thus cast down. For the gospel time excelleth theirs in degrees of grace; and I think the greater care that christians have of their hearts, and of inward rectitude, and communion with God, and their fuller apprehensions of the life to come, and so of their greatest hopes and dangers, is one great cause. But yet there are worse concurring causes. The love of God, and his readiness to show mercy, should not be more questioned now, when it is so abundantly revealed by Christ, than it was in times of darker revelation. The servants of God did formerly conceive that nothing but sin could make man miserable; and therefore when they had sinned, they repented; and instead of continuing doubts and fears, they bent their resolutions against their sins; and having cast away their gross and wilful sins, and continuing the conflict against their unavoidable infirmities, which they hated, they knew that the door of mercy was still open to them; and that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, who is the propitiation." The time that is now spent in doubting and complaining, and asking, How shall I know that I sincerely repent, was then spent in repenting and reforming, and using the means that God hath appointed for conquering of sin; and then trusting to his grace and covenant in the blood of Christ for pardon. And it would be better with us if we did thus. Judge now by all these scriptures, and by the course of former saints, how God would have you behave yourselves. Do you not read a hundred times of their joy, and thanks, and praising God, and calling upon others to praise him, for once that they perplexedly question their sincerity?

But perhaps you will say, that your strength is so weak, and your sins and enemies so strong, and all your duty so imperfect and unworthy, that having such continual cause of trouble, you cannot choose but walk in heaviness and in fears.

I answer you, (1.) But why do you not tell what you have, as well as what you want? Have you not greater cause to say, My sins being mortified at the root, and all forgiven, and my soul renewed, and reconciled unto God, and I being made an heir of heaven, how can I choose but live in joy?

(2.) Are you heartily willing to forsake your sins, and overcome the things of which you so complain; or are you not? If you are not, why do you complain of them? and why will you not consent to let them go, and use God's means to overcome them? If you are willing, then they are but your pardoned infirmities; for that is the difference between infirmities and reigning sins. Whatsoever sin consisteth with a greater habitual willingness to avoid that and all other sins than to keep them, is but an infirmity; for it stands with present saving grace, and is always habitually or virtually repented of, and actually, when grace, by knowledge and consideration, hath opportunity and advantage to produce the act.

(3.) And when once you are truly ingrafted into Christ, he is your worthiness, and your righteousness, and the treasury of your souls; and what you want in your own possession, you have in his hands; and as what you have is but his gift, so what you want he is able and ready to supply. Look not too much to yourselves, as if your safety and happiness were principally in your own hand. "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life," 1 John v. 10, 11. It is through him that we can do all things,* so far as he strengtheneth us: and without him we can do

* I. C. Scaliger Epidorp. I. 7. p. 296.

Hoc quod valeo; non quæo quod debeo: quid tum?

Mensura mea, es, tu Domine, immensa potestas:

Non ego tua: quodque habeo, tu mihi dedisti.

nothing. Make use of him therefore as the Lord of your life, and joyfully acknowledge all that you receive, and stand not dejectedly lamenting that you need him. If you would have the waters of life, go to the fountain, and do not sit down and fruitlessly vex yourselves with complaining of your wants, instead of seeking for supplies. Is there not an all-sufficient Physician of souls at hand? Doth he not freely offer you his help? What though you are not suddenly cured? Wounds may be caused in an hour, but they use not to be cured in an hour. Stay his time, and use his remedies, and cheerfully trust him, and you shall find the cure successfully go on, though it will not be finished till death.

5. Consider, also, that it must needs be the best and most desirable life, which is likeliest to our life in heaven. And therefore as heaven is a state of joy, so joy is the highest and best condition on earth. He is the best and happiest man, that is likeliest to the glorified saints and angels. And judge yourselves whether a dejected or a rejoicing christian be liker to these inhabitants of heaven.

Object. But (you will say) by that rule we should not mourn at all (for they do not). Whereas God delighteth in the contrite soul, and Christ blesseth mourners and weepers.

Ans. (1.) Your resemblance of the saints in heaven must be proportionable in all the parts. You must labour first to be as like them as you can in holiness, and then in joy. If you could be as far from sin as they, you need not mourn at all. But because you cannot, you must have moderate, regular sorrows and humiliation, while you have sin. But yet withal you must endeavour to imitate the heavenly joys, according to the measure of your grace received.

(2.) And it is such a regular contrition, consisting in humble thoughts of ourselves, and tending to restore us from our falls and sorrows, unto our integrity and joy, which God delighteth in. And it is such mourners as these, and such as suffer for righteousness' sake from men, that Christ pronounceth blessed. But the inordinate troubles of the soul, that exclude a holy delight in God, though he pardon, yet he never doth encourage.

6. Consider, also, that a great part of your religion, yea and the most high and excellent part, doth consist in the causes from and effects of this holy joy and cheerfulness. (1.) As to the causes of it, they are such as in themselves are requisite to the very being of the new creature. Faith and love, which are the head and heart of sanctifying grace, are the causes of our spiritual joy. And unwilling, heavy, forced obedience, may proceed from mere fears, and this will not prove an upright heart. But when once we believe everlasting glory, and love Christ as our Saviour, and the Father as our Father and felicity, and love a holy frame of heart and life, as the image of God and that which pleaseth him, then our obedience will be cheerful and delightful, unless accidentally we trouble ourselves by our own mistakes. If you can truly make God, and his will and service, your delight, you may be sure you love him, and are beloved by him, as being past the state of slavish fear.

(2.) And I have showed you that joy in the Holy Ghost is itself one part of that grace in which God's kingdom doth consist. Though not such a part as a christian cannot possibly be without, yet such as is exceeding suitable to his state, and necessary to his more happy being.

Quodque do, non do, sed accipis; hoc enim dedisti.
Tu solus tibi satis es: tu mihi, tibi que
Nec te laudo, ubi laudo: sed ipse te ipse laudas,

3 E 2

(3.) And without this holy delight and joy, you will deny God a principal part of his service. How can you be thankful for the great mercies of your justification, sanctification, adoption, and all the special graces you have received, or for your hopes of heaven itself, as long as you are still doubting whether any of these mercies are yours or not, and almost ready to say that you never received them? Nay, you will be less thankful for your health, and life, and food, and wealth, and all common mercies, as doubting lest they will prove but aggravations of your sin and misery. And for the great and excellent work of praise which should be your daily sacrifice, but especially the work of each Lord's day, how unfit is a doubting, drooping, distressed soul for the performance of it! You stifle holy love within you, and stop your mouths when they should be speaking and singing the praises of the Lord, and disable yourselves from the most high, and sweet, and acceptable part of all God's service, by your unwarrantable doubts and self-vexations. And when all these are laid aside, how poor and lean a service is it that is left you to perform to him! even a few tears, and complaints, and prayers! which I know God will mercifully accept, because even in your desires after him there is love; but yet it is far short of the service which you might perform. Nay, your heavenly-mindedness will be much suppressed, as long as you are sadly questioning whether ever you shall come thither, and it will be yours or not.

7. Are you not ashamed to see the servants of the devil and the world so jocund, and yourselves so sad that serve the Lord? Will you go mourning so inordinately to heaven, when others go so merrily to hell? Will you credit Satan and sin so much, as to persuade men by your practice, that sin affordeth more pleasure and content than holiness?

8. You could live merrily yourselves before your conversion, while you served sin; and will you walk so dejectedly now you have repented of it, as if you had changed for the worse, or would make men think so? I know you would not for all the world be what you were before your change. Why then do you live as if you were more miserable than before?

9. You would be loth so long to resist the sanctifying work of the Spirit: and why should you not be loth to resist its comforting work? It is the same Holy Ghost that you resist in both. Nay, you dare not so open your mouths for wickedness, and plead against sanctification itself, as you open them on the behalf of your sinful doubtings, and plead for your immoderate dejections. If you should, how vile would you appear!

10. Lastly consider, that God will lay sufferings enough upon you for your sins, and suffer wicked men to lay enough on you for well-doing, and you need not lay more upon yourselves. You have need to use all means for strength to bear the burdens that you must undergo: and it is the joy of the Lord, and the hopes of glory, that are your strength. And will you cast away the only supports of your soul, and sink when the day of suffering comes? How will you bear poverty, or reproach, or injuries? How will you meet approaching death, if you feed your doubts of your salvation and of the love of God in Christ, which must corroborate you? O weaken not your souls that are too weak already: weaken not your souls that have so much to do and suffer, and that of so great necessity and importance. While you complain of your weakness, increase it not by unbelieving, uncomfortable complaints. Gratify not

Me periciens, non tua, sic laudibus ornans:
Queis me ad te trahis: haud ego te traho super me:
Me praeveniens hic ades; ut mihi supersis.

the devil and wicked, malicious men so far, as to inflict on yourselves a greater calamity than all their malice and power could inflict. It is a madness in them that will please the devil, to the displeasing of God, though the pleasing of their own flesh be it that moveth them to it. But for a man to please the devil, and displease God, even when he displeaseth his own flesh by it also, and bringeth nothing but sorrow to himself by it, this is in some respects more unreasonable than madness itself. Many cast away their souls for riches, and honours, and carnal accommodations; but who would do it for poverty, sickness, or disgrace? So though many undo their souls for fleshly pleasures and delights, yet he is a strange man indeed that will offend God even for self-tormenting grief and trouble. O therefore, dear christians, as you have let go all your sensual pleasures for the pleasing of your Lord, do not let go the pleasures of his love, for which you have let go all. "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people, even in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy; and the meek he will beautify with salvation," Psal. cxlvii. 11. It is meet therefore that his people take pleasure in the Lord; that the "saints be joyful in glory; that they sing aloud upon their beds, and that the high praises of God be in their mouths," Psal. cxlix. 4—6.

O let not the Spirit of God be thought to be like the evil spirit that vexed Saul, that filled his mind with melancholy, anguish, and confusion. It is the evil spirit that rendeth and tormenteth those that it possesseth; though the Spirit of God doth humble, and by ordinate sorrow prepare for joy: but its proper work is to sanctify, and to comfort, and establish the believer with peace that passeth understanding. As it is a greater sign of the operation of the Spirit of Christ to restore the lapsed by a spirit of meekness, and to bear one another's burdens, and exercise tenderness, compassion, and charity, than to censure and envy, and call for fire from heaven: so even at home (though there we are allowed to be more rigid and censorious) it is a more sure and satisfactory discovery of the Spirit of grace within us, if we are raised to a sweet delight in God, and quieted in his love, and carried out in a cheerful obedience, thankfully acknowledging the grace that we have received, and waiting in the use of means for more, than if we are only turmoiled and troubled in our minds, and tossed up and down with unprofitable griefs and fears, that abate our love to God and our holy joys. It is the still voice that doth most fully acquaint us that it is Christ the Prince of peace that speaketh to us: though at first when he findeth a sinner in a state of enmity and rebellion, he often useth to thunder and lighten, and call to him as to Saul, "Why persecutest thou me?" Wilt thou kick against the pricks? Wilt thou fight against heaven? Or canst thou bear the wrath of God Almighty? Yet to the humbled, penitent soul, there is none in all the world so tender as Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the church's Husband, that cherisheth them as his own flesh. Oh that you did but know the greatness and tenderness of his love to you, while you lie trembling under the unjust apprehensions of his wrath! It would then so transport you with ravishing delights, that the world would see that the saints of the Most High have higher pleasures than the world affordeth.

But I know you will say, Alas, what need you exhort us to spiritual pleasures and consolations? Do you think there is any man in love with sorrows, or unwilling to live a joyful life? Oh that you could tell us how we might attain it; and you should quickly see that we are willing.

Ansio. And if you are so willing to attain it, as

to be also willing to use the means, you shall quicker see that I shall certainly inform you how you may attain it; and how you may come to find a life of holiness to be the most sweet and pleasant life. I therefore desire and require you to practise these directions following.

Direct. 1. Make it your first and principal business to attain the fullest fixed knowledge of God in his attributes, and covenant relations to you.

1. Study him in his attributes. If infinite goodness take not up the soul with love and with delight, it is because it is not known. Where there are all things that the soul of man desires to its highest felicity and content, and yet contentment and delight is wanting, it must needs be ignorance and distance that is the cause. If the sun seem not light to you, it is because you have not eyesight, or look not on the light. If you find no pleasure in the most pleasant food, it is because your appetites are diseased, or you do not taste it. If your most suitable and most affectionate friend seem not amiable to you, it is because you know not his suitability and love. So if the eternal God, that is infinitely powerful, wise, and good, most perfect, and most suitable to your highest affections, do not possess you with abundant pleasures and delights of love, it is because you are unacquainted with him. Study, then, his infinite perfections, and be much with him in secret prayer and meditation, where the retired soul having fewest avocations, is fittest for the most near, familiar converse. And still remember that it is Love itself that you have to do with. For God is love. It is the Fountain of all delights and pleasures that you draw near to. It is a cold heart indeed that fire itself cannot warm, and a dead heart indeed that life itself cannot revive. Conceive of God as God, and you will delight in him: abhor all unworthy, diminutive thoughts of him: set up his love and goodness in your estimation, as infinitely above all the creatures. Believe it, the love of your dearest friends is an inconsiderable drop to the ocean of his love. Think not of him as cruel, or an enemy, if you would love him or delight in him. Love and delight are never forced by bare commands and threatenings, but drawn forth magnetically by attractive goodness. Were not God most amiable, and friendly, and desirable to us, it is not saying, Love me, or I will damn thee, that would ever have caused man to love him; but rather to fear, and hate, and fly from him. Think but of God's love, and goodness, and fidelity, as you do of his power, and then you will find that there are rivers of pleasure in his presence, and fulness of joy at his right hand, the foretastes whereof are the only delights that can quiet the troubled, thirsty soul.

2. And if you say, What is all this to me, any more than to the ungodly world, on whom the wrath of God abideth? I answer, thou art in covenant with him, and he is thine in the covenant relations, even thy reconciled Father, thy Saviour, and thy Sanctifier. No husband is so inviolably bound to a wife, nor will so faithfully answer his relation, as the blessed Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier unto thee. Didst thou well know and consider what it is to have God himself to be thine in covenant to all these uses, and to all the ends that thou canst reasonably desire, it would fill up thy soul with satisfying delights.

There is nothing that thou wantest, but what belongs to God to give thee, in one of these three great relations. And sooner shall the day be turned into night, and the frame of nature be dissolved, than God will violate his covenant of grace. "Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of

the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken," &c. Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21. "Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed, &c. For thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee," Isa. liv. 4, 5, &c. And though yet we have our troublesome imperfections, it belongeth to our God, "through the blood of the everlasting covenant, to make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, that to him may be the glory for ever," Heb. xiii. 20, 21. It is his work "to comfort all that mourn; to appoint to them that mourn in Zion, and to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.—They shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call them the ministers of our God.—Everlasting joy shall be unto them.—For the Lord will direct their work in truth, and make an everlasting covenant with them.—All that see them shall acknowledge them that they are the seed whom the Lord hath blessed: therefore should we greatly rejoice in the Lord; and our souls should be joyful in our God: for he hath clothed us with the garments of salvation; he hath covered us with the robes of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels," Isa. lxi. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put into you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them—and I will save you from all your uncleanness," &c. Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27, 29. "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me: yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good," &c. Jer. xxxii. 38—41. "Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord," Psal. cxliv. 15.

Nature doth not give you such security that the sun shall shine, and that the streams shall run, that the earth shall be fruitful, as the covenant of the Lord doth give you of all that is necessary to your happiness. Study therefore the mercies and riches of the covenant.

Direct. 2. Understand and remember that it is your covenant consent, that is the condition of your title to all the following blessings of the covenant.

I add this as supposing you will say, What are all these benefits to me, unless I were sure that I were indeed in the covenant? It is not your merit, but your consent that is required. God offereth himself to be your reconciled Father, and Christ to be your Saviour, and the Holy Spirit to be your Sanctifier. Do you consent to this, or not? All the question is, whether you are willing; and whether your sin be not so sweet to you, that you will rather venture your souls on the wrath of God, than you will be saved from it. If you heartily consent, assuredly you are in the covenant, and the benefits are yours; and therefore the joy and comfort should be yours. If you do not consent, instead of despairing, presently consent, and refuse not your happiness while you lament your misery.

Object. But it is not only covenant-making, but covenant-keeping that must save us: and I have broke my covenant, and therefore have no title to the benefits. *Ans.* What covenant have you broken? this covenant in question, that engageth you to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? If you have broken this, you have withdrawn your consent; for while you heartily consent, you break it not in any essential part. As it is not every breach of the laws that makes a man a traitor or rebel, nor every fault or falling-out between husband and wife that dissolveth their relation; so is it not every sin, nor any that is consistent with true consent to the terms of the covenant, that is a covenant-breaking forfeiture of the benefits. If you would not have God to be your portion, your Father, your Saviour, and your Sanctifier, you are then covenant-breakers: and if you be so, consent ye, and return to your fidelity, and the comforts of the covenant may yet be yours, for all your former violation.

Direct. 3. Moreover, if you would find the pleasure of a holy life, see that the flesh befooled you not into an over-high estimation of any worldly thing, that so your appetites may not be corrupted with such contrary unwholesome pleasures, nor your hearts be overwhelmed with worldly cares, or griefs, or troubles. If you will glut yourselves with other kind of pleasures, you cannot expect that holiness should be your pleasure, you cannot find your delight in God, when you turn from him to seek it in the creature. If you sought for less in friends, and health, and prosperity in the world, you might have more in God. How should you find content in God, when you set so light by him, that the promise of beholding him in endless glory will not please you, unless you may also have your fleshly desires or selfish inclinations pleased here? This is it that perverteth your judgments and affections, and causeth you to injure God and yourselves. You first fancy that it is an excellent thing to be rich and renowned, and to rule over others, or to have plenty of all accommodations for your flesh; and then because God satisfieth not these carnal fancies, you think he neglecteth you, or deals hardly with you! As if every person in the town should murmur because they are not bailiffs or justices; when if they had the wit to know it, they are but kept from a double encumbrance, and from a burden which perhaps would break their backs. When the people are thus befooled by the flesh into brutish conceits of the nature of felicity, and into an overvaluing of these worldly things, they are then always either tickled by deluding pleasures, or troubled for the crossing of their carnal wills, so that they grow out of relish and liking with the true and durable delights. Take heed therefore of this carnality.

Direct. 4. Study the greatness of the mercy which you have received. You abound with mercies; and yet undervalue them and overlook them, and sweeten

not your souls with the serious observation and remembrance of them : you study principally your afflictions and your wants ; and thus when you live in a land that floweth with milk and honey, you will not feed on the prepared feast, but keep still the gall and wormwood in your mouths ; and how then should you be acquainted with the pleasures of a holy life ?

Yea, you must use to look more to the spiritual part of all your mercies, and see the love of God that appeareth in them ; and taste the blood of Christ in them, and lose not the kernel ; and take not up with the common, carnal part, which every wicked man can value and enjoy. Consider in all your mercies, what there is in them for the benefit of your souls, much rather than how they accommodate your flesh. Could you do thus, you would find the benefit of afflictions ; and that the denial of what you have accounted your necessary mercies, is not the smallest of your mercies. And thus judging truly by the Spirit, and not by the flesh, there is no condition (except that of sin) in which you might not find cause of joy.

Direct. 5. Take heed of sinning : keep still upon your watch against temptation. Sin is the cause of all your sufferings ; when it promiseth you delight, it is preparing for your sorrow ; when it flattereth you into presumption, it is preparing for despair ; when it promiseth you secrecy and security, it prepareth for your shame ; and be sure your sin will find you out, Numb. xxxii. 23. If therefore you have offended, delay not your repentance ; and spare not the flesh in your return ; but (unless the honour of God forbid it) take shame to yourselves by free confession, and make the fullest reparation of the injury that you can to God and man. If you would thus get out the thorn that vexeth you, the ways of God would be more pleasant.

Direct. 6. Daily live in the exercise of faith upon the everlasting pleasures : dwell as at the gates of heaven, as men that are waiting every hour when they are called in, and when death will draw aside the veil, and show them the blessed face of God. And take heed that the enmity of interposing death prevail not against the joys of faith. But look to Christ that hath conquered it, and will conquer it for you. And if thus you could live as strangers here, and as the citizens of heaven, that are ready to step into the immortal pleasures, you would then taste the pleasures of a holy life, in the first-fruits and foretastes thereof. It is your treasure that must delight you ; as your heart must be there, so your pleasure must be derived thence. Strangers to heaven will be strangers to the believer's joys : as the pleasure of the carnal world consisteth in the sense of what they have in hand ; so the pleasure of believers consisteth in the fore-apprehensions of what they shall enjoy with God for ever. If therefore you exercise not those apprehensions, if you look not frequently, seriously, and believingly into the world that you must live in for ever, how can the comforts of that world illustrate and refresh you in this present world ? The light and heat, which is the beauty and life of this lower world, proceedeth not from any thing in this world, but from the sun which is so far above us, and sends down hither its quickening influence and rays. They are not the genuine comforts of christianity, which are not fetched from the world above.

Direct. 7. If you would have the experience of the pleasures of a life of faith and holiness, neither desire nor cherish any fears or sorrows, but such as are subservient to faith, and hope, and love, and preparatory to thankfulness and joy. Think not religion consisteth in any other kind of sorrows. Nay, if any other should assault you, be so far from taking

them for your duty or religion, as to resist them, and lament them as your sin. That is true and saving humiliation, 1. Which makes you vile in your own eyes, and loathe yourselves for sin ; 2. And maketh you more desirous to be delivered and cleansed from your sin, than to live in it, how sweet or gainful soever it may seem ; and, 3. Which maketh you set more by a Saviour to deliver you, than by all the pleasures, riches, and honours of the world. Whatever want of grief or tears you find, if you have these signs, your repentance and humiliation is sincere. Do not therefore refuse your peace because you have not greater sorrows ; nor disturb your souls by struggling for excessive sorrow : take not part with them, but do your best to cast them out, if they are such as would destroy your love and joy, and drive you from Christ, and hinder your thanksgivings. Know that the life of your religion consisteth in the holy love of God, and of his image, and servants, and holy ways. Love is your duty, your felicity, and reward : therefore let all tend to the exercise of love, and value most those means which most promote it ; and think yourselves best when you abound most in love, and not when you are overwhelmed with those fears and griefs which hinder love. Study therefore, above all, the love of God revealed in Christ, which is the best attractive of your love to him ; and hate all suggestions which would represent God unlovely and undesirable to you.

Direct. 8. Use cheerful company ; not carnal, but holy ; not such as waste their time in unprofitable, frothy speeches, or filthy, or profane, or scornful jestings ; but such as have most of the sense of love and mercy on their hearts, and are best acquainted with a life of faith, and whose speeches and cheerful conversations do most lively manifest their sense of the love of God, and of the grace of Christ, and the eternal happiness of the saints. There is a delightful and encouraging virtue in the converse of joyful, thankful, heavenly believers : use it therefore if you can have it.

Direct. 9. In your addresses to God in holy worship, be sure that praise and thanksgiving have it^a due proportion. They are the chief, and most excellent and acceptable part, and therefore let there not have the smallest room. Though your sins and wants be as great as you imagine in your complaints, it is yet your duty to praise the excellences, and attributes, and works of your Creator, and to be thankful for the preparations made by Christ, and freely offered you, so that they shall certainly be yours, if you accept them. But much more thankful should you be that have but the evidence of desire and consent to prove your interest in Christ and in his covenant.

I would entreat poor troubled, fearful souls to resolve upon this one thing, which is reasonable, necessary, and in their power, that when they are upon their knees with God, they will spend as much of their time and words in confessing mercies and praising God, as in confessing sin, and condemning themselves, and lamenting their wants, and weaknesses, and distress. Though they cannot do it cheerfully as they should, let them do it as they can. And at last, while they keep in the right way of duty, and use themselves to the commemoration of that which is sweet and grateful to the soul, religion itself will become sweet and grateful ; and cheerfulness of heart will be promoted by our own considerations and expressions. The same I desire of them as to their thoughts ; that they will do their best to spend as many thoughts and as much time upon mercy, as upon sin and misery ; and upon the goodness and love of God in Christ, as upon his threatenings and terrors.

Direct. 10. If you would taste the comforts of a holy life, be sure that you give up yourselves to Christ without reserve, and follow him fully, and place all your hopes and confidence in his promised rewards: serve him with your best, yea, with your all; and not with some cheap and heartless service. Comforts are the rewards of faithfulness: they that do God the most sincere and costly service, and save nothing from him which he calleth them to lose, are likeliest to be encouraged by his sweetest comforts. It is sluggish neglects and unfruitfulness, doing no good in the world, but thinking to be saved by a dull profession, that makes so many uncomfortable professors as there be: though I know that on the other extreme, too many live in pining sadness, by not understanding the covenant of grace, which accepteth of sincerity, and secureth the weak and infants in the family of Christ. But yet the barren, unprofitable christians (I mean that comparatively are such, though they be sincere) shall find that God will not encourage any in slothfulness by his smiles and consolations.

Direct. 11. If you would know the rest and comfort of believers, see that you rest in the will of God in all conditions, as the centre and only bottom for your souls. His will is not to be reduced to yours: strive therefore to bring yours most fully and quietly to his. God's will is the universal original and end of all things; and there is no felicity or rest for man, but in the fulfilling, and pleasing, and disposals of his will. Be not too desirous of the fulfilling of your own wills, and murmur not against the disposals of the will of God. It cannot but be good which proceedeth from that will which is the spring of good. The accomplishment of God's will is the perfection of all created beings, being that end for which they are all created. If you rest in your own wills, your rest will be imperfect, disturbed, and short of duration; for your wills are the wills of weak and vicious men: they are frequently misguided by an ignorant mind, and perverted by a corrupt and biassed heart; but God's will is never misguided, nor ever determined of any thing but for the best. If you rest here, you rest in safety; you may be sure you shall never be deceived by him: you may rest in constant peace and quietness; for God is unchangeable, and will not be off and on with us, as we are with him and with ourselves. As you pray that his will may be done, acquiesce in the doing of his will; and whatever befall you, repose and satisfy your hearts in this.

Direct. 12. Lastly, let me add, that when you have all the directions that can be given, you trust not too much to your own understanding and skill for the application of them to yourselves, in any weighty, difficult cases. But as you will not think it enough for the health of your bodies, to have physic books and physic lectures, unless you have also a physician who knoweth more than you, to direct you in the application; so think it not enough that you have the best books and sermons, unless you have also a faithful and judicious pastor, whose advice you may crave in particular difficulties, and who may direct

you in the discovery of your own diseases, and applying the fittest remedies in their season and measures, with such rules and cautions as are necessary to the success. If God had not known that there would still be many children and weak ones in his family, that would stand in need of the instruction, support, and encouragement of the strong, he would never have settled pastors in his church to watch over all the flocks, and to be always ready at hand, for the confirmation and encouragement of such as need their help. There had been no physicians, if there had been no diseases. Tire not your physicians with needless consultations for easy and ordinary cases; but be not without them in your greater straits, and wants, and doubts. And "blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same suffering, which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation," 2 Cor. i. 4—6. While you are sick or infants, the stronger must support you. You cannot stand, or go, or suffer of yourselves: and God is so tender of his weak and little ones, that he hath not only given strength to others for their sakes, and commanded the strong to bear the burdens and infirmities of the weak, Gal. vi. 1, 2; Rom. xv. 1—4, but also established the ministerial office much for this end. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts," Mal. ii. 7. Not that we should disclose our consciences, and depend for guidance on every ignorant or ungodly man, that hath the name and place of a priest. Even among the papists, men have leave to choose such confessors as are fittest for them. If the priests "depart out of the way, and cause many to stumble at the law, and corrupt the covenant of Levi, the Lord will make them contemptible and base before all the people, according as they have not kept his ways, but been partial in the law," Mal. ii. 8, 9. But use those that are qualified and sent by the Spirit of God; who "in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, have had their conversation in the world, especially to you-wards," 2 Cor. i. 12. Such as "you have acknowledged in part, that they are your rejoicing, as you also are theirs in the day of the Lord Jesus," ver. 14. Not using them as such as have dominion over your faith, but as those that by office, qualification, and willingness and disposition, are helpers of your joy, ver. 24.

In the faithful practice of these directions, you will find that holiness is the most pleasant way; and that the godly choose the better part; and that the ungodly sensualists do live as BRUTES, while they unreasonably refuse to live as SAINTS.

THE
MISCHIEFS OF SELF-IGNORANCE,
AND THE
BENEFITS OF SELF-ACQUAINTANCE:

OPENED

IN DIVERS SERMONS AT ST. DUNSTAN'S, WEST;

AND PUBLISHED IN ANSWER TO THE ACCUSATIONS OF SOME, AND THE DESIRES
OF OTHERS.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

ANNE, COUNTESS OF BALCARRES, &c.

MADAM,

THOUGH it be usual in dedications to proclaim the honour of inscribed names, and though the proclaiming of yours be a work that none are like to be offended at that know you, they esteeming you the honour of your sex and nation; yet that you may see I intend not to displease you by any unsafe or unsavoury applause, I shall presume here to lay a double dishonour upon you: The one by prefixing your name to these lean and hasty sermons: the other by laying part of the blame upon yourself, and telling the world that the fault is partly yours that they are published. Not only yours, I confess; for had it not been for some such auditors as Christ had, Luke xx. 20; Mark xii. 13, and for the frequent reports of such as are mentioned, Psal. xxxv. 11, I had not written down all that I delivered, and so had been incapable of so easily answering your desires. But it was you that was not content to hear them, but have invited them to recite their message more publicly; as if that were like to be valued, and effectual upon common hearts, which through your strength of charity and holy appetite is so with yours. My own thoughts went in the middle way; neither thinking as those that accused these sermons of injurious tendency, against—I know not whom, or what; (that have been so long in contention, that they dream they are still contending, and fancy every word they hear, from those that their uncharitableness calleth adversaries, to signify some hostile, terrible thing; as the scalded head doth fear cold water;) nor yet did I think them worthy to be tendered by such a publication to the world: but valuing your judgment, and knowing that the subject is of great necessity, though the manner of handling be dull and dry, I hope it may be profitable to some, and I find nothing in it to be hurtful unto any, and therefore submit, and leave you both to bear the blame, and take the thanks, if any be returned.

I perceive you value the subjects which you have found in the practice of your soul to be most useful: as they that know God would fain have all others to know him; so those that know themselves, do love the glass, and would have others to make use of it. I wonder not if your experience of the benefits of self-acquaintance, provoke you to desire to have more partakers in so profitable and so sweet a knowledge. Had you not known yourself, you had never known your Saviour, your God, your way, and your end, as you have done: you had never been so well acquainted with the symptoms and cure of the diseases of the soul; the nature and exercise of grace, the way of mortification, and the comfortable supports, refreshments, and foretastes of heavenly believers; you had never so clearly seen the vanity of all the pomp and fulness of the world, nor so easily and resolutely despised its flatteries and baits, nor so quietly borne variety of afflictions; nor imitated Moses, Heb. xi. 25, 26, nor received the holy character, Psal. xv. He that is a stranger to himself, his sin, his misery, his necessity, &c. is a stranger to God, and to all that might denominate him wise or happy. To have taken the true measure of our capacities, abilities, infirmities, and necessities, and thereupon to perceive what is really BEST FOR US, and most agreeable to our case, is the first part of true, practical, saving knowledge. Did the distracted, mindless world consider, what work they have at home for their most serious thoughts, and care, and diligence, and of what unspeakable concernment and necessity it is, and that men carry within them the matter of their final doom, and the beginning of endless joy or sorrows, they would be called home from their busy idleness, their laborious loss of precious time, and unprofitable vagaries, and would be studying their hearts, while they are doating about a multitude of im-

pertinences, and would be pleasing God while they are purveying for the flesh; and they would see that it more concerneth them to know the day of their salvation, and now to lay up a treasure in heaven, that they may die in faith, and live in everlasting joy and glory, than in the crowd and noise of the ambitious, covetous, voluptuous sensualists, to run after a feather, till time is past, and mercy gone, and endless woe hath unexpectedly surprised them. Yet do these dead men think they live, because they laugh, and talk, and ride, and go, and dwell among gnats and flies in the sunshine, and not with worms and dust in darkness. They think they are awake, because they dream that they are busy; and that they are doing the works of men, because they make a pudder and a noise for finer clothes, and larger room, and sweeter morsels, and lower congees and submissions, than their poorer, undeceived neighbours have: they think they are sailing to felicity, because they are tossed up and down: and if they can play the jacks among the fishes, or the wolves or foxes in the flocks of Christ; or if they can attain to the honour of a pestilence, to be able to do a great deal of hurt, they are proud of it, and look as high as if they saw neither the grave nor hell, nor knew how quickly they must be taken down, and laid so low, that "the righteous shall see it, and fear, and laugh at them, saying, Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness," Psal. lli. 6, 7. "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, and increase in riches. Surely they are set in slippery places, and cast down to destruction, and brought to desolation as in a moment; and utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image," Psal. lxxiii. Though while they lived they blessed themselves, and were praised by men; yet when they die they carry nothing away; their glory shall not descend after them. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning. Man in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings, Psal. xlix. As the proverb is, At last the wolf's skin is brought to the market, and the fox's to the furrier. They shall find that God is not afraid to lay the hand of justice on the stoutest of them, and will be as bold with silken, shining gallants, as with the poorest worms; and will spit in the face of that man's glory, who durst spit in the face of the glory of his Redeemer; and will trample upon the interest which is set up against the interest of Christ. The jovial world do now think that self-study is too melancholy a thing; and they choose to be distracted for fear of being melancholy; and will be mad, in Solomon's sense, that they may be wise and happy in their own, Eccles. ii. 2. "The heart of fools is in the house of mirth, and the heart of the wise in the house of mourning," Eccles. vii. 4. And yet there is most joy in the hearts of the wise, and least solid peace in the hearts of fools: they know that conscience hath so much against them, that they dare not hear its accusations and its sentence: they dare not look into the hideous dungeon of their hearts, nor peruse the accounts of their bankrupt souls, nor read the history of their impious, unprofitable lives, lest they should be tormented before the time: they dare not live like serious men, lest they should lose thereby the delights of brutes. O sinful men! against what light, both natural and supernatural, do they offend! They see how all things haste away: the names of their predecessors are left as a warning to them; every corpse that is carried to the grave, being dead, yet speaketh; and every bone that is thence cast up, doth rise as a witness against their luxury and lust; and yet they will have their wills and pleasure while they may, whatever it cost them: and they will set their houses on fire that they might have one merry blaze, and warm them once before they die.

O Madam, how happy are you, (if one on earth may be called happy,) that have looked home so often and so seriously, that now you can dwell at home in peace, and need not, as the ungodly, be a terror to yourself, nor run away from yourself, nor seek a place to hide you from yourself; when impious vagrants have so abused their consciences, that they dare not converse with them nor meet them alone or in the dark! What a mercy is it, that in the great Reconciler you are reconciled to your conscience, and that it doth not find you out as an enemy, but is a messenger of peace and of good tidings to you! That you need not the smiles of great ones to refresh you, nor pompous entertainments, compliments, plays, or sports to recreate you, and drive away your sorrows, but that you can find more blessed and delectable company and employment at home: that you can daily retire into yourself, and there peruse a richer treasure than bodily eyes on earth can see; and there be taken up with a far more contenting, satisfactory employment, and a more fruitful and pleasant converse and recreation, than any creature in court or country can afford: that your joy is laid up where the hand of violence cannot touch it; and that they that can deprive you of estate, and liberty, and life, yet cannot take your comfort from you. That when fleshly unthrifths love not home, because all is spent, and they can expect no better entertainment there than want, confusion, chiding, and distress, you can withdraw from a confused, troublesome world, into a well-furnished and adorned soul, replenished with the precious fruits of the Spirit, and beautified with the image of your Lord! O Madam, what sweet and noble employment have you there, in comparison of that which worldlings are troubled with abroad! There you may read the sentence of your justification, as foregoing and foreshowing the public final sentence of your Judge: there you can converse with God himself, not in his vindictive justice, but as he is love; for the love that dwelleth so plentifully in you, doth prove that God dwelleth in you, and you in him, 1 John iv. 7, 8, 16. There you may converse with Christ your Head, that dwelleth in you by faith, (Eph. iii. 17,) and with the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in you, and hath communion with you, by the beams of his illuminating, sanctifying, confirming, and comforting grace: there, as in his temple, you are speaking of his glory, (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19; with Psal. xxix. 9,) and rejoicing in his holy praise, and remembering what he hath done for your soul. There you can peruse the records of his mercy, and think with gratitude and delight, how he did first illuminate you, and draw and engage your heart unto himself; what advantage he got upon you, and what iniquity he prevented by the mercies of your education, and how he secretly took acquaintance with you in your youth: how he delivered you from worldly, fleshly snares; how he caused you to savour the things of the Spirit; how he planted you in a sound, well-ordered church, where he quickened and conducted you by a lively, faithful ministry, and watered his gifts by their constant, powerful preaching of his word, where discipline was for a defence, and where your heart was warmed with the communion of the saints, and where you learned to worship God in spirit and in truth; and where you were taught so effectually by God to discern between the precious and the vile, and

to love those that are born of God, whom the world knoweth not, that no subtleties or calumnies of the serpent can unteach it you, or ever be able to separate you from that love. You may read in these sacred records of your heart, how the Angel of the covenant hath hitherto conducted you, through this wilderness towards the land of promise; how he hath been a cloud to you in the day, and a pillar of fire by night; how the Lord did number you with the people that are his flock, his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and led you about in a desert land, instructed you, and kept you as the apple of his eye, Deut. xxxii. 9, 10. His manna hath compassed your tent; his doctrine hath dropped as the rain, and his words distilled as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass, ver. 2. As his beloved you have dwelt in safety by him, and the Lord hath covered you all the day long, chap. xxxiii. 12. When storms have risen, he hath been your refuge; and when dangers compassed you on every side, he hath hid you as in his pavilion, and his angels have pitched their tents about you, and borne you up. You have been fortified in troubles, and enabled comfortably to undergo them: in war and in peace; in your native country and in foreign lands; among your friends and among your enemies; in court and country; in prosperity and adversity, you have found that "there is none like the God of Israel, who rideth upon the heaven in your help, and his excellency on the sky: the eternal God hath been your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," ver. 26, 27. You may remember the mercies of your younger years, of your married state, and of your widowhood; your comforts in your truly noble lord, though troubled and interrupted by his death, yet increased by the consideration of his felicity with Christ; your comfort in your hopeful issue, though abated by the injury of Romish theft, which stole one of the roses of your garden, that they might boast of the sweetness when they called it their own. (I may well say, stole it, when all the cheat was performed by unknown persons in the dark; and no importunity by you or me, could procure me one dispute or conference in her hearing, with any of the seducers, before her person was stolen away.) Though comforts conveyed by creatures must have their pricks, yet your experience hath partly taught you, (and more will do,) that by all the mixtures of sour and bitter ingredients, your Father doth temper you the most wholesome composition; he chasteneth you for your profit, that you may be partaker of his holiness, (Heb. xii. 10,) and the least degree of holiness cannot be purchased at too dear a rate. His rod and staff have comforted you: and whatever are the beginnings, the end will be the quiet fruit of righteousness, when you have been exercised therein: and though man be mutable, and friends, and flesh, and heart have failed you, yet God is still the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever, Psal. lxxiii. 26. Oh the variety of learning that is contained in the secret writings of a sanctified heart! the variety of subjects for the most fruitful and delightful thoughts, which you may find recorded in the inwards of your soul! How pleasant is it there to find the characters of the special love of God, the lineaments of his image, the transcript of his law, the harmony of his gifts and graces, the witness, the seal, and the earnest of his Spirit, and the foretastes and beginnings of eternal life! As thankfulness abhors oblivion, and is a recording grace, and keepeth histories and catalogues of mercies; so it is a reward unto itself; and by these records it furnisheth the soul with matter for the sweetest employments and delights. Is it not pleasant to you there to read how God hath continued the objections of distrust? How oft he hath condescended to your weakness, and pardoned you when you could not easily forgive yourself? How oft he hath entertained you in secret with his love? and visited you with his consolations? How near him sometimes you have got in fervent prayer, and serious meditation? And when for a season he hath hid his face, how soon and seasonably he returned? How oft he hath found you weeping, and hath wiped away your tears, and calmed and quieted your troubled soul? How he hath resolved your doubts, and expelled your fears, and heard your prayers? How comfortably he hath called you his child; and given you leave, and commanded you to call him Father; when Christ hath brought you with boldness into his presence? How sweet should it be to your remembrance, to think how the love of Christ hath sometimes exalted you above these sublimary things! How the Spirit hath taken you up to heaven, and showed to your faith the glory of the new Jerusalem, the blessed company of those holy spirits that attended the throne of the majesty of God, and the shining face of your glorified Head! By what seasonable and happy messengers he hath sent you the cluster of grapes as the first-fruits of the land of promise! and commanded you oft to take and eat the bread of life! How oft hath he reached to your thirsty soul the fruit of the vine, and turned it sacramentally into his blood, and bid you drink it in remembrance of him, till he come and feast you with his fullest love, and satisfy you with the pleasure and presence of his glory!

But the volumes of mercy written in your heart, are too great to be by me transcribed. I can easily appeal to you that are acquainted with it, whether such heart-employment be not more pleasant and more profitable than any of the entertainments that flashy wit, or gaudy gallantry, or merriments, luxury, or preferences can afford. Is it not better converse with Christ at home than with such as are described, Psal. xii. abroad? To dwell with all that blessed retinue, (Gal. v. 22, 23,) than with pride, vain-glory, envy, dissimulation, hypocrisy, falsehood, time-wasting, soul-destroying pleasures; to say nothing of the filthiness which christian ears abhor the mention of, and which God himself in time will judge, Eph. v. 3-6; Heb. xiii. 4; and the rest recited Gal. v. 19-21. If ungodly persons do find it more unpleasant to converse at home, no wonder, when there is nothing but darkness and defilement; and when they have put God from them, and entertained Satan, so that their hearts are like to haunted houses, where terrible cries and apparitions do make it a place of fear to the inhabitants. But if their souls had such blessed inhabitants as yours; could they meet there with a reconciled God, a Father, a Saviour, and a Sanctifier; had they souls that kept a correspondence with heaven; it would not seem so sad and terrible a life to dwell at home, and withdraw from that noise of vanity abroad, which are but the drums and trumpets of the devil, to encourage his deluded followers, and drown the cries of miserable souls. Your dearest friends and chiefest treasure, are not abroad in court or country, but above you, and within you; where then should your delightful converse be, but where your friends and treasure are? Matt. vi. 21; Phil. iii. 20; Col. iii. 1-4. When there is almost nothing to be found in the conversation of the world, but discord, and distraction, and confusion, and clamours, and malice, and treachery, is it not better to retire into such a heart, where, notwithstanding infirmities, and some doubts and fears, there is order, and concord, and harmony, and such peace as the world can neither give nor take away? O blessed be the hand of love, that blotted out the names of honour, and riches, and pleasures, and carnal interest, and accommodations, from your

heart; and inscribed his own in characters never to be obliterated! That turned out usurpers, and so prepared and furnished your heart, as to make and judge it such, as no one is worthy of it but himself. Oh what a court have you chosen for your abode! How high and glorious! how pure and holy! unchangeable and safe! How ambitiously do you avoid ambition! How great are you in the lowliness of your mind! How high in your humility! Will no lower a place than heaven content you to converse in? (For heart-converse and heaven-converse are as much one, as beholding both the glass and face.) Will no lower correspondents satisfy you than the host of heaven? Cannot the company of imperfect mortals serve your turn? Nay, can you be satisfied with none below the Lord himself? Well, Madam, if you will needs have it so, it shall be so: what you judge BEST FOR YOU, shall be yours: what you had rather be, you are; and where you had rather dwell, you shall: and seeing you have understood that "one thing is necessary, and have chosen the good part, it shall not be taken from you," Luke x. 41, 42. Having first sought the kingdom of God and his righteousness, you shall have such additions as will do you good, Matt. vi. 33; Rom. viii. 28; Psalm lxxxiv. 11. You have learned to know, while God is yours, how little of the creature you need, and how little addition it maketh to your happiness. You are wise enough if you live to God; and honourable enough if you are a member of Christ; and rich enough if you are an heir of heaven; and beautiful enough if you have the image of God; and yet having made your choice of these, how liberally hath God cast in as overplus the inferior kind, which you find in losing them! As if he had said to you, as to Solomon, (2 Chron. i. 11,) "Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself—wisdom and knowledge is granted to thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour—;" as if God would convince even flesh itself that none are like the servants of the Lord: and when the envious one hath said, that you serve not God for nought, though he hath been permitted to put forth his hand, and touch you in your dearest friends and relations, your peace, your habitation, and estate; yet hath he so restrained him, and supported you, as may easily convince you that the worst of Christ is better than the best of the world, or sin.

I have purposely been long in opening the felicity of heart-converse, as a matter of your own experience, both for the exciting of you to a life of thankfulness to God, and that this undigested treatise which you have drawn out into the light, may come to your hands with some supply, in that part of the application which doth most concern you: and because your name may draw the eyes of many others to read this preface, I shall add here a few directions to those that would be well acquainted with themselves, and would comfortably converse at home.

Direct. I. Let him not overvalue or mind the deceitful world, that would have fruitful converse with God and with himself. Trust not such a cheater, as hath robbed so many thousands before us, especially when God and common experience do call out to us to take heed. The study of riches, and rising, and reputation, and pleasures, agreeth not with this study of God, and of our hearts; and though the world will not take acquaintance with us, if we come not in their fashion, nor see us, if we stand not on the higher ground; yet it is much better to be unknown to others, than to ourselves. Though they that live upon the trade, do think there is no fishing like the sea, yet those that take it but on the bye, will rather choose the smaller waters, where, though the fish be less, yet few are drowned, and made a prey to the fish that they would have catched. A retirement therefore must be made, from the inordinate pursuit of worldly things, and the charms of honours, riches, and delights; and if some present loss do seem to follow, it is indeed no loss, which tendeth unto gain. He will catch no fish that will not lose his fly. Methinks they that sincerely pray, "Lead us not into temptation," should not desire to have bolts and bars between God and them, and to dwell where salvation is hardest attained! Desire not to be planted in any such place, though it seem a paradise, where God is most unknown, and used as a stranger, and where saints are wonders, and examples of serious piety are most rare, and where a heavenly conversation is known but by reports, and reported of according to the malice of the serpent, and represented but as fancy, hypocrisy, or faction: where sin most prospereth, and is in least disgrace; and where it is a greater shame to be a saint than to be a swine; a serious christian, than a seared, stupified sensualist. Bless you from that place where the weeds of vice are so rank, as that no good plant can prosper near them; where gain is godliness, and impiety is necessary to acceptable observance, and a tender conscience, and the fear of God, are characters of one too surly and unpleasing to be countenanced by men; where the tongue that nature formed to be the index of the mind, is made the chiefest instrument to hide it; and men are so conscious of their own incredibility, that no one doth believe or trust another; where no words are heart-deep, but those that are spoken against Christ's cause and interest, or for their own; where a vile person is honoured, and those condemned that fear the Lord. Bless you from the place where truth is intolerable, and untruth cloaked with its name; where holiness is looked at as an owl or enemy, and yet hypocrisy must steal its honour from it: where he is a saint that is less wicked than infamous transgressors; and where Dives' life is blameless temperance; and where pride, idleness, fulness of bread, and filthy fornication and lasciviousness, are the infirmities of pious and excellent persons: where great sins are small ones, and small ones are none; and where the greatest must have no reproof, and the physician is taken for the greatest enemy: where chaff is valued at the price of wheat, and yet the famine is of choice: where persons and things are measured by interest; and duty to God derided as folly, whenever it crosseth the wisdom of the world, and hated as some hurtful thing when it crosseth fleshly men in their desires: and where Dives' brethren are unwarned; and none are more secure and frolic, than those that to-morrow may be in hell; and as at the gladiators' sports, none complain less than those that speed worst, *quia cæsi silent, spectatores vociferantur*. Old travellers are usually most addicted to end their days in solitude: learn to contemn the world at cheaper rates than they; neither hope nor wish to live an Alexander, and die a Socrates: a crowd or concourse, though of the greatest, where is the greatest tumult of affairs, and confluence of temptations, is not the safest place to die in; and I have most mind to live where I would die. Where men are *barbari moribus, et si non natione*: christians in name, and infidels in conversation; the sweetness of their christian names will not preserve them or you from the danger of their unchristian lives. It was not the whole of Lot's deliverance to be saved from the flames of Sodom, but it was much of it to be freed from their malicious rage, and filthy, grievous conversations. The best medicine against the plague is to keep far

enough from the place that hath it. The proverb saith, He shall have fleas that will lie with the dogs. Desire not that condition where all seem friends, but none are friends indeed; but they that seem to be your servants, are by flattery serving themselves upon you: where few persons or things are truly represented; but men are judged of by the descriptions of their enemies, and the lambs have the skins and names of wolves: and the best are odious when bold calumniators load them with odious accusations. In a word, desire not the place where the more men seek, the less they find; and the more they find, the less they have; and the more they have, the less they do enjoy: where the more are their provisions, the less are their supplies; the more their wealth, the more they want; the more their pleasure, the less their peace; the greater their mirth, the less their joy; the greater their confidence, the less their safety: where the great mistake about their happiness, their best, their end, doth make their lives a constant error, and death a doleful disappointment. He must needs lie crooked that hath so short a bed.

Direct. 2. Keep all clean and sound within, that there may be little of loathsomeness to disaffect you, or terror to frighten you from yourselves. It is a frightful thing to be much conversing with a guilty soul, and hearing the accusations of a conscience not cleansed by the blood of Christ: and it is an unpleasant thing to be searching in our wounds, and reading the history of a life of folly; especially of wilful sin, and of ungrateful neglect of offered grace. Make not such work for yourself, if you love it not. We make our beds ill, and then we are weary of them, because they are so hard: our comforts are more in our own hands than in any others: the best friend or pastor cannot do so much to comfort them, nor the greatest enemy so much to destroy them, as ourselves. If we will surfeit, and make ourselves sick, we must endure it. If wasps and vipers be our guests, no wonder if we dwell not quietly at home; and if we sit not at ease, when we carry thorns about us. Folly and concupiscence breed our misery: it is the smoke of our own corruptions that troubleth our eyes, and the scent and smart of our ulcerated minds that most annoyeth us. We cannot waste our peace, and have it. Turk and pope, and all the terrible names on earth, are not so terrible deservedly to a sinner as his own: the nearest evil is the most hurtful evil. If a scolding wife be such a continual dropping, and troublesome companion, as Solomon tells us, what then is a distempered, troubled mind, and a chiding conscience? It is a pity that man should be his own afflicter, but so it is: and, as the proverb is, He hath great need of a fool, that will play the fool himself; so I may say, He hath great need of a tormenter, that will be a tormenter to himself. Folly, and lust, and rashness, and passion, are sorry keepers of our peace: darkness and filth do make a dungeon, and not a delightful habitation of our hearts: God would take pleasure in them, if we kept them clean, and would walk with us in those gardens, if we kept them dressed; but if we will defile his temple, and make it unpleasant unto him, he will make it unpleasant unto us. Terror and trouble are the shadow of sin, that follow it, though the sun shine never so brightly. If we carry fire in our clothes, we shall smell it at the least. Keep close to God; obey his will; make sure of your reconciliation and adoption; keep clear your evidences, and grieve not the Holy Spirit which sealeth you, and must comfort you. And then it will do you good to look into your heart, and there you shall find the most delightful company; and the Spirit that you have there entertained, will there entertain you with his joys.

But if disorder have prevailed and made your hearts a place of trouble, yet fly not from it, and refuse not to converse with it; for though it be not at the present a work of pleasure, it is a work of necessity, and may tend to pleasure in the end: conversing wisely and faithfully with a disordered, troubled heart, is the way to make it a well-ordered and quiet heart.

Direct. 3. In judging of your present state and actions, let one eye be always on the end: this will both quicken you to be serious in the duty, and direct you in all particular cases to judge aright. As the approach of death doth convince almost all men of the necessity of studying themselves, and calleth them to it from all other studies; so the considerate foresight of it would do the like in better time. And it is the end that communicateth the good or evil to all things in the way; and therefore as they have relation to the end, they must be judged of. When you peruse your actions, consider them as done by one that is entering into eternity, and as those that must all be opened in a clearer light. If we separate our actions in our considerations from their ends, they are not of the same signification, but taken to be other things than indeed they are. If the oaths, the lies, the slanders, the sensuality and filthiness of impure sinners, had not relation to the loss of heaven, and to the pains of hell, they were not matters of that exceeding moment as now they are. And if the holiness, obedience, and watchfulness of believers, had no relation to the escaping of hell-fire, and the attainment of eternal life, they would be of lower value than they are. The more clearly men discern that God is present, that judgment is at hand, that they are near to heaven or hell, where millions have already received their reward, the more seriously will they study, and the better will they know themselves.

Direct. 4. Though you must endeavour to judge yourself truly as you are, yet rather incline to think meanly than highly of yourself, and be rather too suspicious than too presumptuous. My reasons for this direction are, because man's nature is generally disposed to self-exalting; and pride and self-love are sins so common and so strong, as that it is a thing of wondrous difficulty to overcome them, so far as to judge ourselves impartially, and to err as little in our own cause, as if it were another's; and because self-exalting hath far more dangerous effects than self-abasing, supposing them to exceed their bounds. Prudent humility is a quieting grace, and avoideth many storms and tempests, which trouble and shake the peace of others. It maketh men thankful for that little as undeserved, which others repine at as short of their expectations: it telleth the sufferer that God doth afflict him much less than he deserveth; and causeth him to say, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him," Mic. vii. 9. It teacheth us a cautious suspicion of our own understandings, and a just submission to those that are wiser than ourselves; when pride keepeth out wisdom, by keeping out the knowledge of our ignorance. And as Pliny tells us of some nations, where they are grey-headed in their infancy, and black-headed when they are old; so pride maketh many wise so soon, that they never come to be truly wise: they think in youth that they have more than the wisdom of age, and therefore in age they have less than what becometh them in youth. Every hard report or usage is ready to break a proud man's heart; when contempt doth little disquiet the humble, because they judge so meanly of themselves. The proud are frequently disturbed, because they climb into the seats of others; when humility sits quietly, and no one bids it rise,

because it knoweth and keepeth its own place. Therefore it is, that true contrition having once told us of our folly to the heart, doth make us walk more circumspectly while we live; and that no man is better resolved than he that was once in doubt, and that no man standeth faster than he that hath had a fall; and no man is more safe, than he that hath had most assaults. If you love your safety, desire not either to be or to seem too high. Be little in your own eyes, and be content to be so in the eyes of others. As for worldly greatness, affect neither the thing nor the reputation of it. Look up, if you please, to the tops of steeples, masts, and mountains; but stand below if you would be safe. Though the chimney be the highest part of the house, it is not the cleanest or sweetest part; it is scorched more with the fire, and suffocated with the smoke, than other parts. And for spiritual endowments, desire them, and improve them; but desire not inordinately the reputation of them. It seldom increaseth a man's humility to be reputed humble: and though humility help you to bear applause, yet the remnants of pride are ready to take fire, and other sins to get advantage by it.

Direct. 5. Improve your self-acquaintance to a due apprehension of what is most suitable, most profitable, and necessary for you, and what is most hurtful, unsuitable, and unnecessary. He that hath taken a just measure of himself, is the better able to judge of all things else. How suitable will Christ and grace appear, and how unsuitable will worldly pomp appear, to one that truly knows himself! How suitable will serious, fervent worship appear, and how unsuitable the ludicrous shows of hypocrites! And one pair of eyes will be valued above many pair of spectacles, and one pair of legs before two pair of crutches, by one that is not a stranger to himself. He that takes grass and provender to be his best and most delightful food, hath sure forgotten that he is a man, and taketh himself to be but a beast, or else he would not choose the food of a beast, nor use himself as a beast. If a man knew aright the capacity and tendency of the reasonable nature, and the evil of sin, and the necessity and distress of an unrenewed soul, what sweet, what longing thoughts would he have of God, and all that tendeth to the pleasing and enjoying of him! How little would he think himself concerned in the trivial matters of honour or dishonour, riches or poverty, favour or displeasure, further than as they help or hinder him in the things that are of more regard! Know yourself, and you will know what to love and what to hate; what to choose and what to refuse; what to hold and what to lose; what to esteem and what to slight; what to fear, and when to be courageous and secure: the curing the dotage thus, would cure the night-walks of the dreaming, vagrant world. And they that find that music cureth not the stone or gout, would know that mirth, and gallantry, and vain-glory, are no preservatives from hell, nor a sufficient cure for a guilty soul: and that if an aching head must have a better remedy than a golden crown, and a diseased body a more suitable cure than a silken suit, a diseased soul doth call for more.

Direct. 6. Value not yourself by mutable accidents, but by the essence and substance of christianity. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance which he possesseth," Luke xii. 15. Paul knew better what he said, when he accounted all but loss and dung for the knowledge and fruition of Jesus Christ, (Phil. iii. 7, 8,) than they that dote on it as their felicity. And is a man to be valued, applauded, and magnified for his dung, or for his personal endowments? Is that your perfume that stinketh in the nostrils of men of sounder senses? Judge not of the person by his apparel, when the foolishest and the worst may wear the same. The master and inhabitants honour the house more than the house doth the master and inhabitants. All the wit and learning in the world, with all the riches, honour, and applause, yea, and all the civility and winning deportment, will not make a christian of an infidel or atheist, nor a happy of a miserable man. As nothing will make a man honourable indeed, that hath not the use of reason, which differenceth men from brutes; so nothing will make or prove him holy, or happy, or safe, that hath not the holy image of God, which must difference his children from his enemies. If he be unsanctified, and be not a new creature, and have not the Spirit of Christ within him, he is an atheist, or infidel, or an ungodly wretch, let him be never so rich, or great, or honourable. And as a harlot is never beautiful in the eyes of the wise and chaste, so a wicked man is never happy in the eyes of any but his phrenetic society.

Direct. 7. Think not that a few, seldom, hasty thoughts will bring and keep you in acquaintance with yourself. It must be diligent observation and serious consideration that must accomplish this. Many a man walketh where he doth not dwell. A transient salute is not a sign of intimate familiarity. It is enough sometimes to step into your neighbour's house for a charitable visit; but you must dwell in your own: be more busy and censorious at home than the proud and malicious are abroad; and be as seldom and tender in censuring others, as such hypocrites are in censuring themselves. Put on your spectacles at home, when you are reading over the register of your consciences; but wear them not as you walk the streets; but take up with so much knowledge of ordinary passengers as you can have without them. Think not that you are unconcerned in the danger or safety of your neighbour, but remember that you are more concerned in your own. It is here most reasonable to say, that charity begins at home, when self-neglect will disable you to help another. And if sometimes you falls or faintly do find you matter for purging, griping, troublesome thoughts, and interrupt your sweeter, comfortable meditations, refuse not the trouble when you have made it necessary: it is many a sad and serious thought that the ministers of Christ have for the cure and safety of their flocks: and should not the people have as serious thoughts for themselves? None foul their hands, saith the proverb, about their own work: they that bring in the filth, should not refuse to sweep it out. We must not cast out all the foul and troublesome work upon our nurses, as long as we can help ourselves. Your reason, your wisdom, care, and diligence, are more your own than any one's else; and therefore should be more used for yourself than for any. And if, after much thoughtfulness and labour, you find your heart to be no whit better, yet labour and believe. It is not the last blow of the axe alone that cuts down the tree, though it falls not till the last. The growth of grace, as of plants, and fruits, and flowers, is not perceived by immediate inspection. There is much good obtained when we discern it not: and nothing is more certain, than that honest diligence is never lost in the things of God and our salvation. It is worth all our labour, if we grow no better, to keep our spark from going out, and to see that we grow no worse. And the preventing of evil is here an excellent good. Many a thousand eat and drink, that never hope to grow any fatter or stronger than they are. It is not nothing to be sustained for our daily work, and to have our oil renewed daily as it wasteth. The mill gets by going, saith

the proverb, though it stir not from the place. "O keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," Prov. iv. 23. Actions receive their specification and quality from the heart. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue," Prov. xviii. 21, but the tongue is in the power of the heart.

Direct. 8. Let not your self-knowledge be merely speculative, or affective, but also practical. Be not contented that you know what you are, and what you have done, nor that your heart is much affected with it; but let all tend to action, to mend what is amiss, and to maintain, improve, and increase what is good: and let the next question be, What am I now to do? or, What must I be for time to come? It is a lamentable mistake of many that tire themselves with striving to make deep, affecting impressions on their hearts; and when they have got much sorrow, or much joy, they think they have done the greatest matter, and there they stop. But affections are the spring that move to action; and if you proceed not to your duty, affection is much lost: and if with smaller affection or passion you can steadfastly and resolutely cleave to God, and do your duty, you have the principal thing, and are accepted: not that outward actions are accepted without the heart; but that there is most of the heart, where there is most of the estimation and will, though less of passion; and there is most of will, where there is most endeavour: and inward action is the first part of obedience; and without these no speculations will avail. However you find your heart, be up and doing in the use of means, to make it better, and wait on God for further grace.

Direct. 9. Manage your self-acquaintance prudently, cautiously, and with the help of your skilful friend or pastor. Think not that it is a work that you need no helper in. If you mistake in your accounts, and put down a wrong sum, and call yourself confidently what you are not, or deny God's graces whenever through melancholy or distemper you cannot find them, and pass false conclusions against God's mercies and yourself, this were to turn a duty into a sin and snare.

And you must do it seasonably. Melancholy persons are most incapable of it, who do nothing but pore upon themselves to little purpose: such must do more of other duty, but lay by much of this till they are more capable, and make much use of the judgment of their guides. And weaker heads must take but a due proportion of time for self-searching meditations, lest they contract that troublesome disease: duties must be used with profitable variety, and all done under good advice. But young persons, and those that are yet unconverted, have need to fall upon it without delay; and to follow it till they have made sure their calling and election, 2 Pet. i. 10. Oh what a dreadful thing it is for a man to come rawly and newly to the study of his soul, as a thing that he is unacquainted with, when sickness is upon him, and death at hand, and he is ready to pass into another world! To be then newly to ask, What am I? and, What have I done? and, Whither am I going? and, What will become of me for ever? is a most fearful state of folly.

Direct. 10. Terminate not your knowledge ultimately in yourself; but pass up unto God in Christ, and to the blessed privileges of the saints, and the joyful state of endless glory, and there let your meditations be most frequent and most sweet. But of this elsewhere.

Madam, I have added these directions, not principally for you that have learned the art, but for your hopeful sons and daughters, who must be taught these things betimes, and for your friends, who will be invited hither for your sake. They that know you not, will think I have taken too much liberty, and spoken too much both of you and to you. But I appeal from such. They that know not how easily you can pardon any one, except yourself, will aggravate the weaknesses which your charity will cover. I was purposely the longer, because the treatise is defective; and if one kingdom do not hold us, and I should see your face no more on earth, yet till we meet in the glorious, everlasting kingdom, we shall have frequent converse by such means as these, notwithstanding our corporal distance. And as I am assured of a room in your frequent prayers, so I hope I shall remain,

Madam,

Your faithful servant,

And remembrancer at the throne of grace,

August 25, 1661.

RICHARD BAXTER.

POSTSCRIPT.

MADAM,

SINCE the writing of this epistle, finding you under the afflicting hand of God, I thought meet to remember you of what you know, that God thus traineth up his children for their rest: "Whom he loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If we endure chastening, God dealeth with us as with children: and if we be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then we are bastards and not sons," Heb. xii. 6-8. The same flesh that would be pleased, will grudge when it is displeased; and that which is our enticing enemy in prosperity, will be our disturbing enemy in adversity. "As fleshly minds misjudge of the law and service of God, and cannot be subject, because of the enmity against him," Rom. viii. 7; so do they misjudge of his chastisements: and so far as they participate of this disease, the best will be repining, and tempted to unworthy thoughts of God. Even innocent nature is loth to suffer; Christ himself saith, "If it be thy will, let this cup pass from me:" and nature, so far as it is corrupted, is yet much more averse, because the flesh is more inordinately desirous of its ease, and passion more turbulent when it is denied; and the soul hath less apprehension and relish of that love of God, which is the cause and end, and should sweeten all to a reconciled, well-composed mind: and it is also less satisfied in the will of God, and it is less subject to it; and patience is defective, because of the weakness of the graces that should support us. Besides which, also, a tenderness of spirit, and overmuch sensibility, fears, and trouble, are ordinary effects of the weak and tender nature of man, especially of the more weak and tender sex. And when all these concur, (the averseness of the most innocent nature, the remnants of sin, and the special tenderness of your nature and sex,) your burden and trial is much the greater, and your grief must needs be much the more. But, I beseech you, remember, that you have not to do with an enemy, but a Father that knoweth what he doth, and

meaneth you no hurt, but that which is the fittest means to your good, and to your escaping greater hurt; that loveth you no less in the greatest of your pain and danger, than in the greatest of your prosperity and peace. "That you have a Head in heaven, that was partaker with us of flesh and blood, that he might deliver us from our bondage, which we are in through the fear of death; who was made perfect by suffering, and is not ashamed to call us brethren; being in all things made like unto us, that he might be a merciful and faithful High priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for our sins; who, in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted," Heb. ii. 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18. We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted or tried as we are, but without sin. He that himself, in the days of his flesh, did offer "up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, to him that was able to save him from death," (Heb. v. 7,) will not be angry if his servants complain and cry to him in their suffering. He that cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" will pity his poor distressed members, and not forsake them, when they think themselves forsaken; and if they go beyond their bounds in their complainings, he will not therefore disregard their moans: but he that honoured the patience of Job, though he so passionately cursed the day of his birth, will love the faith and patience of his people, notwithstanding the mixtures of unbelief and impatience. He is ready with his gracious excuse, Matt. xxvi. 41, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" and he considereth that our "strength and flesh is not of stones or brass," Job vi. 12. "He will therefore revive the spirit of the contrite, and will not contend for ever, nor be always wroth, lest the spirit should fail before him, and the souls which he hath made," Isa. lvii. 15, 16. "And though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; yet the end is, that he may make us partakers of his holiness; and afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby," Heb. xii. 10, 11. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him," James i. 12. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked: for the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance," Psal. xciv. 12—14.

Madam, if nothing in all the world be more certain, than that there is a God, who is true and just, and delighteth in his people when they are lowest in the world; if nothing be more sure, than that there is a heaven for persevering, penitent believers; then are our arguments for the comfort of God's afflicted ones, no fancies, but fetched as from the highest excellences, so from the surest realities that ever were presented to the understanding of a man. And though the best of saints have been put to wrestle with the temptations that arise from the adversity of believers, and the prosperity of the wicked, yet this is still the result of all their perplexing thoughts; "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. Though sometimes their feet are almost gone, and their paths do well nigh slip, and they are ready to say, We have cleansed our hearts in vain, and washed our hands in innocency; for all the day are we plagued, and chastened every morning; yet they soon learn in the sanctuary of God, that the wicked are set in slippery places, and cast down into destruction, and brought to desolation as in a moment, and utterly consumed with terrors: as a dream when one awaketh, so the Lord, when he awaketh, will dispise their image," Psal. lxxiii. "But mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace," Psal. xxxvii. 37. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil: but though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know, that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him," Eccles. viii. 11, 12. If not here, yet certainly at last all shall say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous," Psal. lviii. 11. "Rest therefore in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; commit your way to him; trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass: for the needy shall not alway be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever," Psal. ix. 18. How happy are you, that God doth thus save you from the temptations of prosperity, which you see befool and undo so many before your eyes! And that you are not left in the number of those that are men of the world, which have their portion in this life! Psal. xvii. 14; "and are given up to their own heart's lust, to walk in their own counsels," Psal. lxxxi. 12; and must hear at last, "Remember that thou in thy life-time receivest thy good things," but that here you have your evils, and shall be comforted when the now prosperous wicked are tormented, Luke xvi. 25. If heaven be enough to make you a felicity, and eternity be long enough for your fruition of it, then never think hardly of God for any of his chastisements. Lazarus repenteth not there that he was poor; nor Job, that he was covered with sores; nor David, that he washed his couch with tears, and that his sore ran and ceased not. The longest of our sorrows will there be reviewed as short in respect of our endless joys; and the sharpest of our pains as nothing to those pleasures. Madam, experience as well as faith assureth me, that it is good for us that we are afflicted; and though for the sake of others, I shall earnestly beseech the Lord, that he will not unseasonably remove such as you from this unworthy generation; yet I doubt not but your removal, and sufferings in the way, will advantage you for your everlasting rest. And for myself, I desire, that my lot may still fall with those that follow Christ through tribulation, bearing the cross, and crucified to the world, and waiting for his appearance, desiring to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord; and not with those that are fed as beasts for the slaughter, and prosper a while in their iniquity, till sudden destruction come upon them, and at last their sins do find them out; "when the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," Psal. ix. 17; Numb. xxxii. 23; 1 Thess. v. 3; Phil. iii. 19. And that these words of life may be engraven upon my heart: Psal. lxxii. 3, "Thy loving-kindness is better than life." Psal. lxxiii. 26, "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Rom. viii. 28, "All things work together for good to them that love God." John xiv. 19, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Col. iii. 3, 4, "Our life is hid with Christ in God: when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." And that I may be fit for the title of the beloved apostle, Rev. i. 9, though, as a servant to you and the church of God,

Your brother and companion in tribulation, and
in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,

RICHARD BAXTER.

TO MY DEARLY BELOVED THE INHABITANTS OF THE BOROUGH AND PARISH
OF KIDDERMINSTER IN WORCESTERSHIRE.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CAUSES OF HIS BEING FORBIDDEN TO PREACH IN THE DIOCESS OF WORCESTER,
BY DR. GEORGE MORLEY, THEN BISHOP THERE.

As I never desired any greater preferment in this world, than to have continued in the work of my ministry among you, so I once thought my days would have been ended in that desired station : but we are unmeet to tell God how he shall dispose of us ; or to foreknow what changes he intends to make. Though you are low in the world, and have not the riches which cause men's estimation with the most, I see no probability that we should have been separated till death, could I but have obtained leave to preach for nothing.

But being forbidden to preach the gospel in that diocess, I must thankfully take the liberty which shall any where else be vouchsafed me : and while I may enjoy it, I take it not for my duty to be over querulous, though the wound that is made by my separation from you be very deep. And though to strangers it will seem probable that such severity had never been exercised against me, but for some heinous crime, yet to you that have known me, I shall need to say but little in my defence. The great crime which is openly charged on me, and for which I am thought unworthy to preach the gospel, (even where there is no other to preach,) is a matter that you are unacquainted with, and therefore, as you have heard me publicly accused of it, I am bound to render you such an account as is necessary to your just information and satisfaction.

It pleased the king's Majesty (in the prosecution of his most christian resolution, of uniting his differing subjects by the way of mutual approaches and abatements) to grant a commission to twelve bishops and nine assistants on the one side, and to one bishop and eleven other divines and nine assistants on the other side, to treat about such alterations of the Liturgy, as are necessary to the satisfying of tender consciences, and to the restoring of unity and peace. My experiences in a former treaty (for reconciliation in matter of discipline) made me entreat those to whom the nomination on the one side was committed, to excuse me from the service which I knew would prove troublesome to myself, and ungrateful to others ; but I could not prevail. (But the work itself I very much approved, as to be done by fitter and more acceptable persons.) Being commanded by the king's commission, I took it to be my duty to be faithful, and to plead for such alterations as I knew were necessary to the assigned ends ; thinking it to be treachery to his Majesty that intrusted us, and to the church and cause for which we were intrusted, if under pretence of making such alterations as were necessary to the two forementioned ends, I should have silently yielded to have *no alterations, or next to none*. In the conclusion (when the chief work was done by writing) a committee of each part was appointed to manage a disputation in presence (by writing also). Therein those of the other part formed an argument, whose major proposition was to this sense (for I have no copy) : Whatsoever book enjoineeth nothing but what is of itself lawful, and by lawful authority, enjoineeth nothing that is sinful. We denied this proposition ; and at last gave divers reasons of our denial ; among which one was that It may be unlawful by accident, and therefore sinful. You now know my crime ; it is my concurring with learned, reverend brethren, to give this reason of our denial of a proposition : yet they are not forbidden to preach for it, (and I hope shall not be,) but only I. You have publicly heard, from a mouth that should speak nothing but the words of charity, truth, and soberness, (especially there,) that this was a desperate shift that men at the last extremity are forced to, and inferring that then neither God nor man can enjoin without sin. In city and country this soundeth forth to my reproach. I should take it for an act of clemency to have been smitten professedly for nothing, and that it might not have been thought necessary to afflict me by a defamation, that so I might seem justly afflicted by a prohibition to preach the gospel. But indeed is there in these words of ours so great a crime ? Though we doubted not but they knew that our assertion made not *every* evil accident to be such as made an imposition unlawful, yet we expressed this by word to them at that time, for fear of being misrepresented : and I told it to the right reverend bishop when he forbade me to preach, and gave this as a reason : and I must confess, I am still guilty of so much weakness as to be confident that some things not evil of themselves, may have accidents so evil, as may make it a sin to him that shall command them. Is this opinion inconsistent with all government ? Yea, I must confess myself guilty of so much greater weakness, as that I thought I should never have found a man on earth, that had the ordinary reason of a man, that had made question of it ; yea, I shall say more than that which hath offended, viz. That whenever the commanding or forbidding of a thing indifferent is like to occasion more hurt than good, and this may be foreseen, the commanding or forbidding it is a sin. But yet this is not the assertion that I am chargeable with, but that some accidents there may be that may make the imposition sinful. If I may ask it without accusing others, how would my crime have been denominated if I had said the contrary ? Should I not have been judged unmeet to live in any governed society ? It is not unlawful of itself to command out a navy to sea : but if it were foreseen that they would fall into the enemies' hands, or were like to perish by any accident, and the necessity of sending them were small, or none, it were a sin to send them. It is not of itself unlawful to sell poison, or to give a knife to another, or to bid another do it ; but if it were foreseen that they will be used to poison or kill the buyer, it is unlawful ; and I think the law would make him believe it that were guilty. It is not of itself unlawful to light a candle or set fire on a straw ; but if it may be foreknown, that by another's negligence or wilfulness, it is like to set fire on the city, or to give fire to a train and store of gunpowder, that is under the parliament house, when the king and parliament are there : I crave the bishop's pardon, for believing that it were sinful to do it, or command it ; yea or not to hinder it, (in any such case,) when *qui non velat peccare cum potest, jubet*. Yea, though going to God's public worship be of itself so far from being a sin, as that it is a duty, yet I think it is a sin to command it to all in time of a raging pestilence, or when they should be defending the city against the assault of an enemy. It may rather be

then a duty to prohibit it. I think Paul spake not any thing inconsistent with the government of God or man, when he bid both the rulers and people of the church, not to destroy him with their meat for whom Christ died; and when he saith that he hath not his power to destruction, but to edification. Yea, there are evil accidents of a thing not evil of itself, that are caused by the commander: and it is my opinion that they may prove his command unlawful.

But what need I use any other instances than that which was the matter of our dispute? Suppose it never so lawful of itself to kneel in the reception of the sacrament, if it be imposed by a penalty that is incomparably beyond the proportion of the offence, that penalty is an accident of the command, and maketh it by accident sinful in the commander. If a prince should have subjects so weak as that all of them thought it a sin against the example of Christ, and the canons of the general councils, and many hundred years' practice of the church, to kneel in the act of receiving on the Lord's days, if he should make a law that all should be put to death that would not kneel, when he foreknew that their consciences would command them all, or most of them, to die rather than obey, would any man deny this command to be unlawful by this accident? Whether the penalty of ejecting ministers that dare not put away all that do not kneel, and of casting out all the people that scruple it, from the church, be too great for such a circumstance, (and so in the rest,) and whether this, with the lamentable state of many congregations, and the divisions that will follow, being all foreseen, do prove the impositions unlawful which were then in question, is a case that I had then a clearer call to speak to than I have now. Only I may say that the ejection of the servants of Christ from the communion of his church, and of his faithful ministers from their sacred work, when too many congregations have none but insufficient or scandalous teachers, or no preaching ministers at all, will appear a matter of very great moment, in the day of our accounts, and such as should not be done upon any but a necessary cause, where the benefit is greater than this hurt, and all the rest, amounts to.

Having given you, to whom I owe it, this account of the cause for which I am forbidden the exercise of my ministry in that country, I now direct these sermons to your hands, that seeing I cannot teach you as I would, I may teach you as I can. And if I much longer enjoy such liberty as this, it will be much above my expectation.

My dearly beloved, stand fast in the Lord; and "fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but the righteousness of the Lord shall be for ever, and his salvation from generation to generation," Isa. li. 7, 8. If I have taught you any doctrine of error or impiety, of disobedience to your governors in lawful things, of schism or uncharitableness, unlearn them all, and renounce them with penitent detestation: but if otherwise, "I beseech you mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them: for they are such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple," Rom. xvi. 17. If any shall speak against truth or godliness, remember what you have received; and how little any adversary could say, that ever made such assaults upon you, while I was with you; and that it is easy for any man to talk confidently when no man must contradict him. I denied no man liberty upon equal terms, to have said his worst against any doctrine that ever I taught you. And how they succeeded, I need not tell you: your own stability tells the world. As you have maintained true catholicism, and never followed any sect, so I beseech you still maintain the ancient faith, the love of every member of Christ, and common charity to all, your loyalty to your king, your peace with all men: and let none draw you from catholic unity to a faction, though the declaiming against faction and schism should be the device by which they would accomplish it. And as the world is nothing, and God is all, to all that are sincere believers; so let no worldly interest seem regardable to you, when it stands in any opposition to Christ; but account all loss and dung for him, Phil. iii. 8. And if you shall hear that I yet suffer more than I have done, let it not be your discouragement or grief; for I doubt not but it will be my crown and joy. I have found no small consolation, that I have not suffered for sinful, or for small and indifferent things: and if my pleading against the ejection of the ministers of Christ, and the excommunicating of his members, for a ceremony, and the divisions of his church, and the destruction of charity, shall be the cause of my suffering, (be it never so great,) it shall as much rejoice me to be a suffering witness for CHARITY and UNITY, as if I were a martyr for the faith. I participate with Paul in an "expectation and hope, that Christ shall be magnified in my body whether by life or death: and as to live will be Christ, so to die will be gain: only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I ever see you more, or be absent, till the joyful day, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God, if to you it shall be given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake," Phil. i. 20, 21, 27—29. But let no injury from inferiors provoke you to dishonour the governors that God himself hath set over you. "Be meek and patient: the Lord is at hand. Honour all men: love the brotherhood: fear God: honour the king." For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," 1 Pet. ii. 15, 17. It is soon enough for you and me, to be justified at the bar of Christ (by himself that hath undertaken it) against all the calumnies of malicious men. Till then let it seem no greater a matter than indeed it is, to be slandered, vilified, or abused by the world. Keep close to him that never faileth you, and maintain your integrity, that he may maintain the joys that none can take from you. Farewell, my dear brethren, who are my glory and joy in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming, 1 Thess. ii. 18, 19.

Your faithful,

Though unworthy pastor,

Nov. 11, 1661.

RICH. BAXTER.

2 COR. XIII. 5.

KNOW YE NOT YOUR OWN SELVES—?

THE Corinthians being much abused by false teachers, to the corrupting of their faith and manners, and the questioning of the apostle's ministry, he acquainteth them in my text with an obvious remedy for both these maladies; and lets them know, that their miscarriages call them to question themselves rather than to question his authority or gifts, and that if they find Christ in themselves, they must acknowledge him in his ministry.

He therefore first most importunately urgeth them to the mediate duty of self-examination: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves:" self-examination is but the means of self-knowledge. This therefore he next urgeth, and that first in general; and this by way of interrogation, "Know ye not your own selves?" and then more particularly he tells them, what it is of themselves, that it most concerneth them to know, "How that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." As if he should say, Alas, poor souls; you have more cause to question yourselves than me: go to, therefore, examine and prove yourselves. It is a shame for a man to be ignorant of himself. Know ye not your own selves? Either Christ is in you, by faith, and by his Spirit, or he is not: if he be not, you are yet but reprobates, that is, disapproved of God, and at present in a forsaken or condemned state yourselves: (which is a conclusion that you will be loth to admit, but more concerneth you:) if Christ be in you, it was by the means of my ministry; and therefore that ministry hath been powerful and effectual to you, and you are my witnesses; the seal of my ministry is upon your own souls: Christ within you bears me witness, and therefore of all men, you have least cause to question or quarrel with my ministry.

This paraphrase opening all that may seem difficult in the text, I shall immediately offer you a double observation, which the words afford us; first, as considered in themselves, and then as respecting the inference for which they are premised by the apostle.

The first is, that *All men should know themselves: or, it is a shame for a man to be unacquainted with himself.*

The second is, that *Not knowing ourselves is the cause of other errors: or, the knowledge of ourselves could much conduce to the cure of many other errors.*

In handling this, I shall show you, I. What it is to know ourselves. II. How far it is or is not a shame to be ignorant of ourselves. III. What evils follow this ignorance of ourselves, and what benefits self-knowledge would procure. IV. How we should improve this doctrine by application and practice. Of the first but briefly.

I. Self-knowledge is thus distinguished according to the object. I. There is a physical self-knowledge: when a man knows what he is as a man; what his soul is, and what his body, and what the compound called *man*. The doctrine of man's nature, or this part of physics, is so necessary to all, that it is first laid down even in the holy Scriptures, in Genesis, chap. i. ii. iii. before his duty is expressed. And it is presupposed in all the moral passages of the word, and in all the preaching of the gospel. The subject is presupposed to the adjuncts. The subjects of God's kingdom belong to the constitution; and therefore to be known before

the legislation and judgment, which are the parts of the administration. Morality always presupposeth nature. The species is in order before the separable accidents. Most ridiculously therefore doth ignorance plead for itself against knowledge, in them that cry down this part of physics, as human learning, unnecessary to the disciples of Christ. What excellent holy meditations of human nature do you find oft in Job and in David's Psalms! Psal. cxxxix. concluding in the praise of the incomprehensible Creator, (ver. 14,) "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well."

2. There is a moral self-knowledge very necessary. And this is, the knowing of ourselves in relation to God's law, or to his judgment. The former is the knowledge of ourselves in respect of our duty: the second, in respect of the reward or punishment. And both of them have respect to the law of nature and works, or to the remedying law of grace.

The ethical knowledge of ourselves, or that which respecteth the precept and our duty, is twofold. The first is, as we have performed that duty. The second, as we have violated the law by non-performance or transgression. The first is, the knowledge of ourselves as good; the second, as evil. And both are either the knowledge of our habits (good or evil) or of our acts; how we are morally inclined, disposed, or habituated; or what and how we have done: we must know the good estate of our nature that we are created in; the bad estate of sinful nature that we are fallen into; the actual sin committed against the law of nature, and what sin we have committed against the law of grace; and whether we have obeyed the call of the gospel of salvation or not. So that as man's state considered ethically, is threefold, *institutus, destitutus, et restitutus*; *infirmatus, deformatus, et reformatus*: the state of upright nature; the state of sin, original and actual; and the state of grace: we must know what we are in respect to every one of these.

And as to the judicial knowledge of ourselves, that is, as we stand related to the promises, and threatenings, the judgment, the reward and punishment; we must know first, what is due to us according to the law of nature, and then what is due to us according to the tenor of the law of grace. By the law of nature or of works, death is the due of fallen mankind; but no man by it can lay claim to heaven. All men are under its curse or condemnation, till pardoned by Christ; but no man can be justified by it. By the promise of the gospel, all true believers, renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, are justified and made the sons of God and heirs of everlasting glory. To know whether we are yet delivered from the condemnation of the law, and whether our sins are pardoned or not, and whether we are the children of God, and have any part in the heavenly glory, is much of the self-knowledge that is here intended in the text, and that which most nearly concerneth the solid comfort of our souls.

II. But is all self-ignorance a shame, or dangerous? *Ans.* I. It is no other shame than what is common to human frailty, to be ignorant of much of the mystery of our natural generation, constitution, integral parts, and temperament. There is not a nerve, or artery, or vein, nor the breadth of a hand from head to foot, but hath something unknown to the

most excellent philosopher on earth. This little world called *man*, is a compound of wonders. Both soul and body have afforded matter of endless controversy, and voluminous disputations, to the most learned men; which will not admit of a full decision, till we are past this state of darkness and mortality.

2. There are many controversies about the nature, derivation, and punishment of original sin, which a humble and diligent christian may possibly be ignorant of.

3. The degrees of habitual sin, considered simply, or proportionally and respectively to each other, may be much unknown to many that are willing and diligent to know: and so may divers actual sins, such as we know not to be sin, through our imperfect understanding of the law; and such as through frailty, in a crowd of actions, escape our particular observation. And the sinfulness or aggravations of every sin, are but imperfectly known and observed by the best.

4. The nature and beauty of the image of God, as first planted on created man, and since restored to man redeemed, the manner of the Spirit's access, operation, testimony, and inhabitation, are all but imperfectly known by the wisest of believers.

The frame or admirable composure or contexture of the new man in each of the renewed faculties; the connexion, order, beauty, and special use of each particular grace, are observed but imperfectly by the best.

5. The very uprightness and sincerity of our own hearts, in faith, hope, love, repentance, and obedience, is usually unknown to incipients, or young beginners in religion; and to the weaker sort of christians, how old soever in profession, and to melancholy persons, who can have no thoughts of themselves but sad and fearful, tending to despair; and to lapsed and declining christians, and also to many an upright soul, from whom in some cases of special trial, God seems to hide his pleased face. And though these infirmities are their shame, yet are they not the characters or prognostics of their misery and everlasting shame.

6. The same persons must needs be unacquainted with their justification, reconciliation, adoption, and title to everlasting blessedness, as long as they are uncertain of their sincerity. Yea, though they uprightly examine themselves, and desire help of their guides, and watch and pore continually upon their hearts and ways, and daily beg of God to acquaint them with their spiritual condition, they may yet be so far unacquainted with it, as to pass an unrighteous judgment on themselves, and condemn themselves when God hath justified them.

But, 1. To be totally ignorant of the excellency and capacity of your immortal souls. 2. To be void of an effectual knowledge of your sin and misery, and need of the remedy. 3. To think you have saving grace, when you have none; that you are regenerate by the Spirit, when you are only sacramentally regenerate by baptism; that you are the members of Christ, when it is no such matter; that you are justified, adopted, and the heirs of heaven, when it is not so; all this is doleful and damnable unacquaintedness with yourselves.

To be unacquainted with a state of life, when you are in such a state, is sad and troublesome, and casts you upon many and great inconveniences. But to be unacquainted with a state of death, when you are in it, doth fasten your chains, and hinder your recovery. To be willing and diligent to know your state, and yet be unable to attain to assurance and satisfaction, is ordinary with many true believers; but to be ignorant of it because you have no grace to find, and

because you mind not the matters of your souls, or think it not worth your diligent consideration or inquiry, this is the case of the miserable despisers of salvation.

III. The commodities and incommunities to be mentioned, are so many and great, that many hours would not serve to open them as they deserve.

1. Atheism is cherished by self-ignorance. The knowledge of ourselves as men, doth notably conduce to our knowledge of God. Here God is known but darkly, and as in a glass, (1 Cor. xiii. 12,) and by his image, and not as face to face. And, except his incarnate and his written word, what glass revealeth him so clearly as the soul of man? We bear a double image of our Maker: his natural image in the nature of our faculties; and his moral image in their holy qualifications, in the nature of grace, and frame of the new man. By knowing ourselves, it is easy to know that there is a God; and it much assisteth us to know what he is, not only in his attributes and relations, but even in the Trinity itself. He may easily know that there is a primitive being and life, that knoweth he hath himself a derived being and life. He must know that there is a Creator, that knoweth he is a creature. He that findeth a capacious intellect, a will and power in the creature, and that is conscious of any wisdom and goodness in himself, may well know that, *formaliter* or *eminenter*, all these are infinite in the first cause that must thus have in itself whatsoever it doth communicate. He that knoweth that he made not and preserveth not himself, may well know that he is not his own, but his that made him and preserveth him, who must needs be his absolute Proprietary and Lord. He that knoweth that he is an intellectual free agent, and therefore to act morally, and therefore to be moved by moral means; and that he is a sociable creature, a member of the universe, living among men; may well be sure, that he is made to be a subject, and governed by laws, and by moral means to be directed and moved to his end; and therefore that none but his absolute Lord, the Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, can be his absolute and highest sovereign. He that is convinced that he is, he lives, he hopeth and enjoyeth all that is good, from a superior bounty, may be sure that God is his principal benefactor. And to be the first and infinite being, intellect, will and power, wisdom and goodness, and cause of all things; the absolute owner, the most righteous governor, and the most bounteous benefactor; this is to be God. This being the description of him that is so called, such a description as is fetched from his created image *man*, and expressed in the terms that himself hath chosen, and used in his word, as knowing that if he will be understood by man, he must use the notions and expressions of man: and though these are spoken but analogically of God, yet are there no fitter conceptions of him that the soul of man, in flesh, is capable of. So that the atheist carrieth about him that impress and evidence of the Deity, which may convince him, or condemn him, for his foolishness and impiety. He is a fool indeed, that "saith in his heart there is no God," (Psal. xiv. 1,) when that heart itself in its being, and life, and motion, is his witness; and soul and body, with all their faculties, are nothing but the effects of this Almighty cause. And when they prove that there is a God, even by questioning or denying it, being unable, without him, so much as to deny him; that is, to think, or speak, or be. As if a fool should write a volume, to prove that there is no ink or paper in the world, when it is ink and paper by which he writes.

And whether there be no representation of the

Trinity in unity in the nature of man, let them judge that have well considered, how in one body there are the natural, vital, and animal parts and spirits; and in one life or soul, there are the vegetative, sensitive, and rational faculties; and in one rational soul as such, there are an intellect, will, and executive power, morally perfected by wisdom, goodness, and promptitude to well-doing; as in one sun there are light, and heat, and moving force. So that man is both the beholder and the glass, the reader and the book: he is the index of the Godhead to himself; yea, partly of the Trinity in unity: of which saith August. de Trinit. lib. 1. *Nec periculosius alicubi erratur, nec laboriosius aliquid queritur, nec fructuosius invenitur, quam Trinilas.* We need not say, Who shall go up into heaven? Saith Seneca himself, by the light of nature, *Prope Deus est; tecum est: intus est; sacer intra nos Spiritus; sed et bonorum malorumque nostrorum observator et custos; hic prout a nobis tractatur, ita nos tractat ipse: bonus vir sine Deo nemo est.* God is nigh us; with us; within us; a holy Spirit resideth within us; the observer of our evil and good, and our preserver; he useth us as he is used by us: no good man is without God. Saith August. *Deus est in seipso sicut a et w; in mundo sicut rector et author; in angelis sicut sapor et decor; in ecclesia sicut pater-familias in domo; in animo sicut sponsus in thalamo; in justus sicut adjutor et protector; in reprobis, sicut pavor et horror.* God is in himself as the Alpha and Omega; in the world as its governor and author; in angels as their sweetness and comeliness; in the church as the master of the family in his house; in the soul as the bridegroom in his bed-chamber; in the righteous as their helper and protector, &c.; and as all declareth him, so all should praise him: *Hunc itaque mens diligat, lingua canat, manus scribat, atque in his sanctis studiis fidelis animus se exerceat.* Aug. Let the mind be exercised in loving him, the tongue in singing him, the hand in writing him; let these holy studies be the believer's work.

2. He that knoweth himself, may certainly know that there is another life of happiness or misery for man to live, when this is ended. For he must needs know that his soul is capable of a spiritual and glorious felicity with God, and of immaterial objects, and that time is as nothing to it, and transitory creatures afford it no satisfaction or rest: and that the hopes and fears of the life to come, are the divine engines by which the moral government of the world is carried on; and that the very nature of man is such, as that without such apprehensions, hopes, and fears, he could not in a connatural way be governed, and brought unto the end, to which his nature is inclined and adapted; but the world would be as a wilderness, and men as brutes. And he may well know that God made not such faculties in vain, nor suited them to an end which cannot be attained, nor to a work which would prove but their trouble and deceit: he may be sure that a mere probability or possibility of an everlasting life, should engage a reasonable creature in all possible diligence in piety, and righteousness, and charity to attain it: and so religious and holy endeavours are become the duty of man as man; there being few such infidels or atheists to be found on earth as dare say, They are sure there is no other life for man, and doubtless whatsoever is by nature and reason made man's duty, is not delusory and vain: nor is it reasonable to think that falsehood, frustration, and deceit, are the ordinary way by which mankind is governed by the most wise and holy God. So that the end of man may be clearly gathered from his nature; forasmuch as God doth certainly suit his works unto

their proper use and ends. It is therefore the ignorance of ourselves, that makes men question the immortality of souls: and I may add, it is the ignorance of the nature of conscience, and of all morality, and of the reason of justice among men, that makes men doubt of the discriminating justice of the Lord, which is hereafter to be manifested.

3. Did men know themselves, they would better know the evil and odiousness of sin. As poverty and sickness are better known by feeling than by hearsay; so also is sin. To hear a discourse, or read a book, of the nature, prognostics, and cure of the plague, consumption, or dropsy, doth little affect us, while we seem to be sound and safe ourselves; but when we find the malady in our flesh, and perceive the danger, we have then another manner of knowledge of it. Did you but see and feel sin as it is in your hearts and lives, as oft as you read and hear of it in the law of God, I dare say sin would not seem a jesting matter; nor would those be censured as too precise, that are careful to avoid it, any more than they that are careful to avoid infectious diseases, or crimes against the laws of man, that hazard their temporal felicity or lives.

4. It is want of self-acquaintance that keeps the soul from kindly humiliation: that men are insensible of their spiritual calamities, and lie under a load of unpardoned sin and God's displeasure, and never feel it, nor loathe themselves for all the abominations of their hearts and lives, nor make complaint to God or man with any seriousness and sense. How many hearts would be filled with wholesome grief and care, that now are careless and almost past feeling! and how many eyes would stream forth tears that now are dry, if men were but truly acquainted with themselves! It is self-knowledge that cansteth the solid peace and joy of a believer, as conscious of that grace that warranteth his peace and joy: but it is self-deceit and ignorance that quieteth the presumptuous, that walk as carelessly, and sleep as quietly, and bless themselves from hell as confidently, when it is ready to devour them, as if the bitterness of death were past, and hypocrisy would never be discovered.

5. It is unacquaintedness with themselves that makes Christ so undervalued by the unhumiliated world; that his name is revered, but his office and saving grace are disregarded. Men could not set so light by the physician, that felt their sickness, and understood their danger. Were you sensible that you are under the wrath of God, and shall shortly and certainly be in hell, if Christ, received by a hearty, working, purifying faith, do not deliver you, I dare say, you would have more serious, savoury thoughts of Christ, more yearnings after him, more fervent prayers for his healing grace, and sweet remembrance of his love and merits, example, doctrine, and inestimable benefits, than lifeless hypocrites ever were acquainted with.

Imagine with what desires and expectations the diseased, blind, and lame cried after him for healing to their bodies, when he was on earth. And would you not more highly value him, more importunately solicit him for your souls, if you knew yourselves?

6. It is unacquaintedness with themselves that makes men think so unworthy of a holy, heavenly conversation; and that possesseth them with foolish prejudice against the holy care and diligence of believers. Did men but value their immortal souls, as reason itself requireth them to do, is it possible they should venture them so easily upon everlasting misery, and account it unnecessary strictness in them that dare not be as desperately venturous as they, but fly

from sin, and fear the threatenings of the Lord? Did men but considerably understand the worth and concernment of their souls, is it possible they should hazard them for a thing of nought, and set them at sale for the favour of superiors, or the transitory pleasures and honours of the world? Could they think the greatest care and labour of so short a life to be too much for the securing of their salvation? Could they think so many studious, careful days, and so much toil, to be but meet and necessary for their bodies; and yet think all too much that is done for their immortal souls? Did men but practically know that they are the subjects of the God of heaven, they durst not think the diligent obeying him to be a needless thing, when they like that child or servant best that is most willing and diligent in their service. Alas! were men but acquainted with their weakness, and sinful failings, when they have done their best, and how much short the holiest persons do come of what they are obliged to by the laws and mercies of the Lord, they durst not make a scorn of diligence, nor hate or blame men for endeavouring to be better, that are sure at best they shall be too bad. When the worst of men, that are themselves the greatest neglecters of God and their salvation, shall cry out against a holy life, and making so much ado for heaven, (as if a man that lieth in bed should cry out against working too much or going too fast), this shows men's strangeness to themselves. Did the careless world but know themselves, and see where they stand, and what is before them, and how much lieth on this inch of time; did they but know the nature and employment of a soul, and why their Creator did place them for a little while in flesh, and whither they must go when time is ended, you should then see them in that serious frame themselves, which formerly they disliked in others; and they would then confess, that if any thing in the world deserved seriousness and diligence, it is the pleasing of God, and the saving of our souls.

7. It is for want of acquaintance with themselves, that men are so deceived by the vanities of the world; that they are drowned in the love of pleasures and sensual delights; that they are so greedy for riches, and so desirous to be higher than those about them, and to waste their days in the pursuit of that which will not help them in the hour of their extremity. Did the voluptuous sensualist know aright that he is a man, he would not take up with the pleasures and felicity of a brute; nor enslave his reason to the violence of his appetite. He would know that there are higher pleasures which besem a man; even those that consist in the well-being and integrity of the soul, in peace of conscience, in the favour of God, and communion with him in the Spirit, and in a holy life, and in the forethoughts and hopes of endless glory.

Did the covetous worldling know himself, he would know that it must be another kind of riches that must satisfy his soul, and that he hath wants of another nature to be supplied; and that it more concerneth him to lay up a treasure in heaven, and think where he must dwell for ever, than to accommodate his perishing flesh, and make provision with so much ado, for a life that posteth away while he is providing for it; he would rather make him friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and lay up a foundation for the time to come, and labour for the food that never perisheth, than to make such a stir for that which will serve him so little a while; that so he might hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," &c. rather than, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then

whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

Self-knowledge would teach ambitious men to prefer the calmest, safest station before the highest; and to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and to please him most carefully that hath the keys of heaven and hell; and to be content with food and raiment in the way, while they are ambitious of a higher glory. It would tell them, that so dark and frail a creature should be more solicitous to obey than to have dominion; and that large possessions are not the most congruous or desirable passage to a narrow grave; and that it is the highest dignity to be an heir of heaven. Would men but spend some hours' time in the study of themselves, and seriously consider what it is to be a man, a sinner, a passenger to an endless life, an expectant of so great a change, and withal to be a professed believer, what a turn would it make in the cares, and the desires, and conversations of the most!

O amatores mundi (inquit August.) cuius rei gratia militates?—Ibi quid nisi fragile plenum periculis? et per quot pericula prevenitur ad majus periculum? pereant hæc omni, et dimittantur hæc vana et inania, conferamus nos ad solam inquisitionem eorum quæ finem non habeant. i. e. What strive you for, O worldlings? what is here but a brittle glass full of dangers? and by how many dangers must you come to greater dangers? Away with these vanities and toys, and let us set ourselves to seek the things that have no end.

8. It is for want of self-acquaintance that any man is proud. Did men considerably know what they are, how quickly would it bring them low! Would corruptible flesh, that must shortly turn to loathsome rottenness, be stout and lordly, and look so high, and set forth itself in gaudy ornaments, if men did not forget themselves? Alas, the way forgets the end; the outward bravery forgets the dirt and filth within; the stage forgetteth the undressing-room. Did rulers behave themselves as those that are subjects to the Lord of all, and have the greatest need to fear his judgment, and prepare for their account; did great ones live as men that know that rich and poor are equal with the Lord, who respects not persons; and that they must speedily be levelled with the lowest, and their dust be mixed with the common earth, what an alteration would it make in their department and affairs! and what a mercy would it prove to their inferiors and themselves! If men that swell with pride of parts, and overvalue their knowledge, wit, or elocution, did know how little indeed they know, and how much they are ignorant of, it would much abate their pride and confidence. The more men know indeed, the more they know to humble them. It is the novices, that "being lifted up with pride, do fall into the condemnation of the devil," 1 Tim. iii. 6. They would loathe themselves if they knew themselves.

9. It is self-ignorance that makes men rush upon temptations, and choose them, when they customarily pray against them. Did you know what tinder or gunpowder lodgeth in your natures, you would guard your eyes, and ears, and appetites, and be afraid of the least spark; you would not be indifferent as to your company, nor choose a life of danger to your souls, for the pleasing of your flesh; to live among the snares of honour or beauty, and bravery, or sensual delights; you would not wilfully draw so near the brink of hell, nor be nibbling at the bait, nor looking on the forbidden fruit, nor dallying with allurements, nor hearkening to the deceiver, or to his messengers. It is ignorance of the weakness and badness of your hearts, that maketh you so confident

of yourselves, as to think that you can hear any thing, and see any thing, and approach the snare, and treat with the deceiver without any danger. Self-acquaintance would cause more fear and self-suspicion.

If you should escape well awhile in your self-chosen dangers, you may catch that at last that may prove your woe.

Nemo sese tuto periculis offerre tam crebro potest. Quem sæpe transit casus, aliquando invenit. SENECA.

Temptation puts you on a combat with the powers of the earth, and flesh, and hell! And is toil and danger your delight? *Nunquam periculum sine periculo vincitur*, saith Seneca: Danger is never overcome without danger. It is necessary valour to charge through all, which you are in; but it is temerarious fool-hardiness to seek for danger, and invite such enemies when we are so weak. Saith Augustine, *Nemo sibi proponat et dicat, habere volo quod vincam: hoc est, dicere, vivere desidero et volo sub ruina.* Goliath's "Give me a man to fight with," is a prognostic of no good success. Rather foresee all your dangers to avoid them; understand where each temptation lieth, that you may go another way if possible. *Castitas periclitatur in deliciis; humilitas in divitiis; pietas in negotiis; veritas in multiloquio; charitas in hoc mundo*, saith Bernard: Chastity is endangered in delights; humility in riches; piety in businesses; truth in too much talk; and charity in this world. Alas, did we but think what temptations did with a Noah, a Lot, a David, a Solomon, a Peter, we would be afraid of the enemy and weapon that such worthies have been so wounded by, and of the quicksands where they have so dangerously fallen. When Satan durst assault the Lord himself, what hope will he have of such as we! When we consider the millions that are blinded, and hardened, and damned by temptations, are we in our wits if we will cast ourselves into them? *Preceps est, qui transire contendit, ubi conspexerit alios cecidisse: et vehementer infransis est, cui non inculitur timor alio pereunte.* Aug.

10. Self-acquaintance would confute temptations, and easily resolve the case when you are tempted. Did you considerably know the preciousness of your souls, and your own concerns, and where your true felicity lieth, you would abhor allurements, and encounter them with that argument of Christ, Mark viii. 36, 37, "What shall it profit a man, if he win the world and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The fear of man would be conquered by a greater fear; as the Lord commandeth, Luke xii. 4, 5, "And I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him."

11. It is unacquaintedness with themselves, that makes men quarrel with the word of God, rejecting it when it suits not with their deceived reason, and to be offended with his faithful ministers, when they cross them in their opinions or ways, or deal with them with that serious plainness, as the weight of the case and their necessity doth require. Alas, sirs, if you were acquainted with yourselves, you would know that the holy rule is straight, and the crookedness is in your conceits and misapprehensions; and that your frail understandings should rather be suspected than the word of God; and that your work is to learn and obey the law, and not to censure it, James iv. 11. And that quarrelling with the holy word which you should obey, will not excuse but aggravate your sin; nor save you from the condemnation, but fasten it and make it greater.

You would know that it is more wisdom to stoop than to contend with God; and that it is not your physicians nor the medicine that you should fall out with, nor desire to be delivered from, but the disease.

12. Self-acquaintance would teach men to be charitable to others, and cure the common censoriousness, and envy, and malice of the world. Hath thy neighbour some mistakes about the disputable points of doctrine, or doubtful modes of discipline or worship? Is he for the opinion, or form, or policy, or ceremony, which thou dislikest? Or is he against them, when thou approvest them? or afraid to use them, when thou thinkest them laudable? If thou know thyself, thou dardest not break charity or peace for this. Thou dardest not censure or despise him; but wilt remember the frailty of thy own understanding, which is not infallible in matters of this rank; and in many things is certainly mistaken, and needs forbearance as well as he. Thou wouldest be afraid of inviting God or man to condemn thyself, by thy condemning others; and wouldest think with thyself, If every error of no more importance in persons that hold the essentials of religion, and conscientiously practise what they know, must go for heresy, or make men sectaries, or cut them off from the favour of God, or the communion of the church, or the protection of the magistrate, and subject them to damnation, to misery, to censures, and reproach: alas, what then must become of so frail a wretch as I, of so dark a mind, of so blamable a heart and life, that am like to be mistaken in matters as great, where I least suspect it? It is ignorance of themselves, that makes men so easily think ill of their brethren, and entertain all hard or mis-reports of them, and look at them so strangely, or speak of them so contemptuously and bitterly, and use them so uncompassionately, because they are not in all things of their opinion and way. They consider not their own infirmities, and that they teach men how to use themselves. The falls of brethren would not be over-aggravated, nor be the matter of insulting or contempt, but of compassion, if men knew themselves. This is implied in the charge of the Holy Ghost, Gal. vi. 1, 2, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted: bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." The Pharisee that seeth not the beam of mortal formality and hypocrisy in his own eye, is most censorious against the moles of tolerable particular errors in his brother's eye. None more uncharitable against the real or supposed errors or slips of serious believers, than hypocrites that have no saving, serious faith and knowledge, but place their religion in opinion and outside shows, and wholly err from the path of life.

13. It is ignorance of themselves that makes men divide the church of Christ, and pertinaciously keep open its bleeding wounds, and hinder concord, and disturb its peace. How far would self-acquaintance go to the cure of all our discords and divisions! Is it possible that the pope should take upon him the government of the antipodes, even of all the world, (and that as to spiritual government, which requireth more personal attendance than secular,) if he knew himself, and consequently his natural incapacity, and the terror of his account for such a usurped charge? Self-acquaintance would depose their inquisitions, and quench their flames; and make them know what spirit they are of, that inclineth not to save men's lives, but to destroy them, Luke ix. 55, 56. Did they know themselves, the papists durst not multiply new articles of faith, and ceremonies, and depart from the ancient simplicity

of the gospel, and turn the Creed or Scripture into all the volumes of their councils, and say, All these decrees or determinations of the church are necessary to salvation; and so make the way of life more difficult, if not impossible, (had they indeed the keys,) by multiplying of their supposed necessities. Did they but know themselves aright, it were impossible they should dare to pass the sentence of damnation on the far greatest part of the christian world, because they are not subject to their pretended vice-christ. Durst one of the most leprous, corrupted sort of christians in the world unchurch all the rest that will not be as bad as they, and condemn all other christians as heretics or schismatics, either for their adhering to the truth, or for errors and faults, far smaller than their own? Did they know themselves and their own corruptions, they durst not thus condemn themselves, by so presumptuous and blind a condemnation of the best and greatest part of the church of Christ, which is dearest to him, as purchased by his blood. If either the protestants, or the Greeks, or the Armenians, Georgians, Syrians, Egyptians, or Ethiopian churches, be in as bad and dangerous a case, as these usurping censurers tell the world they are, what then will become of the tyrannous, superstitious, polluted, blood-thirsty church of Rome?

What is it but self-ignorance that perverteth the unsettled among us, and sends them over to the Roman tents? No man could rationally become a papist, if he knew himself. Let me prove this to you in these four instances.

1. If he had but the knowledge of his natural senses, he could not take them to be all deceived (and the senses of all others as well as his) about their proper object; and believe the priests, that bread is no bread, or wine no wine, when all men's senses testify the contrary.

2. Some of them turn papists because they see some differences among other christians, and hear them call one another by names of contumely and reproach; and therefore they think that such can be no true churches of Christ: but if they knew themselves, they would be acquainted with more culpable errors in themselves, than those which many others are reproached; and see how irrational a thing it is to change their religion upon the scolding words or slanders of another; or, which is worse, upon their own uncharitable censures.

3. Some turn to the papists, as apprehending their ceremonious kind of religion to be an easier way to heaven than ours: but if they knew themselves, they would know that it is a more solid and spiritual sort of food that their nature doth require, and a more searching physic that must cure their diseases; and that shells and chaff will not feed, but choke and starve their souls.

4. All that turn papists, must believe that they were unjustified and out of the catholic church before, and consequently void of the love of God and special grace: for they receive it as one of the Romish articles, that out of their church there is no salvation. But if these persons were indeed before ungodly, if they knew themselves, they would find that there is a greater matter necessary, than believing in the pope, and turning to that faction; even to turn to God by faith in Christ, without which no opinions or profession can save them. But if they had the love of God before, then they were justified, and in the church before; and therefore protestants are of the true church, and it is not confined to the Roman subjects: so that if they knew this, they could not turn papists without a palpable contradiction.

The papists' fugitives tell us, we are no true

ministers, nor our ministry effectual and blessed of God. What need we more than imitate Paul, when his ministry was accused, and call them to the knowledge of themselves: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith? Prove yourselves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" If they were ungodly, and void of the love of God, while they were under our ministry, no wonder if they turn papists. For it is just with God, that those that "receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved, be given over to strong delusions, to believe a lie," 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. But if they received themselves the love of God in our churches by our ministry, they shall be our witnesses against themselves.

And it is others as well as papists that would be kept from church divisions, if they did but know themselves. Church governors would be afraid of laying things unnecessary, as stumblingblocks, before the weak, and of laying the unity and peace of the church upon them; and casting out of the vineyard of the Lord, and out of their communion, all such as are not in such unnecessary or little things of their opinion or way. The words of the great apostle of the gentiles, (Rom. xiv. xv.) so plainly and fully deciding this matter, would not have stood so long in the Bible, as *non-dicta*, or utterly insignificant, in the eyes of so many rulers of the churches, if they had known themselves, as having need of their brethren's charity and forbearance. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations: for one believeth that he may eat all things, another that is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, (much less destroy him, or excommunicate him,) and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike: let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Ver. 13, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Ver. 17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Ver. 18, "For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men." Chap. xv. 1, "We then that are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Ver. 7, "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Self-acquaintance would help men to understand these precepts; and be patient with the weak, when we ourselves have so much weakness, and not to vex or reject our brethren for little or unnecessary things, lest Christ reject or grieve us that have greater faults.

Self-acquaintance also would do much to heal the dividing humour of the people; and instead of separating from all that are not of their mind, they would think themselves more unworthy of the communion of the church, than the church of theirs.

Self-acquaintance makes men tender and compassionate, and cureth a censorious, contemptuous mind. It also silenceth passionate, contentious disputes, and makes men suspicious of their own understandings, and therefore forbiddeth them intemperately to condemn dissenters. It also teacheth men to submit to the faithful directions and conduct of their pastors; and not to vilify, forsake, and disobey them, as if they were above them in understanding, and fitter to be guides themselves. So that in all these respects,

it is ignorance of themselves that makes men troublers of the church, and the knowledge of themselves would much remedy it.

14. And it is ignorance of themselves, also, that makes men troublers of the state. A man that doth not know himself, is unfit for all society: if he be a ruler he will forget the common good, and instead of clemency and justice, will violently exercise an imperious will. If he be a subject, he will be censuring the actions of his rulers, when distance and disacquaintance makes him an incompetent judge. He will think himself fitter to rule than they, and whatever they do, he imagineth that he could do it better. And hence comes suspicions and murmurings against them, and Korah's censures, "Ye take too much upon you: are not all the people holy?" Were men acquainted with themselves, their weaknesses, their concerns, and their duties, they would rather inquire whether they obey well, than whether their superiors rule well; and would think the lowest place to be most suitable to them; and would quiet themselves in the discharge of their own duty, "making supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour," 1 Tim. ii. 1-3. It would quiet all the seditions and tumults of the world, if men were well acquainted with themselves.

I confess, seditions seem to rise from a too great knowledge and regard of ourselves, and of our own commodity. *Aliquid commune tuum facere, est seditionis et discordiæ principium:* To appropriate common benefits to ourselves, is the spring of discord and sedition. But here, as in other things, self-seeking cometh from self-ignorance, and tendeth to self-deceit and disappointment. The end of contentings answer not the promises that selfishness and passion make men in the beginnings.

Si æterna semper odia mortales agant
Ne cæptus unquam cedat ex animis furor.
Sed arma felix teneat, infelix pereat.
Nihil relinquent bella.

SENECA.

And then,

—En quo discordia cives
Perdixit miseros, en queis consevimus agros.

15. Self-acquaintance would end abundance of controversies, and very much help men to discern the truth. In the controversy of free-will or human power, to know ourselves as we are men, would be to know that we have the natural power and freedom consisting in the self-determining faculty and principle. To know ourselves as sinful, would certify us how much we want of the moral power which consisteth in right inclinations, and the moral liberty, from vicious dispositions and habits. Would time permit, I might show it in the instances of original corruption, of the nature of grace, of merit, of the cause of sin, and many other controversies, how much error is promoted by the ignorance of ourselves.

16. Self-acquaintance maketh men both just and merciful. One cannot be so much as a good neighbour without it, nor yet a faithful friend. It will teach you to put up injuries, and to forgive; as remembering that you are like to be injurious to others, and certainly are daily so to God; and that is no great fault that is done against such poor, unworthy persons as ourselves (if it had no higher a respect than to us). It is such only that "with all lowliness, and meekness, and long-suffering, forbear one another in love," Ephes. iv. 2; and "recom-

pense to no man evil for evil," Rom. xii. 17; and "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," ver. 21. He that is drawn to passion and revenge, is overcome when he seems to overcome by that revenge. It teacheth us to forgive, to know that much is forgiven us by Christ, or at least what need we have of such forgiveness. Ephes. iv. 31, 32, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Oh that this lesson were well learned!

17. Self-acquaintance will teach us the right estimate of all our mercies: when we know how unworthy we are of the least, and what it is we principally need, it will teach us thankfulness for all; and teach us which of our mercies to prefer. Men know not themselves and their own necessities, and therefore they slight their chiefest mercies, accounting them burdens, and are unthankful for the rest.

18. Self-acquaintance is necessary to the solid peace and comfort of the soul. Security and stupidity may quiet the ungodly for a while, and self-flattery may deceive the hypocrite into a dream of heaven; but he that will have a durable joy, must find some matter of joy within him, as the effects and evidence of the love of God, and the prognostics of his endless love. To know what Christ hath suffered, and done, and merited, and promised, is to know the general and principal ground of our rejoicing: but something is wanting to make it peace and joy to us, till we find the fruits of his Spirit within us, without which no man can be his, Rom. viii. 9; Gal. v. 16, 17, 22, 24, 25. "If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another," Gal. vi. 3, 4. The seal, and witness, and beginnings of life, must be within you, if you will know that you are the heirs of life.

19. Self-ignorance causeth men to misinterpret and repine at the providence of God, and to be frowned under his most righteous judgments. Because men know not what they have deserved, or what they are, and what is good for them, therefore they know not the reason and intent of Providence; and therefore they quarrel with their Maker, and murmur as if he did them wrong: when self-acquaintance would teach them to justify God in all his dealings, and resolve the blame of all into themselves. The nature of man doth teach all the world, when any hurt is done to societies or persons, to inquire by whose will, as well as by whose hands, it was perpetrated; and to resolve all the crimes that are committed in the world unto the will of man, and there to leave the guilt and blame, and not excuse the malefactors upon any pretence of the concurrence or predetermination of the first or any superior cause: and to justify the judge and executioner that takes away men's lives, or their estates, as long as themselves are proved to deserve it. And surely the knowledge of the nature and pravity of man should teach us to deal as equally with God, and finally resolve all guilt and blame into the free and vitiated will of man. Humbling self-knowledge maketh us say with Job, chap. xl. 4, "Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth:" and when God is glorifying himself on our relations, or ourselves by his judgments, it teacheth us with Aaron to hold our peace, (Lev. x. 3), and to say with Eli, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," 1 Sam. iii. 18. And with David, 2 Sam. xv. 25, "If I shall find favour in the

eyes of the Lord he will bring me again, and show me it, and his habitation : but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee ; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good to him." And as the afflicted church, Mic. vii. 9, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." Even a Pharaoh, when affliction hath taught him a little to know himself, will say, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked," Exod. ix. 27. When Rehoboam and his princes are humbled, they say, "The Lord is righteous," 2 Chron. xii. 6. See Ezra ix. 15.

20. Lastly, it is for want of the knowledge of ourselves, that precious time is so much lost, and hastening death no more prepared for. Did we carry still about us the sensible knowledge of our necessity, our mortality, and the unconceivable change that is made by death, we should then live as men that are continually waiting for the coming of their Lord ; and as if we still beheld our graves. For we carry about us that sin and frailty, such corruptible flesh as may tell us of death as plainly as a grave or skeleton. So great, so unspeakably necessary a work as the serious, diligent preparation for our end, could not be so sottishly neglected by the ungodly, did they thoroughly and feelingly know what it is to be a mortal man, and what to have an immortal soul ; what it is to be a sinner, and what to pass into an endless life of joy or misery.

And thus I have showed you some of the fruits, both of the knowledge and ignorance of ourselves ; even in our natural, and moral, and political capacities (though it be the second that is directly intended in the text) ; which may help you in the application.

Use.

And now I may suppose that the best of you all, the most honourable, the most learned, the most religious, (of them I dare affirm it,) will acknowledge, that I want not sufficient reason to urge you with the question in my text, "Know ye not your own selves ? Judge by the forementioned effects, whether self-acquaintance, even in the most weighty and necessary respects, be common among professed christians. Doth he duly know himself as he is a man, that doubteth of a Deity whose image is his very essence, though not the moral image that must be produced by renewing grace ? or he that doubteth of a particular providence, of which he hath daily and hourly experience ? or he that doubteth of the immortality of his soul, or of the life to come, which is the end of his creation and endowments, and is legibly engraven on the nature and faculties of his soul ? Do they morally know themselves, that make a jest of sin ; and make it their delight ? that bear it as the lightest burden, and are not so much humbled by all the distempers and miseries of their souls, as they would be by a leprosy, an imprisonment, or disgrace ? that have as cold, unthankful thoughts of Christ, and of his grace and benefits, as a sick stomach of a feast ? that compliment with him at the door, but will not be persuaded to let him in, unless he will come upon their terms, and will dwell with their unmortified sin, and be a servant to their flesh, and leave them their worldly prosperity and delights, and save them for these compliments and leaveings of the flesh, when sin and the world shall cast them off ?

Do those men truly know themselves, that think they need not the Spirit of Christ for regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, nor need a diligent, holy life, nor to be half so careful and serious for their salvation, as they are for a shadow of happiness in the world ? that would without entreaty bestir

themselves, if their houses were on fire, or they were drowning in the water, or were assaulted by a thief or enemy ; and yet think he is too troublesome and precise, that entreatheth them to bestir themselves for heaven, and to quit themselves like men for their salvation, and to look about them, and spare no pains for the escaping everlasting misery ; when this is the time, the only time, when all this must be done, or they are utterly undone for ever ?

Do they know themselves, and what they want, and what indeed would do them good, that itch after sensual, bestial delights, and glut their flesh, and please their appetites and lusts, and waste their time in needless sports, and long for honour and greatness in the world, and study for preferment more than for salvation, and think they can never stand too high nor have too much ; as if it were so desirable to fall from the highest pinnacle, or to die forsaken by that for which they forsook the Lord ?

Do our feathered, powdered, gaudy gallants, or our frizzled, spotted, wanton dames, understand what it is that they are so proud of, or do so carefully trim up and adorn ? Do they know what flesh is, as they would do, if they saw the comeliest of their companions, when he hath lain a month or twelvemonth in the grave ? Do they know what sin is, as a sight of hell would make them know, or the true belief of such a state ? If they did, they would think that another garb doth better besem such miserable sinners ; and that persons in their case have something else to mind and do, than toyishly to spruce up themselves, like handsome pictures for men to look upon, and something else to spend their hours in, than dalliance, and compliments, and unnecessary ornaments ; and that the amiable and honourable beauty, and comeliness, and worth, consisteth in the holy image of God, the wisdom and heavenly endowments of the soul, and in a heavenly, charitable, righteous conversation, and good works ; and not in a curious dress or gaudy attire, which a fool may wear as well as a wise man, and a carcass as well as a living man, and a Dives that must lie in hell, when a Lazarus may lie in sores and rags.

Do they know themselves that fear no snares, but choose the life of the greatest temptations and danger to their souls, because it is highest, or hath most provision for the flesh ? and that think they can keep in their candle in the greatest storms, and in any company maintain their innocence ? And yet cannot understand so much of the will of God, nor of their own interest and necessity, and danger, as to resist a temptation when it comes, though it offer them but the most inconsiderable trifle, or the most sordid and unmanly lust.

Do they know themselves, that are prying into unrevealed things, and will be wise, in matters of theology, above what is written ? that dare set their shallow brains, and dark, unfurnished understandings, against the infallible word of God ; and question the truth of it, because it suiteth not with their lame and carnal apprehensions ; or because they cannot reconcile what seemeth to them to be contradiction ; nor answer the objections of every bold and ignorant infidel ? In a word, when God must not be God unless he please them ; nor his word be true, unless it be all within the reach of them, that never employed the time and study to understand it, as they do to understand the books that teach them languages, arts, and sciences, and treat of lower things : and when Scripture truth must be called in question, as oft as an ignorant eye shall read it, or an unlearned, graceless person misunderstand it : when offenders that should bewail and reform their own transgressions of the law, shall

turn their accusations against the law, and call it too precise or strict, and believe and practise no more than stands with their obedience to the law of sin, and will quarrel with God, when they should humbly learn and carefully obey him; and despise a life of holy obedience, instead of practising it; and in effect, behave themselves as if they were fitter to rule themselves and the world than God is; and as if it were not God, but they, that should give the law, and be the judge; and God were the subject, and man were God. Do you think, that sinful, creeping worms, that stand so near the grave and hell, do know themselves, when they think, or speak, or live at such rates, and according to such unreasonable arrogance? Do they know themselves, that reproach their brethren for human frailties, and difference of opinion in modes and circumstances, and errors smaller than their own? and that by calling all men heretics, sectaries, or schismatics, that differ from them, do tempt men to turn infidels or papists, and to take us all for such as we account each other? and that instead of receiving the weak in faith, whom God receiveth, will rather cast out the faith-fullest labourers, and cut off Christ's living members from his church, than forbear the imposing of unnecessary things? I dare say, were it not for unacquaintedness with our brethren and ourselves, we should put those in our bosoms as the beloved of the Lord, that now we load with censures and titles of reproach; and the restoring of our charity would be the restoring of our unity. If blind men would make laws for the banishment of all that cannot read the smallest characters, you would say, they had forgot themselves. Nay, when men turn papists or separatists, and fly from our churches, to shun those that perhaps are better than themselves, and to get far enough from the smaller faults of others, while they carry with them far greater of their own; when people are apter to accuse the church than themselves, and say the church is unworthy of their communion, rather than that they are unworthy the communion of the church, and think no room in the house of God is clean and good enough for them, while they overlook their own uncleanness; when men endure a hundred calumnies to be spoken of their brethren, better than a plain reprehension to themselves; as if their persons only would render their actions justifiable, and the reprobator culpable; judge whether these men are well acquainted with themselves.

What should we go further in the search; when in all ages and countries of the world the unmercifulness of the rich, the murmuring of the poor, the hard usage by superiors, the disobedience of inferiors, the commotions of the state, the wars and rebellions that disquiet the world, the cruelty covered with pretences of religion, the unthankfulness for mercies, the murmuring under afflictions, too openly declare that most men have little knowledge of themselves? To conclude, when we see that none are more self-accusing and complaining than the most sincere, and none more self-justifying and confident than the ungodly, careless souls; that none walk more heavily than many of the heirs of life, and none are merrier than many that must lie in hell for ever; that all that a minister can say, will not convince many upright ones of their integrity, nor any skill, or industry, or interest, suffice to convince most wicked men that they are wicked; nor if our lives lay on it, we cannot make them see the necessity of conversion, nor know their misery till feeling tell them it is now too late; when so many walk sadly and lamentingly to heaven, and so many go fearlessly and presumptuously to hell, and will not be-

lieve it till they are there; by all this judge, what work self-ignorance maketh in the world.

Twisti seaurōv is many a man's motto, that is a stranger to himself; as the house may be dark within that hath the sign of the sun hanging at the door. *Multi humilitatis umbram, pauci veritatem accitantur*, saith Hieron. A blind man may commend the sun, and dispute of light. A man may discourse of a country that he knoweth not. It is easy to say, men should know themselves, and out of the book or brain to speak of the matters of the heart: but indeed to know ourselves as men, as sinners, as christians, is a work of greater difficulty, and such as few are well acquainted with. Shall I go a little further in the discovery of it?

1. Whence is it that most are so unhumbled, so great and good in their own esteem, so strange to true contrition and self-abhorrence, but that they are voluntary strangers to themselves? To loathe themselves for sin, to be little in their own eyes, to come to Christ as little children, is the case of all that know themselves aright, Ezek. xx. 43; vi. 9; Matt. xviii. 3, 4; 1 Sam. xv. 17. And Christ made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant, and set us a pattern of the most wonderful humiliation that ever was performed, to convince us of the necessity of it, that have sin to humble us, when he had none, Phil. ii. 6—9. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly," Matt. xi. 28. And one would think it were a lesson easily learned by such as we that carry about us within and without so much sensible matter of humiliation. Saith Augustin de Verb. Dei, *Discite a me, non mundum fabricare, non cuncta visibilia et invisibilia creare, non miracula facere, et mortuos suscitare, sed quoniam mitis sum, et humilis corde*. Had Christ bid us learn of him to make a world, to raise the dead, and work miracles, the lesson had been strange; but to be meek and lowly is so suitable to our low condition, that if we knew ourselves we could not be otherwise.

To be holy without humility, is to be a man without the essentials of nature, or to build without a foundation. *Qui sine humilitate virtutes congregat, quasi in ventem pulverem portat*, saith Greg. in Psal. 3. Pœnit. It is but carrying dust into the wind, to think to gather commendable qualities without humility. It is the contrite heart that is the habitation and delight of God on earth; the acceptable sacrifice, Isa. lvii. 15; lxvi. 2; Psal. li. 17. *Tanto quis vilior Deo, quanto preciosior sibi: tanto preciosior Deo, quanto propter eum vilior est sibi*, saith Greg. Mor. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be brought low." We must not overvalue ourselves, if we would have God esteem us; we must be vile and loathed either in his eyes or our own. *Solet esse specificum electorum*, saith Greg. Mor. *quod de se semper, sentiunt infra quam sunt*. It is specific to the elect to think meanlier of themselves than they are. *Recta facere et inutiles se reputare*, as Bernard speaks. But I urge you not to err in your humility, nor *humilitatis causa mentiri*, as August. It were low enough, if we were as low, in our own esteem, as we are indeed; which self-acquaintance must procure. *Quanto quis minus se videt, tanto minus sibi displicet*; saith Greg. *Et quanto majoris gratiæ lumen precipit, tanto magis reprehensibilem se esse cognoscit*. He is least displeased with himself, that least knoweth himself; and he that hath the greatest light of grace, perceiveth most in himself to be reprehended. Illumination is the first part of conversion, and of the new creature; and self-discovery is not the least part of illumination. There can be no salvation without it, because no humiliation. Saith Bernard in Cantic.

Scio neminem absque sui cognitione salvari, de qua nimirum mater salutis humilitatis oritur, et timor Domini.

But how rare this is, let experience determine: to have a poor habitation, a poor attire, and perhaps of choice, (though that is not usual,) is much more common than a humble soul, *sed tumet animus, sub squalore habitus*, at Hier. *et multo illa deformior est superbia, quæ latet sub quibusdam signis humilitatis, inquit idem.* It is the most ill-favoured pride that stealth some rags of humility to hide its shame. And saith Jerom truly, *Plus est animus deposuisse quam cultum: difficilius arrogantia quam auro caremus, aut gemmis.* It is easier to change our clothing than our mind, and to put off a gaudy habit than our self-flattering, tumified hearts. Many a one can live quietly without gold rings and jewels, or sumptuous houses and attendance, that cannot live quietly without the esteem and applause of men, nor endure to be accounted as indeed he is. Saith Ambrose, *Qui paupertate contentus est, non est contentus injuria.— Et qui potest administrationes contemnere, dolet sibi aliquem honorificentia esse prælatum.*

O therefore as you would escape divine contempt, and the most desperate precipitation, know yourselves. For that which cast angels out of heaven, will keep you out, if it prevail. As Hugo acutely saith, *Superbia in celo, nata est, sed immemor qua via inde cecidit, illuc postea redire non potuit.* Pride was bred in heaven, (no otherwise than as death in life,) but can never hit the way thither again, from whence it fell. Open the windows of our breast to the gospel light, to the law's conviction, to the light of reason, and then be unhumiliated if you can. *Quare enim superbit cinis et terra?* saith Origen: *oblitus quid erit, et quam fragili vasculo contineatur, et quibus stercoribus immersus sit, et qualia semper purgantia de sua carne projiciat.* Nature is low, but sin and wrath are the matter of our great humiliation, that have made us miserably lower.

2. The abounding of hypocrisy sheweth how little men are acquainted with themselves. I speak not here of that gross hypocrisy which is always known to him that hath it, but of that close hypocrisy, which is a professing to be what we are not, or to believe what we believe not, or to have what we have not, or to do what we do not. What article of the faith do not most among us confidently profess? What petition of the Lord's prayer will they not put up? Which of the commandments will they not profess their obedience to? While the stream of their conversation testifieth, that in their hearts there is none of the belief, the desire, or the obedience in sincerity which they profess. Did they know themselves, they would be ashamed of the vanity of their profession, and of the miserable want of the things professed; and that God who is so nigh their mouths is so far from their hearts. If you heard an illiterate man profess, that he understandeth all the languages and sciences, or a beggar boasting of his wealth, or a parrot taught to say that he is a man, would you take any of these to be the words of one that knows himself? *Quid est vita hypocrita* (inquit Gregor.) *nisi quadam visio phantasmatis, quæ hic ostendit in imagine, quod non habet in veritate?* Sure they are in the dark that spend their days in dreaming visions; but they have their eyes so much on the beholders, that they have no leisure to peruse themselves: they are so careful to be esteemed good, that they are careless of being what they seem. *Quo magis exterius hominibus placeant, eo se interiori aspicere negligunt, totosque se in verbis proximorum fundunt, et sanctos se esse æstimant, quia sic se haberi ab hominibus pensant, ut Gregor.* Mor.

Especially if they practise not the vicious inclinations of their hearts, they think they have not the vice they practise not, and that the root is dead because it is winter: when it is the absence of temptations and occasions, and not of vicious habits or inclinations, that smooths their lives with seeming innocency, and keeps their sins from breaking forth to their own or others' observation. *Multorum, quæ imbecilia sunt, latent vitia,* saith Seneca; *instrumenta illis explicande nequitia desunt. Sic tuto serpens pestifer tractatur, dum riget frigore: non desunt tamen illi venena, sed torpent: ita multorum crudelitatis, luxuria et ambitio.* The feeble vices of many lie hid: there are wanting instruments of drawing forth their wickedness. So a poisonous serpent may be safely handled, while he is stiff with cold, and yet it is not because he hath no venom, but because it is stupified: so it is with the cruelty, luxury, and ambition of many. The knowledge of yourselves is the bringing in of light into your souls, which will awaken you from the hypocrite's dream, and make such apparitions vanish. Come near this fire, and the paint of hypocrisy will melt away.

3. The common impatience of plain reproof, and the love of flattery, show us how much self-ignorance doth abound. Most men love those that have the highest estimation of them, be it true or false. They are seldom offended with any for overvaluing them. They desire not much to be accounted well when they are sick, nor rich when they are poor, but to be accounted wise though they are foolish, and godly when they are ungodly, and honest and faithful when they are deceitful and corrupt; this is a courtesy that you must not deny them; they take it for their due. They will never call you heretics for such errors as these: and why is it, but because they err themselves about themselves, and therefore would have others do so too.

Nimis perverse seipsum amat, qui et alios vult errare, ut error suus lateat, saith August. He too perversely loveth himself, that would have others err to hide his error. A wise man loveth himself so well, that he would not be flattered into hell, nor die as Sisera or Samson, by good words, as the harbingers of his woe. He loveth his health so well, that he thinks not the sweetness or colour of the fruit a motive sufficient to encourage him to a surfeit. He loveth ingenuous penitence so well, that he cannot love the flatterer's voice, that contradicteth it. Faithful reprovers are the messengers of Christ, that calls us to repentance, that is, to life: unfaithful flatterers are the messengers of the devil, to keep us from repentance, and harden us in impenitency unto death. If we know ourselves, we shall know that when we are overloved and overpraised as being more learned, wise, or holy than we are, it is not we that are loved and praised; for we are not such as that love or praise supposeth us to be: saith August. *Vos qui me multum diligitis, si talem me assertis, ut nunquam me in scriptis meis errasse dicatis, frustra laboratis: non bonam causam suscepistis: facile in eo, me ipso judice, superamini. Quoniam non mihi placet, cum a charissimis talis esse existimor, qualis non sum. Profecto non me, sed pro me alium sub meo nomine diligit; si non quod sum, sed quod non sum diligit.* It pleased him not to be accounted unerring in his writings, and to be taken by his friends to be what he was not; which is not to love him, but another under his name. He that knoweth himself, perceiveth how much of the commendation is his due, and how much he can lay just claim to: and knoweth it is a dishonour to own the honour that is not his own. He loves not to be belied by a praiser, any more than by a dispraiser; lest truth and he be both

abused. Vices, like worms, are bred and crawl in the inward parts, unseen, unfelt of him that carrieth them about him; and therefore by the sweetmeats of flattery and sensuality they are ignorantly fed: but it is bitter medicines that must kill them; which those only will endure, that know they have them, and what they are. *Lenocinantur dulcia delictis: austeram vero et fortia virtutibus sunt amica.* You speak bitterly, saith the impatient sinner to the plain reprover, but such are sweet and excellent men that meddle not with the sore. But it is bitter things that are wholesome to your souls; that befriending your virtues, and kill the worms of your corruption, which sweet things cherish. Saith Hierom in Eccles. *Si cujus sermo non pungit, sed oblectationem facit audientibus, ille sermo non est sapiens.* Sermons not piercing, but pleasing, are not wise. But, alas, men follow the appetite of their vices, not only in choosing their meat, and drink, and company, and recreations, but also in the choice of the church that they will hold communion with, and the preachers that they will hear: and they will have the sweet, and that which their corruption loveth, come on it what will, *Libenter enim quod delectat, audimus, et offendit omne, quod nohimus,* saith Hierom: Nay, pride hath got so great dominion, that flattery goeth for due civility; and he is accounted cynical or morose that useth it not. To call men as they are, (even when we have a call to do it,) or to tell them of their faults with necessary freedom, though with the greatest love and caution and deprecation of offence, is a thing that most, especially great ones, cannot digest: a man is supposed to rail, that speaketh without flattery; and to reproach them, that would save them from their sins. Saith Hierom, *Adeo regnat vitium adulationis, quodque est gravissimum, quia humilitatis ac benevolentie loco ducitur, ita fit ut qui adulari nescit, aut invidus, aut superbus reputetur:* that is, The vice of flattery now so reigneth, and, which is worst, goeth under the name of humility and good-will, that he that knoweth not how to flatter is reputed envious or proud. Indeed some men have the wit to hate a feigned, hypocritical flatterer, and also modestly to take on them to disown the excessive commendations of a friend; but these mistaken, friendly flatterers do seldom displease men at the heart. *Ququam respondeamus nos indignos, et calidus rubor ora perfundat, tamen ad laudem suam anima intrinsecus letatur,* Hierom. We can say we are unworthy, and modestly blush; but, within, the heart is glad at its own commendation. Saith Seneca, *Cito nobis placemus, si invenimus, qui nos bonos viros dicant, qui prudentes, qui sanctos: Non sumus modica laudatione contenti; quicquid in nos adulatione sine pudore congesti, tanquam debitum prendimus: optimos nos esse et sanctissimos affirmantibus assentimur, cum sciamus sepe illos mentiri:* that is, We soon please ourselves to meet with those that call us good men, wise and holy; and we are not content with a little praise: whatever flattery heapeth on us without shame, we lay hold on it as due; we assent to them that say we are the best and most holy, when we oftentimes know ourselves that they lie. All this is for want of the true knowledge of themselves. When God hath acquainted a sinner effectually with himself, he quickly calleth himself by other names than flatterers do: with Paul he saith, "We ourselves were sometime foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures," Titus iii. 3. And Acts xxvi. 11, that he was mad against the saints in persecuting them. He then speaks so much against himself, that if tender ministers and experienced friends did not think better of him than he of himself, and persuade him to more comfortable thoughts,

he would be ready to despair, and think himself unworthy to live upon the earth.

4. Judge also how well men know themselves, when you have observed, what different apprehensions they have of their own faults and other men's; and of those that are suitable to their dispositions, interests, or examples, and those that are against them. They seem to judge of the actions by the persons, and not of the persons by the actions. Though he be himself a sensualist, a worldling, drowned in ambition and pride, whose heart is turned away from God, and utterly strange to the mystery of regeneration and a heavenly life, yet all this is scarce discerned by him, and is little troublesome, and less odious than the failings of another, whose heart and life is devoted unto God. The different opinions, or modes and circumstances of worship, in another that truly feareth God, is matter of their severer censures and reproach, than their own omissions, and averseness and enmity to holiness, and the dominion of their deadly sins. It seems to them more intolerable for another to pray without a book, than for themselves to pray without any serious belief, or love, or holy desire, without any feeling of their sins, or misery, or wants; that is, to pray with the lips without a heart; to pray to God without God, even without the knowledge or love of God, and to pray without prayers. It seemed to the hypocritical Pharisees, a greater crime in Christ and his disciples to violate their traditions, in not washing before they eat, to break the ceremonious rest of their sabbath by healing the diseased, or plucking ears of corn, than in themselves to hate and persecute the true believers and worshippers of God, and to kill the Lord of life himself. They censured the Samaritans for not worshipping at Jerusalem, but censured not themselves for not worshipping God, that is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. Which makes me remember the course of their successors, the ceremonious papists; that condemn others for heretics, and fry them in the flames, for not believing that bread is no bread, and wine is no wine, and that bread is to be adored as God, and that the souls of dead men know the hearts of all that pray to them in the world at once; and that the pope is the vice-christ, and sovereign of all the christians in the world; and for reading the Scriptures and praying in a known tongue, when they forbid it; and for not observing a world of ceremonies; when all this enmity to reason, piety, charity, humanity, all their religious tyranny, hypocrisy, and cruelty, do seem but holy zeal and laudable in themselves. To lie, dissemble, forswear, depose and murder princes, is a smaller matter to them when the pope dispenseth with it, and when it tends to the advantage of their faction, which they call the church, than to eat flesh on Friday, or in Lent, to neglect the mass, or images, or crossing, &c.

And it makes me remember Bishop Hall's description of a hypocrite: "He turneth all gnats into camels, and cares not to undo the world for a circumstance. Flesh on Friday is more abominable to him, than his neighbour's bed: he abhors more not to uncover at the name of Jesus, than to swear by the name of God," &c. It seems that prelates were guilty of this in Bernard's days, who saith, *Pralati nostri culicem inquit, et camelum deglutiant: dum majora permittentes, minora discutunt. Optimi rerum aestimatores, qui magnam in minimis, et parvam aut nullam in maximis adhibent diligentiam:* i. e. Our prelates strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel; while permitting greater matters, they discuss (or sift) the less: excellent estimators of things indeed, that in the smallest matters employ great diligence; but in the greatest,

little or none at all. And the cause of all this partiality is, that men are unacquainted with themselves. They love and cherish the same corruptions in themselves, which they should hate and reprehend in others. And saith Hierom, *Quomodo potest præses ecclesiæ auferre malum de medio ejus, qui in delictum simile corruerit ? aut qua libertate corripere peccantem potest, cum tacitus ipse sibi respondeat, eodem se admisisse quæ corripit : i. e.* How can a prelate of the church reform the evil that is in it, that rusheth into the like offence? or with what freedom can he rebuke a sinner, when his conscience secretly tells him, that he hath himself committed the same faults which he reproveh?

Would men but first be acquainted with themselves, and pass an impartial judgment on the affections and actions that are nearest them, and that most concern them, they would be more competent and more compassionate judges of their brethren, that are now so hardly used by them. It is excellent advice that Austin gives us, *Quum aliquem reprehendere nos necessitas cogerit, cogitemus, utrum tale sit vitium, quod nunquam habuimus ; et tunc cogitemus nos homines esse, et habere potuisse, vel quod tale habuimus et jam non habemus ; et tunc memoria tangat communis fragilitatis, ut illam correctionem non odium sed misericordia præcedat : sin autem inveniimus nos in eodem vitio esse, non obyrnemus, sed ingenuiscamus, et ad æqualiter deponendum invitemus : i. e.* When necessity constraineth us to reprove any one, let us think whether it be such a vice as we never had ourselves ; and then let us think that we are men, and might have had it : or if we once had such, but have not now, then let the remembrance of common frailty touch us, that compassion and not hatred may lead the way to our reproof ; but if we find that we have the same vice ourselves, let us not chide, but groan, and move (or desire) that we may both equally lay it by.

5. It shows how little men know themselves, when they must needs be the rule to all other men, as far as they are able to command it ; and that in the matters that men's salvation dependeth on, and in the smallest, tender, disputable points ; and even in those things where themselves are most unfit to judge. In every controverted point of doctrine, (though such as others have much better studied than themselves,) he that hath strength to suppress all those that differ from him, must ordinarily be the umpire ; so is it even in the modes and circumstances of worship. Perhaps Christ may have the honour to be called the King of the church, and the Scripture have the honour to be called his laws. But indeed it is they that would be the lords themselves ; and it is their wills and words that must be the laws ; and this under pretence of subserving Christ, and interpreting his laws : when they have talked the utmost for councils, fathers, church tradition, it is themselves that indeed must be all these ; for nothing but their own conceits and wills must go for the sense of decrees, or canons, fathers, or tradition. Even they that hate the power and serious practice of religion, would fain be the rule of religion to all others ; and they that never knew what it was to worship God in spirit and truth, with delight and love, and suitableness of soul, would needs be the rule of worship to all others, even in the smallest circumstances and ceremonies. And they would be the governors of the church, or the determiners of its mode of government, that never would be brought under the government of Christ themselves. If it please them better to spend the Lord's day in plays or sports, or compliment or idleness, than in learning the will of God in his word, or worshipping

him, and begging his mercy and salvation, and seriously preparing for an endless life, they would have all others do the like. If their full souls loathe the honeycomb, and they are weary of being instructed above an hour, or twice a day, they would have all others forced to their measure, that they may seem as diligent as others, when others are compelled to be as negligent as they. Like a queasy-stomached lady, that can eat but one slender meal a day, and therefore would have all her servants and tenants eat no more, or if they do, accuseth them of excess. If the emperor of Constantinople make a law, that no subject shall be suffered in his dominions, that will not be conformable to him in time, and quality, and measure, for meats and drink, and sleep, and speech, and exercise, it would be an honourable misery, and uniform calamity and ruin to his subjects. Alas, did men but know themselves, the weakness of their understandings, the sinful bias that personal interest and carnal inclinations have set upon their wills, they would be less arrogant and more compassionate, and not think, by making themselves as gods, to reduce the unavoidable diversities that will be found among mankind, to a unity in conformity to their minds and wills, and that in the matters of God and of salvation ; where every man's conscience that is wise and faithful, will be tenacious of a double interest (of God and of his soul) which he cannot sacrifice to the will of any. But be so just as not to mistake and misreport me in all this, as if I pleaded for libertinism or disorder, or spoke against government, civil or ecclesiastical ; when it is only private ambition, uncharitableness, and cruelty, and papal usurpations over the church and consciences of men, that I am speaking of ; which men, I am sure, will have other thoughts of, when God hath made them know themselves, than they have while passion hindereth them from knowing what spirit they are of : they will then see, that the weak in faith should have been received, and that catholic unity is only to be founded in the universal Head, and End, and Rule.

6. The dreadful change that is made upon men's minds, when misery, or approaching death, awakes them, doth show how little they knew themselves before. If they have taken the true estimate of themselves in their prosperity, how come they to be so much changed in adversity ? Why do they begin then to cry out of their sins, and of the folly of their worldliness and sensuality, and of the vanity of the honours and pleasures of this life ? Why do they then begin to wish, with gripes of conscience, that they had better spent their precious time, and minded more the matters of eternity, and taken the course as those did whom they once derided, as making more ado than needs ? Why do they then tremble under the apprehensions of their unreadiness to die, and to appear before the dreadful God, when formerly such thoughts did little trouble them ? Now there is no such sense of their sin or danger upon their hearts. Who is it now that ever hears such lamentations and self-accusations from them, as then it is likely will be heard ? The same man that then will wish with Balaam, that he might "die the death of the righteous, and that his latter end might be as his," will now despise and grieve the righteous. The same man that then will passionately wish that he had spent his days in holy preparations for his change, and lived as strictly as the best about him, is now so much of another mind, that he perceives no need of all this diligence ; but thinks it is humorous or timorous superstition, or at least that he may do well enough without it. The same man that will then cry, Mercy, mercy—O mercy, Lord,

to a departing soul, that is laden with sin, and trembleth under the fear of thy judgment, is now perhaps an enemy to serious, earnest prayer, and hates the families and persons that most use it; or at least is prayerless, or cold and dull himself in his desires, and can shut up all with a few careless, customary words, and feel no pinching necessity to awaken him, importunately to cry and strive with God. Doth not all this show, that men are befooled by prosperity, and unacquainted with themselves, till danger or calamity call them to the bar, and force them better to know themselves.

Your mutability proveth your ignorance and mistakes. If indeed your case be now as good as your present confidence or security do import, lament it not in your adversity; fear it not when death is calling you to the bar of the impartial Judge! Cry not out then of your ungodliness and sensuality; of your trifling hypocrisy, your slight contemptuous thoughts of God, and of your casting away your hopes of heaven, by wilful negligence and delays! If you are sure that you are now in the right, and diligent, serious believers in the wrong, then stand to it before the Lord: set a good face on your cause if it be good; be not down in the mouth when it is tried; God will do you no wrong: if your cause be good, he will surely justify you, and will not mar it. Wish not to die the death of the righteous: say not to them, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out," Matt. xxv. 8. If all their care, and love, and labour, in "seeking first the kingdom of God and its righteousness," be a needless thing, wish not for it in your extremity, but call it needless then. If fervent prayer may be spared now while prayer may be heard, and a few lifeless words that you have learned by rote may serve the turn; then call not on God when answering is past, seek him not when he will not be found; "When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you," Prov. i. 27, 28. Cry not, "Lord, Lord, open unto us, when the door is shut," Matt. xxv. 10, 11. Call them not foolish then that slept, but them that watched, if Christ was mistaken, and you are in the right, Matt. xxv. 2, 8; Prov. i. 22.

O sirs, stand but at the bedside of one of these ungodly, careless men, and hear what he saith of his former life, of his approaching change, of a holy or a carnal course, whether a heavenly or worldly life is better; (unless God have left him to that deplorable stupidity which an hour's time will put an end to;) hearken then whether he think that God or the world, heaven or earth, soul or body, be more worthy of man's chiefest care and diligence; and then judge whether such men did know themselves in their health and pride, when all this talk would have been derided by them as too precise, and such a life accounted over-strict and needless, as then they are approving and wishing they had lived. When that minister or friend should have once been taken for censorious, abusive, self-conceited, and unsufferable, that would have talked of them in that language as, when death approacheth, they talk of themselves; or would have spoke as plainly, and hardly of them, as they will then do of themselves. Doth not this mutability show, how few men now have a true knowledge of themselves?

What is the repentance of the living, and the desperation of the damned, but a declaration that the persons repenting and despairing, were unacquainted with themselves before? Indeed the erroneous despair of men, while grace is offered them, comes from ignorance of the mercy of God, and willingness of Christ to receive all that are willing to return.

But yet the sense of sin and misery, that occasioneth this erroneous despair, doth show that men were before erroneous in their presumption and self-esteem. Saith Bernard in Cant. *Utraque cognitio, Dei scilicet et tui, tibi necessaria est ad salutem, quia sicut ex notitia tui venit in te timor Dei, atque ex Dei notitia iudem amor; sic e contra, de ignorantia tui superbia, ac de Dei ignorantia venit desperatio*; that is, Both the knowledge of God and of thyself is necessary to salvation; because as from the knowledge of thyself, the fear of God cometh into thee, and love from the knowledge of God: so on the contrary, from the ignorance of thyself cometh pride; and from the ignorance of God comes desperation. *Quid est sapientia?* (inquit Seneca:) *Semper idem velle, et idem nolle: at non potest idem semper placere nisi rectum*: Wisdom appeareth in always willing and always nilling the same thing: but it is only right and good that can always please.

Poor men that must confess their sin and misery at last, would show a more reasonable acquaintance with themselves, if they would do it now, and say with the prodigal, "I will go to my Father, and say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." In time this knowledge and confession may be saving. Even a Seneca could say, without the Scripture, *Initium est salutis, notitia peccati*; *nam qui peccare se nescit, corrigi non vult. Ideo quantum potes, teipsum argue. Inquire in te: accusatoris primam partibus fungere; deinde iudicis, novissime deprecatoris*: i. e. The knowledge of sin is the beginning of recovery (or health): for he that knows not that he sinneth, will not be corrected. Reprehend thyself therefore as much as thou canst. Inquire into thyself: first play the part of an accuser, then of a judge, and lastly, of one that asketh pardon.

It is not because men are innocent or safe, that we now hear so little confession or complaint; but because they are sinful and miserable in so great a measure, as not to know or feel it. *Quare vitia sua nemo confitetur?* (inquit Seneca:) *Quia etiam nunc in illis est. Somnium narrare, vigilantis est*; *et vitia sua confiteri, sanatis iudicium est*: i. e. Why doth no man confess his vices? Because he is yet in them. To tell his dreams is the part of a man that is awake; and to confess his faults, is a sign of health. If you call a poor man rich, or a deformed person beautiful, or a vile, ungodly person virtuous, or an ignorant barbarian learned, will not the hearers think you do not know them? And how should they think better of your knowledge of yourselves, if any of you that are yet in the flesh, will say you are spiritual? and those that hate the holiness, and justice, and government of God, will say they love him? Or those that are in a state of enmity to God, and are as near to hell as the execution is to the sentence of the law, will persuade themselves and others, that they are the members of Christ, the children of God, and the heirs of heaven? and take it ill of any that would question it, though only to persuade them to make it sure, and to take heed what they trust to, when endless joy or misery must be the issue?

7. Doth it not manifest how little men know themselves, when in every suffering that befalls them, they overlook the cause of all within them, and fall upon others, or quarrel with every thing that standeth in their way? Their contempt of God doth cast them into some affliction, and they quarrel with the instruments, and meddle not with the mortal cause at home. Their sin finds them out, and testifieth against them; and they are angry with the rod, and repine at providence, as though God himself were more to be suspected of the cause than they: yea, it is be-

come with many a serious doubt, whether God doth not necessitate them to sin; and, whether they omit not duty merely because he will not give them power to perform it; and, whether their sin be any other than a relation unavoidably resulting from a foundation laid by the hand of God himself. Do men know themselves, that will sooner suspect and blame the most righteous, holy God, than their own unrighteous, carnal hearts? Man drinketh up iniquity like water, but there is no unrighteousness with God. Saith Innocent, *Conceptus est homo in fœtore luxurie, quodque deterius est, in labe peccati; natus ad laborem, timorem, dolorem, &c. Agit prava, quibus offendit Deum; offendit proximum; offendit seipsum; agit turpia, quibus polluit famam, polluit personam, polluit conscientiam: agit vana, quibus negligit sana; negligit utilia; negligit necessaria.* Man is conceived in the filth or stink of luxury, (or lust), and which is worse, in the stain of sin; born to labour, fear, and pain, &c. He doth that which is evil, to the offence of God, his neighbour, and himself: he doth that which is filthy, to the polluting of his fame, his person, and his conscience: he doth that which is vain, neglecting what is sound, and profitable, and necessary. And is not such a frail and sinful wight more likely to be the cause of sin than God? and to be culpable in all the ill that doth befall us?

And it shows that men little know themselves, when all their complaints are poured out more fluently on others than themselves: like sick stomachs, that find fault with every dish, when the fault is within them; or like pained, weak, or froward children, that quarrel with every thing that toucheth them, when the cause is in themselves. If they want peace, content, or rest, they lay the blame on this place or that, this or that person or estate; they think if they had their mind in this or that, they should be well; and therefore they are still contriving for somewhat which they want, and studying changes, or longing after this or that, which they imagine would work the cure: when, alas, poor souls, the sin, the sickness, the want is in themselves! It is a wiser mind, a better, more holy, heavenly will, that is wanting to them; without which nothing in the world will solidly content and comfort them. Seneca can teach them this much by the light of nature: *Non longa peregrinatione, nec locorum varietatibus, tristitiam mentis gravitatemque discuties: animus debes mutare, non calum: licet vastum trajeceris mare, sequenter te, quocunque perveneris, vitia. Quid miraris tibi peregrinationes non prodesse, cum te circumferas? Premit te eadem causa quæ expulit. Quid terrarum juvare novitas potest? Quid cognitio urbium aut locorum? In irritum cedit ista jactantia. Omnis enim dependendum est, non ante tibi ullus placebit locus. Vadis huc et illic, ut excutias incidens pondus, quod ipsa jactatione incommodius fit: sicut in navi onera immota minus urgent, inæqualiter convoluta citius eam partem, in quam incumbunt, demergunt. Quicquid facis, contra te facis: et motu ipso nocet tibi: ægrum enim concutis. At cum istud exemeris malum omnis mutatio loci jucundus fiet. In ultimas expellaris terras licet, in quolibet Barbaria angulo colloceris, hospitalis tibi illa quicquidque sedes erit. Magis quis veneris, quam quæ, interest.* That is, It is not by long travels, or by change of places, that you can discuss the sadness and heaviness of the mind. It is the mind, and not the climate, that you should change: though you pass the vastest sea, your vices will follow you whithersoever you go. Why marvellest thou, that travels avail thee not, when thou carriest about thyself? The same cause that drove thee away, doth follow thee. What can the novelty of countries avail? or the knowledge

of cities and places? This tossing up and down is vain; it is the load of thy mind, that must be laid down: till that be done, no place will please thee: thou goest up and down to shake off a burden that is fastened on thee; which even by thy motion doth become more troublesome. As in a ship, the settled weight is least troublesome, when things unequally thrown together, do sink the part in which they lie. What thou dost, thou dost it against thyself, and hurtest thyself by the very motion; for thou shakest a sick person. But when once thou hast taken out of thyself the evil, every change of place will be pleasant. Though thou be expelled into the remotest lands, or placed in any corner of Barbary, it will be however to thee a seat of hospitality: it more concerneth thee to know who (or what) thou art thyself that comest thither, than whither it is that thou comest.

Did you know yourselves in all your griefs, it is there that you would suspect and find your malady, and there that you would most solicitously seek the cure.

By this time, if you are willing, you may see, where lieth the disease and misery of the world, and also what must be the cure. Man hath lost himself, by seeking himself; he hath lost himself in the loss of God; he departeth from God, that he might enjoy himself; and so is estranged from God and himself. He left the sun, and retired into darkness, that he might behold himself, and not the light; and now beholdeth neither himself nor the light: for he cannot behold himself but by the light. As if the body should forsake the soul, and say, I will no longer serve another, but will be my own. What would such a selfish separation procure, but the converting of a body into a loathsome carcass and a senseless clod? Thus hath the soul dejected itself, by turning to itself, and separating from God; without whom it hath neither life, nor light, nor joy. By desiring a selfish kind of knowledge of good and evil, withdrawing from its just dependence upon God, it hath involved itself in care and misery, and lost the quieting, delighting knowledge which it had in God. And now poor man is lost in error; he is straggled so far from home, that he knoweth not where he is, nor which way to return, till Christ in mercy seek and save him, Matt. xviii. 11; Luke xix. 10.

Yet could we but get men to know that they do not know themselves, there were the greater hope of their recovery. But this is contrary to the nature of their distemper. An eye that is blinded by a suffusion or cataract, seeth not the thing that blindeth it: it is the same light that must show them themselves, and their ignorance of themselves. Their self-ignorance is part of the self-evil which they have to know. Those troubled souls that complain that they know not themselves, do show that they begin at least to know themselves. But a Pharisee will say, "Are we blind also?" John ix. 40. They are too blind to know that they are blind. The gospel shall be rejected, the apostles persecuted, Christ himself abused and put to death, the nation ruined, themselves and their posterity undone by the blindness of these hypocrites, before they will perceive that they are blind, and that they know not God or themselves. Alas, the long calamities of the church, the distempers and confusions in the state, the lamentable divisions and dissensions among believers, have told the world, how little most men know themselves; and yet they themselves will not perceive it. They tell it aloud to all about them, by their self-conceitdness and cruelty, uncharitable censures, reproaches, and impositions, that they know not them-

selves, and yet you cannot make them know it. Their afflicted brethren feel it to their smart; the suffering, grieved churches feel it; thousands groan under it, that never wronged them; and yet you cannot make them feel it.

Did they well know themselves to be men, so many would not use themselves like beasts, and care so little for their most noble part. Did they know themselves aright to be but men, so many would not set up themselves as gods; they would not arrogate a divine authority in the matters of God, and the consciences of others, as the Roman prelates do: nor would they desire so much that the observation, reverence, admiration, love, and applause of all should be turned upon them; nor be so impatient when they seem to be neglected; nor make so great a matter of their wrongs, as if it were some deity that were injured.

Oh what a change it would make in the world, if men were brought to the knowledge of themselves! How many would weep, that now laugh, and live in mirth and pleasure! How many would lament their sin and misery, that are now pharisaically confident of their integrity! How many would seek to faithful ministers for advice, and inquire what they should do to be saved, that now deride them, and scorn their counsel, and cannot bear their plain reproof or come not near them! How many would ask directions for the cure of their unbelief, and pride, and sensuality, that now take little notice of any such sins within them! How many would cry day and night for mercy, and beg importunately for the life of their immortal souls, that now take up with a few words of course, instead of serious, fervent prayer! Do but once know yourselves aright, know what you are, and what you have done, and what you want, and what is your danger; and then be prayerless and careless if you can: then sit still and trifle out your time, and make a jest of holy diligence, and put God off with lifeless words and compliments, if you can. Men could not think so lightly and contemptuously of Christ, so unworthily and falsely of a holy life, so delightfully of sin, so carelessly of duty, so fearlessly of hell, so senselessly and atheistically of God, and so disregardfully of heaven as now they do, if they did but thoroughly know themselves.

And now, sirs, methinks your consciences should begin to stir, and your thoughts should be turned inwards upon yourselves, and you should seriously consider what measure of acquaintance you have at home, and what you have done to procure and maintain such acquaintance. Hath conscience no use to make of this doctrine, and of all that hath been said upon it? Doth it not reprove you for your self-neglect, and your wanderings of mind, and your alien, unnecessary, fruitless cogitations? Had you been but as strange to your familiar friend, and as regardless of his acquaintance, correspondence, and affairs, as too many of you have been of your own, you may imagine how he would have taken it, and what use he would have made of it: some such use it beseebeth you to make of estrangement to yourselves. Would not he ask, What is the matter that my friend so seldom looketh at me; and no more mindeth me or my affairs? What have I done to him? How have I deserved this? What more beloved company or employment hath he got? You have this and much more to plead against your great neglect and ignorance of yourselves.

In order to your conviction and reformation, I shall first show you some of those reasons, that should move you to know yourselves, and consequently should humble you for neglecting it: and

then I shall show you what are the hinderances that keep men from self-acquaintance, and give you some directions necessary to attain it.

In general consider, it is by the light of knowledge that all the affairs of your souls must be directed; and therefore while you know not yourselves, you are in the dark, and unfit to manage your own affairs. Your principal error about yourselves will have influence into all the transactions of your lives; you will neglect the greatest duties, and abuse and corrupt those which you think you do perform. While you know not yourselves, you know not what you do, nor what you have to do, and therefore can do nothing well. For instance:

1. When you should repent of sin, you know it not as in yourselves, and therefore cannot savingly repent of it. If you know in general that you are sinners, or know your gross and crying sins, which conscience cannot overlook, yet the sins which you know not, because you will not know them, may condemn you. How can you repent of your pride, hypocrisy, self-love, self-seeking, your want of love, and fear, and trust in God, or any such sins, which you never did observe? Or if you perceive some sins, yet if you perceive not that they reign and are predominant, and that you are in a state of sin, how can you repent of that estate which you perceive not? Or if you have but a slight and superficial sight of your sinful state and your particular sins, you can have but a superficial, false repentance.

2. If you know not yourselves, you cannot be duly sensible of your misery. Could it be expected that the Pharisees should lament, that they were of their father the devil, as long as they boasted that they were the children of God? John viii. 41, 44. Will they lament that they are under the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and the bondage of the devil, that know not of any such misery that they are in, but hope they are the heirs of heaven? What think you is the reason, that when Scripture telleth us that few shall be saved, and none at all but those that are new creatures, and have the Spirit of Christ, that yet there is not one of many that is sensible that the case is theirs? Though Scripture peremptorily concludeth, "That they that are in the flesh cannot please God," and that "to be carnally minded is death," Rom. viii. 6—8, and that "without holiness none shall see God," Heb. xii. 14, and that all "they shall be damned that believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thess. ii. 12, and that Christ will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that do believe," 2 Thess. i. 7—10. And would not a man think that such words as these should waken the guilty soul that doth believe them; and make us all to look about us? I confess it is no wonder, if a flat atheist or infidel should slight them and deride them! But is it not a wonder if they stir not those, that profess to believe the word of God, and are the men of whom these scriptures speak? And yet among a thousand that are thus condemned already, (I say, by the word, that is the rule of judgment, even condemned already; for so God saith, John iii. 18,) how few shall you see that with penitent tears lament their misery! How few shall you hear, with true remorse, complain of their spiritual distress, and cry out as those that were pricked at the heart, Acts ii. 37, "Men and brethren, what shall we do!" In all this congregation, how few hearts are affect-

ed with so miserable a case! Do you see by the tears, or hear by the complaints of those about you, that they know what it is to be unpardoned sinners, under the wrath of the most holy God? And what is the matter that there is no more such lamentation? Is it because there are few or none so miserable? Alas! no: the Scripture, and their worldly, fleshly, and ungodly lives, assure us of the contrary. But it is because men are strangers to themselves: they little think that it is themselves, that all the terrible threatenings of God do mean. Most of them little believe or consider what Scripture saith; but fewer consider what conscience hath to say within, when once it is awakened, and the curtain is drawn back, and the light appeareth. The first proposition inferreth not the conclusion; and the assumption they overlook. Did all that read and hear the Scriptures know themselves, I will tell you how they would hear and read it. When the Scripture saith, "To be carnally minded is death," and, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die," (Rom. viii. 8, 13,) the guilty hearer would say, I am carnally minded; and I live after the flesh: therefore I must turn or die. When the Scripture saith, "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also," (Matt. vi. 21,) the guilty conscience would assume, My heart is not in heaven, therefore my treasure is not there. When Scripture saith, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. xviii. 3,) and, "Except a man be regenerate and born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," (John iii. 3, 5,) and, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new," (2 Cor. v. 17,) and, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his," (Rom. viii. 9,) the guilty hearer would assume, I was never thus converted, regenerate, born again, and made a new creature; I have not the Spirit of Christ: therefore I am none of his, and cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, till this change be wrought upon me. When the Scripture saith, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge," (Heb. xiii. 4,) the guilty hearer would say, How then shall I be able to stand before him?

Yea, did but hearers know themselves, they would perceive their danger from remoter principles, that mention the dealing of God with others. When they hear of the judgment of God upon the ungodly, and the enemies of the church, they would say, "Except I repent, I shall likewise perish," Luke xiii. 3, 5. When they hear that "judgment must begin at the house of God," they would infer, "What then shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?" And when they hear that "the righteous are scarcely saved," they would think, "Where then shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.

3. If you know not yourselves, you cannot be christians: you cannot have a practical belief in Christ; for he is offered to you in the gospel, as the remedy for your misery; as the ransom for your enthralled souls; as the propitiation for your sin, and your peace-maker with the Father; without whose merit, satisfaction, righteousness, and intercession, your guilty souls can have no hope. And can you savingly value him in these respects, if you know not that sin and misery, that guilt and thralldom, in which your need of Christ consisteth? Christ is esteemed by you according to the judgment you pass upon yourselves.

They that say they are sinners, from a general brain knowledge, will accordingly say Christ is their Saviour and their hope, with a superficial belief, and will honour him with their lips with all the titles

belonging to the Redeemer of the world: but they that feel that they are deadly sick of sin at the very heart, and are lost for ever if he do not save them, will feel what the name of a Saviour signifieth, and will look to him as the Israelites to the brazen serpent, and cast themselves at his feet for the crumbs of grace, and will yield up themselves to be saved by him in his way. An uneffectual knowledge of yourselves, may make you believe in a Redeemer, as all the city do of a learned, able physician, that will speak well of his skill, and resolve to use him when necessity constraineth them; but at present they find no such necessity. But an effectual sight and sense of your condition, will bring you to Christ, as a man in a drowsy or consumption comes to the physician, that feels he must have help or die. Saith Bernard, *Filium Dei non reputat Iesum, qui ipsius non terretur comminationibus*, &c. You will not take the Son of God for a Saviour, if you be not affrighted by his threatenings. And if you perceive not that you are lost, you will not heartily thank him that came to seek and save you. *Non consolantur Christi lachrymæ cachinnantes; non consolantur panni ejus ambulantes in stolis; non consolantur stabulum et præsepe amantes primas cathedras in synagogis*, saith Bernard: Christ's tears do not comfort them that laugh; his rags do not comfort them that (love to) walk in robes; his stable and manger comfort not them that love the highest seats in the synagogues. Can you seek to Christ to take you up, till you find that you have fallen and hurt you? Will you seek to him to fetch you from the gates of hell, that find not that you are there?

But to the self-condemning soul that knoweth itself, how welcome would a Saviour be! How ready is such a soul for Christ! Thou that judgest thyself, art the person that must come to Christ to justify thee. Now thou art ready to be healed by him, when thou findest that thou art sick, and dead. Hast thou received the sentence of death in thyself? Come to him now and thou shalt have life, John v. 40; 1 John v. 11. Art thou weary and heavy laden? Come to him for rest: come and fear not; for he bids thee come, Matt. xi. 27, 28. Dost thou know that "thou hast sinned against heaven and before God, and art not worthy to be called a son?" Do but cast thyself then at his feet, and tell him so, and ask forgiveness, and try whether he will not welcome and embrace thee, pardon and entertain thee, clothe thee and feast thee, and rejoice over thee as one that "was lost and is found, was dead and is alive," Luke xv. For he "came to seek and to save that which was lost," Luke xix. 10. While thou saidst, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knewest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" thou wouldst not "buy the tried gold that thou mightest be rich, nor his white raiment that thou mightest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness might not appear; nor Christ's eye-salve that thou mightest see," Rev. iii. 17, 18. But now thou art poor in spirit, and findest that thou art nothing, and hast nothing, and of thyself canst do nothing that is acceptably good, (John xv. 5,) and that of thyself thou art insufficient to think any thing that is good, (2 Cor. iii. 5;) now thou art readier for the help of Christ, and a patient fit for the tender healing hand of the physician. Whilst thou saidst, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor as this publican," thou wast further from Christ and justification, than now thou standest as afar off, and darest scarce look up to heaven, but smitest on thy breast, and sayest, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner," Luke xviii. 11—14. Not that ex-

tortioners, unjust, adulterers, or any that are ungodly, are justified or can be saved, while they are such: not that a smiting on the breast, with a "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner," will serve their turn while they continue in their wicked lives: but when thou art brought to accuse and condemn thyself, thou art prepared for his grace that must renew and justify thee. None sped better with Christ than the woman that confessed herself a dog, and begged but for the children's crumbs: and the centurion that sent friends to Christ to mediate for him, as being unworthy to come himself, and unworthy that Christ should enter under his roof: for of the first Christ said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt," (Matt. xv. 27, 28;) and of the second he saith with admiration, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel," Luke vii. 6-9. Though thou art ready to deny the title of a child, and to number thyself with the dogs, yet go to him and beg his crumbs of mercy. Though thou think that Christ will not come to such a one as thou, and though thou beg prayers of others, as thinking he will not hear thy own, thou little thinkest how this self-abasement and self-denial prepareth thee for his tenderest mercies, and his esteem. When thou art contrite (as the dust that is trodden under feet) and poor, and tremblest at the word, then will he look at thee with compassion and respect, Isa. lxvi. 2. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made," Isa. lvii. 15, 16. When thou art using the self-condemning words of Paul, Rom. vii. 14-25, "I am carnal, sold under sin: what I would, that do I not; and what I hate, that do I. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing—I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me—A law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin—" when thou criest out with him, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" thou art then fitter to look to thy Redeemer, and use the following words, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." When thou didst exalt thyself, thou wast obnoxious to the storms of justice, which was engaged to bring thee low: but now thou humblest thyself, thou liest in the way of mercy, that is engaged to exalt thee, Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14. Mercy looketh downward, and can quickly spy a sinner in the dust; but cannot leave him there, nor deny him compassion and relief. Art thou cast out as helpless, wounded by thy sin, and neglected by all others that pass by? Thou art the fittest object for the skill and mercy of Him that washeth sinners in his blood, and tenderly bindeth up their wounds, and undertakes the perfecting of the cure, though yet thou must bear the surgeon's hand, till his time of perfect cure be come, Luke x. 33-35. Now thou perceivest the greatness of thy sin and misery, thou art fit to study the greatness of his mercy; and with all saints (to strive) "to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," Eph. iii. 18, 19. Now thou hast "smitten upon the thigh," and said, "What have I done?" Jer. xxxi. 19; viii. 6, thou art fitter to look unto him that was wounded and smitten for thy transgressions, and to consider what he hath done and suffered: how he

"hath borne thy grief and carried thy sorrows, and was bruised for thy iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, and we are healed by his stripes: all we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii. 4-6, &c. Art thou in doubt whether there be any forgiveness for thy sins; and whether there be any place for repentance? Remember that Christ is "exalted by God's right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31. And that he himself hath spoken it, that "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, except the blasphemy against the Spirit," Matt. xii. 32. And this forgiveness of sins thou art bound to believe as an article of thy creed: that it is purchased by Christ, and freely offered in the gospel. Mercy did but wait all this while, till thou wast brought to understand the want and worth of it, that it might be thine. When a Peter that denieth Christ with oaths and cursing, goeth out and weepeth, he speedily finds mercy from him without, that he but now denied within. When so bloody a persecutor as Paul findeth mercy, upon his prostration and confession; and when so great an offender as Manasseh is forgiven upon his penitence, in bonds; when all his witchcraft, idolatry, and cruelties are pardoned, upon a repentance that might seem to have been forced by a grievous scourge; what sinner that perceives his sin and misery, can question his entertainment if he come to Christ. Come to him, sinner, with thy load and burden; come to him with all thy acknowledged unworthiness; and try whether he will refuse thee. He hath professed that "him that cometh to him he will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37. He refused not his very murderers, when they were pricked at the heart and inquired after a remedy, (Acts ii. 37,) and will he refuse thee? Hath our Physician poured out his blood to make a medicine for distracted sinners; and now is he unwilling to work the cure? *Fusus est sanguis medici, et factum est medicamentum frenetici*, saith Augustine. O sinner! now thou art brought to know thyself, know Christ also and the cure is done. Let thy thoughts of the remedy be deeper, and larger, and longer, than all thy thoughts of thy misery: it is thy sin and shame if it be not so. Why wilt thou have twenty thoughts of sin and misery, for one that thou hast of Christ and mercy? when mercy is so large, and great, and wonderful as to triumph over misery; and grace aboundeth much more where sin hath abounded, Rom. v. 20. *Inspice vulnera pendentis; sanguinem morientis; pretium redimentis; cicatrices resurgentis. Caput habet inclinatum ad osculandum; cor apertum ad diligendum; brachia extensa ad amplectendum, totum corpus expositum ad redimendum*, saith Augustin. Behold the wounds of Christ as he is hanging; the blood of him dying, the price of him redeeming, the scars of him rising. His head is bowed to kiss thee; his heart open to love thee; his arms open to embrace thee; his whole body exposed to redeem thee.

Homo factus est hominis factor, ut suggeret ubera regens sidera; ut esuriret panis; ut siteret fons; dormiret lux, ab itinere via fatigaretur; falsis testibus veritas occultaretur; Juxta vivorum et mortuorum a judice mortali judicaretur; ab injustis justitia damnaretur; flagellitis disciplina caderetur; spinis botrus coronaretur; in ligno fundamentum suspenderetur; virtus infirmaretur; salus vulneraretur; vita moreretur, saith Augustin: that is, The Maker of man was made man; that he might suck the breasts that rules the stars; that bread might hunger; the spring (or fountain) might thirst; the light might sleep; the way

might be weary in his journey; that the truth might be hidden by false witnesses; that the Judge of quick and dead might be judged by a mortal judge; justice might be condemned by the unjust; discipline might be scourged; the cluster of grapes might be crowned with thorns; the foundation might be hanged on a tree; that strength might be weakened; that health might be wounded; and that life itself might die. This is the wonderful mystery of love, which will entertain the soul that comes to Christ, and which thou must study to know when thou knowest thyself. But till then all these will be riddles to thee, or little relished; and Christ will seem to thy neglecting heart to have died and done all this in vain.

And hence it is, that as proud, ungodly, sensual men, were never sound believers, so they oftentimes fall from that opinionative common faith which they had, and of all men do most easily turn apostates; it being just with God that they should be so far forsaken as to vilify the remedy, that would not know their sin and misery, but love it, and pertinaciously hold it, as their felicity!

4. If you know not yourselves, you will not know what to do with yourselves, nor to what end and for what work you are to live. This makes the holy work neglected, and most men live to little purpose, wasting their days in matters that themselves will call impertinent when they come to die; as if they were good for nothing else: whereas if they knew themselves, they would know that they are made and fitted for more noble works. O man, if thou were acquainted well with thy faculties and frame, thou wouldst perceive the name of God thy Maker, to be so deeply engraven in thy nature, even in all thy parts and powers, as should convince thee that thou wast made for him; that all thou art and all thou hast, is nothing worth, but for his service: as all the parts and motions of a clock or watch are but to tell the hour of the day. Thou wouldst know then the meaning of sanctification and holiness; that it signifieth but the giving God his own, and is the first part of justice, without which no rendering men their due can prove thee just. Thou wouldst then know the unreasonableness and injustice of ungodliness and all sin: and that to serve thy fleshly lusts and pleasures with those noble faculties that were purposely formed to love and serve the Eternal God, is more absurd and villanous, than to employ the highest officers of the king in the sweeping of your chimneys, or the serving of your swine. Remember it, unreasonable, brutish man, the next time thou art going to thy lusts and sensual delights. It is no wiser a course thou takest: it is no more honourable or just: but as much worse, as God is to be preferred to a king; and as thy sin is worse than the serving of thy swine. O man, didst thou but know thyself, and for what employment thy faculties are made, thou wouldst lift up thy head, and seriously think who holds the reins; who keeps the breath yet in thy nostrils, and continueth thee in life; and where it is that thou must shortly fix thy unchangeable abode; and what is now to be done in preparation for such a day: *Os homini sublimē dedit*, &c. Thou wouldst know that thou hadst not that reason, and that will and executive power, to roll in the earth, and be but a cunning kind of beast, that hath wit to play the fool, and can ingeniously live below understanding, and do that with argument which other brutes can do without it. Thou wouldst know that thy higher faculties were not made to serve the lower; thy reason to serve thy sensual delight. The horse was not made to ride the man, nor the master to follow and attend the dog. O man!

hadst thou not lost the knowledge of thyself, thou wouldst be so far from wondering at a holy life, that thou wouldst look upon an unholy person as a monster, and wouldst hear the deriders and opposers of a holy life, as thou wouldst hear him that were deriding a man because he is not a swine, or were reproaching men of honour and learning, because they live not as an ass.

I confess, my soul is too apt to lose its lively sense of all these things; but whenever it is awake, I am forced to say, in these kind of meditations, If I had not a God to know and think on, to love and honour, to seek and serve, what had I to do with my understanding, will, and all my powers? what should I do with life and time? what use should I make of God's provisions? what could I find to do in the world, that is worthy of a man? Were it not as good lie still, and sleep out my days, and professedly do nothing, as to go dreaming with a seeming seriousness, and wander about the world as in my sleep, and do nothing with such a troublesome stir, as sensual, worldly persons do? Could not I have played the beast without a reasonable, free-working soul? Let them turn from God, and neglect the conduct of the Redeemer, and disregard the holy approaches, and breathings, and workings of the soul towards its beloved centre and felicity, that know not what an immortal soul is, or know how else to employ their faculties, with satisfaction or content unto themselves. I profess here, as in his presence that is the Father of spirits, and before angels and men, I do not; I know not what else to do with my soul that is worth the doing, but what is subservient to its proper object, its end, and everlasting rest. If the holy service of God, and the preparation for heaven, and making after Christ and happiness, be forbidden me, I have no more to do in the world, that will satisfy my reason, or satisfy my affections, or that as a man or a christian I can own. And it is as good not live, as to be deprived of the uses and ends of life. Though my love and desires are infinitely below the eternal goodness and glory, which they should prosecute and embrace, yet do my little tastes, and dull desires, and cold affections consent unfeignedly to say, Let me have God or nothing; let me know him and his will, and what will please him, and how I may enjoy him; or, oh that I never had an understanding to know any thing! Let me remember him; or, oh that I had never had a memory! Let me love him and be beloved of him; or, oh that I had never had such a thing as love within me! Let me hear his teachings, or have no ears: let me serve him with my riches, or let me have none; and with my interest or honour, or let me be despised. It is nothing that he gives not being to; and it is useless that is not for his glory and his will. If God have nothing to do with me, I have nothing to do with myself, and the world hath nothing to do with me.

Let dark, and dreaming, dotting sinners, declare their shame, and speak evil of what they never knew, and neglect the good they never saw; let them that know not themselves or God, refuse to give up themselves to God, and think a life of sensuality more suitable to them. But "Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance on me," Psal. iv.; and let me no longer be a man, nor have reason, or any of thy talents in my trust, than I shall be thine, and live to thee. I say as Bernard, *Dignus plane est morte, qui tibi Christe recusat vivere; et qui tibi non sapit, desipit; et qui curat esse nisi propter te, pro nihilo est et nihil est. Propter te ipsum Deus fecisti omnia; et qui esse vult sibi, et non tibi, nil esse incipit inter omnia*. Worthy is that man, O Christ, to die, that refuseth to live to thee: and he that is not wise

to thee, is but a fool; and he that careth to *be*, unless it be for thee, is good for nothing, and is nothing. For thyself, O God, hast thou made all things; and he that would be to himself and not to thee, among all things beginneth to be nothing.

5. If you know not yourselves, you know not how to apply the word of God, which you read or hear; you know not how to use either promises or threatenings, to the benefit of your souls: nay, you will misapply them to your hurt. If you are unregenerate, and know it not, you will put by all the calls of God, that invite you to come in and be converted, and think that they belong to grosser sinners, but not to you. All the descriptions of the unsanctified, and their misery, will little affect you: and all God's threatenings to such will little move you; for you will think they are not meant of you; you will be pharisaically blessing yourselves, when you should be pricked at the heart, and laid in contrition at the feet of Christ; you will be thanking God that you are not such as indeed you are; you will be making application of the threatenings to others, and pitying them when you should lament yourselves; you will be thundering when you should be trembling; and speaking that evil of others that is your own; and convincing others of that which you had need to be convinced of; and wakening others by talking in your sleep; and calling other men hypocrites, proud, self-conceited, ignorant, and other such names that are indeed your own; you will read or hear your own condemnation, and not be moved at it, as not knowing your own description when you hear it, but thinking that this thunderbolt is levelled at another sort of men. All the words of peace and comfort, you will think are meant of such as you. When you read of pardon, reconciliation, adoption, and right to everlasting life, you will imagine that all these are yours. And thus you will be dreaming-rich and safe, when you are poor and miserable, and in the greatest peril. And is it not pity that the celestial, undeceiving light should be abused to so dangerous self-deceit? and that truth itself should be made the furtherance of so great an error? and that the eyesalve should more put out your eyes? Is it not sad to consider, that you should now be imboldened to presumption, by that very word which (unless you be converted) will judge you to damnation? and that self-deceit should be increased by the glass of verity that should undeceive you?

How can you know what promise or threatening doth belong to you, while you know not what state your souls are in. Can you tell what physic to take, till your disease be known? or choose your plaster till you know your sore?

6. If you know not yourselves, you know not how to confess or pray. This makes men confess their sins so seldom, and with so little remorse to God and man; you hide them because they are hidden from yourselves; and therefore God will open them to your shame: whereas if they were opened to you, they would be opened by you, and covered by God. Saith Augustine, *Non operuit, sed aperui ut operires; non celavi, ut tegeres: nam quando homo detegit, Deus tegit. Cum homo celat, Deus nudat: cum homo agnoscit, Deus ignoscit.* I did not cover, but open that thou mayest cover; I concealed not, that thou mightest hide. For when man discloseth, God covereth; when man hideth, God maketh bare; when man confesseth, God forgiveth. For want of self-acquaintance it is that men hypocritically confess to God in a way of custom, the sins which they will deny or excuse to man; and will tell God formally of much, which they cannot endure to be told of seriously by a reprover: or, if they confess it generally with a

seeming humility to others, they cannot bear that another should faithfully charge it upon them, in order to their true humiliation and amendment. *Indicia vera confessionis sunt, si ut unusquisque se peccatorem dicit, id de se dicenti alteri non contradicat. Nam non peccator sed justus videri appetit, cum peccatorem se quisque nullo arguente confitetur; superbiæ quippe vitium est, ut quod de se fateri quis sua sponte dignatur, hoc sibi dici ab aliis dedignetur,* saith Bernard. It is the sign of true confession, if, as every one saith he is a sinner, he contradict not another that saith it of him. For he desireth not to seem a sinner, but righteous, when one confesseth himself a sinner when none reproveth him. It is the vice of pride, for a man to disdain to have that spoken to him of others, which he stuck not to confess of his own accord concerning himself.

And for prayer, it is men's ignorance of themselves that makes prayer so little in request: hunger best teacheth men to beg. You would be offer on your knees, if you were offer in your hearts. Prayer would not seem needless, if you knew your needs. Know yourselves, and be prayerless if you can. When the prodigal was convinced, he presently purposeth to confess and pray. When Paul was converted, Ananias hath this evidence of it from God, "Behold, he prayeth," Acts ix. 11. Indeed the inward part of prayer, is the motion of a returning soul to God. Saith Hugo, *Oratio est pia mentis et humilis ad Deum conversio, fide, spe, et charitate subnixæ.* Prayer is the turning of a pious, humble soul to God, leaning upon faith, hope, and love. It is *Oranti subsidium, Deo sacrificium, demonibus flagellum.* The relief of the petitioner, the sacrifice of God, the scourge of devils.

And self-knowledge would teach men how to pray. Your own hearts would be the best prayer-books to you, if you were skilful in reading them. Did you see what sin is, and in what relation you stand to God, to heaven and hell, it would drive you above your beads and lifeless words of course, and make you know, that to pray to God for pardon and salvation, is not a work for a sleepy soul. Saith Gregory, *Ille Deo veram orationem exhibuit qui semetipsum cognoscit, quia pulvis sit; humiliter videt, qui nihil sibi virtutis tribuit, &c.* He offereth the truest prayer to God, that knoweth himself, that humbly seeth he is but dust, and ascribeth not virtue to himself, &c. Nothing quenched prayer more than to be mistaken or mindless about ourselves. When we go from home this fire goes out; but when we return, and search our hearts, and see the sins, the wants, the weaknesses that are there, and perceive the danger that is before us, and withal the glorious hopes that are offered us, here is fuel and bellows to inflame the soul, and cure it of its drowsiness and dumbness. Help any sinner to a clearer light, to see into his heart and life, and to a livelier sense of his own condition, and I warrant you he will be more disposed to fervent prayer, and will better understand the meaning of those words, "That men ought always to pray and not to faint," Luke xviii. 1; and, "Pray without ceasing," 1 Thess. v. 17. You may hear some impious persons now disputing against frequent and fervent prayer, and saying, What need all this ado? But if you were able to open these men's eyes, and show them what is within them and before them, you would quickly answer all their arguments, and convince them better than words can do, and put an end to the dispute. You would set all the prayerless families in town and country, gentlemen's and poor men's, on fervent calling upon God, if you could but help them to such a sight of their sin and danger, as shortly the stoutest of them must have. Why

do they pray, and call for prayers, when they come to die, but that they begin a little better to know themselves? They see then that youth, and health, and honour, are not the things, nor make them so happy, as befalling prosperity once persuaded them. Did they believe and consider what God saith of them, and not what flattery and self-love say, it would open the mouths of them that are most speechless. But those that are born deaf are always dumb. How can they speak that language with desire to God, which they never learned by faith from God or by knowledge of themselves?

And self-knowledge would teach men what to ask. They would feel most need of spiritual mercies, and beg hardest for them; and for outward things, they would ask but for their daily bread, and not be foolishly importunate with God for that which they know not to be suitable or good for them. *Fi deliter supplicans Deo pro necessitatibus hujus vite, et misericorditer auditur, et misericorditer non auditur. Quid enim infirmo sit utilis magis novit medicus quam ægrotus*, saith Prosper. It is mercy to be denied sometimes when we pray for outward things: our physician, and not we, must choose our physic, and prescribe our diet.

And if men knew themselves, it would teach them on what terms to expect the hearing of their prayers. Neither to be accepted for their merits, nor yet to be accepted without that faith, and repentance, and desire, that seriousness, humility, and sincerity of heart, which the very nature of prayer to God doth contain or presuppose. "He that nameth the name of Christ must depart from iniquity," (2 Tim. ii. 19,) and must "wash himself and make him clean, and put away the evil of his doings from before the eyes of God, and cease to do evil, and learn to do well," Isa. i. 16, 17. As knowing that though a Simon Magus must repent and pray, (Acts viii. 22,) and the "wicked in forsaking his way, and thoughts, and returning to the Lord, must seek him while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near (Isa. lv. 6, 7); and the prayers of a humble publican are heard, when he sets his prayer against his sins: yet if he would cherish his sin by prayer, and flatter himself into a presumption and security in a wicked life, because he useth to ask God forgiveness; if he thus "regard iniquity in his heart, God will not hear his prayers" (Psal. lvi. 18); and "we know that such impenitent sinners God heareth not," John ix. 31. And thus the prayers of the wicked, as wicked, (which are not a withdrawing from his wickedness, but a bolster of his security, and as a craving of protection and leave to sin,) are but "an abomination to the Lord," Prov. xvii. 8; xxviii. 9. *Ferrum prius extrahendum*: The bullet, the thorn must be first got out, before any medicine can heal their wounds. Saith Augustine, *Plus Deo placet latratus canum, mugitus bovm, grunntus porcorum, quam cantus clericorum luxuriantium*. The barking of dogs, the howling of beasts, the grunting of swine, doth please God better than the singing of luxuriant clergymen. Did men know themselves, and who they have to do with in their prayers, they would not go from cards, and dice, and gluttony, and fornication, and railing, lying, or reviling at the servants of the Lord, to a few hypocritical words of prayer, to salve all till the next time, and wipe their mouths, as if one sin had procured the forgiveness of another. Nor would they shut up a day of worldliness, ambition, sensuality, or profaneness, with a few heartless words of confession and supplication; or with the words of penitence, while their hearts are impenitent, as if when they have abused God by sin, they would make him amends, or reconcile him by their

mockery. Nor would they think to be accepted by praying for that which they would not have; for holiness, when they hate it, and for deliverance from the sins which they would not be delivered from, and would not have their prayers granted.

7. If you know not yourselves, it will unfit you for thanksgiving: your greatest mercies will be least esteemed; and the lesser will be misesteemed. And while you are unthankful for what you have, you will be absurdly thanking God for that which indeed you have not.

What inestimable mercies are daily trodden under feet by sinners, that know not their worth, because they know not their own necessities! They have time to repent, and make preparation for an endless life; but they know not the worth of it, but unthankfully neglect it, and cast it away on the basest vanities; as if worldly cares, or wicked company, or fleshly lusts, or cards, or dice, or revellings, or idleness, were exercises in which they might better improve it, than the works of holiness, justice, and mercy, which God hath made the business of their lives; or as if the profits, and pleasures, and vain-glory of this world, did better deserve it than their Creator, and their own souls, and the heavenly inheritance. But if their eyes were opened to see where they stand, and what they are, and what are their dangers and necessities, how thankful would they be for one year, one month, one day, one hour, to repent and cry to God for mercy! And how sensibly would they perceive that a hundred years' time is not too long to spend in serious preparation for eternity!

They have now the faithful ministers of Christ, inviting them in his name to come to him and receive the riches of his grace, and "beseeching them in his stead to be reconciled unto God," Matt. xxii. 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. But they stop their ears, and harden their hearts, and stiffen their necks, and love not to be disturbed in their sins, but are angry with those that are solicitous for their salvation, and revile them as too precise and strict, that tell them of the *one thing needful*, and persuade them to choose the better part, and tell them where their sin will leave them. They take them for their friends that will encourage them in the way that God condemneth, and be merry with them in the way to endless sorrow, and flatter them into security and impenitency till the time of grace be past; but they hate them as their enemies that faithfully reprove them, and tell them of their folly, and call them to a safer, better way. Alas, sirs, there would not be so many nations, congregations, and souls now left in darkness and misery by their own doing, having driven away the mercy of the gospel, and thrust their faithful teachers from them, if they knew themselves. Men would not triumph in their own calamity, when they have expelled their faithful teachers, (the dust of whose feet, the sweat of their brows, the tears of their eyes, and the fervent prayers and groans of their hearts must witness against them,) if they knew themselves. They would not be like a madman that glorieth that he hath beaten away his physician and his friends, and is left to himself, if they knew themselves. When they have the earnest calls of the word without, and convictions and urgings of the Spirit of God and their consciences within, they would not wilfully go on, and cast these mercies at their heels, if they knew themselves.

They have leave to join in the communion of saints, and to enjoy the benefit of holy society in prayer, and conference, and mutual love and spiritual assistance, and in the public worship of God: but they pass these by, as having more of trouble

and burden than of mercy, because they little know themselves.

And their inferior mercies of health, and wealth, and food, and raiment, and friends, and accommodations, their misesteem and misuse; and value them but as provision for the flesh, and the satisfaction of their sensual and inordinate desires, and not as their necessary provision for their duty in the way to heaven! And therefore they are most thankful for their greatest snares; for that honour and abundance which are stronger temptations than they can overcome; for those fleshly contentments and delights, which are the enemies of grace, and the prison of their noblest faculties, and the undoing of their souls. If they could for shame speak out, they would thank God more for a whore, or a successful game, or the favour of their earthly gods, or for preferment, or commodity, lands or houses, than ever they did for all the offers of Christ and grace, and all the invitations to a holy life. For there is much more joy and pleasure in their hearts for the former than the latter.

And self-ignorance will also corrupt your thanksgiving, and turn it into sin and folly. Is it not shame and pity to hear an unpardoned enemy of holiness, and of God, to thank God that he is justified and reconciled to God, and adopted to be his child, and made a member of Jesus Christ? and to hear a carnal, unregenerate person give thanks for his regeneration, and sanctification by the Holy Ghost? as it is to hear a leper give thanks for perfect health, or a fool or madman thank God for making him wiser than his neighbours? Is it not pity to hear a miserable soul thank God for the grace which he never had? and one that is near eternal misery to thank God for making him an heir of glory? Oh how many have thanked God pharisaically for the pardon of their sins, that must for ever suffer for those sins! How many have thanked him for giving them the assured hopes of glory, that must be thrust out into endless misery! As I have known many, that by their friends and by themselves have been flattered into confident hopes of life, when they were ready to die, have thanked God that they were pretty well, and the worst was past; which, in the eyes of judicious standers-by, was not the least aggravation of their sad and deplorable state. Methinks it is one of the saddest spectacles in the world to hear a man thanking God for the assurance of salvation, that is in a state of condemnation, and like to be in hell for ever! These absurdities could not corrupt your highest duties, and turn them into sin, if you knew yourselves.

A man that knoweth his own necessities and unworthiness, is thankful for a little to God and man. Mercy is as no mercy, where there is no sense of need or misery. *Sapienti notum est quanti res quaque taceanda sit*, saith Seneca. Therefore God useth to humble them so low in the work of conversion, whom he meaneth ever after to employ in the magnifying of his grace. And then that which is folly and hypocrisy from a Pharisee, will be an acceptable sacrifice from a humble, grateful soul; and he that by grace is differenced from other men, may (modestly) thank God that he is not as other men. For had he nothing more to thank God for, than the ungodly world, he would be rejected and perish with the world: and if he have more than the world, and yet be no more thankful than the world, he would be guilty of greater unthankfulness than the world. *Non est superbia elati, sed confessio non ingrati: et habere te cognosce, et nihil ex te habere; ut nec superbus sis, nec ingratus. Dic Deo tuo, quoniam sanctus sum quia sanctificasti me: quia accepti, non quæ habui;*

quia tu dedisti, non quæ ego merui: saith Augustine. This is not the pride of one lift up, but the acknowledgment of one that is not unthankful: Know that thou hast, and know that thou hast nothing of thyself, that thou mayst neither be proud, nor yet unthankful. Say to thy God, I am holy, for thou hast sanctified me: for I have received what I had not; and thou hast given me what I deserved not. The thanksgiving of a faithful soul is so far from being displeasing to God as a pharisaical ostentation, that it is a great and excellent duty, and a most sweet and acceptable sacrifice. "Offer unto God thanksgiving—He that offereth praise glorifieth me," Psal. l. 14, 23.

8. And as to the Lord's supper, what work they are there like to make that are unacquainted with themselves, you may conjecture from the nature of the work, and the command of self-examination and self-judging. Though some may be welcomed by Christ, that have faith and love, though they doubt of their sincerity, and know not themselves to be children of God; yet none can be welcome that know not themselves to be sinners condemned by the law, and needing a Saviour to reconcile and justify them. Who will be there humbled at the feet of grace, and thankful for a Redeemer, and hunger and thirst for sacramental benefits, that knoweth not his own unworthiness and necessities? Oh what inestimable mercy would appear in a sacrament to us, in the offers of Christ and saving grace, and communion with God and with his saints, if our appetites were but quickened by the knowledge of ourselves!

9. And I beseech you consider, whether all your studies, and learning, and employments, be not irrational, preposterous, and impertinent, while you study not first to know yourselves? You are nearest to yourselves, and therefore should be best acquainted with yourselves. What should you more observe than the case of your own souls? and what should you know better than what is within you, and what you carry still about you, and that which methinks you should always feel; even the bent of your own estimations and affections; the sickness of your souls; your guilt, your wants, and greatest necessities? All your learning is but the concomitant of your dotage till you know yourselves. Your wisest studies are but the workings of a distracted mind, while you study not yourselves, and the things of everlasting consequence. The wise man was but derided by the standers-by, that fell overhead into a ditch, whilst he was busily taking the height of a star. To study whether it be the sun or earth that moveth, and not consider what motion is predominant in thy soul and life, is a pitiful, preposterous study. To think more what stars are in the firmament, than what grace is in thy heart; and what planet reigneth, than what disposition reigneth in thyself, and whether the spirit or the flesh have the dominion, is but to be learnedly beside thyself.

—*Illum ego jure
Despiciam, qui scit quanto sublimior Atlas
Omnibus in Lybia sit montibus; hic tamen idem
Ignoret quantum ferrata distet ab arca.*

Is it not a laborious madness to travel into far countries, and compass sea and land, to satisfy a curiosity; and to be at so much cost and pains to know the situation, government, and manners of the cities and countries of the world, and in the mean time to be utterly strange at home, and never bestow one day or hour in a serious survey of heart and life? to carry about a dark, unknown, neglected soul, while they are travelling to know remotest things that less concern them? Methinks it is a pitiful

thing, to hear men ingeniously discoursing of the quality, laws, and customs of other nations, and of the affairs of princes and commonwealths, and of the riches and commodities of sea and land, and to be mute when they should express their acquaintance with themselves, either in confession and prayer to God, or in any humble, experimental conference with men. To trade abroad, and utterly neglect the trade of godliness at home. To keep correspondence with persons of all degrees, and to have no correspondence with themselves. To keep their shop-books and accounts with diligence, and never regard the book of conscience, nor keep account of that for which they must ere long be accountable to God. It is a pitiful thing to see men turn over voluminous histories, to know what hath been done from the beginning of the world, and regard no more the history of their own lives, nor once look back with penitent remorse upon their ungodly, careless conversations, nor say, What have we done? to see men have well-furnished libraries, and read over a multitude of books, and never read the state and records of their souls!

*Quid juvat immensos scire atque evolvere casus,
Si facienda fugis, si fugienda facis?*

It maketh you but objects of wonder and compassion, to read laws and records, and understand all cases, and never endeavour to understand the case of your immortal souls! To counsel others for their temporal estates, and never understand your own spiritual state! To study the mysteries of nature, and search into all the works of God, except yourselves, and that which your happiness or misery doth depend on! To study the nature, and causes, and signs of bodily diseases, and their several remedies, and never study the diseases of your own souls, nor the precious remedy which mercy hath provided you. To cure the sicknesses of other men's bodies, and never feel a stony, proud, or sensual heart, nor use any care and industry for the cure! To know the matters of all arts and sciences, to be able to discourse of them all to the admiration of the hearers, is but an aggravation of thy lamentable folly, if thou be all this while a stranger to thyself, and that because thou art mindless of thy soul's condition. You would but laugh at such a learned fool that knew not how to dress himself, or eat, or drink, or go, and yet could talk of the profoundest speculations in metaphysics or other sciences. It is more necessary to know yourselves, your sin, your duty, your hopes, your dangers, than to know how to eat, or drink, or clothe yourselves. Alas, it is a pitiful kind of knowledge, that will not keep you out of hell; and a foolish wisdom that teaches you not to save your souls. *Per veram scientiam ibit ad disciplinam; per disciplinam ad bonitatem; per bonitatem ad beatitudinem*, saith Hugo. Till you know yourselves, the rest of your knowledge is but a confused dream: when you know the thing, you know not the end, and use, and worth of it. Self-knowledge will direct you in all your studies, and still employ you on that which is necessary, and will do you good, when others are studying but unprofitable, impertinent things; and indeed are but "proud, knowing nothing, (when they seem to excel in knowledge,) but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, that take gain for godliness," 1 Tim. vi. 4, 5. Self-knowledge will help you in all your studies, to know, *Quo ordine, quo studio, quo fine unumquodque scire oporteat. Quo ordine; ut illud prius, quod maturius movet ad salutem: quo studio; ut illud ardentius,*

quod vehementius ad amorem: quo fine; ut non ad inanem gloriam et ostentationem, sed ad tuam et aliorum salutem, saith Bernard. You will know in what order, with what study, and to what end every thing should be known: in what order, that that may go first, that most promoteth our salvation; with what study or desire, that we may know that most ardently, which most vehemently provoketh love; to what end, that it be not for vain-glory and ostentation, but for your own and other men's salvation.

And as it is ourselves and our own affairs that are nearest to us, and therefore first in order to be known; so it is ourselves that we have a special charge of, and that we are most obliged to study and to know; and it is our own condition and soul affairs that most concern us. Though sun, and moon, and earth, be not little things in themselves; yet the knowledge of them is a small, inconsiderable matter to thee, in comparison of the knowledge of thyself. The words even of Seneca are so pungent on this subject, that I shall recite some of them to shame those professed christians that are so much short of a heathen. *Quid ad virtutem viam sternit syllabarum enarratio, verborum diligentia et fabularum memoria, et versuum lex et modificatio? Quid ex his metum demit, cupiditatem frangat?* What furtherance to virtue is the enarration of syllables, the diligence of words, the remembering of fables, and the law and modification of verses? What of these taketh away fear, and bridleth concupiscence? *Metri me geometria docet latifundia: potius doceat quomodo metiar quantum homini satis sit: docet quomodo nihil perdam ex finibus meis: at ego discere volo quomodo totum hilaris amittam. Scis rotunda metri: si artifex es, metire hominis animum; dic quam magnus, dic quam pusillus sit. Scis quæ recta sit linea: quid tibi prodest si quid in vita rectum sit ignoras?* The geometrician teacheth me to measure spacious grounds; let him rather teach me to measure how much is sufficient for a man: he teacheth me how I may lose nothing of my possessions; but that which I would learn is, how I may lose all with a cheerful mind. Thou canst measure rounds: if thou be an artist, measure the mind of man; tell me how great it is, or how little or low. Thou knowest a straight line: and what the better art thou if thou know not what is right or straight in thy own life? *Hoc scire quid proderit, ut sollicitus sim, quum Saturnus et Mars e contrario stabunt?*—*Ille liberalium artium consecratio molestos, intempestivos, verbosos, sibi placens facit, et ideo non discantes necessaria, quia supervacua didicerunt.* What good will it do me, that I should be solicitous to know when Saturn and Mars will stand in opposition?—This diligent study of the liberal arts, doth make men troublesome, unseasonable, wordy, self-pleasing, and such as therefore learn not things necessary, because they have learned things superfluous.

When our nearer, greater works are done, then those that are most distant will be seasonable, and useful, and excellent in their proper places. When men understand the state and affairs of their souls, and have made sure of their everlasting happiness, they may then seasonably and wisely manage political and economical affairs, and prudently order and prosecute their temporal concerns: when they "first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness," subordinate things may be seasonably considered. But for a man to be taken up about matters of law, or trade, or pleasure, when he mindeth not the matters of his salvation; and to study languages, arts, and sciences, when he studieth not how to escape damnation; is not to be learned, but to dote; nor to be honourably or prudently employed,

but to walk as a *noctambulo*, a man in a dream, and live besides the reason of a man, as well as below the faith of a christian. These seemingly wise and honourable worldlings, that labour not to know what state and relation they stand in towards God, and his judgment, do live in a more pernicious distraction than he that is disputing in mood and figure while his house is burning over his head, or he that is learning to fiddle or dance, when he is assaulted by an enemy, or to be tried for his life.

Even works of charity seem but absurd, preposterous acts, in those that are not charitable to themselves. To be careful to feed or clothe the bodies of the poor, and senseless of the nakedness and misery of your own souls, is an irrational, distracted course of mercy: as if a man should be diligent to cure another of a bile, while he minds not the plague or leprosy upon himself; or should be busy to pull a thorn out of another's finger, and senseless of a stab that is given himself in the bowels or at the heart. To love yourself, and not your neighbour, is selfish, unsociable, and uncharitable. To love neither your neighbour nor yourself, is inhuman. To love your neighbour, and not yourself, is preposterous, irrational, and scarcely possible. But to love first yourself, (next God,) and then to love your neighbour as yourself, is regular, orderly, christian charity.

10. Consider, also, that the ignorance of yourselves doth much unfit you to be useful unto others. If you are magistrates, you will never be soundly faithful against the sin of others, till you have felt how hurtful it is to yourselves. If you are ministers, you will scarce ever be good at heart-searching work, till you have searched your own: nor will you know the deceitfulness of sin, and the turnings and windings of the crooked serpent, till you have observed them in yourselves: nor will you have due compassion on the ignorant, impenitent, ungodly, unconverted, or on the tempted, weak, disconsolate souls, till you have learned rightly to be affected with sin and misery in yourselves. If men see a magistrate punish offenders, or hear a minister reprove them, that is as bad or worse himself, they will but deride the justice of the one, and reproofs of the other, as the acts or words of blind partiality or hypocrisy; and accost you with a *Medice cura teipsum*, Physician, heal thyself: with a *Loripidem rectus derideat*, *Æthiopem abbus*, &c.—And a *Primus jussa subi*, &c. And a *Qui alterum incausat probri, ipsum se intueri oportet*. First sweep before your own door. It is ridiculous for the blind to reproach the purblind. *Quæ in aliis reprehendis, in teipso maxime reprehende*. Reprehend that more in thyself, which thou reprehendest in another. The eye of the soul is not like the eye of the body, that can see other things, but not itself. There are two evils that Christ noth in the reproofs of such as are unacquainted with themselves, in Matt. vii. 3, 4; hypocrisy, and unfitness to reprove. "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Thy own vices do corrupt thy judgment, and cause thee to excuse the like in others, and to accuse the virtue that in others is the condemner of thy vice, and to represent all as odious that is done by those that by their piety and reproofs are become odious to thy guilty and malicious soul. Dost thou hate a holy, heavenly life, and art void of the love of God, and of his servants? Hast thou a carnal, dead, unconverted heart? Art thou a pre-

sumptuous, careless, worldly wretch? Hast thou these beams in thy own eye? And art thou fit to quarrel with others that are better than thyself, about a ceremony, or a holy day, or a circumstance of church government or worship, or a doubtful, controverted opinion? and to be pulling these motes out of thy brother's eye? (Yea, rather wouldest pull out his eyes, to get out the mote.) First get an illuminated mind, and a renewed, sanctified heart; be acquainted with the love of God, and of his image; and cast out the beam of infidelity, ungodliness, worldliness, sensuality, malice, and hypocrisy, from thine own eye; and then come and play the oculist with thy brother, and help to cure him of his lesser involuntary errors and infirmities. Till then the beam of thy sensuality and impiety will make thee a very incompetent judge of the mote of a different opinion in thy brother. Every word that thou speakest in condemnation of thy brother, for his opinion or infirmity, is a double condemnation of thyself for thy ungodly, fleshly life. And if thou wilt needs have "judgment to begin at the house of God," for the failings of his sincere and faithful servants, it may remember thee to thy terror, "what the end of them shall be that obey not the gospel of God." And if you will condemn the righteous for their lamented weaknesses, "where think you the ungodly and the sinner shall appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.

11. If you begin not at yourselves, you can make no progress to a just and edifying knowledge of extrinsic things. Man's self is the alphabet or primer of his learning. *Non pervenitur ad summa nisi per inferiora*. You cannot come to the top of the stairs, if you begin not at the bottom. *Frustra cordis oculum erigit ad videndum Deum, qui nondum idoneus est ad videndum seipsum; Prius enim est ut cognoscas invisibilia spiritus tui, quam possis esse idoneus ad cognoscendum invisibilia Dei: et si non potes te cognoscere, non præsumas apprehendere ea quæ sunt supra te* (inquit. Hug. de Anim.): i. e. In vain doth he lift up his heart to see God, that is yet unfit to see himself. For thou must first know the invisible things of thy own spirit, before thou canst be fit to know the invisible things of God. And if thou canst not know thyself, presume not to know the things that are above thyself. You cannot see the face which it representeth, if you will not look upon the glass which representeth it. God is not visible, but appeareth to us in his creatures; and especially in ourselves. And if we know not ourselves, we cannot know God in ourselves. *Præcipuum et principale est speculum ad videndum Deum animus rationalis intuens seipsum* (inquit. Hug.) The principal glass for the beholding of God, is the reasonable soul beholding itself.

And you will make but an unhappy progress in your study of the works of God, if you begin not with yourselves. You can know but little of the works of nature, till you know your own nature: and you can know as little of the works of grace, till self-acquaintance help you to know the nature and danger of those diseases that grace must cure. The unhappy error of presumptuous students, about their own hearts, misleadeth and perverteth them in the whole course of their studies; that by all, they do but profit in misapplied notions and self-deceit. It is a lamentable sight to see a man turning over fathers and councils, and diligently studying words and notions, that is himself in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and never knew it, nor studieth the cure. And it is a pitiful thing to see such in a pulpit, teaching the people to know the mysteries of salvation, that know not, nor ever laboured to know what sins are predominant in their own hearts and lives; or, whether they stand before God in a justi-

fied or a condemned state! To hear a poor, unsanctified man, as boldly treating of the mysteries of sanctification, as if he had felt them in himself: and a man that is condemned already, and stayeth but awhile till the stroke of death, for final execution, to treat as calmly of judgment and damnation, as if he were out of danger; and exhorting others to escape the misery which he is in himself, and never dreameth of it! This sheweth how sad a thing it is for men to be ignorant of themselves. To see men run out into damnable and dangerous errors on each hand, some into the proud self-conceitedness of the fanatics, enthusiasts, and libertines, and some into contempt and scorn of holiness, and every one confident even to rage in his own distractions; this doth but show us, whither men will go, that are unacquainted with themselves.

This also maketh us so troubled with our auditors, that when they would learn the truth that should convert and save them, are chafing and quarrelling with us, and hear us as the Pharisees and Herodians heard Christ, to catch him in his words, Mark xii. 13. As if a dying man in a consumption, imagining that he is well, should go to the physician to make a jest of him, or seek to ruin him for telling him that he is sick. And how forwardly do they reject the wisest counsel, and cast the medicine with unthankful indignation into the face of the physician! And they must tell us themselves what medicine must be given them, what doctrine, and what administrations they must have. But self-acquaintance would teach them to understand that of Augustine, *Novit medicus quid salutiferum, quidve contrarium petat ægrotus. Ægroti estis, nolite ergo dicere quæ vobis medicamina velit opponere.*

Yea, they that will not be directed or healed by us, will blame us if others be not healed, and hit the minister in the teeth with the errors and faults of his unteachable hearers. Though we do our best in season and out of season, and they cannot tell us what we have neglected on our part, that was like to do the cure (though I confess we are too often negligent); and though we succeed to the conversion of many others, yet must we be reproached with the disobedience of the impatient! As if it were not grief enough to us, to have our labours frustrated, and see them obstinate in their sin and misery, but we must also be blamed or derided for our calamity.

Pecceit et postquam quicquid jubet ipsa medendi

Norma, nisi valeat subitoque revixerit æger,

Murmurat insipiens vulgus, linguaque loquaci,

Et loquitur de te convitia, talia jactans,

Heu mihi, quam stultum est medicorum credere nugis!

As if they knew not the power of the disease; and what a wonder of mercy it is that any and so many are recovered.

Non est in medico semper relevetur ut æger;

Interdum docta plus valet arte malum.

None would die if physicians could cure all; and none would perish if ministers could save all. *Rhe-tor non semper persuadebit, nec medicus semper sanabat*, saith the philosopher. They cast away the medicine, and then blame the physician. *Crudelem vel infelicem medicum intemperans æger facit.* An intemperate, unruly patient maketh the physician seem cruel and unsuccessful.

12. Lastly, consider but how many great and necessary things concerning yourselves you have to know, and it will show you how needful it is to make this the first of your studies. To know what you are as men; with what faculties you are endowed, and to what use; for what end you live; in what relation you stand to God and to your fellow-creatures; what

duties you owe; what sin is in your hearts, and what hath been by commission and omission in your lives; what humiliation, contrition, and repentance you have for that sin: whether you have truly entertained an offered Christ; and are renewed and sanctified by his Spirit; and unreservedly devoted to God, and resolved to be entirely his: whether you love him above all, and your neighbours as yourselves: whether you are justified and have forgiveness of all your sins: whether you can bear afflictions from the hand or for the sake of Christ, even to the forsaking of all the world, for the hopes of the heavenly, everlasting treasure: how you perform the daily works of your relations and callings: whether you are ready to die, and are safe from the danger of damnation. Oh did you but know how it concerneth you to get all these questions well resolved, you would find more matter for your studies in yourselves, than in many volumes. You would then perceive that the matters of your own hearts and lives, are not so lightly and carelessly to be passed over, as they ordinarily be by drowsy sinners. To consider but *quid, quis, qualis sis; quid in natura, quis in persona, qualis in vita*, (ut Bern.) would find you no small labour. And it would redound (saith another) in *utilitatem sui, charitatem proximi, contemptum mundi, amorem Dei*: To our own profit, charity to our neighbour, the contempt of the world, and the love of God.

If you have but many and weighty businesses to think on in the world, you are so taken up with care, that you cannot turn away your thoughts. And yet do you find no work at home, where you have such a world of things to think on, and such as, of all the matters in the world, do nearest concern you?

Having showed you so much reason for this duty, let me now take leave to invite you all to the serious study of yourselves. It is a duty past all controversy, agreed on by heathens as well as christians, and urged by them in the general, though many of the particulars to be known are beyond their light. It brutifieth man to be ignorant of himself. "Man that is in honour and understandeth not, (himself especially,) is as the beasts that perish," Psal. xlix. 20. Saith Boetius, *Humana natura infra bestias redigitur, si se nosse desiderit: nam ceteris animantibus sese ignorare natura est; hominibus vitio venit.* It is worse than beastly to be ignorant of ourselves; it being a vice in us, which is nature in them.

Come home, you wandering, self-neglecting souls; lose not yourselves in a wilderness or tumult of impertinent, vain, distracting things; your work is nearer you: the country that you should first survey and travel, is within you; from which you must pass to that above you: when by losing yourselves in this without you, you will find yourselves, before you are aware, in that below you. And then (as Gregory speaks) he that was *stultus in culpa*, a fool in sinning, will be *sapiens in poena*, wise in suffering! You shall then have time enough to review your lives, and such constraining help to know yourselves, as you cannot resist. Oh that you would know but a little of that now, that then you must else know in that overwhelming evidence which will everlastingly confound you! And that you would now think of that for a timely cure, which else must be thought of endlessly in despair. Come home then, and see what work is there. Let the eyes of fools be in the corners of the earth! Leave it to men beside themselves, to live as without themselves, and to be still from home, and waste that time in other business, that was given them to prepare for life eternal. *Laudabilior est animus, cui nota*

est infirmitas propria, quam qui ea non perspecta, mœnia mundi, vias syderum, fundamenta terrarum, et fastigia cœlorum scrutatur, inquit August. The soul is more laudable that knows its own infirmity, than he that without discerning this doth search after the compass of the world, the courses of the stars, the foundations of the earth, and the heights of the heavens. Dost thou delight in the mysteries of nature? Consider well the mysteries of thy own. *Mirantur aliqui altitudines montium, ingentes fluctus maris, altissimos lapsus fluminum, et oceani ambitum, et gyros syderum, et relinquunt seipso, nec mirantur, saith Augustine.* Some men admire the heights of mountains, the huge waves of the sea, the great falls of the rivers, the compass of the ocean, and the circuit of the stars, and they pass by themselves without admiration. The compendium of all that thou studieth without thee, is near thee, even within thee, thyself being the epitome of the world. If either necessity or duty, nature or grace, reason or faith, internal inducements, external repulses, or eternal attractives and motives, might determine of the subject of your studies and contemplations, you would call home your lost, distracted thoughts, and employ them more on yourselves and God.

But before I urge this duty further, I must prevent the misapplication of some troubled souls. I must confess it is a grievous thing for a guilty soul to judge itself, and see its own deformity and danger: and I observe many troubled, humbled souls, especially where melancholy much prevails, are exceeding prone to abuse this duty, by excess and misdoing it. Though wandering minds must be called home, we must not run into the other extreme, and shut up ourselves, and wholly dwell on the motions of our own distempered hearts. Though straggling thoughts must be turned inward, and our hearts must be watched, and not neglected, yet must we not be always poring on ourselves, and neglect the rest of our intellectual converse. To look too long on the running of a stream, will make our eyes misjudge of what we after look on, as if all things had the same kind of motion. To look too long on the turning of a wheel, will make us vertiginous, as if all turned round. And to pore too long on the disordered motions, the confused thoughts, the wants, the passions of our diseased minds, will but molest us, and cast us into greater disquiet and confusion. The words of Anselme notably express the straits that christians are here put to, *O nimis gravis angustia, si me inspicio, non tolero meipsum: si non inspicio, nescio meipsum: si me considero, terret me facies mea: si me non considero, fallit me damnatio mea: si me video, horror est intolerabilis: si non video, mors est inevitabilis.* O grievous strait! If I look into myself, I cannot endure myself: if I look not into myself, I cannot know myself. If I consider myself, my own face affrighteth me: if I consider not myself, my damnation deceiveth me. If I see myself, the horror is intolerable: if I see not myself, death is unavoidable.

In this strait we must be careful to avoid both extremes; and neither neglect the study of ourselves, nor yet exceed in poring on ourselves. To be carelessly ignorant of ourselves, is to undo ourselves for ever: to be too much about ourselves, is to disquiet rather than to edify ourselves; and to turn a great and necessary duty into a great, unnecessary trouble.

Consider, I. That we have many other matters of great importance to study and know when we know ourselves. We must chiefly study God himself, and all the books of Scripture, nature, and governing providence, which make him known. What abundance of great and excellent truths have we in all

these to study! What time, what industry is necessary to understand them! And should we lay out all this time about our own hearts and actions, which is but one part of our study? What sinful omissions should we be guilty of in the neglecting of all these! It is indeed but the burying of our talent of understanding, to confine it to so narrow a compass as ourselves, and to omit the study of God, and his word and works, which are all with delight and diligence to be studied.

We have also Christ and his gospel mysteries and benefits to study. We have the church's case, its dangers, sufferings, and deliverances to study: we have the state of our neighbours and brethren to consider of; the mercies, and dangers, and sufferings both of their souls and bodies: we have our enemies to think of with due compassion: and our duty to all these.

2. And as it is negligence and omission to be all at home, and pass by so great a part of duty; so is it a double frustration of our labour, and will make even this study of ourselves to be in vain. (1.) We cannot come by all our study to the true knowledge of ourselves, unless we also study other things besides ourselves: for we are related to God, as his creatures, as his own, as his subjects, and as his dependent children, as his redeemed and his sanctified ones (or such as should be such). And if we know not God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; as our Owner, Ruler, and Benefactor; and know not what his creation, redemption, sanctification, his title, government, and benefits mean, it is not possible that we should know ourselves. Mutual relations must be known together, or neither can be known.

(2.) And if we could know ourselves, and know no more, it were but to know nothing, and lose that knowledge: for this is but the entrance into wisdom, and the means and way to higher knowledge. This learning of our alphabet or primer is lost, if we learn no farther. You are therefore to study and know yourselves, that you may advance to the knowledge of Christ and his grace, and be acquainted with the remedy of all that you find amiss at home; and that by Christ you may be brought unto the Father, and know God as your happiness and rest: you are not your own ultimate ends, and therefore must go farther in your studies than yourselves.

3. We shall never attain to rectitude or solid comfort and content, unless our studies go farther than ourselves: for we are not the rule to ourselves, but crooked lines; and cannot know what is right and wrong, if we study not the rule as well as ourselves. And alas, we are diseased, miserable sinners. And to be always looking on so sad a spectacle, can bring no peace or comfort to the mind. To be still looking on the sore, and hearing only the cry of conscience, will be but a foretaste of hell. When we would be humbled and have matter of lamentation, we must look homeward, where the troubling thorns and nettles of corruption grow. But if we would be comforted and lift up, we must look higher, to Christ and to his promises, and to everlasting life: our garden beareth no flowers or fruits that are so cordial.

This much I have spoken by way of caution. 1. That you may not think I am driving you into the extreme of solitude, and confining or imprisoning you at home. 2. Because some scarce know how to avoid a fault, without running into another on the other side the way; nor how to understand the right use of a doctrine, but are turning it into an abuse, and building sin upon the foundation of righteousness.

Two sorts of persons have great need of this

caution, that they dwell not too much on themselves. One is poor melancholy people, that can think of almost nothing else: their distemper disposeth them to be always poring on themselves, and fixing their thoughts on their sin and misery, and searching into all their own miscarriages, and making them worse than indeed they are: you cannot call off their thoughts from continual self-condemning, and musing on their own misdoings and unhappiness. They have a God, a Christ, a heaven, a treasure of precious promises to meditate on: and they cannot hold their thoughts to these, (unless as they aggravate their sin and sorrows,) but live as if they had nothing to think on but themselves, and were made to be their own tormentors: day and night, even when they should labour, and when they should sleep, they are busy in a fruitless vexation of themselves. These poor afflicted souls have need to be called from the excessive study of themselves.

Another sort is, those christians that are wholly taken up in inquiring, whether they have saving grace or not; while they neglect that exercise of their grace, in doing all the good they can to others, and following on the way of faithful duty, which might do more to their assurance than solitary trials.

The former sort, by overdoing in this one part of their work, disable themselves to all the rest: they tire and distract their minds, and raise such fears as hinder their understandings, and cast their thoughts into such confusion, that they quite lose the command of them, and cannot gather them up for any holy work: yea, while they study nothing but themselves, they lose even the knowledge of themselves: they gaze so long upon their faults and wants, till they can see nothing else, and know no apprehensions but dark and sad; and wilfully unlearn the language of thanksgiving and praise: and the burden of all their thoughts and speeches, is, Miserable and undone; as if there were for them no mercy, no help, no hope, but they were utterly forsaken and cast off by God.

The other sort do so exceed in the measure of that self-love which in itself is good, that they neglect the study of the love of God, and are still thinking what they are and have been, when they should consider what they must be. They spend so much time in trying their foundation, that they can make but little progress in the building: they are like musicians that will spend all the day in setting instruments in tune; or like a mower that spends most of his time in whetting. They are all day preparing their tools, while they should be working; and putting on their armour, and preparing their weapons, when they should be fighting; and inquiring which is the way, while they should be travelling. They leave undone too much of their work without doors, while they confine themselves to that within; and that within goes on the worse, because they neglect that without doors, which should further it. When they should instruct the ignorant, exhort the obstinate, confirm the weak, or comfort the afflicted, they are complaining of their own ignorance, obstinacy, weakness, or affliction; and help not others, because they feel such need of help themselves; as if they were like beggars, that had nothing to give, but must live by asking and receiving. They understand not that it is one of the mysteries of godliness, that teaching others doth inform themselves; and the light which they bring in for others will serve themselves to work by; and that reproving others doth correct themselves; and exhorting others doth prevail with themselves; and persuading the obstinate wills of others doth tend to bend and resolve their own; and that comforting

others doth tend to revive and raise themselves: their own spirits may be a little revived, by the very smell of the cordials they prepare for others. In this case, giving is both begging and receiving. Doing good is not the least effectual kind of prayer; and that we may be so employed, is not the smallest mercy. Many a one hath thus grown rich by giving: many a one hath convinced himself, by confuting his own objections from another: and many a one hath raised and comforted himself, by offering comfort to others that have the same infirmities; and have banished their own excessive doubts and fears, by frequent compassionate answering the same in others, whose sincerity they have less suspected than their own.

None thrive more than they that grow in the sunshine of God's blessing; and God blesteth those most that are most faithful in his work: and the work of love is the work of God. To do good, is to be most like him; and they that are most like him, do best please him. In subordination to Christ, in whom we are accepted, we must, by his Spirit, be made thus acceptable in ourselves: we must be amiable if we will be loved. And those that God loveth best, and is most pleased with, are like to receive most plenteously from his love. It is necessary therefore to our own safety, and holiness, and consolation, that we look much abroad at the necessities of others, and study our brethren and the church of God, as well as ourselves; that we "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," Phil. ii. 4.

There may be somewhat of inordinate selfishness even about our souls; and sinful selfishness is always a losing course. As he that will be a self-saver, in point of estate, or honour, or life, taketh the ready way to lose them, (Matt. xvi. 15,) so he that for the saving of his soul, will confine all his care and charity to his own soul, taketh not the way indeed to save it. We keep not ourselves; we quicken not, we comfort not, we save not ourselves; but only as agents under Christ, manuring the land, and sowing the seed, to which he alone can give the blessing: it is not therefore our inordinate self-studying that will do it. With all our care, without his blessing, we cannot add one cubit to the stature of our graces: therefore it must needs be our safest course, to be as careful and faithful as we can in duty, and lay out most of our study to please him; and then if we come not to assurance of his love, or discern not his image and grace upon us, yet we must trust him with our souls, and leave the rest to his care and goodness, that hath undertaken that none shall be losers by him, nor be ashamed or frustrate of their hopes, that wait upon him, and obey him: "Let us commit the keeping of our souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator," 1 Peter iv. 19. "As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters—so our eyes (in a way of duty) must wait upon the Lord our God, till he have mercy upon us," Psal. cxliii. 1, 2. And though we "grow weary of crying, and our throat be dried, and our eyes fail while we wait for God," (Psal. lxxix. 3,) yet "our hope is only in him, and therefore we must continue to wait upon him," Psal. xxxix. 7. "And they that wait for him shall not be ashamed," Isa. xlix. 23.

It is not the pretended necessity of one work, that will excuse him that hath many as necessary to do; especially when they are conjunct in nature and necessity, and must go together, to attain their end. Concerning God, as we may well say that we must love and serve him only, and none but him, because we must love nothing but for his sake, and as a means to him the end of all; and so while it is God in all

things that we love, we are more properly said to love God than the creature by that act, because he is the ultimate first intended end, and principal object of that love: and as the means, as a means, hath its essence in its relation to the end; so the love of the means, as such, is accordingly specified: and so we may say of our study and knowledge of God, that nothing but God is to be studied or known; because it is God in the creature that must be studied. It is a defective similitude (as all are) to say, As it is the face that we behold the glass for: for God is more in the creature than the face in the glass. But though all the means be united in the end, yet are they various among themselves. And therefore though we must study, know, and love nothing but God, yet must we study, know, and love many things besides ourselves: the means that are many, must all be thought on. More strings must be touched than one (how near soever) if we will have any music. More letters must be learned than *I*, or we shall never learn to read.

All men will confess, that to confine our charity to ourselves, and to do good to no others, is unlike a christian. To deny to feed and clothe our brother in his need, is to deny it unto Christ; and it will be no excuse, if we were able, to say, I laid it out upon myself. And the objects of our charity must be the objects of our thoughts and care: and it will not suffice for our excuse to say, I was taken up at home, I had a miserable soul of my own to think on.

And yet if these self-studying souls, that confine almost all their thoughts unto themselves, would but seek after God in themselves, and see his grace and benefits, it were the better: but, poor souls, in the darkness of temptation, they overlook their God; and most of their study of themselves, is to see Satan and his workings in themselves; to find as much of his image as they can, in the deformities or infirmities of their souls; but the image of God they overlook, and hardly will acknowledge. And so, as noble objects raise the soul, and amiable objects kindle love, and comfortable objects fill it with delight; and God, who is all in one perfection, doth elevate and perfect it, and make it happy; so inferior objects do depress it; and ugly, loathsome objects fill it with distaste and loathing; and sad and mournful objects turn it into grief: and therefore to be still looking on our miseries and deformities, must needs turn calamity and woe into the temperament and complexion of the soul.

This much I thought needful to be spoken here, to prevent misunderstanding and misapplication; that while I am pressing you to study and know yourselves, I may not encourage any in extremes, nor tempt them to make an ill use of so great and necessary a doctrine. And indeed the observation of the sad calamity of many poor, drooping, afflicted souls, that are still poring excessively on their own hearts, commanded me not to overpass this caution. And yet when I have done it, I am afraid lest those in the contrary extreme, will take encouragement to neglect themselves, by my reprehensions of those that are so unlike them.

And therefore I must add, to save them from deceit; 1. That it is but a very few that are faulty in over-studying themselves, in comparison of the many thousands that err on the other hand, in the careless neglecting of themselves. 2. And that it is symptomatically and effectively far more dangerous to study yourselves too little than too much. Though it be a fault here to exceed, yet it is for the most part a sign of an honest heart to be much at home, and a sign of a hypocrite to be little at home and much abroad. Sincerity maketh men censurers of them-

selves; for it maketh them more impartial, and willing to know the truth of their condition: it cureth them of that folly, that before made them think that presumption shall deliver them, and that they shall be justified by believing promises of their own, though contrary to the word of God; yea, by believing the promises of the devil, and calling this a faith in Christ. They are awakened from that sleep, in which they dreamed that winking would save them from the stroke of justice, and that a strong conceit that they shall not be damned, will deliver them from damnation; and that they are safe from hell if they can but believe that there is no hell, or can but forget it, or escape the fears of it. These are the pernicious conclusions of the ungodly; discernible in their lives, and intimated in their presumptuous reasonings, though too gross to be openly and expressly owned: and therefore they are undisposed to any impartial acquaintance with themselves.

But grace recovereth men from this distraction, and makes them know that the judgment of God will not follow the conceits of men; and that the knowledge of their disease is necessary to their cure, and the knowledge of their danger is necessary to the prevention; and that it is the greatest madness to go on to hell, for fear of knowing that we are in the way; and to refuse to know it, for fear of being troubled at the news.

And an upright soul is so far fallen out with sin, that he taketh it seriously for his enemy, and therefore is willing to discover it in order to its destruction, and willing to search after it in order to a discovery.

And he hath in him some measure of the heavenly illumination, which maketh him a child of light, and disposeth him to love the light, and therefore cometh to it, "that his deeds may be made manifest," John iii. 21. Hypocrites are quick-sighted in discovering infirmities of others; but at home they shut the windows, and draw the curtains, that they may not be disturbed or frightened in their sin. Thieves and sleepers choose not light: darkness suits the works of darkness. It is a good sign when a man dare see his own face in the glass of God's word; and when he dare hear his conscience speak. I have ever observed it in the most sincere-hearted christians, that their eye is more upon their own hearts and lives, than upon others: and I have still observed the most unsound professors to be least censorious and regardful of themselves, and hardly drawn to converse at home, and to pass an impartial judgment on themselves.

Hence therefore you may be informed of the reason of many other differences between sincere believers and the ungodly. As, 1. Why is it that the sincere are so ready to discourse about matters of the heart; and that they so much relish such discourse; and that they have so much to say when you come to such a subject. It is because they know themselves in some good measure. They have studied and are acquainted with the heart, and therefore can talk the more sensibly of what is contained in a book which they have so often read, and are so conversant in. Talk with them about the matters of the world, and perhaps you may find them more simple and ignorant than many of their neighbours: but when you talk about the corruptions of the heart, and the secret workings of them; the matter, and order, and government of the thoughts, and affections, and passions; the wants and weaknesses of believers; the nature and workings of inward temptations; the ways of grace, and of the exercise of each grace; the motions and operations of the Spirit upon the heart; the breathings of love and desire after God; the addresses of the soul to Christ by faith, and de-

pendence on him, and receivings from him; about these secret matters of the heart, he is usually more able in discourse than many learned men that are unsanctified.

And hence it is that upright, self-observing souls are so full in prayer, and able to pour out their hearts so enlargedly before the Lord, in confessing their sins, and petitioning for grace, and opening their necessities, and thanking God for spiritual mercies! Some that are themselves acquainted with themselves, and the workings of grace, despise all this, and say, It is but an ability to speak of the things which they are most used to. I doubt not but mere acquired abilities and custom may advance some hypocrites, to pray in the language of experienced christians. And I doubt not but natural impediments and want of use, and of right education, may cause many to want convenient expressions, that have true desires. But the question is, from whence it comes to pass, that so great a number of those that are most careful and diligent for their souls, are so full in holy conference and prayer, when very few others that excel them in learning and natural parts, have any such ability? And doubtless the chief reason is, that the care and study of these christians hath been most about their spiritual estate; and that which they set their hearts upon, they use their tongues upon: generally it cannot be imagined, why they should use themselves to those studies and exercises which procure those abilities, but that they highest esteem and most seriously regard the matters that concern their salvation, which are the subject. I doubt not but God bestoweth his gifts upon men in the use of means, and that it is partly use that maketh men able and ready in these services of God. But what reason can be given, why one part of men use themselves to such employments, and another part are unable through disuse, but that some do set their hearts upon it, and make it their business to know themselves, their sins, and wants, and seek relief, when by the others all this is neglected. Some hypocrites may be moved by lower ends, both in this and in other duties of religion; but that is no rule for our judging of the intentions of the generality, or of any that are sincere. As a man that hath lived in the East or West Indies, is able to discourse of the places and people which he hath seen; and perhaps another by a map or history may say somewhat of the same subject, though less distinctly and sensibly; but others can say nothing of it: so a man of holy experience in the mysteries of sanctification, that is much conversant at home, and acquainted with his own heart, is able (if other helps concur) to speak what he feels, to God and man, and from his particular observation and experience, to frame his prayers and spiritual conference; and a hypocrite, from reading and common observation, may do something affectedly that is like it; but careless, self-neglecting worldlings, are usually dumb about such matters, and hear you as they do men of another country, that talk in a language which they do not understand, or at least cannot make them any answer in.

But if any of you will needs think more basely and maliciously of the cause of holy prayer and conference in believers, let us leave them for the present (to the justification of him that gave them the spirit of supplication, which you reproach); and let us only inquire what is the reason that men that can discourse as handsomely as others, about worldly matters, have nothing to say (beyond a few cold, affected words, which they have learned by rote) either to God or man, about the matters of the soul, the methods of the Spirit, the workings of a truly peni-

tent heart, or the elevations of faith, and the pantings of desire after God. Why are you dumb when you should speak this language, and frequently and delightfully speak it? Is it because your reason is lower than those men's that do speak it, whom you despise? and that you are naturally near kin to idiots? No; you are wise enough to do evil; you can talk of your trades, your honours or employments, your acquaintance and correspondences, all the day long; you are more wordy about these little things, than the preachers themselves, that you count most tedious, are about the greatest. You are much longer in discoursing of your delusory toys, than the lovers of God, whose souls long after him, are in those prayers, which trouble you with their length. Many a time have I been forced to hear your dreaming, incoherent dotage; how copious you are in words that signify no greater matters than flesh-pleasing, or fanciful honours and accommodations; I had almost said, than chaff, or straw, or dirt. One may hear you from morning to night, from day to day, discoursing in variety of company, on various subjects, with freedom and plausible ingenuity; and when all is set together, it is but a hodgepodge of earth and flesh, and windy vanity, a frothy puddle. As the ridiculous orator, *Magno conatu et hialu nihil dictis*: You strain and gape an hour or a day together to say nothing. Set all the words of a day together, and peruse them at night, and see what they are worth: there is little higher than visible materials, (that I say not, than the dunghill or your shadows,) than meat and drink, and play and compliment, than houses, or lands, or domineering affections or actions, in many hours' or days' discourse. I think of you sometimes, when I see how ingeniously and busily children do make up their babies of clouts, and how seriously they talk about them, and how every pin and clout is matter of employment and discourse, and how highly they value them, and how many days they can unweariedly spend about them. Pardon my comparison: if you repent not of your discourses and employments more than they, and do not one day call yourselves far worse fools than them, then let me be stigmatized with the most contemptible brand of folly.

It is not then your want of natural faculties and parts that makes you mute in the matters of God and your salvation, when men of meaner naturals than you do speak of those things with the greatest freedom and delight.

And sure it is not want of an ingenuous education; as you would take it ill to be thought below them in natural endowments, so much more in those acquisitions and furniture of the mind, which comes by breeding and due culture of your naturals. You would disdain in these to be compared with many poor rustics and mechanics, that are almost as fluent in speaking of the great things of immortality, as you are in talking of your transient occurrences, your sublimary felicities, and the provisions of your appetites and your skins. What then can be the cause of this dumb disease, but that you are unacquainted with yourselves? And as you have not a new birth, and a divine nature, and the Spirit of Christ, to be either the spring and principle, or the matter of your discourse; so you have not the due knowledge of your sin and misery, which should teach you the language of serious penitents, before you have the language of justified believers.

If you say again, It is because we have not been used to this kind of speech. I answer, And whence is it that you have not been used to it? If you had known the greatness and goodness of the Lord, as sensibly as they, would not you have used to pray to

him and speak of him as well as they? If you had known and considered your sin, and wants, and miseries, or dangers, as well as they, would you not have been used to beg mercy, pardon, and relief, and to complain of your distress as much as they? If you did as highly value the matters of eternal consequence as they do, and laid them to heart as seriously as they, would not your minds and hearts have appeared in your speeches, and made you use yourselves to prayer and holy conference as well as others.

If you say, That many have that within them which they are not able to express, or which they think not meet to open unto others, I answer:

1. As to ability, it is true of those that have the impediments of some natural disability, or excessive bashfulness, melancholy, or the like disease; and of those that are so lately converted, that they have not had time to learn and use themselves to a holy language: but what is this to them that are of as good natural parts and free elocution as other men, and suppose themselves to have been true christians long?

2. And as to the point of prudence which is pleaded for this silence, it is so much against nature, and so much against the word of God, that there is no room at all for this pretence, unless it be for inferiors, or such as want an opportunity to speak to their superiors or to strangers; or unless it be only for some particular omissions when the thing would be unseasonable.

Nature hath made the tongue the index of the mind; especially to express the matters of most urgency and concernment. Do you keep silent ordinarily the matters which you highest esteem; which you oftenest think of; which you take your life and happiness to consist in; and which you are deepest affected with, and prefer before all other matters of the world? What a shameful pretence is it, for those that are dumb to prayer and holy conference, for want of any due sense of their condition, or love to God, which should open their lips to talk on them? Is it for want of tongues, or because their prudence directeth them to silence; when they hold not their tongues about those matters, which they must confess are ten thousandfold less regardable? They can discourse unweariedly about their wealth, their sport, their friend, their honour, because they love them: and if a man should here tell them, that the heart is not to be opened or exercised by the tongue, they would think he knew not the natural use of heart or tongue: and yet while they pretend to love God above all, they have neither skill nor will to make expression of it, you strike them dumb when you turn the stream of conference that way; and you may almost as well bid them speak in a strange language, as pray to God from the sense of their necessities, and yet they say their hearts are good.

Let the word of God be judge whether a holy, experienced heart should hide itself, and not appear in prayer and holy conference by the tongue. "Pray continually," 1 Thess. v. 17. "Christ spake a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray and not wax faint," Luke xviii. 1. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God," Phil. iv. 6.

And how they must pray, you may gather from 2 Chron. vi. 29. In case of dearth, pestilence, blasting, mildews, locusts, caterpillars, enemies, sicknesses, or sores, "Then what prayer or supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all the people, when every one shall know his own sore, and his

own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house, then hear thou from heaven," &c. I am not speaking of the prescribed prayers of the church, nor denying the lawfulness of such in private: but if you have no words but what you say by rote, and pray not from the knowledge of your own particular sore and grief, it is because you are too much unacquainted with yourselves, and strangers to those hearts where the greatest of your sores and griefs are lodged.

And whether good hearts should be opened in holy conference (as well as prayer) you may easily determine from the command of God, "As every man hath received the gift, so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God," 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers," Eph. iv. 29. "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," Heb. iii. 13. "The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment: the law of his God is in his heart," &c. Psal. xxxvii. 30, 31. "Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day," Psal. lxxi. 8. "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life. The lips of the righteous feed many," Prov. x. 11, 21. And Christ himself decideth it expressly; "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things," Matt. xii. 34, 35.

For a man that hath no heart to prayer or holy conference, but loathes them, and is weary of them, and had rather talk of fleshly pleasures, to pretend that yet his heart is good, and that God will excuse him for not expressing it; and that it is his prudence, and his freedom from hypocrisy, that maketh his tongue to be so much unacquainted with the goodness of his heart; this is but to play the hypocrite to prove that he is no hypocrite; and to cover his ignorance in the matters of his salvation, with the expression of his ignorance of the very nature and use of heart and tongue; and to cast by the laws of God, and his own duty, and cover this impiety with the name of *prudence*. If heart and tongue be not used for God, what do you either with a heart or tongue?

The case is plain, to men that can see that it is your strangeness to yourselves, that is the cause that you have little to say against yourselves, when you should confess your sins to God; and so little to say for yourselves, when you should beg his grace; and so little to say of yourselves, when you should open your hearts to those that can advise you: but that you see not that this is the cause of your dumbness, who see so little of your own corruptions, is no wonder, while you are so strange at home. Had you but so much knowledge of yourselves as to see that it is the strangeness to yourselves that maketh you so prayerless and mute; and so much sense as to complain of your darkness, and be willing to come into the light; it were a sign that light is coming in to you, and that you are in a hopeful way of cure. But when you neither know yourselves, nor know that you do not know yourselves, your ignorance and pride are like to cherish your presumption and impiety, till the light of grace, or the fire of hell, have taught you better to know yourselves.

2. And here you may understand the reason why people fearing God are so apt to accuse and condemn themselves, to be too much cast down; and why they that have cause of greatest joy, do sometimes walk more heavily than others. It is because

they know more of their sinfulness, and take more notice of their inward corruptions and outward failings, than presumptuous sinners do of theirs. Because they know their faults and wants, they are cast down; but when they come further to see their interest in Christ and grace, they will be raised up again. Before they are converted, they usually presume, as being ignorant of their sin and misery: in the infancy of grace they know these, but yet languish for want of more knowledge of Christ and mercy. But he that knoweth fully both himself and Christ, both misery and mercy, is humbled and comforted, cast down and exalted. As a man that never saw the sea, is not afraid of it; and he that seeth it but afar off, and thinks he shall never come near it, is not much afraid of it: he that is drowned in it, is worse than afraid; and he that is tossed by the waves, and doubteth of ever coming safe to harbour, is the fearful person: he that is tossed, but hath good hopes of a safe arrival, hath fears that are abated or overcome with hope; but he that is safe landed is past his fears. The first is like him that never saw the misery of the ungodly; the second is like him that seeth it in general, but thinks it doth not belong to him; the third is like the damned that are past remedy; the fourth is like the humbled, doubting christian, that seeth the danger, but doth too much question or forget the helps; the fifth is like the christian of a stronger faith, that sees the danger, but withal seeth his help and safety; the sixth is like the glorified saints, that are past the danger.

Though the doubting christian know not his sincerity, and therefore knoweth not himself so well as the strong believer doth, yet in that he knoweth his sinfulness and unworthiness, he knoweth himself better than the presumptuous world.

These two remarks, with the foregoing caution, having interposed, (somewhat out of place,) I now return to prosecute my exhortation, that no matters may seem so sweet, so honourable, so great, or necessary, as to pass with you for excuses for the neglecting of the most diligent and impartial study of yourselves.

All persons to whom I can address this exhortation, are either godly or ungodly; in the state of sin, or in the state of grace. And both of them have need to study themselves.

I. And to begin with the unrenewed, carnal sort, it is they that have the greatest need to be better acquainted with themselves. Oh that I knew how to make them sensible of it! If any thing will do it, methinks it should be done by acquainting them how much their endless state is concerned in it. In order hereunto, let me yet add, to all that is said already, these few considerations:

1. If you know not yourselves, you know not whether you are the children of God, or not; nor whether you must be for ever in heaven or hell; no, nor whether you may not within this hour behold the angry face of God, which will frown you into damnation. And is this a matter for a man of reason to be quietly and contentedly ignorant of? It is a business of such unspeakable concernment, to know whether you must be everlasting in heaven or hell, that no man can spare his cost or pains about it, without betraying and disgracing his understanding. You are sure you shall be here but a little while: those bodies, you all know, will hold your souls but a little longer: as you know that you that are now together here attending, must presently quit this room and be gone; so you know that when you have stayed a little longer, you must quit this world, and be gone into another. And I think there is not the proudest of you but would be taken down, nor

the most sluggish or dead-hearted but would be awakened, if you knew that you must go to endless misery, and that your dying hour would be your entrance into hell. And if you know not yourselves, you know not but it may be so. And to know nothing to the contrary, would be terrible to you if you well considered it, especially when you have so much cause to fear it. O sirs, for a man to sit here senselessly in these seats, that knows not but he may burn in hell for ever, and knows not because he is blind and careless; how unsuitable is it to the principle of self-love and self-preservation! And how much unbecoming the rational nature, to have no sense or care, when you look before you into the unquenchable fire, and the utter darkness, where, as the heathen poet speaks,

Nec mortis pœnas mors altera finiet hujus;
Horacæ erit tantis ultima nulla malis.

If any of you think that all these matters are to be put to the adventure, and cannot now be known, you are dangerously mistaken. As you may certainly know by Scripture and the light of nature, that there is a future life of joy to the godly, and of misery to the wicked, so may you know by a faithful trial of yourselves, to which of these at present you belong, and whether you are under the promise or the threatening: know yourselves, and you may know whether you are justified or condemned already, and whether you are the heirs of heaven or hell. Surely He that comforteth his servants with the promise of glory to all that believe and are new creatures, and sanctified by his Spirit, did suppose that we may know whether we believe, and are renewed and sanctified or not: or else, what comfort can it be to us? If blinded infidels have no means to quiet themselves but their unbelief, and a conceit that there is no such life of misery, they have the most pitiful opiate to ease them in the world; and may as well think to become immortal, by a confident conceit that they shall never die. If they be fool themselves with the ordinary questions, Where is hell, and what kind of fire is it? &c. I answer them with Augustine, *Melius est dubitare de occultis, quam litigare de incertis: Illum quippe divitem in ardore pœnarum, et illum pauperem in refrigerio gaudiorum esse intelligendos non dubito: sed quomodo intelligenda illa flamma in inferno, ille sinus Abrahe, illa divitis lingua, ille digitus pauperis, illa sitis tormenti, illa stilla refrigerii, vix fortasse a mansuete quærentibus, contentiose autem sectantibus nunquam invenitur*; that is, It is better to be in doubt about things that are hidden from us, than to quarrel about things that are uncertain to us. I am past doubt that we must understand that that rich man was in the heat of pain, and the poor man in a refreshing place of joys: but how to understand that flame in hell, that bosom of Abraham, that tongue of the rich man, that finger of the poor man, that thirst of torment, that drop for cooling or refreshment, perhaps will hardly be found by the most humble inquirers, but never by contentious strivers.

So that I may conclude, that the greatness and dreadfulness of the case, should make every person that hath an eye to see, an ear to hear, and a heart to understand, to read and inquire and consider, and never rest till they know themselves, and understand where it is that they are going to take up their abode to everlasting.

2. Consider, that all men must shortly know themselves. Presumption will be but of short continuance. Be never so confident of being saved without holiness, you will speedily be undeceived. If the Spirit's illumination do not convince and un-

deceive you, death will undoubtedly do it at the farthest. Thousands and millions know their sin and misery now when it is too late, that would not know it when the remedy was at hand. Sinners, your souls are now in darkness; your bodies are your dungeon; but when death brings you out into the open light, you will see what we could never make you see. Oh how glad would a faithful minister of Christ be, if by any information he could now give you half the light that you shall then have, and now make you know at the heart with the feeling of repentance, that which you must else quickly know, even at the heart with the feeling of despair. Sirs, I hope you think not that I speak mere fancies to you, or any thing that is questionable or uncertain: you cannot say so without denying yourselves to be christians; no, nor without contradicting the light of nature, and debasing your souls below the heathen, who believe an immortality of souls in a different state of joy or misery in the life to come: and if you are once below heathens, what are you better than brute beasts? Better in your natural faculties and powers, as not being made brutes by your Creator; but worse as to the use of them, and the consequents to yourselves, because you are voluntary, self-abusing brutes. But to live here as a brute, will not make you die and be hereafter as a brute: to believe you shall die as a beast will not prevent the miserable life of an impenitent sinner. It will not make your souls to be mortal, to believe they are mortal; no more than it will make a beast to be immortal, if he could but think so. The coffin-maker and the grave-maker, if they never read a book, can tell you that is no controversy whether you must go hence. And faith and reason can both assure you, that your souls lie not down with your bodies in the dust, nor are annihilated by the falling of your earthly tabernacle; no more than the spirits when the glass is broken that held them, or than your bodies are annihilated when you put off your clothes, or rise out of your beds: or than the bird is annihilated that is got out of the shell: or the infant that is by nature cast out of the womb: nor any more than the angels that appeared to the apostles or others, were annihilated when they disappeared: or, (if I must speak more suitably to the ungodly,) no more than the devil that sometimes appeareth in a bodily shape is annihilated when that appearance vanisheth. As I suppose there is never a person in all this populous city, that was here but seven score years ago, so I suppose there is none of you that are here to-day, that expect to be here so long a time: they are gone before you into a world where there is no presumption or security; and you are going after them, and are almost there. As easily as you sit here, I tell you all, you are going after them apace, and are almost there.

O sirs, that world is a world of light. To the damned souls it is called outer darkness, because they have none of the light of glory or of comfort; but they shall have the light of a self-accusing, self-tormenting conscience, that is gone out of the darkness of self-ignorance and self-deceit, and is fully cured of its slumber and insensibility.

Do you now take a civilized person for a saint? You will not do so long.

Doth the baptism of water only go with you now for the regeneration of the Spirit? It will not be so long: you will shortly be undeceived.

Doth a ceremonious Pharisee thank God for the sincerity and holiness which he never had? He will shortly be taught better to know the nature of holiness and sincerity, and that God justifieth not all that justify themselves.

Doth a little formal, heartless, hypocritical devotion, now cover a sensual, worldly mind? The cover will be shortly taken off, and the nakedness and deformity of the Pharisee will appear.

Doth the name of a christian, and the heartless use of outward ordinances, and that good esteem of others, now go for godliness and saving grace? The autumn is at hand, when these leaves will all lie in the dirt, and will go for fruit no longer.

Do you take it now for true religion to be hot for lust, and pride, and gain, and cold for God and your salvation? and to obey God so far as will stand with your outward prosperity, and as the flesh, or your other masters, will give leave? This is an opinion that never accompanied any man beyond the grave.

Do you think to be saved by all that devotion, which gives God but the leavings of the flesh and world, and by a religion that gives him but the outer rooms, (when pleasure and gain are next your hearts,) and that makes him but an underling to your covetousness and ambition? Think so if you can, when you are gone hence.

Cannot the preacher now make the ungodly to know that they are ungodly, the unsanctified to know they are but carnal, and the Pharisee to know that his religion is vain? Death can convince the awakened soul of all this in a moment.

You can choose whether you will believe us; but death will so speak as to be believed. You must be voluntary in knowing your misery now; but then you shall know it against your wills. You must open the windows, or must open your eyes, if you will see yourselves by the light which we bring to you; but death irresistibly throws open all. To say in pride and obstinacy, I will not believe it, will now serve turn to quiet your consciences, and make you seem as safe as any; but when God saith, You shall feel it, your unbelief is ineffectual: it can then torment you, but it can no longer ease you. There is then no room for I will not believe it. God can without a word persuade you of that which you were resolved you would never be persuaded of.

This day, while you all sit here in the body, you are every one affected according as you apprehend your state to be, whether it be indeed as you apprehend it or not; but when death hath opened you the door into eternity, you will be all affected with your conditions as they are indeed.

To-day you are here quiet, because you think your souls are safe: and some are troubled that think they are in a state of misery; and it is like that some on both sides are mistaken; and the quiet of one, and the disquiet of another, may arise for want of the knowledge of yourselves: but death will rectify both these errors; and then if you are unsanctified, no false opinions, no unbelief, no confident conceits of your integrity, will abate your desperation, or give any ease to your tormented minds; nor will there be any doubts, or fears, or despairing, self-afflicting thoughts, to disquiet those that Christ hath justified, or abate their joys.

Oh how many thousands will then think much otherwise of themselves than they now do! Death turns you out of the company of flatterers, and calls you out of the world of error, where men laugh and cry in their sleep; and bringeth you among awakened souls, where all things are called by their proper names; and all men are taken by themselves to be as they are indeed. Serious religion is not there a derision; nor loving, and seeking, and serving God with all the heart, and soul, and might, is not there taken for unnecessary preciseness. Holiness is not there called humour or hypocrisy; nor is the pharisaical, ceremonious hypocrite taken for a man of the

most prudent, safe, and moderate religion. God judgeth not as man, by outward appearances, but with righteous judgment: "That which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God," Luke xvi. 15. And he will make you then to judge of yourselves as he hath judged you. Though wisdom now be justified but of her children, it shall then be justified by all: not by a sanctifying, but a constrained, involuntary, tormenting light: and though now men can believe as well of themselves, as self-love and the quieting of their consciences doth require, yet then they will have lost this mastery over their own conceits.

O therefore, beloved hearers, seeing you are all going into an irresistibly convincing light, and are almost in that world where all must fully know themselves; seeing "nothing is covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be made known," (Matt. x. 26,) and so unsanctified hypocrite doth flatter himself into such high presumption, but a dying hour will take him down, and turn it all into endless desperation, if true conversion prevent it not; I beseech you, be more conversant with conscience than you have been: be ashamed that a wanton sot, that knoweth nothing better than flesh to adorn and to be careful of, should bestow more hours in looking into the glass, than you bestow to look into God's word and your own hearts; yea, more in a year, than you have thus bestowed in all your lives!

Oh that you knew what a profitable companion conscience is for you to converse with! You would not then think yourselves so solitary as to be destitute of company and employment, while you have so much to do at home, and one in your bosom that you have so much business with.

And it is a necessary and inseparable companion. If the wife of your bosom should be a shrew, you must not therefore be a stranger to her, because of nearness, necessity, and business. If conscience should give you some foul words, and chide you when you had rather be flattered; yet there is no running from it for more pleasant company. Home is homely: it is there that you must dwell. Conscience is married to you: please it on safe terms as well as you can; but do not think to overrun it: for it will follow you; or you must return to it home again, when you have gone your farthest, and done your worst. You have taken conscience for better and for worse. There is no expectation of a divorce: no, not by death: it will follow you to eternity. And therefore be not strange to conscience, that will be your comforter or tormenter at the hour of death; that can do so much to make sickness and all suffering light or grievous; and to make death welcome or terrible to you. Fly not from conscience that must dwell with you for ever.

O foolish sinners! do you want company and business to pass away your time? Are you fain to go to cards or dice to waste this treasure, which is more precious than your money? Do you go to an ale-house, a play-house, or other such pest-house, to seek for company and pastime? (I say not, to Bedlam; for that is as much more honourable than your sinful society, as the place that cureth or restraineth the mad, is better than that which makes them mad.) Do you forget what company and business you have at home? As you love your peace and happiness, instead of conversing with vain, lascivious, or ungodly persons, O spend that time in converse with your consciences! You may there have a thousand times more profitable discourse. Be not offended to give conscience a sober, faithful answer, if it ask you, What you have done with all your time? and

how you have lived in the world? and how you have obeyed the calls of grace? and how you have entertained Christ into your hearts? and whether you have obeyed him or his enemy? and whether you have been led by the Spirit or the flesh? and what forwardness the work of your salvation is in, for which you came into the world? and what assurance you have of your justification and salvation? and what readiness to die? Think it not presumption in conscience thus to examine you: though you have perhaps unthankfully disdained to be thus examined by your pastors, your external guides, whose office it is to help you, and watch for your souls; yet do not disdain to be accountable to yourselves. Accountable you must be ere long to God; and that friend that would help you to make ready such accounts, on which so great a weight dependeth, methinks should be welcomed with a thousand thanks. Ministers and conscience should be acceptable to you, that come on so necessary a work.

The chidings of conscience are more friendly language than the flattery of your ignorant or proud associates; and should be more grateful to you than "the laughter of fools, which is like the crackling of thorns in the fire," Eccles. vii. 6. Thy own home, though it be a house of mourning, is better for thee than such a sinful house of mirth. Hear but what conscience hath to say to you. No one will speak with you, that hath words to speak which nearer concern you. I beseech you, sirs, be more frequent and familiar with conscience than most men are. Think not the time lost, when you walk and talk with it alone. Confer with it about your endless state, and where you are like to be for ever; and what way you are in; and what thoughts you will have of your sins and duties, of the world and God, of yielding or overcoming at the last. Is there no sense in this discourse? Thou art dead and senseless if thou think so. Is idle talk and prating better? I hope you are not so distracted as to say so. If you have not blinded, deceived, or bribed it, I tell you, conscience hath other kind of discourse for you; more excellent and necessary things to talk of, than wantons, or worldlings, or pot-companions have. It is better to be giving conscience an account, what business thou hast had so often in such company; and how thou wouldst have looked, if death had found thee there, than without leave from God or conscience, to go thither again.

The thriving way is neither to be still at home, nor still abroad; but to be at home when home-work is to be done, and to be abroad only for doing and for getting good, in a way of diligent, christian trading; and to bring that home that is got abroad: but never to go abroad upon loitering, vain, expensive occasions. When you have done with conscience, converse with others that your business lieth with, and go abroad when it is for your Master's work; but go not upon idle errands: Converse not with prodigal wasters of your time, and enemies to your souls.

One time or other conscience will speak, and have a hearing: the sooner the better: put it not off to a time so unseasonable as death; I say not unseasonable for conscience to speak in; but unseasonable for it to begin to speak in; and unseasonable for those terrible words that need a calmer time, for answer; and unseasonable for so many things and so great, as self-betrayers use to put off until then, which need a longer time for due consideration and despatch.

3. And I beseech you consider, with what amazing horror it must needs surprise you, to find on a sudden and unexpectedly when you die, that all is worse with you than you imagined or would believe! After

a whole life of confident presumption, to be suddenly convinced by so dreadful an experience of your so long and wilful a mistake! to find in a moment, that you have flattered your souls into so desperate a state of woe! to see and feel all the selfish cavils and reasonings confuted, in one hour, which the wisest and holiest men on earth could never beat you from before! O sirs, you know not now what a day, what a conviction, that will be! You know not what it is for a guilty soul to pass out of the body, and find itself in the plague of an unsanctified state, and hated of the holy God, that never would know it till it was too late. You know not what it is to be turned, by death, into the world of spirits, where all self-deceit is detected by experience; and all must undergo a righteous judgment: where blindness and self-love can no more persuade the miserable that they are happy; the unholy, that they are sanctified; the fleshly-minded men, that they are spiritual; the lovers of the world, that they are the lovers of God. Men cannot there believe what they list; nor take that for a truth which makes for their security, be it never so false: men cannot there believe that they are accepted of God, while they are in the bonds of their iniquity; or that their hearts are as good as the best, while their tongues and lives are opposite to goodness; or that they shall be saved as soon as the godly, though they be ungodly.

It is easy for a man to hear of waves, and gulfs, and shipwreck, that never saw the sea; and without any fear to hear of battles, that never saw the face of an enemy; and without any trouble to hear of sickness, and tormenting pains, and burning, and cutting off limbs, that never felt or saw such things. It is easy for you here in these seats, in the midst of health, and peace, and quietness, to hear of a departing soul, and where it shall appear, and what it shall there see, and how great a discovery death will make. But, O sirs, when this must be your case, (as you know it must be, alas, how speedily!) these matters then will seem considerable: they will be new and strange to those that have heard of them a hundred times, because they never heard of them sensibly till now. One of those souls that have been here before you, and have passed that way into eternity, have other thoughts of these things than you have! O how do they think now, of the fearless slumber and stupidity of those that they have left behind! What think they now of those that wilfully fly the light, and flatter themselves in guilt and misery, and make light of all the joys and torments of the other world? Even as the damned rich man in Luke xvi. thought of his poor brethren, that remained in prosperity and presumption upon earth, and little thought what company he was in, what a sight he saw, and what he did endure!

Poor careless souls, you know not now what it is, for the ungodly to see that they are ungodly, by the irresistible light of another world; and for the unholy to feel in hell that they are unholy, and to be taught by flames and the wrath of the Almighty, what is the difference between the sanctified and the carnal, between an obedient and a rebellious life. While you sit here you little know these things. You see them not; you feel them not; and the Lord grant you may never so know them by woeful experience: that you may escape such a knowledge, is the end of all that I am saying to you: but that will not be, but by another kind of knowledge, even the knowledge of belief and serious consideration.

For your souls' sake therefore come into the light, and try yourselves, and huddle not over a work of such unspeakable consequence, as the searching of

your hearts and judging of your spiritual state! O be glad to know what you are indeed! Put home the question, Am I sanctified or not? Am I in the Spirit or in the flesh? Be glad of any help for the sure resolution of such doubts. Take not up with slight and venturous presumptions. It is your own case; your nearest and your greatest case; all lies upon it: who should be so willing of the plainest dealing, the speediest and the closest search, as you? O be not surprised by an unexpected sight of an un-renewed, miserable soul at death! If it be so, see it now, while seeing it may do good: if it be not so, a faithful search can do you no harm, but comfort you by the discovery of your sincerity. Say not too late, I thought I had been born again of the Spirit, and had been in a state of grace: I thought I had been a child of God, and reconciled to him, and justified by faith! Oh what a heart-tearing word would it be to you, when time is past, to say, I thought it had been better with me!

4. Consider, also, that it is one of Satan's principal designs of your damnation, to keep you ignorant of yourselves. He knows if he can but make you believe, that you are regenerate when you are not, you will never seek to be regenerate: and that if he can make you think that you are godly, when you are ungodly, and have the Spirit of Christ, while you are servants to the flesh, he may defeat all the labours of your teachers, and let them call on you to be converted till their hearts ache, to no purpose, but leave you as you are: he knows how light you will set by the physician, if he can but make you believe that you are well; and how little care you will take for a pardon, if you think that you need it not, or have one already. In vain we may call on you till we are hoarse, to turn and become new creatures, and give up yourselves to Christ, if you think that you are good christians, and are in the way to heaven already.

And when you know beforehand, that here lieth the principal game of the deceiver, and that it will be his chief contrivance, to keep you unacquainted with your sin and danger, till you are past recovery, one would think there should be no need to bid you be diligent to know yourselves.

5. And I beseech you consider also, that without this design there is no likelihood that Satan could undo you: if he keep you not ignorant of yourselves, he is never like to keep you in his power: you come out of his kingdom when you come out of darkness. He knoweth that if once you did but see how near you stand to the brink of hell, you would think it time to change your standing.

There is a double principle in nature, that would do something towards your repentance and recovery, if your eyes were opened to see where you are.

1. There is since the seduction and ruin of man, by Satan's temptations, an enmity put into the whole nature of man against the whole satanica, serpentine nature; so that this natural enmity would so much conduce to your deliverance, as that you would not be contented with your relation, if you knew that you are the drudges of the devil; nor would you be charmed into sin so easily, if you knew that it is he indeed that doth invite you; nor would you dance after his pipe, or take his bait, if you perceived indeed that it is his: no language would be so taking with you, which you knew was uttered by his voice. It would do much to affright you from his service, if you knew that it is he indeed that setteth you on work, and is gratified by it. He keepeth men in his bondage, by making them believe that they are free: he persuadeth men to obey him, by persuading them that it is God that they obey:

and he draweth them to hell by making them believe that they are following Christ to heaven; or at least, that they are following the inclination of their nature in a pardonable infirmity.

2. And the natural principle of self-love would, in order to self-preservation, do much to drive you from your sinful state, if you did but know what a state it is. There is no man so far hateth himself, as to be willing to be damned. You cannot choose a habitation in hell; such a place can never be desired. Sure he that cannot choose but to fly from an enemy or a bear that did pursue him, or fly from fire, or water, or pestilence, when he perceives his danger, would fly from hell if he perceived his danger.

I beseech you all, that are secure in an unsanctified state, do but look inwards, and help me in preaching this doctrine to your hearts, and tell yourselves, whether you do not think that your state is good, and that you are the children of God as well as others; and that though you are sinners, yet your sins are pardoned by the blood of Christ; and that you shall be saved if you die in the state that you are in? And are not these thoughts the reason why you venture to continue in your present state, and look not after so great a change as Scripture speaketh of as necessary?

And I pray you deal plainly with your hearts, and tell me, you careless sinners, young or old, that sit here as quietly as if all were well with you, if you did but know that you are at this hour unregenerate, and that without regeneration there is no salvation; if you did but know that you are yet carnal and unholy, and that "without holiness none shall see God;" if you did but know that you are yet in a state of enmity to God while you call him Father, and of enmity to Christ while you call him your Saviour, and of enmity to the Holy Spirit, while you call him your Sanctifier; if you did but know that your sins are unpardoned, and your souls unjustified, and that you are condemned already, and shall certainly be damned if you die as you are, could you live quietly in such a state? Could you sleep, and eat, and drink quietly, and follow your trades, and let time run on without repenting and returning unto God, if you knew that you are past hope, if death surprise you in this condition? For the Lord's sake, sirs, rouse up yourselves a little, and be serious in a business that concerneth you more than ten thousand natural lives; and tell me, or rather tell yourselves, if you did but know that while you sit here, you are unrenewed, and therefore under the curse of God, and in the bondage of the devil, and are hastening towards perdition, and are gone for ever, if you be not sanctified and made new creatures before you die; could you then put off this sermon with a sleepy, careless hearing, and go home and talk of common matters, and no more mind it, as you have done by sermons until now? Could you forbear going alone, and there be-think yourselves, Oh what a sinful, dreadful condition are we in? What will become of us, if we be not regenerate before we die? Had we no understandings, no hearts, no life or sense, that we have lingered so long, and lived so carelessly in such a state! Oh where had we been now, if we had died unregenerate! How near have we been oft to death! How many sicknesses might have put an end to life and hope! Had any of them cut off the slender thread that our lives have hanged on so long, and had we died before this day, we had been now in hell without remedy. Could any of you that knew this to be your case, forbear to betake yourselves to God, and cry to him in the bitterness of your souls, O Lord, what rebels, what wretches have we been! We have sinned against heaven and before thee, and are no

more worthy to be called thy children! Oh how sin hath captivated our understandings, and conquered our very sense, and made us live like men that were dead, as to the love and service of God, and the work of our salvation, which we were created and redeemed for! O Lord, have mercy upon these blind and senseless, miserable souls! Have mercy upon these despisers and abusers of thy mercy! O save us, or we perish! Save us from our sins, from Satan, from thy curse and wrath! Save us, or we are undone and lost for ever! Save us from the unquenchable fire, from the worm that never dieth! from the bottomless pit, the outer darkness, the horrid gulf of endless misery! O let the bowels of thy compassion yearn over us! O save us for thy mercy sake; shut not out the cries of miserable sinners. Regenerate, renew, and sanctify our hearts: O make us new creatures! O plant thine image on our souls, and incline them towards thee, that they may be wholly thine! O make us such as thou commandest us to be! Away with our sins, and sinful pleasures, and sinful company! We have had too much, too much of them already! Let us now be thine, associated with them that love and fear thee; employed in the works of holiness and obedience all our days! Lord, we are willing to let go our sins, and to be thy servants: or if we be not, make us willing.

What say you, sirs, if you knew that you were this hour in a state of condemnation, could you forbear making haste with such confessions, complaints, and earnest supplications to God?

And could you forbear going presently to some faithful minister, or godly friend, and telling him your case and danger, and begging his advice, and prayers, and asking him what a poor sinner must do to be recovered, pardoned, and saved, that is so deep in sin and misery, and hath despised Christ and grace so long? Could you tell how to sleep quietly many nights more, before you had earnestly sought out for help, and made this change? How could you choose but presently betake yourselves to the company, and converse, and examples of the godly that are within your reach? (For whenever a man is truly changed, his friendship and company is changed, if he have opportunity.) And how could you choose but go and take your leave of your old companions, and with tears and sorrow tell them, how foolishly and sinfully you have done, and what wrong you have done each other's souls, and entreat them to repent and do so no more, or else you will renounce them, and fly from their company as from a pest-house?

Can a man forbear thus to fly from hell, if he saw that he is as near it as a condemned traitor to the gallows? He that will beg for bread if he be hungry, and rather lay by shame than famish, would beg for grace, if he saw and felt how much he needeth it: and seeing it, is the way to feel it. He that will seek for medicines when he is sick, and would do almost any thing to escape a temporal death, would he not seek out to Christ, the remedy of his soul, if he knew and felt that otherwise there is no recovery? and would he not do much against eternal death? "Skin for skin, and all that a man hath, he will give for his life," was a truth that the devil knew and maketh use of in his temptations. And will a man then be regardless of his soul, that knows he hath an immortal soul? and of life eternal, that knows his danger of eternal death?

O sirs, it is not possible, but the true knowledge of your state of sin and danger, would do very much to save you from it. For it is a willful, chosen state. All the devils in hell cannot bring you to it, and continue you in it, against your will. You are will-

ing of the sin, though unwilling of the punishment. And if you truly knew the punishment, and your danger of it, you would be the more unwilling of the sin; for God hath affixed punishment to sin for this end, that they that else would love the serpent, may hate it for the sting. Will you not say, he is a beast and not a man, that will avoid no danger but what he seeth? Foreseeing is to a man, what seeing is to a beast: if he see it before his eyes, a beast will not easily be driven into a coal-pit or a gulf; he will draw back and strive, if you go about to kill him. And is he a man, or some monster that wants a name, that will go on to hell, when he seeth it as it were before him? and that will continue in a state of sin, when he knows he must be damned in hell for ever, if he so continue to the end? Indeed sin is the deformity and monstrosity of the soul. He is a monster of blindness that seeth not the folly and peril of such a state, and that a state of holiness is better. He is a monster of stupidity that finds himself in such a state, and doth not feel it, but maketh light of it. And he is a monster of slothfulness, that will not stir when he finds himself in such a case, and seek for mercy, and value the remedy, and use the means, and forsake his sinful course and company, till further mercy take him up and bring him home, and make him welcome, as "one that was lost but now is found, was dead but is alive."

I do not doubt, for all these expostulations, but some men may be such monsters, as thus to see that they are in a state of wrath and misery, and yet continue in it.

As, 1. Such as have but a glimmering, insufficient sight of it, and a half belief, while a greater belief and hope of the contrary (that is, presumption) is predominant at the heart: but these are rather to be called men ignorant of their misery, than men that know it; and men that believe it not, than men that do believe it, as long as the ignorance and presumption is the prevailing part.

2. Such as by the rage of appetite and passion are hurried into deadly sin, and so continue, whenever the tempter offereth them the bait against their conscience, and some apprehension of their misery. But these have commonly a prevalent self-flattery secretly within, encouraging and upholding them in their sin, and telling them, that the reluctances of their consciences are the Spirit's strivings against the flesh, and their fits of remorse are true repentance: and though they are sinners, they hope they are pardoned, and shall be saved, so that these do not know themselves indeed.

3. Such as by their deep engagements to the world, and love of its prosperity, and a custom in sinning, are so hardened, and cast into a slumber, that though they have a secret knowledge or suspicion that their case is miserable, yet they are not awakened to the due consideration and feeling of it; and therefore they go on as if they knew it not: but these have not their knowledge in exercise. It is but a candle in a dark lantern, that now and then gives them a convincing flash, when the right side happens to be towards them; or like lightning, that rather frightens and amazeth them, than directeth them. And (as I said of the former) as to the act, their self-ignorance is the predominant part, and therefore they cannot be said indeed to know themselves. Now and then a convinced apprehension, or a fear, is not the tenor of their minds.

4. Such as being in youth or health, do promise themselves long life, or any others that foolishly put away the day of death, and think they have yet time enough before them; and therefore though they are convinced of their misery, and know they

must be converted or condemned, do yet delay, and quiet themselves with purposes to repent hereafter, when death draws near, and there is no other remedy but they must leave their sins, or give up all their hopes of heaven. Though these know somewhat of their present misery, it is but by such a flashy, uneffectual knowledge as is afore described; and they know little of the wickedness of their hearts, while they confess them wicked. Otherwise they could not imagine that repentance is so easy a work to such as they, as that they can perform it when their hearts are further hardened, and that so easily and certainly, as that their salvation may be ventured on it by delays. Did they know themselves, they would know the backwardness of their hearts; and manifold difficulties should make them see the madness of delays, and of longer resisting and abusing the grace of the Spirit that must convert them, if ever they be saved.

5. Such as have light to show them their misery, but live where they hear not the discovery of the remedy, and are left without any knowledge of a Saviour: I deny not but such may go on in a state of misery, though they know it, when they know no way out of it.

6. Such as believe not the remedy, though they hear of it, but think that Christ is not to be believed in, as the Saviour of the world.

7. Such as believe that Christ is the Redeemer, but believe not that he will have mercy upon them, as supposing their hearts are not qualified for his salvation, nor ever will be, because the day of grace is past, and he hath concluded them under a sentence of reprobation; and therefore thinking that there is no hope, and that their endeavours would be all in vain, they cast off all endeavours, and give up themselves to the pleasures of the flesh, and say, It is as good be damned for something, or for a greater matter, as for a less.

So that there are three sorts of despair, that are not equally dangerous. 1. A despair of pardon and salvation, arising from infidelity, as if the gospel were not true, nor Christ a Saviour to be trusted with our souls, if predominant, is damnable. 2. A despair of pardon and salvation, arising from a misunderstanding of the promise, as if it pardoned not such sins as ours, and denied mercy to those that have sinned so long as we; this is not damnable necessarily of itself, because it implieth faith in Christ; and not infidelity, but misunderstanding hindereth the applying, comforting act: and therefore this actual personal despair, is accompanied with a general actual hope, and with a particular personal, virtual hope. 3. A despair of pardon and salvation, upon the misunderstanding of ourselves, as thinking both that we are graceless, and always shall be so, because of the blindness and hardness of our hearts. Of this despair, I say as of the former, it is joined with faith, and with general and virtual hope; and therefore is not the despair that of itself condemneth. Many may be saved that are too much guilty of it.

But if either of these two latter sorts shall so far prevail, as to turn men off from a holy to a fleshly, worldly interest and life, and make them say, We will take our pleasure while we may, and will have something for our souls before we lose them, and do accordingly; this kind of desperation is damnable by the effects, because it takes men off the means of life, and giveth them up to damning sins.

Thus I have showed you of seven sorts of persons that may know themselves, their sin and danger, with such an uneffectual, partial knowledge as I have described, and yet continue in that sin and misery.

And in two cases, even sound believers may pos-

sibly go on to sin, when they see the sin; and not only see the danger of it, but despairingly think it greater than it is. As, I. In case of common, unavoidable failings, infirmities, and low degrees of grace: we are all imperfect, and yet we all know that it is our duty to be perfect, (as perfection is opposed to sinful, and not to innocent imperfection,) and yet this knowledge maketh us not perfect. We know we should be more humbled, and more believing, and more watchful, and love God more, and fear and trust him more, and be more fruitful and diligent, and obedient and zealous; and yet we are not what we know we should be in any of these. In these we all live in sin against knowledge; else we should be all as good as we know we ought to be, which no man is. And if through temptation any of us should be ready to despair, because of any of these infirmities, because we cannot repent, or love God, watch, or pray, or obey more perfectly, or as we should, yet grace ceaseth not to be grace, though in the least degree, because we are ready to despair for want of more. Nor will the sincerity of this spark, or grain of mustard seed, be unsuccessful, as to our salvation, because we think so, and take ourselves to be unsincere, and our sanctification to be none; nor yet because we cannot be as obedient and good as we know we should be. For the gospel saith not, He that knoweth he hath faith or sincerity shall be saved; and he that knoweth it not, shall be damned; or, he that is less holy or obedient than his conscience tells him he should be, shall be damned. But "He that believeth and repenteth, shall be saved," whether he know it to be done in sincerity or no; and "he that doth not, shall be damned," though he never so confidently think he doth. So that in the degrees of holiness and obedience, all Christians ordinarily sin against knowledge.

2. And besides what is ordinary, some extraordinarily in the time of a powerful temptation go further than ordinarily they do. And some under dull, phlegmatic melancholy, or choleric diseases or distempers of body, or under a diseased, violent appetite, may transgress more against their knowledge, than otherwise they would do. When the spirits are flatted, the thoughts confused, the reason weakened, the passion strengthened, and the executive faculties undisposed, so that their actions are but imperfectly human or moral; (imperfectly capable of virtue or vice, good or evil;) it is no wonder here, if poor souls not only perceive their sin, but think it and the danger to be tenfold greater than they are, and yet go on against their knowledge, and yet have true grace.

This much I have said, both to stay you from misunderstanding what I said before, concerning the power of conviction to conversion, (for few auditories want hearers that will be still excepting, if caution stop not every hole,) and also to help you to the fuller understanding of the matter itself, of which I treat. But *exceptio firmat regulam in non exceptis*, exceptions strengthen and not weaken any rule or proposition in the points not excepted. Still I say, that out of these cases, the true knowledge of a sinful, miserable state, is so great a help to bring us out of it, that it is hardly imaginable, how rational men can wilfully continue in a state of such exceeding danger, if they be but well acquainted that they are in it. I know a hardened heart hath an unreasonable, obstinate opposition against the means of its own recovery; but yet men have some use of reason and self-preserving love and care, or they are not men (and if they be not men, they cannot be sinful men). And though little transient lightnings oft come to nothing, but leave some men in greater darkness;

yet could we but set up a standing light in all your consciences, could we fully convince and resolve the unregenerate, that they cannot be saved in the carnal state and way that they are in, but must be sanctified or never saved; what hopes should we have, that all the subtleties and snares of Satan, and all the pleasures and gain of sin, and all the allurements of ungodly company, could no longer hinder you from falling down at the feet of mercy, and begging forgiveness through the blood of Christ, and giving up yourselves in covenant to the Lord, and speedily and resolutely betaking yourselves to a holy life? Could I but make you thoroughly known unto yourselves, I should hope that all the unsanctified that hear me, would date their conversion from this very day; and that you would not delay till the next morning, to bewail your sin and misery, and fly to Christ, lest you should die and be past hope this night.

And doth so much of our work, and of your recovery, lie upon this point, and yet shall we not be able to accomplish it? Might you be brought into the way to heaven, if we could but persuade you that you are yet out of the way; and will you be undone, because you will not suffer so small and reasonable a part of the cure as this is? O God forbid! Oh that we knew how to illuminate your minds so far, as to make you find that you are lost! how ready would Christ be then to find you, and to receive and welcome you, upon your return! Here is the first difficulty, which if we could but overcome, we should hope to conquer all the rest. Had we but a wedge to cleave this knot, the rest would the more easily be done. Could we draw but this one pin of self-deceit, the frame of Satan's building were like to tumble down. Oh that any of you that know the nature of self-deceit, and know the accesses to the inwards of a sinner, and know the fallacious reasonings of the heart, could tell us but how we might undeceive them! O that any of you that know the nature of human understanding, with its several maladies, and their cure, and know the power of saving truth, could tell us what key would undo this lock! what medicine will cure this disease, of wilful, obstinate, self-deceiving! Think but on the case of our poor people, and of ours, and sure you cannot choose but pity both them and us. We are all professors of the Christian faith, and all say, we believe the word of God. This word assureth us, that all men are fallen in Adam, and are by "nature children of wrath," and increase in sin and misery, till supernatural grace recover them. It tells us, that the Redeemer is become by office the Physician or Saviour of souls, washing away their guilt by his blood, and renewing and cleansing their corrupted natures by his Spirit. It tells us, that he will freely work the cure, for all that will take him for their Physician, and will forgive and save them that penitently fly to him, and value, and accept, and trust upon his grace: and that except they be thus made new creatures, all the world cannot save them from everlasting wrath. This is the doctrine that we all believe, or say we do believe. Thus doth it open the case of sinners. We come now, according to our office, and the trust reposed in us, and we tell our hearers what the Scripture saith of man, and what it commandeth us to tell them. We tell them of their fall, their sin, and misery; of the Redeemer, and the sure and free salvation, which they may have if they will but come to him. But, alas, we cannot make them believe that they are so sick, as to have so much need of the Physician; and that they are dead, and have need of a new creation, as to the inclinations of their hearts, and the end, and bent, and business of their lives.

We are sent to tender them the mercy of Christ, but we cannot make them believe that they are miserable. We are sent to offer them the riches, and eye-salve, and white raiment of the gospel; but we cannot make them know that they are poor, and blind, and naked. We are sent to call them to repent and turn, that they may be saved; and we cannot make them know that they are so far out of the way, as to need a change of heart and life. Here they sit before us, and we look on them with pity, and know not how to help them. We look on them, and think, Alas, poor souls, you little see what death will quickly make you see! You will then see that there is no salvation, by all the blood and merits of Christ, for any but the sanctified: but oh that we could now but make you understand it! We look on them with compassion; and think, Alas, poor souls, as easily and quietly as you sit here, a change is near! It will be thus with you but a little while, and where will you be next? We know, as sure as the word of God is true, that they must be converted and sanctified, or be lost for ever: and we cannot make them believe, but that the work is done already. The Lord knoweth, and our consciences witness to our shame, that we be not half so sensible of their misery, nor so compassionate towards them, as we ought to be. But yet sometimes our hearts melt over them, and fain we would save them from the "wrath to come;" and we should have great hopes of the success, if we could but make them know their danger. It melts our hearts to look on them, and think that they are so near damnation, and never like to escape it, till they know it; till they know that their corruption is so great, that nothing but the quickening Spirit can recover them, and nothing less than to become new creatures will serve the turn. But if we would never so fain we cannot make them know it. Oh that we knew how to acquaint them with their case! Oh that we knew how to get within them, and to open the windows, that the light of Christ might show them their condition! But when we have done all, we find it past our power. We know they will be past help in hell, if they die before they are regenerate. And could we but get themselves to know it, we could not but hope that they would better look about them and be saved. But we are not able. It is more than we can do. We cannot get the grossest worldling, the basest sensualist, the filthiest lecher, the proudest child of the spirit of pride, to know that he is in a state of condemnation, and must be sanctified or be damned. Much less can we procure the formal Pharisee thus to know himself. We can easily get them to confess that they are sinners, and deserve damnation, and cannot be saved without Christ: but this will not serve: the best saint on earth must say as much as this comes to. There are converted and unconverted sinners, sanctified and unsanctified sinners, pardoned and unpardoned sinners; sinners that are members of Christ, and the children of God, and heirs of heaven; and sinners that are not so, but contrary. They must know not only that they are sinners, but that they are yet unconverted, unsanctified, unpardoned sinners; not only that they cannot be saved without Christ, but that yet they have no special interest in Christ: they will not turn, while they think they are turned already: they will not so value and seek for conversion, and remission, and adoption, as to obtain them, while they think they have them already. They will not come to Christ that they may have life, while they think they have part in Christ already. Paul after his conversion was a sinner, and had need of Christ; but Paul, before his conversion, was an unsanctified, unjustified sinner, and had no part in Christ. This is the state of sin and misery

that you must come out of, or you are lost: and how can you be brought out of it, till you know that you are in it?

Oh therefore that we knew how to make you know it! How should we make poor sinners see that they are within a few steps of everlasting fire, that we might procure them to run away from it, and be saved? We cry so oft, and lose our labour, and leave so many in their security and self-deceits, that we are too discouraged, and remit our desires, and lose our compassion; and ourselves, alas, grow dull, and too insensible of their case, and preach too oft as coldly as if we could be content to let them perish. We are too apt to grow weary of holding the light to men asleep, or that shut their eyes and will not see by it. When all that we have said is not regarded, and we know not what more to say than hath been said so long in vain, this flats our spirits; this makes so many of us preach almost as carelessly as we are heard. Regardless, sleepy hearers, make regardless, sleepy preachers. Frequent frustration abateth hope; and the fervour and diligence of prosecution ceaseth, as hope abateth. This is our fault; your insensibility is no good excuse for ours; but it is a fault not easily avoided.

And when we are stopped at the first door, and cannot conquer Satan's out-works, what hope have we of going further? If all that we can say, will not convince you that you are yet unsanctified and unjustified, how shall we get you to the duties that belong to such, in order to the attainment of this desirable state?

And here I think it not unseasonable to inform you of the reason why the most able, faithful ministers of Christ do search so deep, and speak so hardly of the case of unrenewed souls, as much displeaseth many of their hearers, and makes them say, they are too severe and terrible preachers. The zealous antinomian saith, they are legalists; and the profane antinomian saith, they rail and preach not mercy, but judgment only, and would drive men to despair and make them mad. But will they tell God he is a legalist for making the law, even the gospel law as well as the law of nature, and commanding us to preach it to the world? Shall they escape the sentence by reproaching the law-maker? Will not God judge the world; and judge them by a law; and will he not be just and beyond the reach of their reproach? O sinner, this is not the smallest part of thy terror, that it is the gospel that speaks this terror to thee, and excludes thee from salvation, unless thou be made new: it is mercy itself that thus condemneth thee, and judgeth thee to endless misery. You are mistaken, sirs, when you say we preach not mercy, and say we preach not the gospel, but the law. It is the gospel that saith, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven!" and that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his," John iii. 3, 5; Rom. viii. 9. The same gospel that saith, "He that believeth shall be saved," saith also, that "He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16. Will you tell Christ, the Saviour of the world, that he is not merciful, because he talks to you of damnation? Mercy itself, when it tells you that "there is no condemnation," doth limit this pardon to them "that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1. It is sanctifying mercy that must save you, if ever you be saved, as well as justifying mercy. And will you refuse this mercy, and by no entreaty yield to have it, and yet think to be saved by it? What! saved by that mercy which you will not have? And will you say, we preach not mercy, because we tell you, that mercy

will not save you, if you continue to reject it? To be saved by mercy without sanctification, is to be saved and not saved; to be saved by mercy without mercy: your words have no better sense than this. And are those afraid, lest preachers should make them mad by showing them their need of mercy, that are no wiser than to cast away their souls upon such senseless, self-contradicting conceits as these?

I beseech you, tell us whose words are they, think you, that say, "Without holiness none shall see God?" Heb. xii. 14, and that "He that is in Christ, is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17, and such like passages which offend you; are they ours, or are they God's? Did we indite the holy Scriptures, or did the Holy Ghost? Is it long of us, if there be any words there that cross your flesh, and that you call bitter? Can we help it, if God will save none but sanctified believers? If you have any thing to say against it, you must say it to him: we are sure that this is in his word; and we are sure he cannot lie; and therefore we are sure it is true. We are sure that he may do with his own as he list, and that he oweth you nothing, and that he may give his pardon and salvation to whom and upon what terms he please; and therefore we are sure he doth you no wrong. But if you think otherwise, reproach not us that are but messengers; but prepare your charge, and make it good against your Maker, if you dare and can. You shall shortly come before him, and be put to it to justify yourselves: if you can do it by recrimination, and can prevent your condemnation by condemning the law and the Judge, try your strength and do your worst.

Ah, poor worms! dare you lift up the head, and move a tongue against the Lord? Did Infinite Wisdom itself want wisdom, to make a law to rule the world? And did Infinite Goodness want goodness to deal mercifully, and as was best with man? And shall Justice itself be judged to be unjust? and that by you! by such silly, ignorant, naughty, and unrighteous ones as you! as if you had the wisdom and goodness, which you think God wanted when he made his laws!

And whereas you tell us of preaching terribly to you, we cannot help it if the true and righteous threatenings of God be terrible to the guilty. It is because we know the terrors of the Lord, that we preach them, to warn you to prevent them. And so did the apostles before us, 2 Cor. v. 11. Either it is true that the unquenchable fire will be the portion of impenitent, unbelieving, fleshly, worldly, unsanctified men, or it is not true. If it were not true, the word of God were not true: and then what should you do with any preaching at all, or any religion? But if you confess it to be true, do you think in reason it should be silenced? Or can we tell men of so terrible a thing as hell, and tell them that it will certainly be their lot, unless they be new creatures, and not speak terribly to them? O sirs, it is the wonder of my soul that it seemeth no more terrible, to all the ungodly that think they do believe it. Yea, and I would it did seem more terrible to the most, that it might affright you from your sin to God, and you might be saved. If you were running ignorantly into a coal-pit, would you revile him that told you of it, and bid you stop if you love your life? you tell him that he speaks bitterly or terribly to you? It is not the preacher that is the cause of your danger: he doth but tell you of it, that you may escape. If you are saved, you may thank him; but if you are lost, you may thank yourselves. It is you that deal bitterly and terribly with yourselves. Telling you of hell doth not make hell: warning you of it, is not causing it: nor is it God

that is unmerciful, but you are foolishly cruel and unmerciful to yourselves. Do not think to despise the patience and mercy of the Lord, and then think to escape by accusing him of being unmerciful, and by saying, it is terrible doctrine that we preach to you impenitent sinners? I confess to thee it is terrible, and more terrible than thy senseless heart imagineth, or yet is aware of: one day, if grace prevent it not, thou shalt find it ten thousand times more terrible than thou canst apprehend it now. When thou seest thy Judge with millions of his angels coming to condemn thee, thou wilt then say his laws are terrible indeed. Thou hast to do with a holy, jealous God, who is a "consuming fire," Heb. xii. 29; and can such a God be despised, and not be terrible to thee? He is called, "The great, the mighty, and the terrible God," Neh. ix. 32; Deut. vii. 21. "With God is terrible majesty," Job xxxvii. 22. "He is terrible out of his holy place," Psal. lxxviii. 35. "He is terrible to the greatest, even to the kings of the earth," Psal. lxxvi. 12. It is time for you therefore to tremble and submit, and think how unable you are to contend with him; and not revile his word or works, because they are terrible; but fear him for them, and study them on purpose that you may fear and glorify him. And as David, "Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! Through the greatness of thy power shall thy enemies submit themselves unto thee—Come and see the works of the Lord! He is terrible in his doings towards the children of men," Psal. lxxvi. 3, 5. "Let them praise thy great and terrible name, for it is holy," Psal. xcix. 3. And will you reproach God, or his word, or works, or ministers, with that which is the matter of his praise? If it be terrible to hear of the wrath of God, how terrible will it be to feel it! Choose not a state of terror to yourselves, and preaching will be less terrible to you. Yield to the sanctifying work of Christ, and receive his Spirit; and then that which is terrible to others will be comfortable to you. What terror is it to the regenerate, (that knoweth himself to be such,) to hear that none but the regenerate shall be saved? What terror is it to them that mind the things of the Spirit, to hear of the misery of a fleshly mind, and that they that live after the flesh shall die? Rom. viii. 8, 13. The word of God is full of terror to the ungodly: but return with all your hearts to God, and then what word of God speaks terror to you? Truly, sirs, it is more in your power than ours, to make our preaching easy and less terrible to you. We cannot change our doctrine, but you may change your state and lives: we cannot preach another gospel, but you may obey the gospel which we preach. Obey it, and it will be the most comfortable word to you in the world. We cannot make void the word of God; but you may avoid the stroke by penitent submission. Do you think it is fitter for us to change our Master's word, and falsify the laws of God Almighty; or for you to change your crooked courses, which are condemned by this word, and to let go the sin which the law forbiddeth? It is you that must change, and not the law. It is you that must be conformed to it, and not the rule that must be made crooked to conform to you.

Say not, as Ahab of Micaiah, of the minister: "I hate him, for he prophesieth not good of me, but evil," 1 Kings xxii. 8; for a Balaam could profess that if the king "would give him his house full of silver and gold, he could not go beyond the word of the Lord his God, to do less or more," Numb. xxii. 19, or "to do either good or bad of his own mind," as he after speaks, chap. xxiv. 13. What good would it do you for a preacher to tell you a lie, and say that

you may be pardoned and saved in an impenitent, unsanctified state? Do you think our saying so would make it so? Will God falsify his word to make good ours? Or would he not deal with us as perfidious messengers that had betrayed our trust, and belied him, and deceived your souls? And would it save or ease an unregenerate man to have Christ condemn the minister for deceiving him, and telling him that he may be saved in such a state?

Do but let go the odious sin that the word of God doth speak so ill of, and then it will speak no ill of you.

Alas, sirs, what would you have a poor minister do, when God's command doth cross your pleasure, and when he is sure to offend either God or you? Which should he venture to offend? If he help not the ungodly to know their misery, he offendeth God: if he do it, he offendeth them. If he tell you, that "All they shall be damned that believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness," your hearts rise against him for talking of damnation to you; and yet it is but the words of the Holy Ghost, (2 Thess. ii. 12,) which we are bound to preach! If he tell you that "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," you will be angry (especially if he closely apply it to yourselves): and if he do not tell you so, God will be angry; for it is his express determination, Rom. viii. 13. And whose anger think you should a wise man choose; or whose should he most resolutely avoid; the anger of the dreadful God of heaven, or yours? Your anger we can bear, if there be no remedy; but his anger is intolerable. When you have fretted, and fumed, and railed, and slandered us and our doctrine, we can live yet; or if you kill the body, you can do no more: you do but send us before, to be witnesses against you, when you come to judgment. But who can live, when God will pour out wrath upon him? Numb. xxiv. 23. We may keep your slanders and indignation from our hearts; but it is the heart that the heart-searching God contendeth with: and who can heal the heart which he will break? You may reach the flesh; but he that is a Spirit can afflict and wound the spirit: "And a wounded spirit (and wounded by him) who can bear?" Prov. xviii. 14. Would you not yourselves say he were worse than mad, that would rather abuse the eternal God, than cross the misguided desires of such worms as you; that would displease God to please you, and sell his love to purchase yours? Will you be instead of God to us when we have lost his favour? Will you save us from him, when he sendeth for our souls by death, or sentenceth us to hell by judgment? Silly souls! how happy were you, could you save yourselves! Will you be our gods if we forsake our God? What! you that are but skinfuls of corruption! that will shortly be choked with your own filth and phlegm, and by your friends be laid to rot in silent, undiscerned darkness, lest the loathsome sight or smell of you should annoy them! Blame not God to use them as enemies and rebels, that will change him for such earthen gods as you. We have one God, and but one, and he must be obeyed, whether you like or dislike it: "There is one Lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy," Jam. iv. 12, and he must be pleased, whether it please your carnal minds or not. If your wisdom now will take the chair, and judge the preaching of the gospel to be foolishness, or the searching application of it to be too much harshness and severity, I am sure you shall come down ere long, and hear his sentence that will convince you, that the "wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, and the foolishness of God (as blasphemy dare call it) is wiser than men," 1 Cor. iii.

19; i. 25. And God will be the final Judge, and his word shall stand when you have done your worst. The worst that the serpent can do, is but to hiss awhile and put forth the sting, and bruise our heel: but God's day will be the bruising of his head, and "Satan shall be bruised under feet," Rom. xvi. 20.

The sun will shine, and the light thereof discover your deformities, whether you will or not. And if adulterers or thieves, that love the works of darkness, will do their worst by force or flattery, they cannot make it cease its shining, though they may shut their eyes, or hide themselves in darkness from its light. Faithful teachers are the "lights of the world," Matt. v. 14. They are not lighted by the Holy Ghost, to be "put under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they may give light to all that are in the house," ver. 15. What would you do with teachers but to teach you? and what should they make known to you, if not yourselves? Shall not the physician have leave to tell you of your diseases?

Verily, sirs, a sinner under the curse of the law, unsanctified and unpardoned, is not in a state to be jested and dallied with, unless you can play in the flames of hell: it is plain dealing that he needs. A quibbling, toyish, flashy sermon, is not the proper medicine for a lethargic, miserable soul, nor fit to break a stony heart, nor to bind up a heart that is kindly broken. Heaven and hell should not be talked of in a canting, jingling, or pedantic strain. A Seneca can tell you that it is a physician that is skilful, and not one that is eloquent, that we need. If he have also fine and neat expressions, we will not despise them; not overmuch value them: *utendum, secundum*: It is a cure that we need; and the means are best, be they never so sharp, that will accomplish it. Serious, reverent gravity best suiteth with matters of such incomprehensible concernment. You set not a schoolboy to make an oration, to give an assaulted city an alarm, or to call men out to quench a common fire. You may play with words when the case will bear it: but as dropping of beads is too ludicrous for one that is praying to be saved from the flames of hell; so a sleepy, or a histrionical, starched speech, is too light and unlikely a means to call back a sinner that is posting to perdition, and must be humbled and renewed by the Spirit, or be for ever damned. This is your case, sirs: and do you think the playing of a part upon a stage doth fit your case? O, no! So great a business requireth all the serious earnestness in the speaker that he can use. I am sure you will think so ere long yourselves; and you will then think well of the preachers that faithfully acquainted you with your case: and (if they succeed to your perdition) you will curse those that smoothed you up in your presumption, and hid your danger, by false doctrine, or misapplication, or seeming to discover it, indeed did hide it, by an hypocritical light, not serious mention of it. God can make use of clay and spittle to open the eyes of men born blind; and of rams' horns to bring down the walls of Jericho; but usually he fitteth the means unto the end, and works on man agreeably to his nature: and therefore if a blind understanding must be enlightened, you cannot expect that it should be done by squibs and glowworms, but by bringing into your souls the powerful celestial truth, which shall show you the hidden corners of your hearts, and the hidden mysteries of the gospel, and the unseen things of the other world. If a hardened heart be to be broken, it is not stroking, but striking that must do it. It is not the sounding brass, the tinkling cymbal, the carnal mind puffed up with superficial knowledge,

that is the instrument fitted to the renewing of men's souls; but it is he that can acquaint you with what he himself hath been savingly acquainted. The heart is not melted into godly sorrow, nor raised to the life of faith and love, by the bubbles of a frothy wit, or by a game at words, or useless notions; but by the illuminating beams of sacred truth, and the attraction of divine displayed goodness, communicated from a mind that by faith hath seen the glory of God, and by experience found that he is good, and that liveth in the love of God: such a one is fitted to assist you first in the knowledge of yourselves, and then in the knowledge of God in Christ.

Did you consider what is the office of the ministry, you would soon know what ministers do most faithfully perform their office, and what kind of teaching and oversight you should desire: and then you would be reconciled to the light; and would choose the teacher (could you have your choice) that would do most to help you to know yourselves, and know the Lord.

I beseech you, judge of our work by our commission, and judge of it by your own necessities. Have you more need to be acquainted with your sin and danger? or to be pleased with a set of handsome words, which when they are said, do leave you as they found you; and leave no light, and life, and heavenly love upon your hearts; that have no substance that you can feed upon in the review?

And what our commission is you may find in many places of the Scripture. Ezek. iii. 18—21, "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul:—" And, "If thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul."

And what if they distaste our doctrine, must we forbear? Ezek. iii. 11, "Tell them, Thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." So Ezek. xxxiii. 1—10.

You know what became of Jonah for refusing to deliver God's threatenings against Nineveh.

Christ's stewards must give to each his portion. He himself threateneth damnation to the impenitent, the hypocrites, and unbelievers, Luke xiii. 3, 5; Matt. xvi. 16; Matt. xxiv. 51. Paul saith of himself, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ," Gal. i. 10. Patience and meekness is commanded to the ministers of Christ, even in the instructing of opposers; but to what end, but "that they may escape out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will?" So that with all our meekness we must be so plain with you, as to make you know that you are Satan's captives, taken alive by him in his snares, till God by giving you repentance shall recover you, 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

The very office of the preachers sent by Christ was "to open men's eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and inheritance with the sanctified by faith in Christ," (Acts xxvi. 10,) which telleth you, that we must let men understand, that till they are converted and sanctified, they are blind, and in the dark, and in the power of Satan, far from God; unpardoned, and having no part in the inheritance of saints.

Christ tells the Pharisees, that they were of their father the devil, when they boasted that God was their Father, John viii. 44. And how plainly he tells them of their hypocrisy, and asketh them how they can escape the damnation of hell, you may see in Matt. xxiii.

Paul thought it his duty to tell Elymas, (Acts xiii. 10,) that he "was full of all subtlety and mischief, the child of the devil, and the enemy of all righteousness, a perverter of the right ways of the Lord." And Peter thought meet to tell Simon Magus, that he had "neither part nor lot in that matter; that his heart was not right in the sight of God;" that he was in "the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity," Acts viii. 21—23.

The charge of Paul to Timothy is plain and urgent, (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2,) "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, Preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort." And to Titus, (chap. i. 13,) "Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith."

Judge now, whether ministers must deal plainly or deceitfully with you, and whether it be the searching, healing truth that they must bring you, or a smooth tale that hath no salt or savour in it. And would you have us break these laws of God, for nothing but to deceive you and tell you a lie, and make the ungodly believe that he is godly, or to hide the truth that is necessary to your salvation? Is the knowledge of yourselves so intolerable a thing to you?

Beloved hearers, either it is true that you are yet unsanctified, or it is not. If it be not, it is none of our desire you should think so: we do all that we can to cure the mistakes of troubled christians, that think themselves worse than indeed they are. But if it be true, tell me, why would you not know it? I hope it is not because you would not be remembered of your woe, and so tormented before the time. I hope you think not that we delight to vex men's consciences with fear, or to see men live in grief and trouble, rather than in well-grounded peace and joy. And if indeed you are unregenerate, that is not long of us that tell you of it, but of yourselves that wilfully continue it. Do we make you ungodly, by telling you of your ungodliness? Is it we that hinder the forgiveness of your sins, by letting you know that they are not forgiven? O no! we strive for your conversion to this end, that your sins may be forgiven you; and you hinder the forgiveness of them, by refusing to be converted. When God forsaketh stubborn souls for resisting his grace, note how he expresseth his severity against them: "That seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them, Mark iv. 12. You see here, that till they are converted, men's sins are not forgiven them. And that whoever procureth the forgiveness of their sins, must do it by procuring their conversion; and that the hindering of their conversion is the hindering of their forgiveness. And that blindness of mind is the great hinderance of conversion; when men do not perceive the very things which they see, (not knowing the reason, and the sense, and the end of them, but the outside only,) nor understand the things which they hear. And therefore undoubtedly the teacher that brings you a light into your minds, and first sheweth you yourselves, and your unconverted and your unpardoned state, is he that takes the way to your conversion and forgiveness: as the forecited text sheweth you, "I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn

them from darkness to light," (Acts xviii. 26,) (that they may first know themselves, and then know God in Jesus Christ,) "and from the power of Satan" (who ruled them as their prince, and captivated them as their gaoler) "unto God" (whom they had forsaken as a guide and governor, and were deprived of as their protector, portion, and felicity); "that they may receive forgiveness of sins," (which none receive but the converted,) "and an inheritance among them that are sanctified;" (for glory is the inheritance of the saints alone, Col. i. 12;) and all this "through faith that is in me" (by believing in me, and giving up themselves unto me, that by my satisfaction, merits, teaching, Spirit, intercession, and judgment, it may be accomplished).

Truly sirs, if we knew how to procure your conversion and forgiveness, without making you know that you are unconverted and unpardoned, we would do it, and not trouble you needlessly with so sad a discovery. Let that man be accounted a butcher of souls, and not a physician for them, that delighteth to torment them. Let him be accounted unworthy to be a preacher of the gospel, that envieth you your peace and comfort. We would not have you think one jot worse of your condition than it is. Know but the very truth, what case you are in, and we desire no more.

And so far are we by this from driving you to desperation, that it is your desperation that we would prevent by it; which can no other way be prevented. When you are past remedy, desperation cannot be avoided: and this is necessary to your remedy. There is a *conditional* despair, and an *absolute* despair. The former is necessary to prevent the latter, and to bring you to a state of hope. A man that hath the tooth-ache, may perhaps despair of being eased without drawing the tooth; or a man that hath a gangrened foot may despair of life, unless it be cut off; that so by the cure he may not be left to an absolute despair of life. So you must despair of being pardoned or saved without conversion, that you may be converted, and so have hope of your salvation, and be saved from final, absolute despair. I hope you will not be offended with him, that would persuade you to despair of living, unless you will eat and drink. You have no more reason to be offended with him that would have you despair of being pardoned or saved without Christ, or without his sanctifying Spirit.

Having said so much of the necessity of ministers endeavouring to make unregenerate sinners know themselves, I shall next try what I can do towards it, with those that hear me, by proposing these few questions to your consideration.

Quest. 1. Do you think that you were ever sanctified, and in a state of wrath and condemnation, or not? If not, then you are not the offspring of Adam; you are not then of human race; for the Scripture telleth you that "We are conceived in sin," Psal. li. 5. And "that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. And that by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation," Rom. v. 12, 18. And that "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Rom. iii. 23. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 John i. 8, 10. And "the wages of sin is death," Rom. vi. 23.

And I hope you will confess that you cannot be pardoned and saved without a Saviour; and therefore that as you need a Saviour, so you must have a special interest in him. It is as certain that Christ

saveth not all, as that he saveth any; for the same word assureth us of the one and of the other.

Quest. 2. But if you confess that once you were children of wrath, my next question is, Whether you know how and when you were delivered from so sad a state? or at least, whether it be done, or not? Perhaps you will say, it was done in your baptism, which washeth away original sin. But granting you, that all that have a promise of pardon before, have that promise sealed and that pardon delivered them by baptism, I ask you,

Quest. 3. Do you think that baptism by water only will save, unless you be also baptized by the Spirit? Christ telleth you the contrary, with a vehement asseveration, John iii. 5, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And Peter tells you that it is "not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God," 1 Pet. ii. 21. "If therefore you have not the Spirit of Christ," for all your baptism, "you are none of his," Rom. viii. 9. For "that which is born of the flesh is (but) flesh," and you must be born of the Spirit if you will be spiritual, John iii. 6.

I shall further grant you, that many receive the Spirit of Christ even in their infancy, and may be savingly as well as sacramentally then regenerate. And if this be your case, you have a very great cause to be thankful for it. But I next inquire of you,

Quest. 4. Have you not lived an unholy, carnal life, since you came to the use of reason? Have you not since then declared, that you did not live the life of faith, nor walk after the Spirit but after the flesh? If so, then it is certain that you have need of a conversion from that ungodly state, whatever baptism did for you; and therefore you are still to inquire, whether you have been converted since you came to age.

And I must needs remember you, that your infant covenant made in baptism, being upon your parents' faith and consent, and not your own, will serve you turn no longer than your infancy, unless when you come to the use of reason, you renew and own that covenant yourselves, and have a personal faith and repentance of your own. And whatever you received in baptism, this must be our next inquiry.

Quest. 5. Did you ever since you came to age, upon sound repentance, and renunciation of the flesh, the world, and the devil, give up yourselves unfeignedly by faith, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and show by the performance of this holy covenant, that you were sincere in the making of it?

I confess it is a matter so hard to most, to assign the time and manner of their conversion, that I think it no safe way of trial. And therefore I will issue all in this one question.

Quest. 6. Have you the necessary parts of the new creature now? though perhaps you know not just when or how it was formed in you? The question is, whether you are now in a state of sanctification? and not, whether you can tell just when you did receive it? He that would know, whether he be a man, must not do it by remembering when he was born, or how he was formed; but by discerning the rational nature in himself at present. And though grace be more observable to us in its entrance, than nature (as finding, and entering into a discerning subject, which nature doth not); yet it beginneth so early with some, and so obscurely with others, and in others the preparations are so long or notable, that it is hard to say when special grace came in. But you may well discern, whether it be there or

not. And that is the question that must be resolved, if you would know yourselves.

And, though I have been long in these exhortations, to incline your wills, I shall be short in giving you those evidences of the holy life, which must be before your eyes while you are upon the trial.

In sum, if your very hearts do now unfeignedly consent to the covenant which you made in baptism, and your lives express it to be a true consent, I dare say you are regenerate, though you know not just when you first consented.

Come on then, and let us inquire what you say to the several parts of your baptismal covenant.

1. If you are sincere in the covenant you have made with Christ, you do resolutely consent, that God shall be your only God, as reconciled to you by Jesus Christ. Which is, 1. That you will take him for your Owner or your absolute Lord, and give up yourselves to him as his own.

2. That you will take him for your supreme Governor, and consent to be subject to his government and laws, taking his wisdom for your guide, and his will for the rule of your wills and lives.

3. That you will take him for your chiefest Benefactor, from whom you receive and expect all your happiness, and to whom you owe yourselves and all, by way of thankfulness. And that you take his love and favour for your happiness itself, and prefer the everlasting enjoyment of his glorious sight and love in heaven, before all the sensual pleasures of the world.

I would prove the necessity of all these by Scripture as we go, but that it is evident in itself; these three relations being essential to God, as our God in covenant. He is not our God, if not our Owner, Ruler, and Benefactor. You profess all this, when you profess but to love God, or to take him for your God.

2. In the covenant of baptism you do profess to believe in Christ, and take him for your only Saviour. If you do this in sincerity, 1. You do unfeignedly believe the doctrine of his gospel, and the articles of the christian faith, concerning his person, his offices, and his sufferings and works. 2. You do take him unfeignedly for the only Redeemer and Saviour of mankind, and give up yourselves to be saved by his merits, righteousness, intercession, &c. as he hath promised in his word. 3. You trust upon him and his promises, for the attainment of your reconciliation and peace with God, your justification, adoption, sanctification, and the glory of the life to come. 4. You take him for your Lord and King, your Owner and Ruler, by the right of redemption; and your grand Benefactor, that hath obliged you to love and gratitude, by saving you from the wrath to come, and purchasing eternal glory for you by his most wonderful condescension, life, and sufferings.

3. In the baptismal covenant, you are engaged to the Holy Ghost. If you are sincere in this branch of your covenant, 1. You discern your sins as odious and dangerous, as the corruption of your souls, and that which displeaseth the most holy God. 2. You see an excellency in holiness of heart and life, as the image of God, the rectitude of man, and that which fits him for eternal blessedness, and maketh him amiable in the eyes of God. 3. You unfeignedly desire to be rid of your sin, how dear soever it hath been to you; and to be perfectly sanctified by the Holy Spirit, by his degrees, in the use of the means which he hath appointed; and you consent that the Holy Ghost, as your Sanctifier, do purify you and kindle the love of God in you, and bring it to perfection.

4. In baptism, you profess to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; that is, as they stand for

your hearts against the will and love of God, and against the happiness of the unseen world; and against your faith in Christ your Saviour; and against the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost. If therefore you are sincere in this part of your covenant, you do upon deliberation perceive all the pleasures, profits, and honours of this world, to be so vain and worthless, that you are habitually resolved to prefer the love and favour of God, and your salvation, before them; and to be ruled by Jesus Christ, and his Spirit and word, rather than by the desires of the flesh, or the world's allurements, or the will of man, or the suggestions of the devil; and to forsake all rather than forsake the Father, the Saviour, the Sanctifier, to whom you are devoted, and the everlasting life, which upon his promise you have taken for your hope and portion. This is the sense of baptism; and all this in profession being essential to your baptism, must be essential to your christianity. Your parents' profession of it was necessary to your infant title to the outward privileges of the church. Your own personal profession is necessary to your continuance of those privileges, and your visible christianity and communion with the adult. And the truth of what you profess, is necessary to your real christianity before God, and to your title to salvation; and this is it that is to be now inquired after. You cannot hope to be admitted into heaven, upon lower terms than the sincerity of that profession which entereth you into the church; while we tell you of no higher matters necessary to your salvation, than the sincerity of that which is necessary to baptism and christianity, I hope you will not say we deal too strictly with you. Inquire now by a diligent trial of your hearts, whether you truly consent to all these articles of your baptismal vow or covenant. If you do, you are regenerate by the Spirit; if you do not, you have but the sacrament of regeneration; which aggravateth your guilt, as a violated profession and covenant must needs do. And I do not think, that any man worthy to be discouraged with, will have the face to tell you, that any man, at the use of reason, is by his baptism (or any thing else) in a state of justification and salvation, whose heart doth not sincerely consent to the covenant of baptism, and whose life expreseth not that consent.

Hence therefore you may perceive that it is a thing unquestionable, that all these persons are yet unregenerate, and in the bond of their iniquity.

1. All those that have not unfeignedly devoted themselves to God, as being not their own, but his. His by the title of creation; Psal. c. 3, "Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." And his by the title of redemption; for "we are bought with a price," 1 Cor. vii. 23. And he that unfeignedly taketh God for his Owner, and absolute Lord, will heartily give up himself unto him; as Paul saith of the Corinthians, 2 Cor. viii. 5, "They first gave up their own selves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God."

And he that entirely giveth up himself to God, doth with himself surrender all that he hath in desire and resolution. As Christ with himself doth give us all things, Rom. viii. 32, and addeth other things to them that seek first his kingdom and its righteousness, Matt. vi. 33; so christians with themselves do give up all they have to Christ.

And he that giveth up himself to God, will live to God: and he that taketh not himself to be his own, will take nothing for his own; but will study the interest of his Lord, and think he is best disposed of, when he honoureth him most, and serveth

him best. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

If any of you devote not yourselves unfeignedly to God, and make it not your first inquiry, what God would have you be and do, but live to yourselves, and yet think yourselves in a state of life, you are mistaken, and do not know yourselves. What abundance might easily see their miserable condition in this discovery, who say in effect, "Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" Psal. xii. 4; and rather hate and oppose the interest of God and holiness in the world, than devote themselves to the promoting of it! Deut. xxxii. 6, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, ye foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?"

2. All those are unregenerate and in a state of death, that are not sincerely subjected to the governing will of God, but are ruled by their carnal interest and desires; and the word of a man that can gratify or hurt them, can do more with them than the word of God. To show them the command of a man that they think can undo them if they disobey, doth more prevail with them, than to show them the command of God, that can condemn them unto endless misery. They more fear men that can kill the body, than God, that can destroy both soul and body in hell fire. When the lust of the flesh, and the will of man, do bear more sway than the will of God, it is certain that such a soul is unregenerate. Rom. vi. 3, 4, 6, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.—Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin."—Ver. 16, "Know ye not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

3. All those are unregenerate, that depend not upon God as their chiefest Benefactor; and do not most carefully apply themselves to him, as knowing that "in his favour is life," Psal. xxx. 5, and that "his loving-kindness is better than life," Psal. lxxiii. 3, and that to his judgment we must finally stand or fall; but do ambitiously seek the favour of men, and call them their benefactors, (Luke xxii. 25; Matt. xxiii. 9,) whatever become of the favour of God. He is no child of God that preferreth not the love of God before the love of all the world. He is no heir of heaven, that preferreth not the fruition of God in heaven before all worldly glory and felicity. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth," Col. iii. 1, 2. The love of God is the sum of holiness, the heart of the new creature; the perfecting of it is the perfection and felicity of man.

4. They are certainly unregenerate, that believe not the gospel, and take not Christ for their only Saviour, and his promises of grace and glory, as purchased by his sacrifice and merits, for the foundation of their hopes, on which they resolve to trust

their souls for pardon and for peace with God, and endless happiness. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12. "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life, 1 John v. 11, 12."

When our happiness was in Adam's hands, he lost it: it is now put into safer hands, and Jesus Christ the second Adam is become our treasury. He is the head of the body, from whom each member hath quickening influence, Eph. i. 22. The life of saints is in him, as the life of the tree is in the root, unseen, Col. iv. 3, 4. Holiness is a living unto God in Christ; though we are dead with Christ, to the law, and to the world, and to the flesh, we are alive to God. So Paul describeth our case in his own: "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 19, 20. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 11. "Christ is the vine, and we are the branches; without him we can do nothing. If you abide not in him, and his words in you, you are cast forth as a branch, and withered, which men gather and cast into the fire, and they are burned," John xv. 1, 5–7. In baptism you are married unto Christ, as to the external solemnization; and in spiritual regeneration your hearts do inwardly close with him, entertain him, and resign themselves unto him by faith and love; and by a resolved covenant become his own: and therefore baptism and the Lord's supper are called sacraments; because as soldiers were wont, by an oath, and listing their names, and other engaging ceremonies, to oblige themselves to their commanders, and their vow was called a sacrament; so do we engage ourselves to Christ in the holy vow or covenant entered in baptism, and renewed in the Lord's supper.

5. That person is certainly unregenerate, that never was convinced of a necessity of sanctification, or never perceived an excellency and amiableness in holiness of heart and life, and loved it in others, and desired it himself; and never gave up himself to the Holy Ghost, to be further sanctified in the use of his appointed means; desiring to be perfect, and willing to press forward towards the mark, and to abound in grace. Much less is that person renewed by the Holy Ghost, that hateth holiness, and had rather be without it, and would not walk in the fear and obedience of the Lord.

The Spirit of holiness is that life by which Christ quickeneth all that are his members. He is no member of Christ that is without it, Rom. viii. 9. "According to his mercy he saveth us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus iii. 5.

6. That person is unregenerate, that is under the dominion of his fleshly desires, and "mindeth the things of the flesh above the things of the Spirit;" and hath not mortified it so far, as not to live according to it. A carnal mind, and a carnal life, are opposite to holiness, as sickness is to health, and darkness unto light. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.—For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be

spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh, cannot please God.—For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," Rom. viii. 1—14. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts," Gal. v. 18—25.

7. Lastly, That person is certainly unregenerate, that so far valueth and loveth this world, or any of the carnal accommodations therein, as practically to prefer them before the love of God, and the hopes of everlasting glory: seeking it first, with highest estimation, and holding it fastest; so as that he will rather venture his soul upon the threatened wrath of God, than his body upon the wrath of man; and will be religious no further than may consist with his prosperity or safety in the world, and hath something that he cannot part with for Christ and heaven, because it is dearer to him than they. Let this man go never so far in religion, as long as he goeth further for the world, and setteth it nearest to his heart, and holds it fastest, and will do most for it, and consequently loveth it better than Christ, he is no true christian, nor in a state of grace.

The Scriptures put this also out of doubt, as you may see, Matt. x. 37, 38; Luke xiv. 26, 27, 33, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, &c. Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. Whoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God," James iv. 4. No wonder then if the world must be renounced in our baptism. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15.

You see by this time, what it is to be regenerate, and to be a christian indeed, by what is contained even in our baptism; and consequently how you may know yourselves, whether you are sanctified, and the heirs of heaven, or not.

Again therefore I summon you to appear before your consciences: and if indeed these evidences of regeneration are not in you, stop not the sentence, but confess your sinful, miserable state, and condemn yourselves, and say no longer, I hope yet that my present condition may serve turn, and that God will forgive me, though I should die without any further change: those hopes that you may be saved without regeneration, or that you are regenerate when you are not, are the pillars of Satan's fortress in your hearts, and keep you from the saving hopes of the regenerate, that will never make you ashamed. Uphold not that which Christ is engaged against: down it must, either by grace or judgment: and therefore abuse not your souls by underpropping such an ill-grounded, false, deceitful hope. You have now time to take it down so orderly and safely, as that it fall not on your heads, and overwhelm you not for ever. But if you stay till death shall under-

mine it, the fall will be great, and your ruin irreparable. If you are wise, therefore, know yourselves in time.

II. I have done with that part of my special exhortation which concerned the unregenerate: I am next to speak to those of you that by grace are brought into a better state; and to tell you, that it very much concerneth you also, even the best of you, to labour to be well acquainted with yourselves: and that both in respect of, 1. Your sins and wants; and, 2. Your graces and your duties.

I. Be acquainted with the root and remnant of your sins: with your particular inclinations and corrupt affections; with their quality, their degree, and strength; with the weaknesses of every grace; with your disability to duty; and with the omissions or sinful practices of your lives. Search diligently and deeply; frequently and accurately peruse your hearts and ways, till you certainly and thoroughly know yourselves.

And I beseech you, let it not suffice you that you know your states, and have found yourselves in the love of God, in the faith of Christ, and possessed by his Spirit. Though this be a mercy worth many worlds, yet this is not all concerning yourselves that you have to know. If yet you say that you have no sin, you deceive yourselves. If yet you think you are past all danger, your danger is the greater for this mistake. As much as you have been humbled for sin; as much as you have loathed it, and yourselves for it; as oft as you have confessed it, lamented it, and complained and prayed against it, yet it is alive: though it be mortified, it is alive. It is said to be mortified as to the prevalency and reign, but the relics of it yet survive: were it perfectly dead, you were perfectly delivered from it, and might say you have no sin: but it is not yet so happy with you. It will find work for the blood and Spirit of Christ, and for yourselves, as long as you are in the flesh. And, alas, too many that know themselves to be upright in the main, are yet so much unacquainted with their hearts and lives, as to the degrees of grace and sin, as that it much disadvantage them in their christian progress. Go along with me in the careful observation of these following evils, that may befall even the regenerate by the remnants of self-ignorance.

1. The work of mortification is very much hindered, because you know yourselves no better, as may appear in all these following discoveries.

(1.) You confess not sin to God or man so penitently and sensibly as you ought, because you know yourselves no better. Did you see your inside with a fuller view, how deeply would you aggravate your sin! how heavily would you charge yourselves! repentance would be more intense and more effectual; and when you were more contrite, you would be more meet for the sense of pardon, and for God's delight, Isa. li. 15; lxxvi. 2. It would fill you more with godly shame and self-abhorrence, if you better knew yourselves. It would make you more sensibly say with Paul, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 23, 24. And with David, "I will declare my iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. They are more than the hairs of my head, I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin," Psal. xxxviii. 18; xl. 12; xxxii. 5. Repentance is the death of sin: and the knowledge of ourselves,

and the sight of our sins, is the life of repentance.

(2.) You pray not against sin, for grace and pardon, so earnestly as you should, because you know yourselves no better. Oh that God would but open these too close hearts unto us, and anatomize the relics of the old man, and show us all the recesses of our self-deceit, and the filth of worldliness and carnal inclinations that lurk within us, and read us a lecture upon every part! what prayers would it teach us to indite! That you may not be proud of your holiness, let me tell you, christians, that a full display of the corruptions that the best of you carry about you, would not only take down self-exalting thoughts, that you be not lifted up above measure, but would teach you to pray with fervour and importunity, and waken you out of your sleepy indifference, and make you cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" If the sight of a leazar, or cripple, or naked person, move you to compassion, though they use no words; if the sight of a man that is gasping for want of your relief, will affect you; surely the sight of your own deformities, wants, and dangers, would affect you if you saw them as they are. How many a sin do you forget in your confessions that should have a particular repentance! And how many wants do you overlook in prayers, that should have particular petitions for a merciful supply! And how many are lightly touched, and run over with words of course, that would be earnestly insisted on, if you did but better know yourselves! Oh that God would persuade you better to study your hearts, and pray out of that book whenever you draw nigh him, that you might not be so like the hypocrites, that draw near to him with the lips, when their hearts are far from him. To my shame I must confess, that my soul is too dry and barren in holy supplications to God, and too little affected with my confessed sins and wants: but I am forced to lay all in a very great measure upon the imperfect acquaintance that I have at home: I cannot think I should want matter to pour out before the Lord in confession and petition, nor so much want fervour and earnestness with God, if my heart and life lay open to my view, while I am upon my knees.

(3.) It is for want of a fuller knowledge of yourselves that you are so negligent in your christian watch; that you do no better guard your senses; that you make no stricter a covenant with your eyes, your appetites, your tongues: that you no more examine what you think, affect, and say; what passeth into your heart or out of it: that you call not yourselves more frequently to account; but days run on, and duties are carelessly performed as of course, and no daily or weekly reckoning made to conscience of all. The knowledge of your weaknesses, and readiness to yield, and of your treacherous corruptions that comply with the enemy, would make you more suspicious of yourselves, and to walk more "circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise," Eph. v. 15; and to look under your feet, and consider your ways before you were too bold and venturous. It was the consciousness of their own infirmity, that should have moved the disciples to watch and pray. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," Matt. xxvi. 41. And all have the same charge, because all have the same infirmity and danger. "What I say to you, I say unto all, Watch," Mark xiii. 37. Did we better know how many advantages our own corruptions give the tempter, that charge of the Holy Ghost would awake us all to stand to our arms and look about us: "Watch ye, stand fast in the

faith: quit you like men, be strong," 1 Cor. xvi. 13. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil: for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," &c. Eph. vi. 11-14. When men know not whose legs they stand upon, they grow heedless of their way, and quickly slide.

The knowledge of ourselves doth show us all the advantages of the tempter; what he hath to work upon, and what in us to take his part, and consequently where he is likeliest to assault us; and so puts us into so prepared a posture for defence, as very much hindereth his success. But so far as we do not know ourselves, we are like blind men in fencing, that the adversary may hit in what part he please: we have so many hidden enemies in our houses, as will quickly open the door to more. What sin may not Satan tempt a man into, that is not acquainted with the corruptions and frailties of his own heart!

(4.) It is for want of self-acquaintance that we make not out for help against our sin to ministers or other friends that could assist us; and that we use the confirming ordinances with no more care and diligence. All the abilities and willingness of others, and all the helps of God's appointment, will be neglected, when we should employ them against our sins, so far as self-ignorance doth keep us from discerning the necessity of them.

(5.) It is for want of a fuller knowledge of ourselves, that many lie long in sins unobserved by themselves; and many are on the declining band, and take no notice of it. And how little resistance or mortifying endeavours we are like to bestow upon unknown or unobserved sins, is easy to conceive. How many may we observe to have notable blemishes of pride, ostentation, desire of pre-eminence and esteem, envy, malice, self-conceit, self-seeking, censoriousness, uncharitableness, and such like, that see no more of it in themselves, than is in more mortified men! How ordinarily do we hear the pastors that watch over them, and their friends that are best acquainted with them, lamenting the miscarriages, and the careless walking and declining, of many that seem religious, when they lament it not themselves, nor will be convinced that they are sick of any such disease, any more than all other christians are! Hence comes the stiffness of too many such, against all that can be said to humble and reform them; and that they are so impatient of reproof, and think reprovers do them wrong: and it is well if it abate not christian love, and procure not some degree of hatred or displeasure. Like a man that is entering into a consumption, and takes it for an injury to be told so, till his languishing and decay convince him. Hence it is that we have all need to lament in general our unknown sins, and say with David, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults," Psal. xix. 12. Hence it is that we can seldom tell men of the most discernible faults, but they meet us with excuses, and justify themselves.

There are few of us, I think, that observe our hearts at all, but find both upon any special illumination, and in the hour of discovering trials, that there were many distempers in our hearts, and many miscarriages in our lives, that we never took notice of before. The heart hath such secret corners of uncleanness, such mysteries of iniquity, and depths of deceitfulness, that many fearing God are strangely unacquainted with themselves, as to the particular motions and degrees of sin, till some notable provi-

dence or gracious light assist them in the discovery. I think it not unprofitable here to give you some instances of sin undiscerned by the servants of the Lord themselves that have it, till the light come in that makes them wonder at their former darkness.

In general, first observe these two. 1. The secret habits of sin, being discernible only by some acts, are many times unknown to us, because we are under no strong temptation to commit those sins. And it is a wonderful hard thing for a man that hath little or no temptation to know himself, and know what he should do, if he had the temptations of other men. And oh what sad discoveries are made in the hour of temptation! What swarms of vice break out in some, like vermin, that lay hid in the cold of winter, and crawl about when they feel the summer's heat! What horrid corruptions which we never observed in ourselves before, do show themselves in the hour of temptation! Who would have thought that righteous Noah had in the ark such a heart, as would by carelessness fall into the sin of drunkenness? or that righteous Lot had carried from Sodom the seed of drunkenness and incest in him? or that David, a man so eminent in holiness, and a man after God's own heart, had a heart that had in it the seeds of adultery and murder? Little thought Peter, when he professed Christ, Matt. xvi. 16, that there had been in him such carnality and unbelief, as would so soon have provoked Christ to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," ver. 22, 23. And little did he think when he so vehemently professed his resolution rather to die with Christ than deny him, that there had been then in his heart the seed that would bring forth this bitter fruit, Matt. xxvi. 74, 75. Who knows what is virtually in a seed, that never saw the tree, or tasted of the fruit?

Especially when we have not only a freedom from temptations, but also the most powerful means to keep under vicious habits, it is hard to know how far they are mortified at the root. When men are among those that countenance the contrary virtue, and where the vice is in disgrace, and where examples of piety and temperance are still before their eyes; if they dwell in such places and company, where authority and friendship and reason do all take part with good, and cry down the evil, no wonder if the evil that is unmortified in men's hearts, do not much break out to their own or others' observations through all this opposition. The instance of king Joash is famous for this, who "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, all the days of Jehoiada the priest that instructed him," 2 Kings xii. 2; but after his death, when the princes of Judah flattered him with their obeisance, he left the house of God and served idols, till wrath came upon the land: and was so hardened in sin, as to murder Zechariah the prophet of God, and son of that Jehoiada that had brought him out of obscurity, and set him upon the throne, even because he spake in the name of the Lord against his sin, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22.

Who would have thought that it had been in the heart of Solomon, a man so wise, so holy, and so solemnly engaged to God, by his public professions and works, to have committed the abominations mentioned, 1 Kings xi. 4?

If you say, That all this proveth not that there was any seed or root of such a sin in the heart before, but only that the temptation did prevail to cause the acts first, and then such habits as those acts did tend to; I answer, 1. I grant that temptations do not only discover what is in the heart, but

also make it worse when they prevail; and that is no full proof that a man had a proper habit of sin before, because by temptation he commits the act; for Adam sinned by temptation without an antecedent habit. 2. But we know the nature of man to be now corrupted, and that this corruption is virtually or seminally all sin, disposing us to all; and that this disposition is strong enough to be called a general habit. When grace in the sanctified is called a nature, 2 Pet. i. 4, there is the same reason to call the sinful inclination a nature too; which can signify nothing else than a strong and rooted inclination. Knowing therefore that the heart is so corrupted, we may well say, when the evil fruit appears, that there was the seed of it before. And the easy and frequent yielding to the temptation, shows there was a friend to sin within. 3. But if it were not so, yet that our hearts should be so frail, so defective, mutable, and easily drawn to sin, is a part of self-knowledge necessary to our preservation, and not to be disregarded. 4. I am sure Christ himself tells us, that "out of the heart proceed the sins of the life," Matt. xv. 19; and that the "evil things of evil men come out of the evil treasure of their hearts," Matt. xii. 35. And when God permitted the fall of good king Hezekiah, the text saith, "God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart," 2 Chron. xxxii. 31; that is, that he might show all that was in his heart; so that the weakness and the remaining corruption of Hezekiah's heart were shown in the sin which he committed.

2. And as the sinful inclinations are hardly discerned, and long lie hid till some temptation draw them out; so the act itself is hardly discerned in any of its malignity, till it be done and past, and the soul is brought to a deliberate review. For while a man is in the act of sin, either his understanding is so far deluded, as to think it no sin in its kind, or none to him that then committeth it; or that it is better venture on it than not, for the attaining of some seeming good, or the avoiding of some evil: or else the restraining act of the understanding is suspended, and withdrawn; and it discerneth not practically the pernicious evil of the sin, and forbiddeth not the committing of it; or forbids it so remissly, and with so low a voice, as is drowned by the clamour of contradicting passion, so that the prohibition is not heard. And how can it be then expected, that when a man hath not wit enough in use, to see his sin so far as to forbear it, he should even then see it so far as rightly to judge of himself and it? And that when reason is low, and sensuality prevaileth, we should then have the right use of reason for self-discerning? When a storm of passion hath blown out the light, and error hath extinguished it, we are unlikely then to know ourselves. When the sensual part is pleasing itself with its forbidden objects, that pleasure so corrupts the judgment, that men will easily believe that it is lawful, or that it is not very bad: so that sin is usually least known and felt, when it is greatest and in exercise, and one would think should then be most perceptible. Like a phrensy or madness, or other delirium, that is least known when it is greatest and most in act, because its nature is destructive to the reason that should know it; like a spot in the eye, that is itself unseen, and hindereth the sight of all things else; or as the deeper a man's sleep is, the less he knoweth that he is asleep. *Somnium narrare vigilantis est*, saith Seneca: It is men awake that tell their dreams.

And thus you see that through self-ignorance it comes to pass, that both secret habits, and the most open acts of sin, are oftentimes little known. A man that is drunk, is in an unfit state to know what

drunkenness is, and so is a man that is in his passion; you will hardly bring him to repentance till it be allayed. And so is a man in the brutifying heat of lust; or in the childish use of such recreations as he doteth on; or in the ambitious pursuit of his deluding honours. And therefore abundance of unknown sin may remain in a soul that laboureth not to be well acquainted with itself.

And as I have showed you this in general, both of habits and acts of sin, let us consider of some instances in particular, which will yet more discover the necessity of studying ourselves.

1. Little do we think what odious and dangerous errors may befall a person that now is orthodox; what a slippery mutability the mind of man is liable unto; how variety of representations causeth variety of apprehensions: like some pictures, that seem one thing when you look on them on one side, and another thing when on another side; if you change your place, or change your light, they seem to change. Indeed God's word hath nothing in it thus fitted to deceive; but our weakness hath that which disposeth us to mistakes. We are like an unlearned judge, that thinks the cause is good which he first hears pleaded for, till he hear the confutation by the other party, and then he thinks the other hath the best cause, till perhaps he hear both so long, till he know not whose cause is the best. The person that now is a zealous lover of the truth, (when it hath procured entertainment by the happy advantage of friends, acquaintance, ministers, magistrates, or common consent being on its side,) may possibly turn a zealous adversary to it, when it loseth those advantages. When a minister shall change his mind, how many of the flock may he mislead!

When you marry or contract any intimate friendship with a person of unsound and dangerous principles, how easily are they received!

When the stream of the times and authority shall change, and put the name of truth on falsehood, how many may be carried down the stream!

How zealous have many been for a faithful ministry, that have turned their persecutors, or made it a great part of their religion to revile them, when once they have turned to some sect that is possessed by the malicious spirit (especially the papists and quakers are famous for such language of reproach: though the former excel the latter much in the slanderous part, and the latter excel in the open bawling and incivility of speech).

And oh that we could stop here, and could not remember how faithfully and honestly some have seemed to love and obey the word of God, and to delight in the communion of saints, that by seducers have been brought to deny the divine authority of the Scriptures, and to turn their backs on all God's public ordinances of worship, and excommunicate themselves from the society of the saints, and vilify or deny the works of the Spirit in them! Little did these men once think themselves, whither they should fall, under the conceit of rising higher; and little would they have believed him that had told them what a change they would make. Had these men known themselves in time, and known what tinder and gunpowder was in their hearts, they would have walked more warily, and it is like have escaped the snare: but they fell into it, because they feared it not; and they feared it not, because they knew not, or observed not, how prone they were to be infected.

2. Little do many think in their adversity, or low estate, what seeds are in their hearts, which prosperity would turn into very odious, scandalous sins, unless their vigilancy, and a special preservation, do

prevent it. Many a man that in his shop, or at his plough, is censuring the great miscarriages of his superiors, doth little think how bad he might prove, if he were in the place of those he censureth. Many a poor man that freely talks against the luxury, pride, and cruelty of the rich, doth little think how like them he should be, if he had their temptations and estates. How many persons that lived in good repute for humility, temperance, and piety, have we seen turn proud, and sensual, and ungodly, when they have been exalted! I would mention no man's case by way of insulting or reproach, but by way of compassion, and in order to their repentance that survive. I must say that this age hath given us such lamentable instances, as should make all our hearts to ache and fear, when we consider the crimes and their effects. Would the persons that once walked with us in the ways of peace, and concord, and obedience, have believed that man that should have foretold them twenty years ago, how many should be puffed up and deluded by successes, and make themselves believe, by the ebullition of pride, that victories authorized them to deny subjection to the higher powers, and by right or wrong to take down all that stood in their way, and to take the government into their own hands, and to depose their rightful governors, never once vouchsafing to ask themselves the question that Christ asked, Luke xii. 14, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" As if authority had been nothing but strength, and he had the best right to govern, that could make the greatest force to compel obedience. Little were the seeds of all this evil discerned in the heart, before prosperity and success did cherish them, and bring them to that, which with grief we have long observed. They would have said as Hazaël, "Am I a dog that I should do this?" If one had told them before, that when God hath charged every soul to be subject on pain of condemnation, and they had vowed fidelity, they should break all these bonds of commands and vows; and all because they were able to do it: when they would not justify him that should do any mischief to themselves, and think it warrantable because he was able: when the ministers of the gospel, and their dearest friends, bore witness against the sin, the heart could not by all this be brought to perceive its guilt; or that it was any sin to overturn, overturn, overturn, till they had overturned all, and left not themselves a bough to stand upon. And how hardly to this day, do the notable discoveries of God, and the plainness of his word, and the continued witness of his servants, prevail for kindly true repentance! The unrighteous usage of magistracy and ministry, and the licentious indulgence of the open enemies and revilers of both, and of all the ordinances and churches of the Lord, do proclaim aloud to all that fear God, the depths and deceits of the heart are wonderful, and you little think what an hour of temptation may discover in you, or bring you to. O therefore know yourselves, and fear and watch.

3. A man that in adversity is touched with penitent and mortifying considerations, and strongly resolveth how holily and diligently he will live hereafter, if he be recovered or delivered from his suffering, doth oftentimes little think what a treacherous heart he hath, and how little he may retain of all this sense of sin or duty, when he is delivered, and that he will be so much worse than he seemed or promised, as that he may have cause to wish he had been afflicted still. Oh how many sick-bed promises are as pious as we can desire, that wither away and come to almost nothing, when health hath scattered the fears that caused them! How many with that great imprison-

ed Lord, do, as it were, write the story of Christ upon their prison walls, that forget him when they are set at liberty ! How many are tender-conscienced in a low estate, that when they are exalted, and converse with great ones, do think that they may waste their time in idleness and needless, scandalous recreations, and be silent witnesses of the most odious sins from day to day ; and pray God be merciful to them when they go to the house of Rimmon ; and dare scarcely own a downright servant, or hated and reproached cause of God ! Oh what a preservative would it be to us in prosperity, to know the corruption of our hearts, and foresee in adversity what we are in danger of ! We should then be less ambitious to place our dwellings on the highest ground, and more fearful of the storms that *there* must be expected. How few are there (to a wonder) that grow better by worldly greatness and prosperity ! Yea, how few that hold their own, and grow not worse ! And yet how few are there (to a greater wonder) that refuse, or that desire not this perilous station, rather than to stand safer on the lower ground ! Verily, the lamentable fruits of prosperity, and the mutability of men that make great professions and promises in adversity, should make the best of us jealous of our hearts, and convince us that there is greater corruption in them, than most are acquainted with, that are never put to such a trial. The height of prosperity shows what the man is indeed, as much as the depth of adversity.

Would one have thought that had read of Hezekiah's earnest prayer in his sickness, and the miracle wrought to signify his deliverance, 2 Kings xx. 2, 3, 9, and of his written song of praise, Isa. xxxviii. that yet Hezekiah's heart should so deceive him, as to prove unthankful ? You may see by his expressions, his high resolutions to spend his life in the praise of God : "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day : the fathers to the children shall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me ; therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord !" Isa. xxxviii. 19, 20. Would you think that a holy man, thus wrapt up in God's praise, should yet miscarry, and be charged with ingratitude ? And yet in 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, it is said of him, "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him ; for his heart was lifted up : therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem." And God was fain to bring him to a review, and humble him for being thus lifted up, as the next words show, ver. 26, "Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart." O sirs, what christian that ever was in a deep affliction, and hath been recovered by the tender hand of mercy, hath not found how false a thing the heart is, and how little to be trusted in its best resolutions and most confident promises ! Hezekiah still remained a holy, faithful man ; but yet thus failed in particulars and degrees. Which of us can say, who have had the most affecting and engaging deliverances, that ever our hearts did fully answer the purposes and promises of our afflicted state ? and that we had as constant sensible thanksgivings after, as our complaints and prayers were before ? Not I ; with grief I must say, Not I, though God hath tried me many a time. Alas, we are too like the deceitful Israelites, Psal. lxxviii. 34—37, "When he slew them, then they sought him ; and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him,

neither were they stedfast in his covenant." Prosperity oft shows more of the hypocrisy of the unsound, and the infirmity of the upright, than appeared in adversity. When we feel the strong resolutions of our hearts to cast off our sin, to walk more thankfully, and fruitfully, and accurately with God than we have done, we can hardly believe that ever those hearts should lose so much of those affections and resolutions, as in a little time we find they do. Alas, how quickly and insensibly do we slide into our former insensibility, and into our dull and heavy, fruitless course, when once the pain and fear is gone ! And then when the next affliction comes, we are confounded and covered with shame, and have not the confidence with God in our prayers and cries as we had before, because we are conscious of our covenant-breaking and backsliding ; and at last we grow so distrustful of our hearts, that we know not how to believe any promises which they make, or how to be confident of any evidence of grace that is in them ; and so we lose the comfort of our sincerity, and are cast into a state of too much heaviness and unthankful denial of our dearest mercies. And all this comes from the foul, unexpected relapses, and coolings, and declinings of the heart that comes not up to the promises we made to God in our distress.

But if exaltation be added to deliverance, how often doth it make the reason drunk, so that the man seems not the same ! If you see them drowned in ambition, or worldly cares or pleasures ; if you see how boldly they can play with the sin, that once they would have trembled at ; how powerful fleshly arguments are with them ; how strangely they now look at plain-hearted, zealous, heavenly christians, whose case they once desired to be in ; and how much they are ashamed or afraid, to appear openly for an opposed cause of Christ, or openly to justify the persons that he justifieth, as if they had forgot that a day is coming, when they will be loth that Christ should be ashamed of them, and refuse to justify them, when the grand accuser is pleading for their condemnation ! I say, if you see these men in their prosperity, would you not ask with wonder, Are these the men that lately in distress, did seem so humble, penitent, and sincere ; that seemed so much above these vanities ; that could speak with so much contempt of all the glory and pleasures of the world ; and with so much pity of those vertiginous men, that they now admire ?

Oh what pillars have been shaken by prosperity ! what promises broken ! what sad eruptions of pride and worldliness ! What openings and sad discoveries of heart, doth this alluring, charming trial make ! And why is it that men know not themselves when they are exalted, but because they did not sufficiently know themselves when they were brought low, nor suspected enough the purposes and promises of their hearts, in the day of their distress ?

4. We would little think, when the heart is warmed and raised even to heaven, in holy ordinances, how cold it will grow again, and how low it will fall down ! And when we have attained the clearest sight of our sincerity, we little think how quickly all such apprehensions may be lost ; and the misjudging soul, that reckons upon nothing but what it sees or feels at present, may be at as great a loss, as if it had never perceived any fruits of the Spirit, or lineaments of the image of God upon itself. How confident upon good grounds, is many an honest heart of its sincerity ! How certain that it desireth to be perfectly holy ! 1. That it would be rid of the nearest, dearest sin. 2. That it loves the saints. 3. That it loves the light of the most searching ministry. 4. And loveth the most practical,

sanctifying truths. 5. And loves the ministry and means that have the greatest and most powerful tendency to make themselves more holy (all which are certain evidences of sincerity). How clearly may the heart perceive all these, and write them down; and yet ere long have lost the sight and sense of them all, and find itself in darkness and confusion, and perhaps be persuaded that all is contrary with them! And when they read in their diary, or book of heart-accounts, that at such a day in examination they found such or such an evidence; and such a one at another; and many at a third; yet now they may be questioning, whether all this were not deceit, because it seems contrary to their present sight and feeling; for it is present light that the mind discerneth by, and not by that which is past and gone, and of which we cannot so easily judge by looking back. They find in their accounts, At such a time I had my soul enlarged in prayer; and at such a time I was full of joy; and at another time I had strong assurance, and boldness with God, and confidence of his love in Christ, and doubted not of the pardon of all my sins, or the justification or acceptance of my person: but now, no joy, no assurance, no boldness, or confidence, or sense of love and pardon doth appear; but the soul seemeth dead and carnal, and unrenewed: as the same trees that in summer are beautified with pleasant fruits and flowers, in winter are deprived of their natural ornaments, and seem as dead, when the life is retired to the root. The soul that once would have defied the accuser, if he had told him that he did not love the brethren, nor love the sanctifying word and means, nor desire to be holy, and to be free from sin, is now as ready to believe the accusation, and will sooner believe the tempter than the minister that watcheth for them, as one that must give account. Yea, now it will turn the accuser of itself, and say as Satan, and falsely charge itself with that which Christ will acquit it of. (And must Christ be put to justify us against ourselves, as well as against Satan?) The same work that a well composed believer hath in confuting the calumnies of Satan, the same hath a minister to do in confuting the false accusations of disturbed souls against themselves. And how subtle, how obstinate and tenacious are they! As if they had learned some of the accuser's art; such as the uncharitable and malicious are against their neighbours, in picking quarrels with all that they say or do, in putting the worst construction upon all, in taking every thing in the most uncharitable sense, in aggravating the evil and extenuating the good, in feigning things against them that they are not guilty of, and denying or hiding all that is commendable; just such are poor disquieted souls against themselves: so unjust, and so censorious, as that if they dealt as ill by others, they would have the more cause for some of these accusations of themselves.

And there is not a soul so high in joy and sweet assurance, but is liable to fall as low as this. And it makes our case to be much more grievous than otherwise it would be, because we know not ourselves in the hour of our consolations, and think not how apt we are to lose all our joy, and what seeds of doubts, and fears, and grief, are still within us, and what cause we have to expect a change. And therefore when so sad a change befalleth us, so contrary to our expectations, it surprieth us with terror, and casteth the poor soul almost into despair. Then crieth the distressed sinner, Did I ever think to see this day? are my hopes and comforts come to this? Did I think so long that I was a child of God, and must I now perceive that he disowneth me? Did I draw near him as my Father, and place my hope in

his relief; and now must my mouth be stopped with unbelief, and must I look at him afar off, and pass by the doors of mercy with despair? Is all my sweet familiarity with the godly, and all my comfortable hours under the precious means of grace, now come to this? Oh how the poor soul here calls itself, O vile apostate, miserable sinner! Oh that I had never lived to see this gloomy day! It had been better for me never to have known the way of righteousness, than thus to have relapsed; and have all the prayers that I have put up, and all the sermons I have heard, and the books that I have read, to aggravate my sin and misery. Oh how many a poor christian in this dark, misjudging case, is ready with Job to curse the day that he was born, and to say of it, "Let it be darkness, let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it: let it not be joined to the days of the year: let it not come into the number of the months:—Because it shut not up the doors of the womb, and hid not sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me, or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have lain still and been quiet—Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul: which long for death, and it cometh not— which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave. Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?" Job iii. Such are the lamentations of distressed souls, that lately were as in the arms of Christ. Their lives are a burden to them; their food is bitter to them; their health is a sickness to them; their liberty is as a prison to them; their dearest relations are become as strangers; and all their comforts are turned into sorrows, and the world seems to them as a howling wilderness, and themselves as desolate, forsaken souls. They are still as upon the cross, and will own no titles, but vile, unworthy, lost, undone, forlorn, and desolate; as if they had learned no words from Christ, but "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

And much of this comes from the ignorance of ourselves in the time of peace and consolation. We are as David, Psal. xxx. 6, 7, that saith, "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved: Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: but thou hidest thy face and I was troubled." One frown of God, or withdrawing the light of his countenance from us, would quickly turn our day into night, and cover us with sackcloth, and lay us in the dust.

Take warning, therefore, dear christians, you that are yet in the sunshine of mercy, and were never at so sad a loss, nor put to grope in the darkness of mistake and terror. No man is so well in health, but must reckon on it that he may be sick. When you feel nothing but peace and quietness of mind, expect a stormy night of fears, that may disquiet you. When you are feasting upon the sweet entertainments of your Father's love, consider that feasting is not like to be your ordinary diet, but harder fare must be expected. Look on poor christians, in spiritual distress, with compassion; hear their sad complaints, and the bills for prayer which they here put up, and join in hearty prayer for them, and remember that this may prove your case. If you say, To what purpose should you know beforehand, how subject you are to this falling sickness: I answer, not to anticipate, or bring on your sorrows; but if it may be, to prevent them; or if that may not be, at least to prevent the extremity and terror, and to be provided for such a storm. When you are now in health

of body, and not disabled by melancholy, or other corruptions of your fantasy, or passion, nor overwhelmed with the troubles of your mind, you have leisure calmly to understand the case of such misjudging and distressed souls; and accordingly you may avoid the things that cause it: and you may be furnished with right principles, and with promises, and experiences, and recorded evidences of grace; and when comfort is withdrawn, you may by such provision understand, that God changeth not, nor breaks his covenant, nor abates his love, when your apprehensions change: and that this is no sign of a forsaken soul: and that the ceasing of our feast, and withdrawing of the table, is not a turning us out of the family. Expect some sicknesses, and you will the better know the use of the physician, and will lay up promises, and prepare your cordials: and this will prove an exceeding ease, when the hour of your trial comes.

And what I have said of the loss of comfort may be said also of the diminished and interrupted operations of all grace. We little think, in the vigour of our holy progress, what falls, and swoonings, and languishings we may find. When you have access with boldness in prayer unto God, and lively affections and words at will, and comfortable returns, remember that you may come to a sadder case; and that many a true christian hath such withdrawals of the spirit of prayer, as makes them think they are possessed with a dumb devil, and question whether ever they prayed acceptably at all, and cannot so much as observe the groanings of the Spirit in them, Rom. viii. 26.

When you are warm and vigorous in the work of God, and find delight in all the ordinances, remember that you are subject to such sicknesses as may take away your appetite, and make you say, I have no mind to hear, or read, or pray; methinks I feel no sweetness in them! I was wont to go up with comfort to the house of God; I was glad when the Lord's-day was come, or night: it did me good to see the faces of the saints: oh the meltings, the strivings, the lively workings of soul that I have had in their sweet communion, when they have preached and prayed as full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith! but now I do but force myself to duty: I go to prayer as against my will: I feel small relish in the word of life. Oh how many christians that little thought of such a day, cry out that spiritual death is upon them; that they are dead to prayer, and dead to meditation, and dead to holy conference; and that once they thought they were dead to the world, and now they find they are dead to God. Understand before that you are liable to this, and you may do much to prevent it: and if you should fall into a sickness and loss of appetite, you may be able to difference it from death.

When you are sweetly refreshed at the table of the Lord, and have there received a sealed pardon, as from heaven, into your bosoms, and have found delightful entertainment with the Lord, remember that the day may come, when dulness, and unbelief, and fears, may so prevail, as to make that an ordinance of greatest terror to you, and you may sit there in trembling, lest you should eat and drink your own damnation: and you may go home in fears, lest Satan have there taken possession of you, or lest it have sealed you up to wrath: or you may fly from that feast which is your due, and Christ invites you to, through fears, lest it belong not to you, and should but harden you more in sin: for alas, this sad and sinful case is too oft the case of true believers, that little feared it in their spiritual prosperity. So that the very high expectations of such

workings of soul, which they cannot oft or ordinarily reach, and the frustrating of those expectations, doth so often turn the table of the Lord into the bitterness of wormwood, into distracting fears and troubles, that I cannot tell whether any other part of worship occasion so much distress to many that are upright at the heart as this doth, which is appointed for their special consolation.

So when you are clear and vigorous in the life of faith, and can abhor all temptations to unbelief, and the beams of sacred verity in the Scriptures, have showed you that it is the undoubted word of God, and you have quietly bottomed your soul on Christ, and built your hopes upon his promises, and can with a cheerful contempt let go the world for the accomplishment of your hopes; remember yet that there is a secret root of unbelief remaining in you, and that this odious sin is but imperfectly mortified in the best; and that it is more than possible that you may see the day when the tempter will assault you with questionings of the word of God, and trouble you with the injections of blasphemous thoughts and doubts, whether it be true or not! And that you that have thought of God, of Christ, of heaven, of the immortal state of souls, with joy and satisfied confidence, may be in the dark about them, affrighted with ugly suggestions of the enemy, and may think of them all with troublesome, distracting doubts, and be forced to cry with the disciples, "Lord, increase our faith," Luke xvii. 5. And as he, Mark ix. 24, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." Yea, worse than so; some upright souls have been so amazed and distracted by the tempter, and their distempered hearts, as to think they do not believe at all, nor yet are able sincerely to say, "Lord, help thou my unbelief." When yet at that time their fears and their abstaining from iniquity show, that they believe the threatenings, and therefore indeed believe the word. Now if we did but thoroughly know ourselves, when faith is in its exercise and strength, and consider whither the secret seeds of remaining unbelief may bring us, being forewarned, we should be fore-armed, and should fortify our faith the better, and be provided against these sad assaults. And if the malignant spirit be suffered to storm this fortress of the soul, we should more manfully resist; and we should not be overwhelmed with horror, as soon as any hideous and blasphemous temptations do assault us. (When Christ himself was not exempted from the most blasphemous temptation, even the worshipping of the devil instead of God; though in him there was no sinful disposition to entertain it, Matt. iv. 9, 10; John xiv. 30.)

O watch and pray, christians, in your most prosperous and comfortable state! Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation; for you little think what is yet within you; and what advantage the deceiver hath; and how much of your own to take his part; and how low he may bring you, both in point of grace and peace, though he cannot damn you.

I am troubled that I must tell you of so sad a case, that even the children of God may fall into, lest by troubling you with the opening of your danger, I should do any thing to bring you into it. But because self-ignorance, and not being beforehand acquainted with it, may do much more, I have timely showed you the danger with the remedy.

5. Another instance of the darkness even of a heart that in part is sanctified, is in the successes of the temptations of adversity. When we want nothing, we think we value not the world, and we could bear the loss of all; but when poverty or danger comes, what trouble and unseemly whining is there, as if it

were by a worldling that is deprived of his idol, and all the portion that ever he must have! And by the shameful moan and stir that we make for what we want, we show more sinful overvaluing of it, and love to it, than before we observed or would believe. Oh how confidently and piously have I heard some inveigh against the love of the world, as if there had been no such thing in them; who yet have been so basely dejected, when they have been unexpectedly stripped of their estates, as if they had been quite undone!

How patiently do we think we could bear affliction, till we feel it! and how easily and piously can we exhort others unto patience, when we have no sense of what they suffer! But when our turn is come, alas, we seem to be other men. Suffering is now another thing; and patience harder than we imagined. And how inclinable are we to hearken to temptations, to use sinful means to come out of our sufferings! Who would have thought that faithful Abraham should have been so unbelieving, as to equivocate in such a danger, and expose the chastity of his wife to hazard, as we read in Gen. xii. 12, 13, 19? and that he should fall into the same sin again, on the same occasion, (Gen. xx.) to Abimelech, as before he had done with Pharaoh? and that Isaac should, after him, fall into the same sin, in the same place? Gen. xxvi. 7. The life of faith doth set us so much above the fear of man, and show us the weakness and nothingness of mortal worms, and the faithfulness and all-sufficiency of God, that one would think the frowns and threatenings of a man should signify nothing to us, when God stands by, and giveth us such ample promises and security for our confirmation and encouragement: and yet what base dejectedness and sinful compliances are many brought to, through the fear of man, that before the hour of this temptation, could talk as courageously as any! This was the case of Peter, before mentioned, and of many a one that hath a wounded conscience, and wronged their profession by too cowardly a disposition; which if it were foreknown, we might do more for our confirmation, and should betake ourselves in time to Christ, in the use of means for strength. Few turn their backs on Christ, or a good cause, in time of trial, that are jealous of themselves beforehand, and afraid lest they should forsake him. Few fall that are afraid of falling: but the self-ignorant and self-confident are careless of their way, and it is they that fall.

6. Another instance that I may give you, is, in the unexpected appearances of pride in those that yet are truly humble. Humility speaks in their confessions, aggravating their sin, and searching heart and life for matter of self-accusation: they call themselves "Less than the least of all God's mercies." They are ready, with the woman of Canaan, (Matt. xv. 27,) even to own the name of dogs, and to confess themselves unworthy of the children's crumbs, and unworthy to tread upon the common earth, or to breathe in the air, or to live upon the patience and provisions of God: they will spend whole hours and days of humiliation, in confessing their sin, and bewailing their weaknesses and want of grace, and lamenting their desert of misery. They are oft cast down so much too low, that they dare not own the title of God's children, nor any of his special grace, but take themselves for mere unsanctified, hardened sinners; and all that can be said, will not convince them that they have any saving interest in Christ, nor hinder them from pouring out unjust accusations against themselves. And all this is done by them in the uprightness of their hearts, and not dissemblingly. And yet would you think, that with

all this humility, there should be any pride? and that the same persons should lift up themselves and resist their helps to further humiliation? Do they think in their dejections, that it is in their hearts so much to exalt themselves? I confess many of them are sensible of their pride, even to the increase of their humility; and as it is said of Hezekiah, "do humble themselves for the pride of their hearts, so that God's wrath doth not come upon them," 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. But yet too few are so well acquainted with the power and rootedness of this sin at the heart, and the workings of it in the hour of temptation, as they should be. Observe it but at such times as these, and you will see that break forth, that before appeared not. 1. When we are undervalued and slighted, and meaner persons preferred before us; and when our words and judgments are made light of, and our parts thought to be poor and low; when any blot or dishonour is cast upon us, deserved or undeserved; when we are slandered or reproached, and used with despite; what a matter do we make of it, and how much then doth our pride appear in our distaste, and offence, and impatience! So that the same person that can pour out words of blame and shame against himself, cannot bear half as much from others, without displeasure and disquietness of mind. It would help us much to know this by ourselves, in the time of our humility, that we may be engaged to more watchfulness and resistance of our pride.

2. When we are reproved of any disgraceful sin, how hardly goes it down, and how many excuses have we! How seldom are we brought to downright penitent confessions! What secret distaste is apt to be rising in our hearts against the reprover! And how seldom hath he that hearty thanks, which so great a benefit deserves! And would any think in our humiliations and large confessions unto God that we were so proud? To know this by ourselves, would make us more suspicious, and ashamed to be guilty of it.

3. When any preferment or honour is to be given, or any work to be done that is a mark of dignity, how apt are we to think ourselves as fit for it as any, and to be displeased, if the honour or employment do pass by us!

4. When we are admired, applauded, or excessively esteemed and loved, how apt are we to be too much pleased with it! which sheweth a proud desire to be somebody in the world; and that there is much of this venom at the bottom in our hearts, even when we lay ourselves in the dust, and walk in sackcloth, and pass the heaviest judgment on ourselves.

7. Another instance of our unacquaintedness with our hearts, and the latent, undiscerned corruption of them, is our little discerning or bewailing those secret master-sins, which lie at the root of all the rest, and are the life of the old man, and the cause of all the miscarriages of our lives. As, 1. Unbelief of the truth of the holy Scriptures, of the immortality of the soul, and the life of joy or misery hereafter, and the other articles of the christian faith. What abundance of christians are sensible of their unbelief, as to the applying acts of faith that tend to their assurance of their own salvation, that are little sensible of any defect in the assenting act, or of any secret root of unbelief about the truth of the gospel revelations! And yet, alas, it is this that weakeneth all our graces; it is this that feedeth all our woe! O happy men, were we free from this! What prayers should we put up! What lives should we lead! How watchfully should we walk! With what contempt should we look on the allurements of the world! With what disdain should we think on fleshly lusts! With what indignation should we meet the tempter,

and scorn his base, unreasonable motions, if we did but perfectly believe the very truth of the gospel, and world to come! How careful and earnest should we be, to make our calling and election sure! How great a matter should we make of sin, and of helps and hinderances in the way to heaven! How much should we prefer that state of life that furthereth our salvation, before that which strengtheneth our snares by furthering our prosperity and pleasure in the world, if we were not weak or wanting in our belief of the certain verity of these things! Did we better know the badness of our hearts herein, it would engage us more in fortifying the vitals, and looking better to our foundation, and winding up this spring of faith, which must give life to all right motions of the soul.

2. How insensible are too many of the great imperfection of their love to God! What passionate complaints have we of their want of sorrow for their sin, and want of memory, and of ability to pray, &c. when their complaints for want of love to God, and more affecting knowledge of him, are so cold and customary, as shows us they little observe the greatness of this sinful want! This is the very heart, and sum, and poison of all the sins of our soul and life. So much as a man loves God, so much he is holy; and so much he hath of the Spirit and image of Jesus Christ; and so much he hath of all saving graces; and so much he will abhor iniquity; and so much he will love the commands of God. As love is the sum of the law and prophets, so should it be the sum of our care and study through all our lives to exercise and strengthen it.

3. How little are most christians troubled for want of love to men; to brethren, neighbours, and enemies! How cold are their complaints for their defects in this, in comparison of other of their complaints! But is there not cause of as deep humiliation for this sin, as almost any other? It seems to me that want of love is one of the most prevalent diseases among us, when I hear it so little seriously lamented. I oft hear people say, Oh that we could hear more attentively and affectionately, and pray more fervently, and weep for sin more plenteously! but how seldom do I hear them say, Oh that we did love our brethren more ardently, and our neighbours and enemies more heartily than we do, and set ourselves to do them good! There is so little pains taken to bring the heart to the love of others, and so few and cold requests put up for it, when yet the heart is backward to it, that makes me conclude that charity is weaker in most of us than we observe. And indeed it appeareth so when it comes to trial; to that trial which Christ will judge it by at last, Matt. xxv. When love must be showed by any self-denial, or costly demonstration, by parting with our food and raiment, to supply the wants of others, and by hazarding ourselves for them in their distress, then see how much we love indeed! Good words cost little: so cheap an exercise of charity as is mentioned, James ii. 15, 16, "Depart in peace, be warmed, and filled," is an insufficient evidence of the life of grace, and will do as little for the soul of the giver, as for the body of the receiver. And how little hazardous or costly love is found among us, either to enemies, neighbours, or to saints! Did we better know our hearts, there would be more care and diligence used to bring them to effectual, fervent love, than to those duties that are of less importance; and we should learn what this meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," Matt. ix. 13; xii. 7, which Christ sets the Pharisees twice to learn. More instances of greatest duties extenuated I might add, but I proceed.

8. Another instance of unobserved corruption of

the heart, is, the frequent and secret insinuations of selfishness in all that we do towards God or man: when we think we are serving God alone, and have cleansed our hearts from mixtures and deceit, before we are aware, self-interest, or self-esteem, or self-conceit, or self-love, or self-will, or self-seeking, do secretly creep in and mar the work. We think we are studying, and preaching, and writing purely for God, and the common good, or the benefit of souls; and perhaps little observe how subtly selfishness insinuates, and makes a party, and biaseth us from the holy ends, and the simplicity and sincerity which we thought we had carefully maintained: so that we are studying, and preaching, and writing for ourselves, when we take no notice of it.

When we enter upon any office, or desire preferment, or riches, or honour in the world, we think we do it purely for God, to furnish us for his service, and little think how much of selfishness is in our desires.

When we are doing justice, or showing mercy, in giving alms, or exhorting the ungodly to repent, or doing any other work of piety or charity, we little think how much of selfishness is secretly latent in the bent and intention of the heart.

When we think we are defending the truth and cause of God, by disputing, writing, or by the sword; or when we think we are faithfully maintaining on one side order and obedience against confusion and turbulent, disquiet spirits, or the unity of the church against division; or on the other hand, that we are sincerely opposing pharisaical corruptions, and hypocrisy, and tyranny, and persecution, and are defending the purity of divine worship, and the power and spirituality of religion; in all these cases we little know how much of carnal self may be secretly unobserved in the work.

But above all others, Christ himself, and the Holy Ghost that searcheth the hidden things of the heart, hath warned one sort to be suspicious of their hearts; and that is, those that cannot bear the dissent and infirmities of their brethren in tolerable things, and those that are calling for fire from heaven, and are all for force and cruelty in religion; for vexing, imprisoning, banishing, burning, hanging, or otherwise doing as they would not be done by, proportionably in their own case. He tells his two disciples, in such a case, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," Luke ix. 55. As if he should say, You think you purely seek my honour in the revenge of this contempt and opposition of unbelievers, and you think it would much redound to the propagation of the faith; and therefore you think that all this zeal is purely from my Spirit; but you little know how much of a proud, carnal, selfish spirit is in these desires! You would fain have me, and yourselves with me, to be openly vindicated by fire from heaven, and be so owned by God that all men may admire you, and you may exercise a dominion in the world; and you stick not at the sufferings and ruin of these sinners, so you may attain your end: but I tell you this selfish, cruel spirit, is unlike my Spirit, which inclineth to patience, forbearance, and compassion.

"Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye—Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? Why dost thou judge thy brother, and why dost thou set at nought thy brother? We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.—Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.—We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification," Rom. xiv. 1, 2, &c.; xv. 1, 2. "Brethren, if a man

be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," Gal. vi. 1, 2.

So also men are foully and frequently mistaken, when they are zealously contending against their faithful pastors and their brethren, and vilifying others, and quenching love, and troubling the church, upon pretence of greater knowledge or integrity in themselves, which is notably discovered, and vehemently pressed by the apostle, James iii. 1, &c.; where you may see how greatly the judgment of the Spirit of God, concerning our hearts, doth differ from men's judgment of themselves. They that had a masterly, contentious, envious zeal, did think they were of the wiser sort of christians, and of the highest form in the school of Christ; when yet the Holy Ghost telleth them that their wisdom descended not from above, but was earthly, sensual, and devilish, and that their envy and strife doth bring confusion, and every evil work; and that the wisdom from above is neither unpeaceable nor contentious, but "first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated," James iii. 17.

You see then how oft and dangerously we are deceived by unacquaintedness with ourselves; and how selfish, carnal principles, ends, and motives, are oft mixed in the actions which we think are the most excellent for wisdom, zeal, and piety, that ever we did perform. Oh therefore, what cause have we to study, and search, and watch such hearts, and not too boldly or carelessly to trust them!

And it is not only hypocrites that are subject to these deceitful sins, who have them in dominion, but true believers, that have a remnant of this carnal, selfish principle continually offering to insinuate and corrupt their most excellent works, and even all that they do.

9. The strong eruption of those passions that seemed to be quite mortified, doth show that there is more evil lurking in the heart than ordinarily doth appear. How calmly do we converse together, how mildly do we speak, till some provoking word or wrong do blow the coals; and then the dove appeareth to partake of a fierce nature; and we can perceive that in the flame, which we perceive not in the spark. When a provocation can bring forth censorious, reviling, scornful words, it shows what before was latent in the heart.

10. We are very apt to think those affections to be purely spiritual, which in the issue appear to be mixed with carnality. Our very love to the assemblies and ordinances of worship, and to ministers and other servants of the Lord, to books and knowledge, are ordinarily mixed; and good and bad are strangely complicate and twisted together in the same affections and works. And the love that begetteth in the Spirit, is apt to degenerate into carnal love, and to have too much respect to riches, or honour, or personage, or birth, or particular concerns of our own, and so it is corrupted, as wine that turneth into vinegar, before we are aware. And though still there be uprightness of heart, yet too much hypocrisy is joined with it, when it is little perceived or suspected.

And thus in ten instances I have showed you how much the servants of Christ themselves may be mistaken or unacquainted with their hearts; and how the work of mortification is hindered by this covering of so many secret, unobserved sins.

But I must here desire you to take heed of running into their extreme, who hereupon conclude that their hearts being so dark and so deceitful, are not

at all to be understood; and therefore they are still so suspicious of the worst, as that they will not be persuaded of the grace that plainly worketh in them, and will condemn themselves for that which they are not guilty of, upon suspicion that they may be guilty and not know it, and think that all the sin that they forbear, is but for want of a temptation; and that if they had the same temptations, they should be as bad as any others.

I would entreat these persons to consider of these truths, for their better information:

1. Temptations do not only show the evil that is in the heart, but breed much more, and turn a spark into a flame, as the striking of the steel upon the flint, doth by the collision and tinder make fire where was none. Adam was made a sinner by temptation.

2. There is no christian so mortified, but hath such remnants of corruption and concupiscence, as would quickly bring forth heinous sins, if temptations beyond strength were let loose upon him. What need you more proof than the sad instances of Noah, Lot, David, Solomon, and Peter? It did not prove that any of these were graceless hypocrites before, because they fell so foully by temptations. And yet these objectors think they are graceless, because some strong temptation might make them fall.

3. Is it not God's way of saving men, to give them so much inward grace as no temptation can overcome, but to preserve and bring them safe to heaven, by moral, sapiential conduct, together with internal changes of their hearts. And therefore he keepeth men from sin, by keeping them from temptations that are too strong for them. All human strength is limited; and there are none on earth have such a measure of grace, but a temptation may be imagined so strong as to overcome them. And if God should let Satan do his worst, there must be extraordinary assistances to preserve us, or we should fall. Bless God if he "lead you not into temptation, but deliver you from the evil," by keeping you far enough from the snare. This is the way of preservation that we are taught to pray and hope for.

4. And therefore it is our own duty to keep as far from temptations as we can; and if we have grace to avoid the sin by avoiding the temptation, we have such grace as God useth for the saving of his own: not that he hath saving grace that would live wickedly, if he were but tempted to it by those ordinary trials that human nature may expect; but the soul that preferreth God and glory before the pleasures of sin for a season, if it so continue, shall be saved, though possibly there might have been a temptation so strong as would have conquered the measure of grace that he had, if it had not been fortified with new supplies. It is therefore mere dotage in those that could find in their hearts to put themselves upon some temptation, to try whether they are sincere by the success. Avoid temptation, that you may avoid the sin and punishment. Make not yourselves worse on pretence of discovering how bad you are. Put not gunpowder or fuel to the sparks of corruption that still remain in you, on pretence of trying whether they will burn. All men are defensible, and capable of every sin, and must be saved from it by that grace which worketh on nature according to that nature, and prevaileth with reason by means agreeable to reason. If we think we are wicked, because we find that we have hearts that could be wicked, were they let alone, and because we are not removed so far from sin as to be incapable of it, we may as well say Adam was wicked in his innocence, much more David, Solomon, and Peter, before their falls. It is not he that can sin that shall be punish-

ed; but he that doth sin, or would sin if he could, and had rather have the sin for its pleasure or commodity to the flesh, than be free from it, and be holy, in order to salvation, and the favour, and pleasing, and enjoying of God in endless glory.

5. Lastly, Let such persons try themselves by their conquest over the temptations which they have, and not by imaginary conflicts with all that they think may possibly at any time assault them. You have still the same flesh to deal with, and the same world and devil, that will not let you go to heaven without temptation. If the temptations which you have already, keep you not from preferring the love and fruition of God before the pleasure of the flesh; and a life of faith and holiness, before a life of infidelity, and impiety, and sensuality, so that you had rather live the former than the latter, I am sure then your temptations have not kept you from a state of grace. And you may be assured, that for the time to come, if you watch and pray, you may escape the danger of temptation; and that God will increase your strength if he increase your trials: be not secure, be you never so holy. Think not that you have a nature that cannot sin, or cannot be tempted to a love of sin: but "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is moderate, or common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 12, 13.

And thus I have showed you how self-ignorance hindereth the conquest and mortifying of sin, even in the godly, and now shall add some further motives.

2. Not knowing ourselves, and the secret corruptions of our hearts, doth make sin surprise us the more dangerously, and break forth the more shamefully, and wound our consciences the more terribly. The unsuspected sin hath least opposition, and when it breaks out doth, like an unobserved fire, go far before we are awakened to quench it. And it confoundeth us with shame, to find ourselves so much worse than we imagined. It overwhelmeth the soul with despairing thoughts to find itself so bad, when it thought it had been better. It breedeth endless suspicions and fears, when we find our former opinions of ourselves confuted, and that contrary to our expectations we are surprised where we thought we had been safe: we are still ready to think, whatever we discern that is good within us, that we may as well be mistaken now as we were before. And thus our present self-ignorance, when discovered, may hinder all the comforts of our lives.

3. Lastly, Not knowing ourselves, and our particular sins, and wants, and weaknesses, doth keep us from a particular application of the promises, and from seeking those particular remedies from Christ, which our case requireth; and so our mercies lie by neglected, while we need them, and do not understand our need.

And thus I have showed you why you should labour to know your sinfulness.

II. I am next to persuade believers to know their graces and their happiness. Good is the object of voluntary knowledge, but evil of forced, involuntary knowledge, unless as the knowledge of evil tendeth to some good. Therefore methinks you should be readiest to this part of the study of yourselves: and yet, alas, the presumptuous are not more unwilling to know their sin and misery, than some perplexed christians are backward to acknowledge their grace and happiness. How hard is it to convince them of

the tender love of God towards them, and of the sincerity of their love to him; and to make them believe that they are dear to God when they loathe themselves! How hard is it to persuade them that the riches of Christ, the promises of the gospel, and the inheritance of the saints, belong to them! And the reasons, among others, are principally these:

1. The remnants of sin are so great, and so active, and so troublesome, as that the feeling of these contrary dispositions doth hinder them from observing the operations of grace. It is not easy to discern the sincerity of faith among so much unbelief, or the sincerity of love where there is so much averseness; or of humility where there is so much pride; or of repentance and mortification where there is so much concupiscence and inclination to sin; especially when grace by its enmity to sin doth make the soul so suspicious and sensible of it, as that the observation of it turns their mind from the observation of the contrary good that is in them. Health is not observed in other parts, when the feeling of the stone, or but the tooth-ache, takes us up. The thoughts are called all to the part affected; and sickness and wounds are felt more sensibly than health. The fears of misery by sin are easier excited, and more passionate, than love and hope, and all the affections that are employed in the prosecution of good. And in the midst of fears it is hard to feel the matter of our joys: fear is a tyrant if it exceed, and will not permit us to believe or observe the cause of hope. *Quod nimis metuunt miseri, hos facile credunt, et nunquam amoveri putant*, saith Seneca. What we too much fear, we too easily believe, and hardly believe that it is gone, and the danger past. These fears are useful to our preservation, but they too often pervert our judgments, and hinder our due consolation. *Qui insidias timet, in nullas incidit; nec cito perit ruina, qui ruinam timet. Semper metuendo sapiens vitat malum*, saith Seneca. He that feareth snares, doth not fall into them; nor doth he quickly perish by ruin, that feareth ruin. A wise man escapeth evil by always fearing it. And the Holy Ghost saith, "Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief," Prov. xxviii. 14.

Moderate fears then are given to believers for their necessary preservation, that walking among enemies and snares, they may take heed and escape them. But when this passion doth exceed, it abuseth us, and drowns the voice of reason; it maketh us believe that every temptation is a sin, and every sin is such as cannot stand with grace, and will hardly ever be pardoned by Christ. Every sin against knowledge and conscience doth seem almost unpardonable; and if it were deliberate after profession of religion, it seems to be the sin against the Holy Ghost. As children and other fearful persons that fear the devil by way of apparitions, do think in the dark he is ready to lay hold on them, and they look when they see him; so the fearful christian is still thinking that thing he feareth is upon him, or coming upon him. The fear of an unregenerate, unpardoned state, doth make him think he is in it; and the fear of the wrath of God doth make him think that he is under it; and the fear of damnation makes him imagine he shall be damned. It is wonderful hard in a fearful state, or indeed in any passion that is strong, to have the free use of judgment for the knowing of ourselves, and to discern any grace, or evidence, or mercy, which is contrary to our fears, especially when the feeling of much corruption doth turn our eyes from the observation of the good, and we are still taken up with the matter of our disease.

2. Another cause that we hardly know our graces, is because they are weak and small; and therefore in the midst of so much corruption are oftentimes hardly discerned from none. A little faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, may save us; a little love to God that is sincere will be accepted; and weak desires may be fulfilled; but they are frequently undiscerned, or their sincerity questioned, by those that have them, and therefore bring but little comfort. Peter's little faith did keep him from drowning, but not from doubting and fearing he should be drowned, nor from beginning to sink. "He walked on the water to go to Jesus; but when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matt. xiv. 29—31. So the little faith of the disciples kept them from perishing, but not from their fear of perishing. "When a great tempest arose, so that the ship was covered with waves, they cry, Lord, save us, we perish: and he saith to them, Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith?" Matt. viii. 24—26. The little faith of the same disciples entitled them to the fatherly protection and provision of God: but it kept them not from sinful cares and fears, about what they should eat or drink, or wherewith they should be clothed, as is intimated in Matt. vi. 25, 28, 30, "Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or drink; or for your body, what you shall put on.—Why take you thought for raiment?—If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" So in Matt. xvi. 7, 8. The seed that Christ likeneth his kingdom to, Matt. xiii. 31, hath life while it is buried in the earth, and is visible while a little seed; but is not so observed as when it cometh to be as a tree. Though God "despise not the day of little things," Zech. iv. 10, and though he "will not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax," Isa. xlii. 3, yet ourselves or others cannot discern and value these obscure beginnings, as God doth. But because we cannot easily find a little faith, and a little love, when we are looking for it, we take the non-appearance for a non-existence, and call it none.

3. Sanctification is oft unknown to those that have it, because they do not try and judge themselves by sure infallible marks, the essentials of the new man; but by uncertain qualifications, that are mutable and belong but to the beauty and activity of the soul.

The essence of holiness, as denominated from the object, is the consent to the three articles of the covenant of grace. 1. That we give up ourselves to God, as our God and reconciled Father in Jesus Christ. 2. That we give up ourselves to Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer and Saviour, to recover us, reconcile us, and bring us unto God. 3. That we give up ourselves to the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier, to guide and illuminate us, and perfect the image of God upon us, and prepare us for glory.

The essence of sanctification, as denominated from its opposite objects, is nothing but our renunciation and rejection of the flesh, the world, and the devil; of pleasures, profits, and honours, as they would be preferred before God, and draw us to forsake him.

The essence of sanctification, as denominated from our faculties, which are the subject of it, is nothing but this preferring of God, and grace, and glory, above the said pleasures, profits, and honours. 1. By the estimation of our understandings. 2. By the resolved, habituate choice of our wills. 3. And in the bent and drift of our endeavours in our conversations. In these three acts, as upon the first three

objects, and against the other three objects, lieth all that is essential to sanctification, and that we should judge of our sincerity and title to salvation by, as I before showed.

But besides these, there are many desirable qualities and gifts, which we may seek for, and be thankful for; but are not essential to our sanctification. Such are,

1. The knowledge of other truths, besides the essentials of faith and duty, and the soundness of judgment, and freedom from error in these lesser points.

2. A strong memory to carry away the things that we read and hear.

3. A right order of our thoughts, when we can keep them from confusion, roving, and distraction.

4. Freedom from too strong affections about the creatures, and from disturbing passions.

5. Lively affections and feeling operations of the soul towards God, in holy duty, and tender meltings of the heart for sin; which are very desirable, but depend so much on the temperature of the body, and outward accidents, and are but the vigour, and not the life and being of the new creature, that we must not judge of our sincerity by them. Some christians scarce know what any such lively feelings are; and some have them very seldom, and, I think, no one constantly: and therefore if our peace, or judgment of ourselves, be laid on these, we shall be still wavering and unsettled, and tossed up and down as the waves of the sea: sometimes seeming to be almost in heaven, and presently near the gates of hell: when our state doth not change at all, as these feelings and affectionate motions of the soul do; but we are still in our safe relation to God, while our first essential graces do continue, though our failings, dullness, weaknesses, and wants, must be matter of moderate filial humiliation to us.

6. The same must be said of all common gifts, of utterance in conference or prayer, and of quickness of understanding, and such like.

7. Lastly, The same must be said also of all that rectitude of life, and those degrees of obedience, that are above mere sincerity; in which one true christian doth exceed another; and in which we should all desire to abound; but must not judge ourselves to be unsanctified, merely because we are imperfect; or to be unjustified sinners, merely because we are sinners.

In our judging of ourselves by our lives and practices, two extremes must be carefully avoided: on the left hand that of the profane, and of the antinomians. The former cannot distinguish between sinners and sinners, sanctified and unsanctified, justified and unjustified sinners; and when they have once conceived that they are in the favour of God, whatever they do, they say, We are but sinners, and so are the best. The latter teach men, that when once they are justified, they are not for any sins to doubt again of their justified state, lest they should seem to make God changeable.

On the other hand must be avoided this extreme of perplexed, doubting christians, that make all their sins, or too many of them, to be matter of doubting, which should be but matter of humiliation.

I know it is a very great difficulty that hath long perplexed the doctors of the church, to define what sins are consistent and what inconsistent with a state of holiness and salvation (which if any distinguish by the names of *mortal* and *venial*, taking the words in no other sense, I shall not quarrel with them). At the present I shall say but this, for the resolving of this great and weighty question.

1. It is not the bare act of sin in itself considered, that must determine the case; but the act compared with the life of grace, and with true repentance.

Whoever hath the love of God and life of grace, is in a state of salvation; and therefore whatever sin consisteth with the fore-described essentials of sanctification, (viz. the habitual devotion of the soul to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the habitual renunciation of the flesh, the world, and devil,) consisteth with a state of life. And true repentance proveth the pardon of all sin: and therefore whatever sin consisteth with habitual repentance, (which is the hatred of sin, as sin,) and hath actual repentance when it is observed, and there is time for deliveration, consisteth with a state of grace. Now in habitual conversion or repentance, the habitual willingness to leave our sin, must be more than our sinful habitual willingness to keep it. Now you may by this much discern, as to particular acts, whether they are consistent with habitual hatred of sin. For some sins are so much in the power of the will, that he that hath an habitual hatred of them, cannot frequently commit them. And some sins are also of so heinous a nature or degree, that he that habitually hateth sin, cannot frequently commit them; nor at all, while his hatred to them is in act. And he that truly repenteth of them, cannot frequently return to them; because that sheweth that repentance was indeed either but superficial, or not habitual. But some sins are not so great and heinous, and therefore do not so much deter the soul, and some are not so fully in the power of a sanctified will, (as passions, thoughts, &c.) and therefore may oftener be committed in consistency with habitual repentance or hatred of sin. To examine particulars would be tedious and digressive.

2. And I must further answer, that our safety, and consequently our peace and comfort, lieth in flying as far from sin as we can: and therefore he that will sin as much as will consist with any sparks of grace, shall bury those sparks by his sin, and shall not know that he hath any grace, nor have the comfort of it; as being in a condition unfit for actual assurance and comfort, till he be brought to actual repentance and amendment.

Thus have I showed you by what you must try your sanctification, if you will know it; which I before proved to you from Scripture; and further may do, when the occasion will excuse me from the imputation of disproportion and unseasonableness, in repeating the proofs of all that we speak in explication or application of the principal point.

4. Another cause that many christians are ignorant of their state of grace, is their looking so much at what they should be, and what others are that have a high degree of grace, and what is commanded as our duty, that they observe not what they have already, because it is short of what they ought to have. We are thus too much about outward mercies too. We mourn more for our friend that is dead, than we rejoice in many that are alive. We are more troubled for one mercy taken from us, than comforted in many that are left us. We observe our diseases and our sores, more sensibly than our health. David for one Absalom is so afflicted, that he wished he had died for him though a rebel! when his comfort in Solomon and his other children is laid aside. As all the humours flow to the pained place, so do our thoughts, as was aforesaid, and so we overlook the matter of our comfort.

5. And it very much hindereth the knowledge of our graces, that we search upon so great disadvantages as hinder a true discovery. Among many others, I will instance but in two or three.

1. We surprise our souls with sudden questions, and look for a full and satisfactory answer, before we can well recollect ourselves, and call up our evi-

dences; and we expect to know the sum or product, before our consciences have had leisure deliberately to cast up their accounts. Yea, when we have set to it, and by diligent search with the best assistances, have discovered our sincerity, and recorded the judgment, if conscience cannot presently recall its proofs, and make it out upon every surprise, we unjustly question all that is past, and will never rest in any judgment, but are still calling over all again, as if the cause had never been tried. And then the judgment passeth according to our present temper and disposition, when many of the circumstances are forgotten, and many of the witnesses are out of the way, that last assisted us.

2. Perhaps we judge (as I said before) in the fit of a passion of fear or grief, which imperiously overruleth or disturbeth reason: and then no wonder if in our haste we say, that all men that would comfort us are liars. And if with David, Psal. lxxvii. 2, 3, 7—9, in the “day of our trouble, our souls do even refuse to be comforted;” and if we remember God, and are troubled more; and if “our spirit be overwhelmed in us: when he holdeth our eyes waking, and we are so troubled that we cannot speak.” And if we question whether “the Lord will cast off for ever, and will be favourable no more:” whether “his mercy be clean gone for ever, and his promise fail for evermore:” whether “he hath forgotten to be gracious, and hath shut up his tender mercies in displeasure:” till a calm deliver us from the mistake, and make us say, This is our infirmity. We think that God doth cast off our souls, and “hideth his face from us,” when “our soul is full of troubles, and our life draweth nigh unto the grave: when we are afflicted and ready to die from our youth up, and are distracted, while we suffer the torments of the Lord;” as he complaineth, Psal. lxxxviii. 3, 14—16. Passion judgeth according to its nature, and not according to truth.

3. Or perhaps we judge, when our friends, our memory, and other helps are out of the way, and we are destitute of due assistance.

4. Or when our bodies are weak or distempered with melancholy, which representeth all this in black and terrible colours to the soul, and will hear no language but *forsaken, miserable, and undone*. You may as well take the judgment of a man half drunk, or half asleep, about the greatest matters of your lives, as to take the judgment of conscience in such a state of disadvantage, about the condition of your souls.

5. Another hinderance to us, is, that we cannot take comfort from the former sight of grace that we have had, unless we have a continued present sight. And so all our labour in trying, and all our experiences, and all God's former manifestations of himself to the soul, are lost, as to our present comfort, when our grace is out of sight: like foolish travellers, that think they are out of the way, and are ready to turn back, whenever any hill doth interpose, and hinder them from seeing the place they go to. As if it were no matter of comfort to us, to say, I did find the evidences of grace; I once recorded a judgment of my sincerity: but the former is still questioned rather than the latter. When with David, we should “consider the days of old, the years of ancient times, and call to remembrance our songs in the night, and commune with our hearts in such a diligent search,” and remembrance of the mercies formerly received, Psal. lxxvii. 5—7.

6. Lastly, The operations of man's soul are naturally so various, and from corruption are so confused and so dark, that we are oftentimes in a maze and at a loss, when we are most desirous to judge aright;

and scarce know where, in so great disorder, to find any thing that we seek; and know it not when we find it: so that our hearts are almost as strange to themselves as to one another; and sometimes more confident of other men's sincerity than our own, where there is no more matter for our confidence.

Having thus showed you the causes of our ignorance of our sanctification, I shall briefly tell you some reasons that should move you to seek to be acquainted with it, where it is.

1. The knowledge of God is the most excellent knowledge; and therefore the best sort of creature knowledge is that which hath the most of God in it. And undoubtedly there is more of God in holiness, which is his image, than in common things. Sins and wants have nothing of God in them; they must be fathered on the devil and yourselves. And therefore the knowledge of them is good but by accident, because the knowledge even of evil hath a tendency to good: and therefore it is commanded and made our duty, for the good which it tendeth to. It is the divine nature and image within you, which hath the most of God; and therefore to know this is the high and noble knowledge. To know Christ within us, is our happiness on earth, in order to the knowledge of him in glory "face to face," which is the happiness of heaven. To "know God, though darkly through a glass," and but in part, (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) is far above all creature knowledge. The knowledge of him raiseth, quickeneth, sanctifieth, enlargeth, and advanceth all our faculties. It is "life eternal to know God in Christ," John xvii. 3. Therefore where God appeareth most, there should our understandings be most diligently exercised in study and observation.

2. It is a most delightful, felicitating knowledge, to know that Christ is in you. If it be delightful to the rich to see their wealth, their houses, and lands, and goods, and money; and if it be delightful to the honourable to see their attendance, and hear their own commendations and applause; how delightful must it be to a true believer to find Christ within him, and to know his title to eternal life! If the knowledge of "full barns," and "much goods laid up for many years," can make a sensual worldling say, "Soul, take thy ease, eat, drink, and be merry," Luke xii. 19, 20; methinks the knowledge of our interest in Christ and heaven, should make us say, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased," (that is, more than corn and wine could put into theirs), Psal. iv. 7. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee," Psal. cxvi. 7. If we say with David, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee," Psal. lxxxiv. 4; much more may we say, Blessed are they in whom Christ dwelleth, and the Holy Ghost hath made his temple; they should be still praising thee. "Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple," Psal. lxxv. 4. But this is upon supposition, that he be first blessed by Christ's approach to him, and dwelling in him.

If you ask, How it is that Christ dwelleth in us? I answer, 1. Objectively, as he is apprehended by our faith and love: as the things or persons that we think of, and love and delight in, are said to dwell in our minds or hearts. 2. By the Holy Ghost, who as a principle of new and heavenly life, is given by Christ the Head, unto his members; and as the agent of Christ, doth illuminate, sanctify, and guide

the soul. "He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," 1 John iii. 24. That of Eph. iii. 17, may be taken in either or both senses comprehensively, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

3. Did you know that Christ is in you by his Spirit, it might make every place and condition comfortable to you! If you are alone, it may rejoice you to think what company dwelleth continually with you in your hearts. If you are wearied with evil company without, it may comfort you to think that you have better within: when you have communion with the saints, it is your joy to think that you have nearer communion with the Lord of saints. You may well say with David, Psal. cxxxix. 18, "When I awake I am still with thee." "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved," Psal. xvi. 8.

4. Did you know Christ within you, it would much help you in believing what is written of him in the gospel. Though to the ungodly the mysteries of the kingdom of God do seem incredible, yet when you have experience of the power of it on your souls, and find the image of it on your hearts, and the same Christ with you, conforming you to what he commandeth in his word, this will work such a suitableness to the gospel in your hearts, as will make the work of faith more easy. Saith the apostle, 1 John iv. 14, 16, "We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world;" (there is their outward experience); "and we have known and believed the love that God hath to us: God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (There is their faith confirmed by their inward evidence: no wonder if they that have God dwelling in them by holy love, do believe the love that God hath to them.) This is the great advantage that the sanctified have in the work of faith, above those that much excel them in disputing, and are furnished with more arguments for the christian verity; Christ hath his witness abiding in them. "The fruits of the Spirit bear witness to the incorruptible seed, the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever," 1 Peter i. 23. The impress on the heart bears witness to the seal that caused it. And it is not a weak and uneffectual argument for the truth of the gospel, that believers use to fetch from within, when they plead the effects of it on their souls. Labour to know the truth of your sanctification, that you may be confirmed by it in the truth of the word that sanctifieth you, John xvii. 17, and may "rejoice in him that hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," 2 Thess. ii. 13.

5. If you can come to the knowledge of Christ within you, it will be much the easier to you to trust upon him, and fly to him in all your particular necessities, and to make use of his mediatorship with holy confidence. When others fly from Christ with trembling, and know not whether he will speak for them, or help them, or have any regard to them, but look at him with strange and doubtful thoughts, it will be otherwise with you that have assurance of his continual love and presence. Nearness breedeth familiarity, and overcometh strangeness: familiarity breedeth confidence and boldness: when you find Christ so near you, as to dwell within you, and so particular and abundant in his love to you, as to have given you his Spirit, and all his graces, it will breed a sweet, delightful boldness, and make you run to him as your help and refuge, in all your necessities. When you find the great promise fulfilled to

yourselves, "I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;" you will "have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; by the new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. And having an High Priest over the house of God, you may draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," (or the conscience of evil,) "as your bodies are washed" (in baptism) "with pure water," Heb. x. 16—22. "In Christ we may have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of him," Eph. iii. 12. This intimate acquaintance with our great High Priest that is "passed into the heavens," and yet abideth and reigneth in our hearts, will encourage us to "hold fast our profession, and to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 14, 16. When by unfeigned love, we "know that we are of the truth, and may assure our hearts before him, and our heart condemneth us not, then we have confidence towards God; and whatever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight," 1 John iii. 18—22.

6. When once you know that you have Christ within you, you may cheerfully proceed in the way of life; when doubting christians, that know not whether they are in the way or not, are still looking behind them, and spend their time in perplexed fears, lest they are out of the way, and go on with heaviness and trouble, as uncertain whether they may not lose their labour; and are still questioning their groundwork, when the building should go on. It is an unspeakable mercy, when a believing soul is freed from these distracting, hindering doubts, and may boldly and cheerfully hold on his way, and be walking or working, when other men are fearing and inquiring of the way; and may with patience and comfort wait for the reward, the crown of life, when others are still questioning, whether they were ever regenerate, and whether their hopes have any ground. We may be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, when we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58. We may then "gird up the loins of the mind, and in sobriety hope unto the end, for the grace that is to be brought us, at the revelation of Jesus Christ," 1 Peter i. 13.

7. When you are assured that you have Christ within you, it may preserve you from those terrors of soul that affright them that have no such assurance. Oh! he that knoweth what it is to think of the intolerable wrath of God, and says, I fear I am the object of this wrath, and must bear this intolerable load everlastingly, may know what a mercy it is to be assured of our escape. He that knows what it is to think of hell, and say, I know not but those endless flames may be my portion, will know what a mercy it is to be assured of deliverance, and to be able to say, "I know I am saved from the wrath to come," 1 Thess. i. 10; and that we "are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul," Heb. x. 39; and that "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him;" we may "comfort ourselves together, and edify one another," when we have this assurance, 1 Thess. v. 9—11.

They that have felt the burden of a wounded spirit, and know what it is to feel the terrors of the Lord,

and to see hell-fire as it were before their eyes, and to be kept waking by the dreadful apprehensions of their danger, and to be pursued daily by an accusing conscience, setting their sins in order before them, and bringing the threatenings of God to their remembrance; these persons will understand, that to be assured of a Christ within us, and consequently of a Christ that is preparing a place in glory for us, is a mercy that the mind of man is now unable to value, according to the ten thousandth part of its worth.

8. Were you assured that Christ himself is in you, it would sweeten all the mercies of your lives. It would assure you, that they are all the pledges of his love; and love in all, would be the kernel and the life of all. Your friends, your health, your wealth, your deliverances, would be steeped in the dearest love of Christ, and have a spiritual sweetness in them, when to the worldling they have but a carnal, unwholesome, luscious sweetness; and to the doubting christians they will be turned into troubles, while they are questioning the love and meaning of the giver; and whether they are sent for good to them, or to aggravate their condemnation; and the company of the giver will advance your estimation of the gift. Mean things with the company of our dearest friends are sweeter than abundance in their absence. To have money in your purses, and goods in your houses, and books in your studies, and friends in your near and sweet society, are all advanced to the higher value, when you know that you have also Christ in your hearts; and that all these are but the attendants of your Lord, and the fruits that drop from the tree of life, and the tokens of his love, importing greater things to follow. Whereas in the crowd of all those mercies, the soul would be uncomfortable, or worse, if it missed the presence of its dearest friend: and in the midst of all, would live but as in a wilderness, and go seeking after Christ with tears, as Mary at his sepulchre, because they had "taken away her Lord," (as she thought,) "and she knew not where they had laid him," John xx. 13. All mercies would be bitter to us, if the presence of Christ do not put into them that special sweetness which is above the estimate of sense.

9. This assurance would do much to preserve you from the temptation of sensual delights. While you had within you the matter of more excellent contentment, and when you find that these inferior pleasures are enemies to those which are your happiness and life, you would not be easily taken with the bait. The poorest brutish pleasures are made much of by them that never were acquainted with any better. But after the sweetness of assurance of the love of God, how little relish is there to be found in the pleasures that are so valued by sensual unbelievers! Let them take them for me, saith the believing soul; may I but still have the comforts of the presence of my Lord, how little shall I miss them! how easily can I spare them! Silver will be cast by, if it be set in competition with gold. The company of common acquaintance may be acceptable, till better and greater come; and then they must give place. Men that are taken up with the pleasing entertainment of Christ within them, can scarce afford any more than a transient salutation or observance to those earthly things that are the felicity of the carnal mind, and take up its desires, endeavours, and delight; when the soul is tempted to turn from Christ, to those deceiving vanities that promise him more content and pleasure, the comfortable thoughts of the love of Christ, and his abode within us, and our abode with him, do sensibly scat-

ter and confound such temptations. The presence of Christ, the great Reconciler, doth reconcile us to ourselves, and make us willing to be more at home. He that is out of love with the company that he hath at home, is easily drawn to go abroad. But who can endure to be much abroad, that knoweth of such a guest as Christ at home? We shall say as Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe, and are sure, thou art that Christ the Son of the living God," John vi. 68, 69. And as Matt. vii. 4, when he saw him in a little of his glory, "Master, it is good for us to be here." And if the riches of the world were offered to draw a soul from Christ, that hath the knowledge of his special love and presence, the tempter would have no better entertainment than Simon Magus had with Peter, Their money perish with them that think Christ and his graces to be no better than money, Acts viii. 20.

10. How easy and sweet would all God's service be to you, if you were assured that Christ abideth in you! What delightful access might you have in prayer, when you know that Christ himself speaks for you! Not as if the Father himself were unwilling to do us good, but that he will do it in the name, and for the sake and merits of his Son: which is the meaning of Christ in those words, which seem to deny his intercession, "At that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me," &c. John xvi. 26. I appeal to your own hearts, Christians, whether you would not be much more willing and ready to pray; and whether prayer would not be a sweeter employment to you, if you were sure Christ's abode within you, and intercession for you, and consequently that all your prayers are graciously accepted of the Lord? You would not then desire the vain society of empty persons; nor seek for recreation in their insipid, frothy, insignificant discourse. The opening of your heart to your heavenly Father, and pleading the merits of his Son, in your believing petitions for his saving benefits, would be a more contenting kind of pleasure to you.

How sweet would meditation be to you, if you could still think on Christ, and all the riches of his kingdom, as your own! Could you look up to heaven, and say with grounded confidence, It is mine, and there I must abide and reign for ever! Could you think of the heavenly host, as those that must be your own companions, and of their holy employment as that which must be your own for ever, it would make the ascent of your minds to be more frequent, and meditation to be a more pleasant work. Were you but assured of your special interest in God, and that all his attributes are by his love and covenant engaged for your happiness, experience would make you say, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts do delight my soul," Psal. xlv. 19. "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being: my meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord," Psal. civ. 33, 34. Could you say with full assurance, that you are the children of the promises, and that they are all your own, how sweet would the reading and meditation on the holy Scriptures be to you! How dearly would you love the word! what a treasure would you judge it! "Your delight would be then in the law of the Lord, and you would meditate in it day and night," Psal. i. 2. To find such grounds of faith, and hope, and riches of consolation in every page, and assuredly to say, All this is mine, would make you better understand why David did indite all the 119th Psalm, in

high commendations of the word of God, and would make you join in his affectionate expressions, "Oh how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me," Psal. cxix. 97—99.

Sermos also would be much sweeter to you, when you could confidently take home the consolatory part, and use our ministry as a help to your faith, and hope, and joy; whereas your doubts and fears, lest you are still unregenerate, will turn all that you hear, or read, or meditate on, into food and fuel for themselves to work upon; and you will gather up all that tends to your disquietment, and say, it is your part; and cast away all that tendeth to your consolation, and say, it belongeth not to you. And the most comforting passages of the word will be turned into your discomfort; and the promises will seem to you as none, while you imagine that they are none of yours: and the loss of your peace and comfort will not be the worst. But this will increase your backwardness to duty; and when your delight in the worship of God is gone, your inclination to it will abate, and it will seem a burden to you, and be as meat to the stomachs of the sick, that with the carefullest preparation, and much entreaty, can hardly be brought to get it down, and can bear but little, and that which is suited to their diseased appetites.

The same I may say of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. How sweet will it be to you, if you are assured, that the same Christ that is there represented as broken and bleeding for your sins, doth dwell within you by his Spirit! What welcome entertainment would you expect and find, if you knew that you brought the feast, and the Master of the feast, with you in your hearts; and had there entirely entertained him, with whom you expect communion in the sacrament! How boldly and comfortably would your hungry souls then feed upon him! With what refreshing acts of faith would you there take the sealed promise and pardon of your sins! Whereas when you come in fears and doubting, and must take the body and blood of Christ in their representations, with your hand and mouth, while you know not whether you receive him with the heart, and whether you have any special interest in him, oh what a damp it casteth on the soul! How it stifleth its hopes and joys, and turneth the sacrament, which is appointed for their comfort, into their greater trouble! It hath many a time grieved me to observe that no ordinance doth cast many upright souls into greater perplexities, and discouragements, and distresses, than the Lord's supper, because they come to it with double reverence, and by the doubtings of their title, and questioning their preparedness, and by their fears of eating and drinking unworthily, their souls are utterly discomposed with perplexing passions, and turned from the pleasant exercise of faith, and the delightful intercourse that they should have with God; and they are distempered and put out of relish to all the sweetness of the gospel: and then they are frightened from the sacrament by such sad experiences, and dare come thither no more, for fear of eating judgment to themselves. And should not Christians labour to remove the cause of such miserable, distracting fears, that so much wrong both Christ and them, and to recover their well-grounded peace and comfort?

11. Your love to God, which is the heart and life of the new creature, doth so much depend upon your knowledge of his love to you, as should make you much more desirous of such a knowledge. Love is the end of faith; and faith the way to love. So much

of love as is in every duty, so much holiness is in it, and no more. Love is the sum of the commandments. It is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. xiii. 10; Matt. xxii. 37; Mark xii. 33. Though God loved us first, as purposing our good, before we loved him, (1 John iv. 9, 10,) and we therefore love him, because he first loved us, (ver. 19,) yet doth he love us by complacency and acceptance, because we love the Father and the Son. "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye loved me, and have believed that I came out from God," John xvi. 27. And what will more effectually kindle in you the fervent love of Christ, than to know that he loveth you, and dwelleth in you? All this is expressed by Christ himself: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.—If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 20—23. "If any man love God, the same is known of him," (1 Cor. viii. 3,) with a knowledge of special love and approbation. This is no disparagement to faith, whose nature and use is to work by love, Gal. v. 6. What a man loveth, such he is. The love is the man. Our love is judged by our life, as the cause by the effect; but the life is judged by the love, as the fruits by the tree, the effects by the cause. *Mores autem nostri non ex eo; quod quisque novit, sed ex eo quod diligit, diducari solent nec faciunt bonos vel malos mores, nisi boni vel mali amores,* saith Augustine; that is, Our manners are not used to be judged of according to that which every man knoweth, but according to that which he loveth: it is only good or evil love, that maketh good or evil manners. If Plato could say, (as Augustine citeth him, lib. viii. de Civit. Dei,) *Hoc est philosophari, scilicet Deum amare*: To be a philosopher, is to love God; much more should we say, *Hoc est christianum agere*: This is the doctrine and the work of a christian, even the love of God. Indeed it is the work of the Redeemer, to recover the heart of man to God, and to bring us to love him by representing him to us as the most amiable, suitable object of our love; and the perfection of love, is heaven itself. *O jugum sancti amoris,* (inq. Bernard.) *quam dulciter capis, gloriose laqueas, suaviter premis, delectanter oneras, fortiter stringis, prudenter erudis!* that is, The yoke of holy love, O how sweetly dost thou surprise! how gloriously dost thou enthral! how pleasantly dost thou press! how delightfully dost thou load! how strongly dost thou bind! how prudently dost thou instruct! *O fatix amor ex quo oritur strenuitas morum, puritas affectionum, subtilitas intellectuum, desideriorum sanctitatis, operum claritas, virtutum fecunditas, meritorum dignitas, premiorum subtilitas.* O happy love, from which ariseth the strength of manners, the purity of affections, the subtlety of intellects, the sanctity of desires, the excellency of works, the fruitfulness of virtues, the dignity of deserts, the sublimity of the reward! I appeal to your own consciences, christians, would you not think it a foretaste of heaven upon earth, if you could but love God as much as you desire? Would any kind of life that you can imagine, be so desirable and delightful to you? Would any thing be more acceptable unto God? And on the contrary, a soul without the love of God, is worse than a corpse without a soul. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha," 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

And do I need to tell you what a powerful incentive it is to love, to know that you are beloved? It

will make Christ much more dear to you, to know how dear you are to him. What is said of affective love in us, may partly be said of attractive love in Christ. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it," Cant. viii. 7: no riches can purchase what it can attract. When you find that he hath set you "as a seal upon his arm and heart," ver. 6, and that you are dear to him as the "apple of his eye," what holy flames will this kindle in your breast! If it be almost impossible with your equals upon earth not to love them that love you, (which Christ telleth you that even publicans will do, Matt. v. 46,) how much more should the love of Christ constrain us abundantly to love him, when being infinitely above us, his love descendeth, that ours may ascend! His love puts forth the hand from heaven to fetch us up.

O christians, you little know how Satan wrongeth you, by drawing you to deny, or doubt of, the special love of God! How can you love him that you apprehend to be your enemy, and to intend your ruin? Doubtless not so easily as if you know him to be your friend. In reason is there any likelier way to draw you to hate God, than to draw you to believe that he hateth you? Can your thoughts be pleasant of him, or your speeches of him sweet? or can you attend him, or draw near him with delight, while you think he hateth you, and hath decreed your damnation? You may fear him, as he is a terrible avenger; and you may confess his judgments to be just: but can you amicably embrace the consuming fire, and love to dwell with the everlasting burnings?

O, therefore, as ever you would have the love of God to animate, and sanctify, and delight your souls, study the greatness of his love to you, and labour with all possible speed and diligence, to find that Christ by his Spirit is within you. It is the whole work of sanctification that Satan would destroy or weaken by your doubts; and it is the whole work of sanctification that by love would be promoted, if you knew your interest in the love of Christ.

12. It is the knowledge of Christ dwelling in you, and so of the special love of God, that must acquaint you with a life of holy thankfulness and praise. These highest and most acceptable duties will be out of your reach, if Satan can hide from you that mercy which must be the chiefest matter of your thanksgiving. Will that soul be in tune for the high praises of the Lord, that thinks he meaneth to use him as an enemy? Can you look for any cheerful thanksgiving from him that looks to lie in hell? Will he not rather cry with David, "In death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Psal. vi. 5. "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?" Psal. xxx. 9. Shall the damned praise thee, or shall they give thee thanks that must be scorched with the flames of thine indignation? Can you expect that joy should be in their hearts, or cheerfulness in their countenances, or praises in their mouths, that think they are reprobated to the fire of hell? Undoubtedly Satan is not ignorant, that this is the way to deprive God of the service which is most acceptable to him and you, of the pleasures of so sweet a life. And therefore, he that envieth both, will do his worst to damp your spirits, and breed uncomfortable doubts and fears, and wrongful suspicions in your minds. Whereas the knowledge of your interest in Christ, would be a continual storehouse of thanksgiving and praise, and teach your hearts, as well as your tongues, to say with David, "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not ini-

quity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.—Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart," Psal. xxxii. 1, 2, 11. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies," Psal. ciii. 1—4. "O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me: O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; thou hast kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness: for his anger endureth but for a moment: in his favour is life," Psal. xxx. 2—5. Thanksgiving would be the very pulse and breath of your assurance of Christ dwelling in you. You would say with Paul, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in celestials in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us," &c. Eph. i. 3—8. Thus faith and assurance, as they have an unspeakable store to work upon, so it is natural to them to expatiate in the praise of our Redeemer, and to delight in amplifications and commemorations of the ways of grace. Just so doth Peter begin his first epistle, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein ye greatly rejoice," &c.

No wonder if the heirs of heaven be inclined to the language and the work of heaven. I think there are few of you that would not rejoice, and by your speech and countenance express your joy, if you had assurance but of the dignities and dominions of this world. And can he choose but express his joy and thankfulness, that hath assurance of the crown of life? What fragrant thoughts should possess that mind that knoweth itself to be possessed by the Spirit of the living God! How thankful will he be that knows he hath Christ and heaven to be thankful for! What sweet delights should fill up the hours of that man's life, that knows the Son of God liveth in him, and that he shall live in joy with Christ for ever! How gladly will he be exercised in the praises of his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, that knows it must be his work for ever! No wonder if this joy be a stranger to their hearts, that are strangers to Christ, or strangers to their interest in his love: no wonder if they have no hearts for these celestial works, that have no part in the celestial inheritance, or that know not that they have any part therein. How can they joyfully give thanks for that which they know not that they have or ever shall have, or have any probability to attain?

But to that man that is assured of Christ within him, heaven and earth, and all their store, do offer themselves as the matter of his thanks, and do furnish him with provisions to feed his praises. What

a shame is it that an assured heir of heaven should be scant and barren in comfort to himself, or in thanks and praise to Jesus Christ, when he hath so full a heap of love and mercy to fetch his motives from, and hath two worlds to furnish him with the precious materials; and hath no less than infinite goodness, even God himself, to be the subject of his praise! "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, because his mercy endureth for ever (whatsoever others do): let Israel say, let the house of Aaron say, let them that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever," Psal. cxviii. 1—4. The knowledge of our interest fitteth us for his praise. "Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee," Psal. cxviii. 28. "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds; I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord!" Psal. cxvi. 16, 17. "His praise is for the congregation of his saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King," Psal. cxlix. 1, 2. "Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of his people; the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him," Psal. cxlviii. 13, 14. "I will also clothe his priests with salvation, and his saints shall shout aloud for joy," Psal. cxxxii. 16. Praise is a work so proper for the saints, and thanksgiving must be fed with the knowledge of your mercies, that Satan well knoweth what he shall get by it, and what you will lose, if he can but hide your mercies from you. The height of his malice is against the Lord, and the next is against you: and how can he show it more than by drawing you to rob God of his thanks and praise, when he hath blessed and enriched you with the chiefest of his mercies? Labour therefore, Christians, to know that you have that grace that may be the matter and cause of so sweet and acceptable an employment as the praises of your Lord.

13. Moreover, you should consider that without the knowledge of your interest in Christ, you cannot live to the honour of your Redeemer, in such a measure as the gospel doth require. The excellency of gospel mercies will be veiled and obscured by you, and will not be revealed and honoured by your lives. Your low and poor dejected spirits will be a dishonour to the faith and hope of the saints, and to the glorious inheritance, of which you have so full a prospect in the promises. If you take the son of a prince in his infancy, and educate him as the son of a ploughman, he will not live to the honour of his birth, which he is not acquainted with. The heirs of heaven, that know not themselves to be such, may live like the heirs of heaven as to uprightness and humility, but not in the triumphant joy, nor in the courageous boldness, which becometh a believer. What an injury and dishonour is it to our Redeemer, that when he hath done and suffered so much to make us happy, we should walk as heavily as if he had done nothing for us at all! And when he hath so fully secured us of everlasting happiness, and told us of it so expressly that our joy may be full, we should live as if the gospel were not the gospel, and such things had never been promised or revealed! When heaven is the object, and the promise of God is the groundwork of our faith, we should live above all earthly things, as having the honours and pleasures of the world under our feet, accounting all as "loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ," Phil. iii. 8, whom we should love, though "we have not seen him; in whom though

now we see him not, yet believing we should rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, as those that must receive the end of their faith, the salvation of our souls," 1 Pet. i. 8, 9. And how can we do this, if we are still questioning the love of Christ or our interest in it.

Believers should with undaunted resolution charge through the armies of temptation, and conquer difficulties, and suffer for the name of Christ with joy; accounting it a blessed thing to be persecuted for righteousness' sake, because that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven:" because of the greatness of the reward, they should "rejoice and be exceeding glad," Matt. v. 10, 12. And how can they do this, that believe not that the reward and kingdom will be theirs?

The joys of faith and confidence on the promise and strength of Christ, should overcome all inordinate fears of man; "For he hath said, I will never fail thee nor forsake thee." So that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me," Heb. xiii. 5, 6. And how can we do this, while we are questioning our part in the Christ and promise that we should thus boldly trust upon?

14. Lastly consider, that the knowledge of your part in Christ, may make all sufferings easy to you. You will be so much satisfied in God your portion, as will abate the desires, and drown the joys and sorrows of the world. You will judge the "sufferings of this present time unworthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us," Rom. viii. 18. You will choose rather "to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world, as having respect to the recompence of the reward," Heb. xi. 25, 26. All this must be done, and will be done by true believers, that have an assurance of their own sincerity; they must and will forsake all, and take up the cross and follow Christ, in hope of a reward in heaven, as it is offered them in the gospel, when they know their special interest in it. For these are Christ's terms which he imposeth on all that will be his disciples, Luke xiv. 33; xviii. 22, 24, 25. But you may certainly perceive that it will be much more easy to part with all, and undergo and do all this, when we have the great encouragement of our assured interest, than when we have no more but the common offer. To instance in some particulars.

1. Do you live where serious godliness is derided, and you cannot obey the word of God, and seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, without being made the common scorn, and the daily jest and by-word of the company? Let it be so: if you know that you have Christ within you, and are secured of the everlasting joys, will you feel, will you regard such things as these? Shall the jest of a distracted, miserable fool, abate the joy of your assured happiness? Princes and noblemen will not forsake their dominions or lordships, nor cast away the esteem and comfort of all they have, because the poor do ordinarily reproach them as proud, unmerciful oppressors. They think they may bear the words of the miserable, while they have the pleasure of prosperity. And shall not we give losers leave to talk? We will not be mocked out of the comfort of our health or wealth, our habitations or our friends; and shall we be mocked out of the comfort of Christ, and of the presence of the Comforter himself? If they that go naked deride you for having clothes, and they that are out of doors in the cold and rain, deride you that are warm and dry within,

or they that are sick deride you for being well, this will but make you more sensible of your felicity, and pity them that have added such folly to their wants: so will it increase the sense of your felicity, to find that you are possessed of so unspeakable a mercy, which others have not so far tasted of as to know its worth. If you have the feast, you may bear the words of famished, unhappy souls that speak against it because they taste it not: if you are in your Father's arms, you may bear the scorn of such as stand without the doors.

2. If you have the contradictions and opposition of the ignorant or malicious, speaking evil of things they know not, and persuading you from the ways of righteousness, how easily may all this be borne while you have Christ within you to strengthen and encourage you! Had you but his example before you, who is "the Author and Finisher of your faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and endured such contradiction of sinners against himself; it should keep you from being weary and fainting in your minds," Heb. xii. 2, 3. But when you have his presence, his Spirit, and his help, how much should it corroborate and confirm you!

3. How easily may you bear the slanders of your own or the gospel's enemies, as long as you are sure of your interest in Christ! How easily may you suffer them to call you by their own names, "pestilent fellows, and movers of sedition among the people, ringleaders of a sect, profaners of the temple," as Paul was called, Acts xxiv. 5, 6, as long as you have Christ within you, that was called Beelzebub for your sakes, Matt. x. 25. Your Judge that must finally decide the case, is your dearest Friend, and dwelleth in you: it is "he that will justify you; who is he that condemneth you?" Rom. viii. 33, 34. His approbation is your life and comfort. How inconsiderable is it as to your own felicity, what mortal worms shall say or think of you! What if they call you all that is naught, and stain your names, and obscure your innocence, and make others believe the falsest accusations that Satan can use their tongues to utter of you? You have enough against all this within you. What if you go for hypocrites, or factious, or what malignity can call you, until the day of judgment? As long as you have so good security of being then fully cleared of all, and your righteousness vindicated by your Judge, how easily may you now bear the slanders of men, that prove themselves wicked, by falsely affirming it of you! You can endure to be called poor, so you be not poor; and to be called sick, as long as you are well. And you may well endure to be called proud, while you are humble; and factious, while you are the lovers of unity and peace; or hypocrites, while you are sincere. How boldly may you say with the prophet, "The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they shall all wax old as a garment: the moth shall eat them up," Isa. l. 7-9.

Had you but Paul's assurance and experience of Christ dwelling in you, you might imitate him in a holy contempt of all the slanders and revilings of the world: "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were men appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but

ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day." 1 Cor. iv. 9—13. Thus may we "do and suffer all things through Christ that strengtheneth us," Phil. iv. 13. What matter is it what men call us, if God call us his children and friends, and Christ be not ashamed to call us brethren? With us it will be a very small thing to be judged of man, while we know "the Lord that must judge us is on our side," 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. It lieth not on our hands to justify ourselves: it is Christ that hath undertaken to answer for us; and made it the work of his office to justify us; and to him we may boldly and comfortably leave it: and let all the accusers prepare their charge, and deal with him, and do their worst.

4. How easily may you bear imprisonment, banishment or other persecution, as long as you are assured of the love of Christ! Can you fear to dwell where Christ dwells with you? If he will go with you through fire and water, what need you fear? Those owning, appropriating words, will make us venture upon the greatest perils: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine: when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt.—For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Who would not with Peter cast himself into the sea, or walk with confidence upon the waters, if Christ be there, and call us to him? Matt. xiv. 28, 29; John xxi. 7.

The eleventh chapter to the Hebrews doth recapitulate the victories of faith, and show us what the hope of unseen things can cause believers patiently to undergo. How cheerfully will he endure the foulest way, that is assured to come safe to such a home! What will a man stick at, that knows he is following Christ to heaven; and knoweth that he "shall reign with him, when he hath suffered with him?" 2 Tim. ii. 12. Who will refuse bloodletting, that is assured beforehand that it shall procure his health? He is unworthy of Christ, and of salvation, that thinks any thing in the world too good to lose for them, Matt. x. 37. What matter is it, whether death finds us in honour or dishonour, in our own country or in another, at liberty or in prison, so we are sure it finds us not in a state of death? Who would not rather pass to glory by as straight a way as John Baptist, Stephen, or other martyrs did, than with their persecutors, to prosper in the way to misery? Who can for shame repine at the loss of temporal commodities, that is secured of the eternal joys? If assurance of the love of God would not imbolden you to patient suffering, and to lay down life and all for Christ, what do you think should ever do it?

But when you are afraid lest death will turn you into hell, what wonder if you timorously draw back? When you know not whether ever you shall have any better, no wonder if you are loth to part with the seeming happiness which you have. Those doubts and fears enfeeble the soul, and spoil you of that valour that becomes a soldier of Christ.

5. All personal crosses in your estates, your families, your friends, your health, will be easily borne, if you are once assured of your salvation. To a man that is passing into heaven, all these are almost in-

considerable things. What is Lazarus the worse now for his sores or rags? Or what is the rich man the better for his sumptuous attire and fare? Luke xvi. Whether you be poor or rich, sick or sound; whether you are used kindly or unkindly in the world; are questions of so small importance, that you are not much concerned in the answer of them: but whether you have Christ within you, or be reprobates; whether you are the heirs of the promise, or are under the curse; are questions of everlasting consequence.

6. Lastly, You may comfortably receive the sentence of death, when once you are assured of the life of grace, and that you have escaped everlasting death. Though nature will be still averse to a dissolution, yet faith will make you cheerfully submit, "desiring to depart and be with Christ," as the best condition for you, Phil. i. 23. When you "know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, you have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" you will then "groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with your house which is from heaven: not to be unclothed, (for the union of soul and body is the constitution of the man, which nature cannot but desire,) but to be clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. This God doth work you for, who giveth you the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore as men that know while you are at home in the body, you are absent from the Lord; and that walk by faith, and not by sight; you would be always confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 1—8.

Though it be troublesome to remove your dwelling, yet you would not stick upon the trouble, if you were sure to change a cottage for a court: nor would you refuse to cross the seas, to change a prison for a kingdom. The holy desires of believers do prepare them for a safe death; but it is the assurance of their future happiness, or the believing expectation of it, that must prepare them for a death that is safe and comfortable. The death of the presumptuous may be quiet, but not safe: the death of doubting, troubled believers may be safe, but not quiet: the death of the ungodly, that have awakened, undeceived consciences, is neither safe nor quiet: but the death of strong believers, that have attained assurance, is both. And he that findeth Christ within him, may know, that when he dieth he shall be with Christ: his dwelling in us by faith, by love, and by his Spirit, is a pledge that we shall dwell with him. Christ within us, will certainly carry us unto Christ above us. Let Socinians question the happiness of such departed souls, or doubt whether they be in heaven before the resurrection; I am sure that they are with Christ, as the forecited places show, 2 Cor. v. 7, 8; Phil. i. 23, and many other. We are following him, that when he had conquered death, and went before us, did send that message to his doubting, troubled disciples, (which is to me so full of sweetness, that methinks I can scarce too oft recite it,) "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God," John xx. 17. O piercing, melting words, which methinks do write themselves upon my heart, whenever I read them with attention and consideration! Know once that you are his brethren, and that his Father is your Father, and his God is your God, and that he is ascended and glorified in your nature; and then how can you be unwilling to be dismissed from the bondage of this flesh, and be with Christ? For in his Father's house are many mansions! and he is gone before to prepare a place for us; and will come

again and receive us unto himself, that where he is, there we may be also," John xiv. 2, 3. And that this is his will for all his servants, he hath declared in that comfortable promise, (which also I have found so full of sweetness, that I value it above all the riches of the world,) "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour," John xii. 26. The Spirit of Christ within you, is the earnest of all this: be assured of your faith, and hope, and love, and you may be assured to possess the good believed, and hoped for, and loved. "The incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever," of which you are new born, (1 Pet. i. 23,) doth tend to the "incorruptible crown," (1 Pet. v. 4,) even the "crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge will give to all that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 8. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord," as the apostle comfortably speaks, 1 Thess. iv. 17, and seasonably annexeth the use of such a cordial, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words," ver. 18.

Whether we are to die by the decay of nature, or by the storm of any violent disease, or by the hand of persecutors, or any other instruments of Satan, the difference is small; they are but several ways of landing at the shore of happiness, which we were making towards, through all the duties and difficulties of our lives. May we by any death be sent to Christ, let them domineer awhile that stay behind, and are conquerors and happy in their dream; we shall neither miss nor desire their felicity. May I die assured of the love of God, how little regardable is it, whether I be poor or rich till then, or in what manner death shall do its execution! And how little cause have blessed souls to envy them that are left on earth, in a quiet and prosperous passage to damnation!

And what an ease and pleasure is this to a man's mind through all his life, to be able, with well-grounded comfort, to think of death! What cares can vex him that hath secured his everlasting state? What losses should afflict him that is sure he shall not lose his soul, and is sure to gain eternal life? What fears should disquiet him that is sure to escape the wrath of God? What wants should trouble him that knoweth he is an heir of heaven? Why should the indignation or threatenings of man, be any temptation to turn him out of the way of duty, or dismay his mind, who knoweth that they can but "kill the body," and dismiss the soul into his blessed presence, whom it loveth, and laboureth and longs to see? What should inordinately grieve that man that is certain of eternal joy? What else should he thirst for, that hath "in him the well of living waters, springing up to everlasting life?" John iv. 14. And what should deprive that man of comfort, that knoweth he hath the Comforter within him, and shall be for ever comforted with his Master's joy? And what should break the peace and patience of him that is assured of everlasting rest? If the assurance of a happy death cannot make it welcome, and cannot make affliction easy, and fill our lives with the joys of hope, I know not what can do it.

But, alas for those poor souls that know not whether death will send them, or at least have not good grounds of hope; what wonder if "through the fear of death they be all their lifetime subject to bondage?" Heb. ii. 15. Methinks in the midst of their wealth and pleasure, they should not be so stupid as to forget the millions that are gone before them, that lately were as jovial and secure as they; and how short their dreaming feast will be. Methinks all the beauty of their fleshly idols should be

blasted with those nipping frosts and storms, that in their serious forethoughts come in upon them, from the black and dreadful regions of death! Methinks at any time it should damp their mirth, and allay the ebullition of their frenetic blood, to remember, For all this I must die, and it may be "this night, that the fool must deliver up his soul; and then, whose shall those things be which he hath provided?" Luke xii. 19, 20. Then who shall be the lord, and who the knight or gentleman? and who shall wear the gay attire? and who shall domineer, and say, Our will shall be done, and thus we will have it? Then where is the pleasure of lust, and merry company, and meat, drink, and sports? Methinks Solomon's memento, Eccles. xi. 9, should bring them to themselves: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." And as the sound of these words, I must shortly die, methinks should be always in your ears: so in reason, the question, Whither I must then go, should be always as it were before your eyes, till your souls have received a satisfactory answer to it. Oh what an amazing, dreadful thing it is, when an unsanctified, unprepared soul must say, I must depart from earth, but I know not whither! I know not whether unto heaven or hell; here I am now, but where must I be for ever! When men believe that their next habitation must be everlasting, methinks the question, Whither must I go? should be day and night upon their minds, till they can say upon good grounds, I shall go to the blessed presence of the Lord. O had you but the hearts of men within you, methinks the sense of this one question, Whither must I go when I leave the flesh? should so possess you, that it should give your souls no rest till you are able to say, We shall be with Christ, because he dwelleth in us here, and hath sealed us and given us the earnest of his Spirit; or at least, till you have good hopes of this, and have done your best to make it sure.

And thus I have told you of how great importance it is to believers, to attain assurance of the love of God, and to know that Christ abideth in them. And now I think you will confess, I have proved the necessity of self-knowledge, both to the unregenerate and the regenerate, though in several degrees; and having opened the disease, and showed you the need of a remedy, I am next to direct you in the application for the cure.

I doubt not but there are many of the hearers, that by this time are desirous to be instructed, how this self-knowledge may be attained: for whose satisfaction, and for the reducing of all that hath been spoken into practice, I shall next acquaint you with the hinderances of self-knowledge, (the removing of them being not the least point in the cure,) and with the positive directions to be practised for the attainment of it. And because the hinderances and helps are contrary, I shall open both together as we go on.

The hinderances of self-knowledge are some of them without us, and some within us; and so must be the helps.

I. The external hinderances are these.

1. The failing of ministers in their part of the work, through unskilfulness or unfaithfulness, is a great cause that so many are ignorant of themselves. They are the lights of the world; and if they are eclipsed, or put under a bushel; if they are darkened by the snuff of their own corruptions; or if they feed not their light by the oil of diligent studies, and

other endeavours ; or if they will not go along with men into the dark and unknown corners of the heart, what wonder if men's hearts remain in darkness, when those that by office are appointed to afford them light, do fail them ? It is not a general dull discourse, or critical observations upon words, or the subtle decision of some nice and curious questions of the schools, (though these may be useful to their proper ends,) nor is it a neat and well-composed speech, about some other distant matters, that is like to acquaint a sinner with himself. How many sermons may we hear (that to other ends are not unprofitable) that are levelled at some mark or other, that is very far from the hearers' hearts, and therefore are never like to convince them or prick them, or open and convert them ! And if our congregations were in such a case, as that they needed no closer quickening work, such preaching might be borne with and commended ; but when so many usually sit before us, that must shortly die, and are unprepared, and that are condemned by the law of God, and must be pardoned or finally condemned ; that must be saved from their sins, that they may be saved from everlasting misery ; I think it is time for us to talk to them of such things as most concern them ; and that in such a manner as may most effectually convince, awake, and change them. When we come to them on their sick-beds, we talk not then to them of distant or impertinent things ; of words, or forms, or parties, or by-opinions ; but of the state of their souls, and their appearing before the Lord, and how they may be ready, that death may be both safe and comfortable to them. (Though a superstitious, miserable fellow, that knoweth no better things himself, may talk to the sick of beads, and relics, and of being on this side or that, for this ceremony or the other, and may think to conjure the unholy spirit out of him by some affected words of devotions, uttered from a graceless, senseless heart ; or to command him out by papal authority, as if they would charm his soul to heaven, by saying over some lifeless forms, and using the gospel as a spell : yet ministers indeed, that know themselves what faith and what repentance is, and what it is to be regenerate, and to be prepared to die, do know that they have other work to do.) The gospel offereth men their choice, whether they will have holiness or sin ; and be ruled by Christ, or by their fleshly lusts ; and so whether they will have spiritual or carnal, eternal or transitory joys. And our work is to persuade them to make that choice which will be their happiness if we can prevail, and which eternal joy depends upon ; whether we come to them in sickness or in health, this is our business with them. A man that is ready to be drowned, is not at leisure for a song or dance : and a man that is ready to be damned, methinks should not find himself at leisure to hear a man show his wit and reading only, if not his folly and malice against a life of holiness : nor should you think that suitable to such men's case, that doth not evidently tend to save them. But, alas, how often have we heard such sermons, as tend more to diversion than direction, to fill their minds with other matters, and find men something else to think on, lest they should study themselves, and know their misery ! And whereas there may be so much ingenuity in the sinner, as to perceive that the discourse of idle tongues, or the reading of a romance, is unsuitable to one in his condition ; and therefore will not, by such toys as these, be called off from the consideration of his ways : a preacher that seems to speak religiously, by a sapless, dry, impertinent discourse, that is called a sermon, may more plausibly and easily divert him ; and his conscience will

more quietly suffer him to be taken off the necessary care of his salvation, by something that is like it, and pretends to do the work as well, than by the grosser avocations, or the scorn of fools ; and he will more tamely be turned from religion, by something that is called religion, and which he hopes may serve the turn, than by open wickedness, or impious defiance of God and reason. But how oft do we hear applauded sermons, which force us, in compassion to men's souls, to think, Oh what is all this to the opening a sinner's heart unto himself, and showing him his unregenerate state ? What is this to the conviction of a self-deluding soul, that is passing unto hell with the confident expectations of heaven ? to the opening of men's eyes, and turning them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God ! What is this to show men their undone condition, and the absolute necessity of Christ, and of renewing grace ? What is in this to lead men up from earth to heaven, and to acquaint them with the unseen world, and to help them to the life of faith and love, and to the mortifying and the pardon of their sins ? How little skill have many miserable preachers, in the searching of the heart and helping men to know themselves, whether Christ be in them, or whether they be reprobates ! And how little care and diligence are used by them to call men to the trial, and help them in the examining and judging of themselves, as if it were a work of no necessity ! "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, saith the Lord," Jer. vi. 14. And Ezek. xiii. 10—12, "Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace ; and there was no peace ; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar : say unto them that daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall : there shall be an overflowing shower ; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall ; and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it ?"

It is a plain and terrible passage, Prov. xxiv. 24, "He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse ; nations shall abhor him." Such injustice in a judge, or witnesses, is odious, that determine but in order to temporal rewards or punishments, Lev. xix. 15 ; Prov. xviii. 5 ; xxviii. 21. But in a messenger that professeth to speak to men in the name of God, and in the stead of Jesus Christ, when the determination hath respect to the consciences of men, and to their endless joy or torment, how odious and horrid a crime must it be esteemed, to persuade the wicked that he is righteous ; or to speak that which tendeth to persuade him of it, though not in open, plain expressions ! What perfidious dealing is this against the holy God ! What an abuse of our Redeemer, that his pretended messengers shall make him seem to judge clean contrary to his holiness, and to his law, and to the judgment which indeed he passeth, and will pass on all that live and die unsanctified ! What vile deceit and cruelty against the souls of men are such preachers guilty of, that would make them believe that all is well with them, or that their state is safe or tolerable, till they must find it otherwise to their woe ! when diseased souls have but a short and limited time allowed them for their cure, that a man shall come to them, as in the name of their physician, and tell them that they are pretty well, and need not make so much ado about the business, and thus keep them from their only help till it be too late ! What shame, what punishment can be too great for such a wretch, when the neglect and mak-

ing light of Christ and his salvation is the common road to hell? Heb. ii. 3; Matt. xxii. 5. And most men perish, because they value not and use not the necessary means of their recovery. For a man in the name of a minister of the gospel, to cheat them into such undervaluings and neglects, as are like to prove their condemnation; what is this but to play the minister of Satan, and to do his work, in the name and garb of a minister of Christ? It is damnable treachery against Christ, and against the people's souls, to hide their misery, when it is your office to reveal it; and to let people deceive themselves in the matters of salvation, and not to labour diligently to undeceive them; and to see them live upon presumption and ungrounded hopes, and not to labour with faithful plainness to acquaint them with their need of better hopes. But some go further, and more openly act the part of Satan, by reproaching the most faithful servants of the Lord, and labouring to bring the people into a conceit, that seriousness and carefulness in the matters of God and our salvation, are but hypocrisy and unnecessary strictness: and in their company and converse they put so much countenance on the ungodly, and cast so much secret or open scorn upon those that would live according to the Scriptures, as hardeneth multitudes in their impenitency. Oh dreadful reckoning to these unfaithful shepherds, when they must answer for the ruin of their miserable flocks! How great will their damnation be, which must be aggravated by the damnation of so many others! When the question is, How come so many souls to perish? the answer must be, Because they set light by Christ and holiness, which should have saved them. But what made them set light by Christ and holiness? It was their deceitful confidence, that they had so much part in Christ and holiness, as would suffice to save them, though indeed they were unsanctified strangers to both. They were not practically acquainted with their necessities. But how came they to continue thus ignorant of themselves till it was too late? Because they had teachers that kept them strange to the nature of true holiness, and did not labour publicly and privately to convince them of their undone condition, and drive them to Christ, that by him they might have life. Woe to such teachers that ever they were born, that must then be found under the guilt of such perfidiousness and cruelty! Had they ever felt themselves, what it is to be pursued by the law and conscience, and with broken hearts to cast themselves on Christ as their only hope and refuge; and what it is to be pardoned, and saved by him from the wrath of God; and what it is to be sanctified, and to be sensible of all his love; they would take another course with sinners, and talk of sin, and Christ, and holiness at other rates, and not deceive their people with themselves.

Direct. 1. My first direction therefore to you, is in order to the knowledge of yourselves, that if it be possible, you will live under a faithful, soul-searching, skilful pastor; and that you will make use of his public and personal help, to bring you and keep you in continual acquaintance with yourselves.

As there is a double use of physicians; one general, to teach men the common principles of physic, and read them lectures of the nature of diseases, and their causes and remedies; and the other particular, to apply these common precepts to each individual person as they need: so is there a double use of ministers of the gospel; one to deliver publicly the common doctrines of christianity, concerning man's sin and misery, and the remedy, &c. and the other to help people in the personal application of all this to themselves. And they that take up only with the

former, deprive themselves of half the benefit of the ministry.

1. In public, how skilful and diligent should we be, in opening the hearts of sinners to themselves! The pulpit is but our candlestick, from which we should diffuse the holy light into all the assembly; not speaking the same things of all that are before us, as if it were our work to trouble men, or only to comfort them: but as the same light will show every man the things which he beholdeth in their varieties and differences; (we see by the same sun a man to be a man, and a beast to be a beast, and a bird to be a bird;) so the same word of truth which we deliver, must be so discovering and discriminating, as to manifest the ungodly to be ungodly; and the carnal to be carnal; the worldling to be a worldling; the hypocrite to be a hypocrite; and the enemies of holiness to be as they are; and the sincere to be sincere; and the renewed soul to be indeed renewed. The same light must show the excellency of sanctification, and the filthiness of sin; the glory of the image of Christ, and the deformity of that spiritual death which is its privation. It must show the righteous to be "more excellent than his neighbour," Prov. xii. 26; and help men to "discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not," Mal. iii. 18. We must not be like the miserable ungodly preachers, that cannot describe the state of grace with clearness and feelingly, because they never knew it; or that dare not discover the unsanctified, lest they detect themselves, nor judge them according to their office, lest they condemn themselves; and that preach to the ungodly as if all were well with them; and they dare not awaken the consciences of others, lest they should awaken and affright their own: and therefore are ready to scorn at all distinguishing preachers, and to take the discovery of regeneration to be but the boasting of hypocrisy, as if he that would differ from the most, or did pretend to the special privileges of the saints, did but as the Pharisee, "Thank God that he is not like other men;" or say, "Stand by, I am more holy than thou." And if these preachers could prove that all men should be saved that will but say that they are christians, they might then have hope of being saved themselves, without that serious piety which they so distaste. No wonder therefore if they preach in the language of Korah, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift you up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Numb. xvi. 3. But the Lord saith, "If you take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them," Jer. xv. 19. If you love not differing preaching, make no difference from the true members of Christ by your hypocrisy or ungodly living; be such as they, and we shall not difference you from them. Read but the first psalm, and the fifteenth psalm, and the third of John, and the eighth to the Romans, and the first Epistle of John, and then tell me whether the Scripture be not a differing word, condemning some, and justifying others, and showing the true state of the difference between them. What! is there no difference between the heirs of heaven and hell? Or is the difference no more than that one hath the name of a christian, and not the other? or that one had the hap to be born where the gospel was received, and christianity was the religion of the country, and the other the unhappiness to be born where it was not known? O no, when the dreadful differing day is come, men shall find that there was another kind

of difference between the way of life and of death: when many shall say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" To whom Christ will profess, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity," Matt. vii. 22, 23. When "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matt. viii. 11, 12. What a difference will appear between those that now converse together, and sit here in the same seats, between whom the world, that judgeth by the outside, discerns but little or no difference! When those things shall be executed that are written in Matt. xxv. and 2 Thess. i. oh what a difference will then appear! When of those that were in the same church, the same house, the same shop, the same bed, one shall be taken, and the other left: and the felicity that was hid in the seed of grace, shall shine forth to the astonishment of the world, in the fulness of eternal glory!

I know preachers are ordinarily hated that thus difference between the godly and the ungodly; the very names of difference are matter of scorn to guilty souls, because they imply the matter of their terror. I have oft noted this with admiration, in the success of Christ's own doctrine upon the Jews, (Luke iv. 18, 19, 22,) when he had so preached the gospel, as that he had the testimony of the multitude that wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, yet some were cavilling and believed not; and ver. 25—27, he saith, "I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years, &c.; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta; a city of Sidon, to a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisens the prophet; and none of them were cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." But how was this differing doctrine of Christ entertained by the Jews? It is said, ver. 28, 29, "All they in the synagogue when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." Read it, and consider what moved these men to so much rage against Christ himself for preaching this doctrine, which restrained the fruit of the gospel to a few; and then you will not wonder, if those preachers that imitate Christ in this, be used no better than their Master.

But let ministers know that this is their duty, to show every man himself, his deeds, and state, as indeed they are: and let christians choose and love such ministers. Choose not the glass that makes you fairest, but which is truest, and representeth you to yourselves as God accounteth you, whether he do it with more eloquence or less, with smoother or with rougher language: hear him, if you may, that will best acquaint you with the truth of your condition, and choose not those that speak not to the heart.

2. And when you have heard the best, the clearest, the most searching preacher, do not think that now you can do all the rest of the work yourselves, and that you have no further need of help, but make use of their more particular personal advice, not needlessly, but in these following cases.

1. In case that after your most diligent self-examination, you are yet at uncertainty and doubt, whether you are truly sanctified or not, the settling

of your states for all eternity, and the well-grounding of your hopes and comforts, is a matter of such unspeakable moment, as that you should not remain in careless, negligent uncertainty, while God hath provided you any further means that may be used for assurance. Yea, if you were not troubled with doubting, yet if you have opportunity of opening your evidences to a judicious, faithful minister or friend, I think it may be worth your labour, for the confirmation of the peace and comforts which you have. You cannot make too sure of everlasting happiness.

2. And not only in the first settling of your peace, but also when any notable assault or dangerous temptation shall afterward shake it, which you cannot overcome without assistance, it is seasonable to betake yourselves to the physician.

3. And also in case of any dangerous lapse or declining, that hath brought you into a state of darkness. The sick and wounded must have help: they that are not sufficient for themselves.

4. Also in case of any particular corruption or temptation, your particular sinful inclinations may, cautiously, be opened to a faithful guide, that by his prudent and lively counsel you may be strengthened.

If you say, To what end do ministers preach to me, and why do I hear them opening the natures of grace and of hypocrisy, if I cannot judge of myself by the doctrine which they preach? I answer, 1. You may and must judge yourselves by the public common helps, as far as you are able; but a personal applying help, added unto this, is a further advantage. And humility should teach you, not to think better of your understandings than there is cause; nor to think you are so wise as to need but one help, when God hath provided you two; or that you need but the lesser, when he hath provided you a greater. And doth not your own experience convince you? Do you not find, that after the best public preaching, you are yet in doubt, and at a loss about your spiritual state, and therefore that you have need of further help?

2. I further answer you: There is so great a diversity of particular circumstances in the cases of particular persons, that a great deal of help is necessary to most, to pass a right judgment, when they do understand both the law and the fact. Will you think it enough that you have the statutes of the land, and the law-books, to judge of all your own cases by? Or will you not think that you have also need of the counsel of the wisest lawyer (in your weightiest cases) to help you to judge of your cause by the particular application of the law to it? So in physic, who is so foolish, as to think that by the help of the most learned book, or approved recipes, he is able to be his own physician, without any more particular advice? You must be long in studying law or physic, before you can understand them so well as those that have made them the study and business of their lives. It is not having or reading a book only, or hearing a lecture of them, that can make you as understanding as the masters of the profession; and also to have all passages at hand that must be observed in the judging of your cause. So is it in matters of the soul. When you have heard much, and understand much, you cannot in modesty think that all the sense of Scripture, about those points, is known as exactly to you as to your most judicious teachers; and that you are as able at once to see all the passages of the word, and of the fact, as may enable you to pass so clear a judgment on it. Perhaps you will say, that you know your own hearts and actions better than they do. I answer, you do so, or should do so, as to the matter

of fact; and it is you that they must know it from: and yet when you have done, you may not be able to judge of your state by those acts which you say you know. You must show the lawyer all your evidences: he cannot see them, till you show them him; and yet when he seeth them, he can judge of them whether they are good or bad, and of your title by them, better than you can that have the keeping of them, because he better understands the law. The physician feeleth not your pain, nor knoweth it till you tell it him; and yet when you have told it him, he knows better than you what it signifieth, and whither it tendeth, and whether it be curable or not, and what must cure it.

But perhaps you will say, that when you have gone to ministers, and opened your case to them, they cannot resolve you, but you are still in doubt.

I answer, 1. Perhaps when they have resolved them, yet you would not be resolved. Have they not told you the truth and you would not believe it? or directed you to remedies which you would not use? They cannot, when they have told you the truth, compel you to believe it; nor when they have told you what will do the cure, they cannot make you use it if you refuse.

2. And what if the nature of the disease be obstinate, and will not be cured easily and at once, but with time, and diligence, and patience? Will you therefore think the means are vain? Must you at once, or in a short time, be resolved, and delivered from all your doubts, about your title to eternal life, or else will you cast off all advice? Should you do so by your bodies, you may know what were like to be the issue: should your children learn thus of their teachers, they were like to make unhappy scholars. As you will not have done with Christ, if he cure you not at once, nor give over praying, if you have not all your desires at once, (if you love yourselves,) so you must not have done with the counsel of your guides, if they satisfy not your doubts at once. As you cease not hearing them in public, though you have still your doubtings; so why should you cease advising with them personally upon that account? Use God's means, and be thankful, if by degrees they do cure, and prevail at last.

Object. But I find it is God only that can speak peace; and therefore it is vain to hang on men.

I answer, God speaketh by his word and Spirit: his word is to be delivered, expounded, and applied to you by his ministers: if therefore you will have it from God, you must not refuse his own appointed ordinary means. The Spirit comforteth by the promise. As in conversion God useth not to do it by the Spirit, without, but in, and by the ministry of the word, so also in all our directions, and satisfaction and comfort afterwards. As he that will run from the ministry of the word, because it is God that must convert, doth indeed run from God, and is not like to be converted; so is it in point of assurance and consolation. The teachers of the church "are to be accounted of as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God," (1 Cor. iv. 1, "by whom the people have believed," (1 Cor. iii. 5), "not having dominion over their faith, but being helpers of their joy," (2 Cor. i. 24); "who are comforted in all their tribulations, that they might be able to comfort them that are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God," ver. 4. They are to be "faithful and wise stewards, whom the Lord maketh rulers over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season," Luke xii. 42. Thus Christ has given "authority to his servants, and appointed to every man his work," (Mark xiii. 34), and "given pastors

and teachers to his church, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man," Eph. iv. 11—13. These therefore being Christ's officers, and this their appointed work, we must receive so much of God's mercies by their hands, as belongeth to their office to administer. "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness, then God is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom," Job xxxiii. 23, 24.

So that you, see it is God's way to show to man his uprightness, and to speak peace to souls, by his messengers and interpreters that are fitted and authorized thereto.

Object. But it is but few that are able thus to discuss the case of unsettled, doubting souls, and to give them clear and safe directions, that may save them both from presumption and despair: in many places the ministers are senseless of these things, and unacquainted with the concerns and works of conscience, and have nothing to say to us, unless to deride us as scrupulous and precise; and bid us not trouble our heads about such matters, seeing God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners. They will discourse with us long enough about news, or worldly businesses, or opinions, or controversies; but when we open to them the state of our souls, and desire their advice for the "making our calling and election sure," they have no sense or savour of such discourse: and many ministers that are truly conscientious, are yet so unskilful and so weak, that we have no encouragement to acquaint them with our state.

To this I answer: It cannot be denied but all this is too true; and it is matter of lamentation, which Christ himself hath put into our mouths, (Matt. ix. 37, 38,) "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

But consider that this is no wonder, or unusual thing. For all this, there is no nation under heaven that hath more able, faithful ministers of Christ, than are in these nations. Alas, how much of the church is guided by mere ignorant readers! and how much by superstitious deceivers! Did you know the case of the poor christians in the Ethiopian, the Greek, and the Roman churches, you would bless God that it is so well with us: even when the church was in a narrower room, yet God complained, (Jer. xii. 10,) "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness: they have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me." And Jer. xxiii. 1, 2, "Woe be to the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit on you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. And I will set up shepherds over them that shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed." Then was the church fain to take up this lamentation, Jer. x. 19—21, "Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous: but I said, Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it. My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains. For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord: therefore

they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered."

But the voice of healing mercy saith, "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, &c.—Turn, O backsliding children, &c.—and I will give you pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding," Jer. iii. 13—15.

You see in all other professions, (that require not supernatural illumination,) there are but few that attain to excellency: it is but in few that nature layeth the foundation, or giveth that capacity to be excellent, which grace doth elevate and improve.

Take therefore the advice of the ablest you can get. If most physicians are weak and ignorant, do not therefore cast off all, nor yet cast yourselves upon one that is like to kill you, because he is your neighbour. I will not persuade you to go always to the minister of your parish, to open the case of your souls, be he fit or unfit, but to the fittest that you can have access to. The papists themselves will give men leave to choose others for their confessors. Where there is most of the heavenly illumination, and holy skill in the matters of the soul; where there is the soundest and exactest judgment, joined with experience and tender compassion, and faithful plainness, and cautious secrecy, there open your hearts if you have opportunity, and take the help of such faithful counsellors to acquaint you with yourselves.

Object. But such ministers being few, and having more of greater work than they can turn them to, are not to be spoken with as oft as my necessity requireth help.

Ans. Use then the best that are at leisure; and it is not only ministers that you must use, but any other christian friend that hath such abilities and qualifications, as fit them to assist you: whosoever hath the light, refuse not to come to it; God's gifts and graces may be helpful to you in a parent, a husband, a neighbour, and not only in a minister.

Quest. But how far may a dark and doubting person take up and rest in the judgment of a minister, or of others, about the state of his soul, when he is not satisfied himself?

Ans. This question is of very great use, and therefore the more carefully to be resolved. I shall answer it therefore, 1. Negatively, and, 2. Affirmatively.

1. No man's judgment of your state is to be taken as absolutely infallible or divine; nor is man to be believed as God is, with a divine belief. When they tell you, that if you are regenerate, you are justified, then they do but tell you what God hath told you; and therefore this is to be taken as of infallible certainty, not as it is their word, but as it is God's: so also when they tell you, that if you are unconverted you are not forgiven. But when they tell you, that you are converted or unconverted, pardoned or unpardoned, this judgment is not to be taken as infallible or divine.

2. For the bare matter of fact, (whether you repent or not; whether you had rather be holy or unholy, &c.) there is no minister that can know your heart so well as you yourselves may know it, except in case when melancholy or passion, or a weakness of understanding on one side, or a wilfulness of presumption on the other side, doth make men judge of their own condition quite contrary to the evidence that appeareth in their lives to others.

3. It is not safe to rest on the judgment of one that is either an enemy or stranger to the workings of a careful, troubled soul; or of one that is drunk with any heresy, or fond of any private opinion of his own, and layeth out his zeal to form people into his

opinion, as if the life of religion lay in that: nor yet of a weak, unskilful man.

4. It is not safe for you to rest much in the judgment of one that knows you not, and is not acquainted (by himself, or by the report of others, or some good evidence) of the bent and manner of your lives, but must judge only by the present expressions of your own mouths.

5. It is not safe for you to rest on the judgment of any one single person, when the judgment of most of your judicious acquaintance is contrary to it. So much for the negative.

2. Affirmatively, I answer,

1. By a divine faith you are bound to believe all the promises of Scripture that your pastor (or any other) shall acquaint you with.

2. As a disciple of Christ, you are bound to learn the meaning of those promises (and other passages of the Scripture) from your teachers, duly authorized to instruct you: and with such a human belief, as a scholar oweth to his teacher in arts or sciences, you are bound to believe your teachers concerning the meaning of the promises, in cases wherein you are unable yourselves to understand the word by its proper light and evidence, as well as they; and in case you see no evidence of falsehood in their exposition, nor have any special reason to distrust them. He that will believe nothing that his teacher telleth him, in order to his own understanding, shall never understand by teaching. If you know as much as he already, you need no teacher: if you do not, you must believe him, or else you can never learn of him. But this is not to take him for omniscient, or infallible in himself, but to credit him as a man.

3. You are bound, when he judgeth of your particular case, upon your opening to him the matter of fact, to allow him so much credit as is due to the proportion of his understanding. You tell him how you feel your hearts affected, and what the actions of your lives have been; when you have told it him, he judgeth by God's word, whether this be a state of saving grace which you describe, or not; if upon much stronger parts, or longer study, and more experience, he know more of the meaning of the word, and of the nature of grace, and so be able to judge than you, modestly requireth that you do in that measure submit your understanding unto his, and believe him according to the measure of his skill, upon supposition that you deceive him not in your information. Even as you will believe a lawyer about your title to your lands, when you have showed him your evidence; or a physician about your disease, when you have told him what you feel, as I said before.

4. You are bound to add also, all that credit that his honesty and fidelity requireth, if he be a godly man unwilling to deceive you.

5. And you are bound to add so much belief, as in the case is due to a stander-by that is out of the dust, and is not blinded by self-love, or partiality, or passions, or any selfish bias, as most men are to themselves.

6. If you are darkened by melancholy, or any other weakening distemper, that maketh you incapable of judging for yourselves, you are bound to allow another so much credit, as the advantage of his sounder understanding, and more composed judgment, doth require. If every child, or sick person, will believe nobody that doth not say as they, their self-conceit and their distrust of others will be their wrong.

7. In the manner of reception, you are bound to do all this with such a submission as belongeth to

an officer of Christ : not that you are to believe any falsehood that he bringeth you, and fathereth upon Christ; nor to put out your own eyes, and see with his; but to learn of him to understand yourselves, and receive what he bringeth you, according to his office: as a child is bound to submit to any tutor or teacher that the parents shall set over him. The same truth must be received as from a double obligation, when besides its proper evidence it is delivered by a messenger of Christ.

8. You may yet more boldly and confidently give credit to the judgment of such a minister of Christ, when he is not singular, but speaks according to the concurrent judgment of the generality of able, experienced men: modesty will forbid you to think yourselves wiser than all the able ministers about you.

9. You have the less reason to suspect his judgment, when you may be sure that he is not perverted by any self-interest or self-respect, and balketh not the truth for fear of displeasing you, or bringing any discredit or suffering on himself.

10. Lastly, When all these things concur, you may with the greater confidence rest upon his judgment. And though still he is but an imperfect man, and no absolute certainty of your estate can be had from his bare judgment, (though from his doctrine, and the effects and signs, there may,) yet such a judgment should weigh very much with you, to the raising of fear and care in the ungodly, and for the quieting of a troubled soul.

Let us a little now apply this direction to both parties. Beloved hearers, if any of you can look before you to eternity, and do not with awakened thoughts conclude, that all probable means should be used in time, to make sure of your final justification at the dreadful day of God, that man wants either the faith of a christian, or the feeling of a considerate man. Are you all desirous to be sure beforehand, what sentence shall pass upon you then, or are you not? If you are, come on, and let me make a motion that you cannot reasonably refuse: the business is of unspeakable consequence; to be deceived, may be to be undone for ever. Will you advise with those that God hath appointed to give you advice in so great a case? Well then, will you go and faithfully open your state (supposing you have the need before expressed) to some able, faithful minister of Christ? Not to an ignorant, or a carnal, unexperienced man, but unto one that is skilled in spiritual affairs, and that will be faithful to you, and deal with that serious gravity and reverence as becometh him that is helping to prepare a soul for the bar of Christ. Will you (if you never did it) tell him, whether ever you were convinced of your sin and misery? and whether ever you saw the need of Christ? and whether you have loathed yourselves for your iniquities, and fled to Christ as your only refuge from the wrath of God, and have turned away with resolution from your former ungodly, careless life, and have changed your company, your business, and your delights? Whether you make it your chief business to please God, and to save your souls? and resolve to take up with the hopes of heaven as your only portion, and not to hazard it for any worldly interest or fleshly pleasure whatsoever? "Whether in your eyes a vile person be contemned, but you love and honour them that fear the Lord?" Tell these and other such particulars of your state to your faithful pastors; answer them to these and such like questions, and then take their judgment (with the cautions before expressed) of your spiritual state. Hear what they will tell you of it. Might not this course convince

thee of thy miserable state, that never hadst any such evidences as these to show? and might it not awaken thee in time, to bethink thee of a safer course? Go to any faithful minister in the world, and tell him the plain truth, that yet thou art a secret fornicator, or drunkard, or pot-companion, or flesh-pleaser in some sensual way; or if thou sinnest not so grossly, that yet thou art a formal hypocrite, and hast a secret enmity to those that are most seriously religious, and live the most heavenly lives, and that thou art thyself a stranger to all the foresaid passages of sanctification: and I dare assure thee that he will tell thee, if thou art thus indeed, thou art in the "gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity," and must be speedily renewed, and sanctified, and justified, or thou art undone for ever. I tell thee, there is not a man that is worthy the name of a minister in all the world, but will pass this judgment on the condition of thy soul. And yet wilt thou bear it out with a senseless heart, a seared conscience, and a brazen face, and still live as carelessly as if all were well with thee? What! is thy soul of no more worth? Is it so small a matter with thee, what becometh of thee? or is the judgment of able, faithful ministers, in the way of their own office, of no more regard with thee? What! not when all the foresaid requisites concur? They show thee the plain word of God against thee; and that his threatening contains the virtual sentence of thy condemnation; they are by office the interpreters of the law of God to you; it hath been the study of their lives: the matters in question are such as they have had experience of in themselves, and others: they have judged as hardly of themselves, and of their own case, as now they do of yours, when theirs was the same as yours is now. Do they pronounce you miserable, as being strangers to the Spirit of Christ? So they did by themselves, when they saw their sin; and therefore they are impartial. They have had before them multitudes (alas, too many) in your case; and you will regard the judgment of a physician, that hath had many hundreds in hand that had the same disease as you. They are men that are not willing to deceive you. They deny themselves, in telling you of your danger: they know that smoother words would please you better; and they have natures that desire men's love and favour, rather than displeasure and ill-will. They are more impartial than you are, and have not your self-interest and passion to blind them; they are not abused in their judgment by the temptations of evil company, or of worldly, fleshly things, as you are; for these temptations more hinder us from judging ourselves than other men: they are the messengers of Christ, appointed to give to each their portion; and should not their judgment be regarded in the business committed to their trust? And it is not one man or two, or a hundred only, that are of this mind. Open thy case to all the judicious, faithful ministers in the land, or in the world, and open it truly, and they will all tell thee, that if thou die without converting, sanctifying grace, thou art lost for ever; and that all the world cannot save thee from the everlasting wrath of God. Try as many of them as you will, and see if all of them tell you not the same thing. And is all this nothing to thee, presumptuous sinner, that in the judgment of all the most able, faithful ministers of Christ, thy soul should be in a state of death? Art thou wiser than all the best and wisest, in the matters of their own profession? If all the physicians in the country should tell thee, that thou hast a disease that will certainly be thy death, unless thou take some effectual medicine in time, I think thou wouldst not

slight their judgment, and say, they are too censorious, that thou knowest thy condition better than they. I think it would affright thee to seek after the remedy. And why should not the judgment of the faithful ministers, about the state of thy soul, be so far regarded, as to awaken thee to a more careful inquiry, and stir up a preventing and remedying fear? If the judgment of Christ's officers be not regardable, then there is no matter of terror in excommunication, nor no matter of comfort in ministerial absolution.

Oh the madness of a hardened sinner! that when he sheweth by the fruits of an ungodly life, that he is a stranger to sanctification, and liveth in the sins which the Scripture threateneth damnation to, and hath no evidence of true conversion to show, will yet be confident of pardon and salvation, let God and all his ministers say what they will against it! and will rather be offended with his spiritual physicians, for telling him of the danger of his state, and rail at them as if they did him wrong, than he will see his danger and prevent his misery! Let such a one hear the word of God, if he have ears to hear: "Let there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood, and it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil," &c. Deut. xxix. 18—21.

And on the other side, is there any soul among you, that in doubts and troubles hath opened his case to the faithful ministers of Christ, and their judgment is, that your state is safe? Is this the judgment, not only of the weakest, but the wisest; not only of strangers, but of those that know you best; not only of one or two, but of all, or most of the judicious ministers that ever you opened your case to; even of the most honest and impartial, that would not flatter you nor deceive you? Yea, and perhaps, when desolutions, or melancholy, or passion, or ignorance, do make you unmeet to judge of yourselves. And doth all this seem nothing to you; or a small matter? It is not nothing; it is not small. I confess it is no ground of certainty: they are but men: it is a human testimony; but yet it is a testimony that may weigh down many of your own surmises, and take off much of your distressing fears, and may give much ease to troubled souls, while they are seeking after surer knowledge. It is a ground of comfort, not to be despised, or made light of. Till you can come to see your evidences yourselves, and to be acquainted with the indwelling Spirit as your witness, you may much quiet your minds, and take much comfort, in this judgment and witness of the servants of the Lord, that have a spirit of discerning, and have that grace which acquainteth them with the nature of grace in others, and that have been long exercised in the discerning of men's states. It is possible a hypocrite (especially one that wilfully giveth them a false relation of himself) may deceive them; but it is probable that it is not one of many they are deceived in, when they know or have a good description of the person. If in a lawsuit, all the ablest lawyers tell you that your cause is good, it is possible they may be deceived, but it is not likely. If in a fever, all the ablest physicians tell you the danger is past, it is possible yet that they may be all deceived; but yet I think you

would take some comfort in such a testimony: so should you here. Though the judgment of ministers be not infallible, it may be much better than your own, though about yourselves; and it may be set against the jealousies and fears of a disquiet soul, and against abundance of the molesting suggestions of the accuser.

I do not by all this draw you to lay too much on man; I advance them not too high, and make them not lords of your faith, but helpers of your joy. I draw you not to any deceitful course, nor into any way of danger to your souls. I bid you not fully and finally rest in the judgment of man; I bid you not neglect any means to come to fuller knowledge, and certainty of your own sincerity. I bid you not forbear any means that tend to the getting of true grace. If you have it, and know it not, the same means (for the most part) may increase it, which you use to get it: and if you have it not, when it is thought you have it, the means may work it, that are intended to increase it. Do all that you can to repent, believe, and love God, and live to him, whether you ever did these before or not. But yet let the judgment of your faithful pastors, the officers and experienced servants of the Lord, keep off despondency and despair, that would disable you from the use of means, and would weaken your hands, and make you sit down in unprofitable complaints, and give up all as hopeless. Let their judgment quiet you in the way of duty; lean on them in the dark, till you come into the light. Yea, be glad that you have so much encouragement and hope, from those that are by Christ appointed to subserve the Spirit, in the comforting as well as the sanctifying work, and to show to man his uprightness, and to say to the righteous, "It shall be well with him," Isa. iii. 10. I tell you, all the wealth of the world is not worth even this much ground of comfort. Live upon this much, till by diligent attendance, and waiting on the Spirit of grace and comfort, you can get higher.

2. The second extrinsical hinderance of self-knowledge is prosperity, and the flattery that usually attendeth it. The one disposeth men to be deceived, and the other putteth the hood over their eyes, and tells them the falsehoods which deceive them.

When men prosper in the world, their minds are lifted up with their estates; and they can hardly believe that they are indeed so ill, while they feel themselves so well; and that so much misery is joined with so much content and pleasure. They cannot taste the bitterness of their sin, and God's displeasure, while the sweetness of worldly delights and honours is in their mouths. The rich man in Luke xvi. it is like would have given a man but an unwelcome entertainment, that had come to tell him that within a few days or years he should lie in hell, and not be able to get a drop of water to cool his tongue! What need we doubt of that, when his five brethren, that he left on earth behind him, would not be persuaded (to know their danger of those flames, and to use the necessary means to escape them) though one had come to them from the dead? Luke xvi. 31. You plead against their feeling, when you tell them of their misery, when they feel prosperity. Their fleshly appetite and sense, which is in them the reigning faculty, doth tell them they are well and happy: and that which must confute this, and tell them they are miserable, must be an inward sense of the sin and diseases of their souls, and a foreseeing faith that must look before them unto eternity, and fetch its proofs from the word of God, and fetch its motives from another

world: and, alas, they have no such inward sense, nor no such faith, as can prevail against their sensual feeling. And therefore it is a matter of lamentable difficulty, to make a prospering sinner well acquainted with his misery. He is drunken with fleshly pleasures and contentments: and when the drink is in a man's head, you can hardly make him sensible of his misery, though he be a beggar, or a prisoner, or were to die within a week. The devil is therefore willing to reach his servants as full a cup of prosperity as he can, that their drunkenness may keep them from the true use of their reason; for if they once come to themselves, they will come home to God. When misery brought the prodigal to himself, he resolved presently of going to his father, Luke xv. The bustle of his worldly business, and the chattering, vain discourse that is in his ears, and the mirth and sport that takes him up, will not allow him so much of reason, as seriously to consider of his soul's condition. Alas, when poor men, that must labour all day for food and raiment, can find some time for serious converse with God, and with their consciences, the great ones of the world have no such leisure. How many are going apace towards hell, and say they cannot have while to bethink themselves what way they are in, or whither it is that they are going! That which they have all their time for, they have no time for, because they have no hearts for it. Prosperity doth so please their flesh, that they can give no heed to conscience or to reason: it doth so charm their minds, and enslave their wills to sense and appetite, that they cannot abide to be so melancholy, as to prepare for death and judgment, or to consider seriously how this will relish with them at the end; nor scarce to remember that they are men, that should rule their senses, and be ruled by God, and that have another life to live.

And as prosperity in itself is so great a hinderance to the knowledge of yourselves, so flatterers, that are the flies of summer, are always ready to blow upon the prosperous, and increase the danger. What miserable men are extolled as wise, and virtuous, and religious, if they be but rich and great! their vices are masked, or extenuated, and made but little human frailties: though they were swinish gluttons or drunkards, or filthy fornicators, or mere flesh-pleasing, sensual brutes, that waste most of their lives in ease and sports, and eating and drinking, and such delights; yet with their flatterers all these shall go for prudent, pious, worthy persons, if they can but seek when they have done, to mock God and their consciences with some lip-service and lifeless carcass of religion. O happy men, if God would judge of them as their flatterers do; and would make as small a matter of their wickedness, and as great a matter of their outside, hypocritical, heartless worship! But they must be greater than men or angels, and higher than either earth or heaven, before God will flatter them. When they can make him afraid of their high looks or threatenings, or when they can put him in hope of rising by their preferment, then they may look that he should comply with their parasites, and compliment with his enemies, and justify the ungodly; but not till then. Oh did they consider how little flattery doth secure them, and how little the Judge of all the world regards their worldly pomp and splendour; yea, how greatly their greatness doth aggravate their sin and misery; they would frown their flatterers out of doors, and call for plain and faithful dealers. Of all the miseries of worldly greatness, this is not the least, that usually such want the necessary blessing of a glass that will truly show them their faces; of a friend at hand that will deal plainly and

justly with their souls. Who tells them plainly of the odiousness and bitter fruits of sin; and of the wrath of God, and endless misery? How few such true and faithful friends have they! and what wonder, when it is a carnal inducement that draweth men to follow them? It is their wealth and honour, and their power to do men good or hurt in outward things, that makes their friends. They are attended by these flies and wasps, because they carry the honey-pot which they love. And God saith to his followers, "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15. And it is for love of worldly things, even the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life, &c. which are not of the Father, but of the world, 1 John ii. 16; it is for these that great men have their friends and followers for the most part: and therefore it is plain that the worst sort of men are ordinarily their friends; for those are the worst men, that have not the love of the Father in them, but are the friends of the world, and therefore the enemies of God, Jam. iv. 4. And the best, though fit to be their truest friends, are seldom their followers, as knowing that the attractive of the sensual world is a shadow unfit to deceive those that are acquainted with its vanity, and a snare unfit to take those that have observed how Satan lays and baits the trap, and how they have sped that have been taken in it. A despised Christ that hath the words of eternal life, is much more followed by men that have the heavenly relish. Such gracious souls, whose appetites are not corrupted by the creature and their sickness, have more mind to flock after a spiritual and powerful messenger of Christ, that talks to them of his kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, which they first seek, than to gape after the preferment and vain-glory of prosperity. Christ, that despised the offer of all the kingdoms and glory of the world, (Matt. iv. 8, 9,) doth teach his followers to despise them.

Seeing then the ordinary attendants of the prosperous are the worst of men, that seek themselves, and are purveying for the flesh, what wonder if they be flatterers, that have neither skill nor will to speak that unpleasing language of reproof, that should make the prosperous know themselves? Oh how seldom (or never) do they hear, what the poor can hear from every mouth! If a man of low degree be wicked, or offend, his enemy dare tell him of it, and his friend dare tell him of it, and his angry neighbour or companion will be sure to tell him of it; and they dare tell him frequently till he amend, and tell him plainly, and set it home. But if great ones be as bad, and need more help, as having more temptation, yet, alas, they may sin, and sin again, and perish, for any body that will deal faithfully with their souls, except some faithful minister of Christ, whose plainness is taken but for a thing of course. And usually, even ministers themselves are some of them so unfaithful, and some so fearful, and some so prudently cautious, that such persons have no such help from them to know themselves, as the poorer sort of people have. If we deal freely with them, and set it home, it will be well taken; or if it offend, yet offence may easily be borne, as bringing no ill consequences to our ministry: but if we deal so with the great ones of the world, what outcries would it raise, and by what names should we and our preaching be called! If it were not for fear lest some malicious hearers would misunderstand me and misapply my words, as spoken of those that we are bound to honour, and as tending to diminish the reputation of any of our superiors, (which I detest,) I

should have showed you all this in Scripture instances. When Haman could not bear the omission of one man's obeisance, what wonder if such cannot bear to be spoken to as indeed they are? Not only an Ahab hateth one faithful plain Micaiah, because he prophesieth not good of him, but evil, (1 Kings xxii. 8,) but Asa, that destroyed idolatry, can imprison the prophet that reproveth him for his sin, 2 Chron. xvi. 10. I will not tell you of the words that were spoken to Amos by the priest of Bethel, Amos vii. 10—13, or to the prophet, 2 Chron. xxv. 15, 16, lest malice misinterpret and misreport me: for it is none of my intent to fix on any particular persons, but to tell you in general, the lamentable disadvantage that the great and prosperous have, as to the knowledge of themselves; how little plain-dealing they have, and how hardly most of them can bear it; though yet I doubt not but it is borne and loved by those that have true grace: and that if David sin, he can endure to hear from Nathan, "Thou art the man," and this shall befall thee! And an Eli can bear the prophesy of Samuel, and say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," 1 Sam. ii. 27; iii. 17, 18. And a Hezekiah can say, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken," 2 Kings xx. 19; and Josiah can bear the threatenings of Huldah, 2 Chron. xxxiv.; 2 Kings xxii. And it is a double honour in persons that have so great temptations, to love the plain discoveries of their sin: but a Joash will slay even Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, that set him up: and a Herod, that hath so much religion as to fear John, as knowing that he was a just man, and a holy, and to observe (or save) him; and when he heard him, to do many things, and hear him gladly; had yet so much love to his fleshly lust, and so little power to resist a flatterer, as that he could sell both the head of John and his own soul, for so pitiful a price as this, Mark vi. 20, 25, 27, 28. So true is that of Christ himself, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved (or discovered); but he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God," John iii. 20, 21.

And indeed there is none that more opposeth Micaiah than Zedekiah, as being concerned for the honour of his flattering prophecy, to bring plain-dealing into disgrace. It is he that smiteth him, and saith, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee?" 1 Kings xxii. 24. As Plutarch compareth the flatterer to a painter, that having made a picture of cocks which was very bad, he bid his boys be sure to keep the living cocks out of sight, lest their appearance should show the faultiness of his picture; so, saith Plutarch, doth the flatterer do what he can to keep away plain-dealing, faithful friends, lest his fraud and falsehood should be detected by them. But, saith Solomon, "He that rebuketh a man, afterward shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue," Prov. xxviii. 23. And, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful," Prov. xxvii. 6. When prosperity is vanished, the flatterer and the faithful dealer will be better known. Deceitful prosperity, and deceitful men, will at once forsake you. None of them will admire or applaud you when you are low, and the tide is gone, and hath left you in contempt: these kind of men will be as ready as any to reproach you; as Shimei that honoured David in his prosperity, but curseth him, and revileth him as a rebel against Saul, and casteth stones at him, when he saw him flying in distress. Plutarch liketh flatterers to lice, that forsake the

bodies of the dead, because the blood is gone that did maintain them. Commonly men in misery, or at death, have better thoughts of faithful plainness, and worse of smoothing man-pleasers, than before.

But whom can the prosperous blame so much as themselves, if they are undone by the deceit of flatterers? It is their own choice; they love to have it so; they will not endure faithful dealing. When they contract those diseases which will not be cured without bitter medicines, they hate the physician that offereth them: their appetites and sensual lust, and not their believing reason, doth choose their work, their pleasures, and their company, and prescribe what language must be spoken to them. And he that resolves to cast away the remedy, and will please his appetite and fancy, come on it what will, must take what he gets by it, and bear the endless wrath of God, that could not bear the necessary warnings and self-knowledge that should have prevented it. Did these men hate sin, and the messengers of Satan, they would not hate the justice and messengers of God: but while they damnably love fleshly pleasures, they cannot savingly love the word that chargeth them to let go those pleasures, nor the persons that cross them in the things they love. And thus poor worldlings are ruined by their own desires: it seemeth so sweet to them to live in sin, that they cannot endure to know the bitter fruits of misery, which it will at last bring forth. They are conquered by their fleshly lusts, and therefore they hate the messengers of that Spirit which would fight against them. Satan doth perfect his former victories in them, by dispelling or dispersing the auxiliaries of Christ, that were sent for their rescue and relief. They live as if they were purposely made great, that they may be able to drive away the messengers of salvation, and to keep the voice of mercy far enough from their ears; and to command that which the Gadarenes did entreat, that Christ would go out of their coasts, (Mark v. 17,) because they would not be troubled with him. They so much love the way to hell, that they cannot abide to be told whither it leadeth them, and therefore they come thither before they are aware, and must know themselves by the unquenchable fire, because they would not know themselves by the discovering recovering light. And thus by prosperity and flattery, Satan pursues and wins his game.

Direct. 2. In opposition to this hinderance, two things are to be done. 1. Desire not so perilous a station as worldly prosperity and greatness is. Love not and seek not a condition so hazardous to your souls. Leave that to them that take it for their portion, as not believing what they must lose and suffer by it, or what God hath revealed of the life to come.

Or if you be in such prosperity, not by your desire, but by the will and providence of God, let your fear and watchfulness be doubled, as your dangers are: be not like those sensualists, that "feed themselves without fear," Jude 12. Use not prosperity to the pleasing of the flesh, and the prospering of your lusts, but deny yourselves in the midst of your abundance; and turn it into an adversity to your sensual inclinations, by taming the body and bringing it into subjection, and suspecting yourselves, and walking humbly with God and man.

And when adversity is upon you, improve the opportunity for the knowledge of yourselves. Then take a just survey of your former course of life. Then try your ways, when the drunkenness and deceits of prosperity are past, and the hand of God hath brought you into a sober and considerate state. Oh how many souls do know that in one day, when adversity hath made them wise and sensible, which

before they knew and would not know; they saw it, but did not understand and feel it! Then on a sudden they are able to pass a righter judgment upon their yielding to temptations, and the value of the things that tempted them, and upon their worldly designs, and fleshly wisdom, and their neglects of God, and heaven, and duty, than before they could do, though they had never so much instruction, and though they could speak the same words of sin as now. Affliction taketh away the deceiving advantages of fleshly objects, and unmasketh the glory and profit of the world, and awakeneth the rational faculties to perform their office, and therefore is an excellent opportunity for self-acquaintance. The prodigal came to himself, when he was denied to fill his belly with the food of swine, Luke xv. 16, 17. Nature teacheth men to understand, that it is the principal lesson that affliction readeth to us, to know ourselves, and our ways, as they are related to God and to his judgment.

2. If you are in prosperity, be the more suspicious of flatterers, and drive them away with the greater detestation: be more careful to keep them from you, than to keep your bodies clean from vermin. And be the more solicitous to procure such faithful overseers and physicians for your souls, as will do their best to save you, though they displease you. Oh that you knew what an advantage it is to have a faithful pastor, and a faithful friend, that seek not yours but you, and make no advantage to themselves by flattering you, but choose the means that tend most to your salvation! And oh that you knew the great disadvantage of those that want such a pastor, and such a friend! You would then be sure to give it as your strictest charge to both, to deal plainly with you, and never to hide or extenuate your sin or danger. You would charge your teachers, Whatever you do, deal faithfully with my soul! If you see me in any dangerous course, I beseech you tell me of it; if I should be hardened against your warnings and reproofs, I beseech you deal not lightly with me, but labour to awaken me, and set it home, and pull me out of the fire, and save me as with fear, Jude 23. O suffer me not to be quiet in my sins. The like charge also you would give to your friends that are about you, and converse with you. Choose such pastors, and choose such friends, as are fittest thus to prove your friends indeed: and charge them, and entreat them, as they love your souls, and as they will answer it before God, that they suffer you not to sin for fear of displeasing you by plain reproofs; and resolve to submit and take it well. A stander-by hath the great advantage of impartiality, and therefore may see that in you which you observe not in yourselves: an object too near the eye, or too far off, is not well discerned: self-love doth not hinder us so much in judging of other men's cases as our own. Friendly and faithful dealing in the matters of eternal consequence, is the principal use and benefit of friendship. This differenceth the communion of saints from Beelzebub's swarm of flies and caterpillars. Thus "two are better than one; for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth! for he hath not another to help him up," Eccles. iv. 9, 10. Much more woe to him that hath a multitude to cast him and to keep him down!

Hind. 3. The third extrinsical impediment to self-knowledge, is conversing only with such as are as bad as ourselves; and not with such whose lives display the spiritual endowment and excellences which we want. Among the Ethiopians, it seemeth no deformity to be black. Seneca saith, that "no man is to be upbraided with that which is *vitiū humani generis*, the common fault of all the world, or of the

country where he lives;" for this were but to upbraid him that he is a man, or that he was born in such a time or place. Though christians that know better the common disease, do know that there must be a common humiliation and remedy; yet these indeed are the thoughts of most; they know not that it is a matter of dishonour and lamentation, to be no better than the most, and to lie in the common corruptions of the world, and to have no better hearts than they had by nature. To hear preachers talk of holiness, and a divine nature, and a new birth, and of being made new creatures, and of living in the love of God, and in the joyful hopes of endless glory, doth seem to them but as the talk of a world in the sun, or the description of an angel, which humbleth not them at all for not being such, nor exciteh in them any great desires to be such: as long as they see not the persons that are such, they think these are but devout imaginations, or the pious dreams of melancholy men; and that indeed there are no such persons in the world; or if there be, that they are but as the papists' saints, here and there one to be admired and canonized, and not upon pain of damnation to be imitated. They judge of all the world, or almost all, by those about them, and they think that God should be unmerciful if he should condemn so great a number as they see are like themselves, and should save none but those few transcendent souls that they hear described, but are unacquainted with.

It sometimes melteth my heart, in pity of many great ones of the world, to think how hard a matter it is for them to know indeed what holiness is; when they seldom hear so much as one heavenly prayer or discourse, or any serious talk of the matters of sanctification, and communion with Christ. When profaneness and inhuman wickedness dwell about them, and make such as are but civil, and temperate, and good-natured persons, to seem saints; when they see but few that fear the Lord, and love him unfeignedly, and live by faith; and those few are perhaps of the more cold, and timorous, and temporizing strain, that show forth but little of the heavenly nature, and the virtues of their holy faith; that dare scarce open their mouths to speak against the wickedness which they see or hear; that dare not discourse like the saints of the Most High, and the heirs of heaven, for fear of being made the scorn and by-word of the rest, or of falling under the frowns and dislike of their superiors; so that they live among others almost like common men, save only that they run not with them to their excess of riot; and think it enough that by such forbearance of gross sin, they are in some measure evil spoken of; when they that should "let their light so shine before men, that they might see their good works, and glorify their heavenly Father, do hide their religion, and put their light as under a bushel, and not in a candlestick, that it might give light to all that are in the house," Matt. v. 15, 16; and so when religion never appeareth in its proper splendour, and power, and heavenly tendency, to those great ones that have no better company, what wonder if they never know themselves, nor truly understand the nature, necessity, or excellency of religion? When they know it, for the most part, but by hearsay, yea, and when they hear it more reproached than applauded, it must be a miracle of mercy that must make such men to be sincerely and heartily religious. When they see so many about them worse than themselves, and so few better, and those few that are better do hide it, and live almost as if they were no better; and when the godly, whom they see not, are described to them by the serpent's seed, as if they were but a company of whining, melancholy, brain-sick hypocrites; who can

expect that ever such men should savingly know themselves or Christ, unless a wonder of mercy rescue them, and bring them from this darkness and delusion into the light? Oh how oft have I wished, in compassion to many of the great ones of the world, that they had but the company which we that are their inferiors have! that they did but hear the humble, holy, heavenly language, that we have heard! and hear the faithful fervent prayers that many poor christians pour out before the Lord! and saw but the humble, harmless, exemplary, and heavenly lives of many poor christians, that are represented to them as the filth and offscouring of the world, and perhaps no more regarded than Lazarus was at the rich man's gate, Luke xvi. Did they but see, and hear, and know such holy and heavenly believers, and were as well acquainted with them as we are, how many of them would better know themselves, and see what they want, and what they must be, and better discern between the righteous and the wicked, between those that fear God, and those that fear him not! Mal. iii. 18.

Direct. 3. It will therefore be a great help to the knowledge of yourselves, if you will converse with those that bear the holy image of their Creator, (Col. iii. 10,) and whose lives will tell you what it is to live by faith, and what it is to walk in the Spirit, to mortify the flesh, and to live above all the alluring vanities of the world. We can more sensibly perceive the nature of holiness, when we see it in action before our eyes, than when we only read a description of it. Who could have known what life is, or what reason is, by bare reading or hearing their descriptions, if he knew them not in himself and others, by another kind of demonstration? Many thousands can honour the name of a saint, and the Scripture descriptions of a saint, that hate the life of holiness when it appeareth to them in practice, and cannot endure a saint indeed. It will most convincingly tell you what you want, when you see what others have. To see how naturally they breathe after heaven, will most convincingly show you the dullness and earthliness of your minds: to see how easily they can love an enemy, and forgive a wrong, will acquaint you most sensibly with the ulcers of your passionate, revengeful minds. Do but lay by your prejudice and partiality, and see whether there be not in serious christians another spirit than in the world; and whether they live not upon the things above, which your belief and love did never reach? Look upon believers, and consider why they pray, and watch, and study to please God; and then bethink yourselves, whether you have not as much cause to do so as they: and so you may perceive your negligence by their diligence; your senselessness by their tenderness of heart and conscience; your fleshliness by their spirituality; and the rest of your sins by the lustre of their graces. Saith Gregory, *Qui plenissime intelligere appetit qualis sit, tales debet aspiciere qualis non est; ut in bonorum forma metiatur quantum ipse deformis est*: that is, He that would fully understand what he is, must look on such as are better than himself, that in the comeliness of the good he may take the measure of his own deformity. As Isidore saith, *Minus homo seipsum ex seipso considerat*: Men know not themselves by themselves alone.

Hence, therefore, the servants of God may see how exactly they should live, and of what consequence it is that they be eminently holy; when it is they that by their heavenly excellency must convince the world of their sinfulness and misery. O christians, do you live such exemplary and convincing lives? Is there indeed that excellency of holiness appearing in you, which may show men, to

the glory of your Redeemer, how the heirs of heaven do differ from the world? Alas, our common, careless living, doth wrung to multitudes as well as to ourselves; and is a cruelty to the souls whose salvation we are bound by our examples to promote. What then do those men, that by their vicious, scandalous conversation, do harden the ungodly, and cause them to think contemptuously and to speak scornfully of the holy way! O, woe to them, if they repent not, by whom such offence cometh!

Especially ministers should see that their lives be a continual lecture; as Hierom saith, *Episcopi domus et conversatio quasi in speculo posita, magistra est publicæ disciplinæ: quicquid fecerit, id sibi omnes faciendum putant*: that is, The house and conversation of a bishop is set as in a glass, (or to be beheld,) as the teacher of public discipline: all think they should do whatever he doth. And therefore Chrysostom concludeth, That a priest that is bad, doth acquire by his priesthood not dignity but disgrace: for (saith he) thou sittest in judgment on thyself: if thou live well and preach well, thou instructest the people; if thou preach well and live ill, thou condemnest thyself. For by living well and preaching well, thou instructest the people how to live; but by preaching well and living ill, thou instructest God as it were how to condemn thee.

And hence it is also that the servants of God should have a care of their fame, as well as of their conversation; because the reputation of religion dependeth much on the reputation of the religious; and reputation doth much to the encouraging or discouraging of the ungodly that are strangers to the things themselves. Saith Augustine, *Conscientia necessaria est tibi, fama proximo tuo: qui famam aucupans negligit conscientiam, hypocrita est: qui confidens conscientie negligit famam, crudelis est*: that is, Conscience is necessary for thyself; and thy good name is necessary for thy neighbour. He that hunteth after fame, and neglecteth conscience, is a hypocrite: and he that so trusteth to a good conscience as to neglect his good name, is cruel (to others). When we mind our fame for the good of others, and the service of God, and not to please a proud, vain-glorious mind; and when we do it without immoderate care, seeking it only by righteous means, and referring the issue to the will of God, as being prepared for evil report as well as good, this is but to improve our talent to our Master's use.

II. I come next to the internal impediments to self-acquaintance, especially in the worse sort of men.

I. The first that I shall acquaint you with is, that natural deep-rooted sin of pride, which strongly inclineth men to think well of themselves, and to desire that all others do so too: so that where pride is not discovered and subdued by grace, men will scarce endure to be closely questioned by ministers or other friends about their sin, and the condition of their souls. What! question them whether they are ungodly, unsanctified, the servants of sin and Satan, in a state of death and condemnation? Their hearts will rise with indignation against him that will put such questions to them. What! question them whether they have any saving grace? whether they are regenerate, pardoned, and have any well-grounded hopes of heaven? They love not the searching word of God; they love not the distinguishing passages of Scripture; they love not a faithful, searching minister, because they would dishonour and trouble them with such doubts as these. A proud man judgeth not of himself as he is, but as his tumefied, distempered fancy representeth him to himself to be: to "think himself something when

he is nothing," and so to be wilfully his own deceiver, is his disease, Gal. vi. 3. And as pride is one of the deepest rooted sins in man, and of greatest strength, and hardest extirpated and overcome; so true self-acquaintance must be accordingly difficult, it being carried on but by such degrees as we get ground and victory against our pride. As melancholy men that are wise in all other things, may be far from the right use of reason in some one point, where the fantasy is crazed, and the distemper lieth; so a proud man, how wise soever in any other matters, as to the right knowledge of himself is like one that is crackbrained, and hath not indeed the use of reason: pride was his first tutor, and taught him what to believe of himself; so that Christ who comes after with a humbling doctrine, cannot be believed, nor scarce with any patience heard. Oh what a disease is to be cured, before a proud person will well know himself! What labour do we lose in all our sermons! Yea, how oft doth the medicine irritate the disease! So that a poor wretch that is under the wrath of God, and knoweth not when he is gone out of the assembly, whether the justice of Heaven will not take vengeance on him before he come hither again, yet cannot abide to hear of this, but with Ahab, hateth the preacher that prophesieth evil of him, be it never so true. It is pride that leadeth up that army of corruptions, that here strive against the light of truth, that is sent to convince and convert the guilty. And is a man like to be saved by the word, while he hateth it, and bends his thoughts and passions all against it?

Direct. 1. He therefore that will ever know himself, must first let in so much of the light as may take down his arrogance, and bring him as a little child to the school of Christ. First know what thou art as man; and then know what thou art as a sinner, and sentenced by God, that so thou mayst come to know what thou art as one that is under the hopes and duties of the redeemed. When thy proud heart rebelleth against conviction, remember with whom thou hast to do. Will God speak submissively to thee for fear of offending thee? Will he cry thee mercy for handling thee so roughly as to tell thee thou art yet the child of wrath? Is he afraid to talk to thee of death or of damnation? Will he recall his threatenings, and repent him of the severity of his laws, because such worms are angry with them, or will not believe them? Perhaps thou mayst make a false-hearted, frightful, man-pleasing minister, to change his strain of plainer dealing, and become thy flatterer, or be silent: but will God be silenced? Will he stoop to thee, and bend or stretch his word to humour thee? O no; he will one day tell thee what thou art with another voice than this of a mortal and despised man, and in another manner than preachers tell it thee. If thou canst frown the preacher out of the pulpit, or out of his fidelity to God and thee, yet canst thou not frown God out of heaven. He will speak to thee more terribly than the terriblest preacher that ever thou heardest: and if thy pride shall rise up, and tell him that he doth thee wrong, how quickly will thy "mouth be stopped," and thou be forced to confess thy guilt! Rom. iii. 5, 6, 19. O stoop, man, to the humbling word of grace, or God will make thee stoop to the words and strokes of wrath! Fear him that will make the proudest fear, before he hath done with them. Judged thou must be; by thyself, to self-abasing and conversion, or by God, to desolation and confusion: and canst thou easier bear God's judgment than thy own? Stoop, foolish, self-deluding dust! Stoop, sinful wretch, and know thy misery! If thou stand it out a little longer, an undiscerned blow will bring thee down; and

thou shalt not see the hand that strikes thee, till thou art humbled to the grave and hell. Oh how absurd, yet pitiful a sight is it, to see poor sinners brave it out against the humbling message of the Lord, as if they could make good their cause against him! and scorn to know that they are going to hell, till they are there! And then will pride preserve them from the knowledge of it? It is shameful folly to be proud and obstinate, where a man knoweth beforehand that he must submit at last, and is not able to stand it out.

2. The second intrinsic impediment to self-acquaintance is, an unreasonable tenderness of ourselves; when an inordinate love of ease and quietness of mind doth prevail with us to hold fast all that thus quieteth us at the present, without regard of due provision for the time to come: in this there is a mixture of unreasonableness and self-love, it is indeed the very brutish disposition. A beast will not willingly be dieted for his future health: let him have at present what he loveth and you please him, though you feed him for the slaughter; for he hath not reason to foresee what followeth. An ox must be bound, and cast and held down by force, if you will shoe him, though it be to the keeping of his feet from hurt; or if you will pull out a thorn, or do any thing for his good that hurteth him at the present. You please not your horse by letting him blood, though you save his life by it. Fleshly-minded men have thus brutified themselves, so that they judge of things by present feeling, and have not reason and faith to look before them, and judge of things by what they tend to, even by the good or hurt that will follow in the end. It is a very terrible, troublesome thing for a man that is unregenerate, unjustified, and unreconciled to God, to know it; for a man that hath any feeling left, to find himself in a state of condemnation: this is to stir up all the terrors of his soul, and cast him into perplexing fears and disquietments of mind; so that he cannot eat, or drink, or sleep in quietness, but the troublesome thoughts of sin and everlasting wrath torment him: and the inconsiderate man that judgeth of things by present feeling, will not endure this; and therefore must needs have the windows shut, and the light removed, that sheweth him these perplexing sights. As most men hate those that speak against them, be the matter never so true, so they cannot endure those thoughts that do accuse them, nor to have a reprover so near them, even in their own breasts: a conscience within them, to preach to them night and day; not one hour in a week, but wherever they go, and whatever they are doing; to be so near, so constant, so precise, and so severe and terrible a preacher, as usually a newly enlightened and awakened conscience is; this seemeth intolerable to them; and whatever come of it, this preacher must be silenced, as turbulent and vexatious, and one that would make them melancholy or mad. "And this is the condemnation, (of these miserable souls,) that light is come into the world, and they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil: for every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved," John iii. 19, 20. And thus while men are so tender of themselves, that they will do nothing that troubleth or hurteth them at the present, they venture upon all the miseries that they are forewarned of.

Direct. 2. Be not unreasonably tender of a little disturbance at the present, nor unbelievably careless of the misery to come. Cannot you endure to know your sin and misery, and yet can you endure to bear it? Will you go to hell for fear of knowing that you are in the way? Must you not know it with

everlasting woe and vengeance when you come thither, if by knowing your danger you prevent not your coming thither? Is it easier to bear God's wrath for ever, than to find at present that you have offended him? Sirs, the question is, Whether you are under the condemnation of the law, or not? Whether you are regenerate and justified, or yet in your sin? If you are justified, far be it from me to persuade you to think that you are under condemnation. I leave that to Satan and the malicious world, who are the condemners of those that Christ doth justify. But if you are unregenerate and unjustified, what will you do at death and judgment? Can you stand before God, or be saved upon any other terms? You cannot: if God be to be believed, you cannot: and if you know the Scriptures, you know you cannot! And if you cannot be saved in an unregenerated, unjustified state, is it not needful that you know it? Will you cry for help before you find yourselves in danger? or strive to get out of sin and misery, before you believe that you are in it? If you think that you have no other sin than the pardoned infirmities of the godly, you will never so value Jesus Christ, and pray and strive for such grace as is necessary to them that have the unpardoned, reigning sins of the ungodly. If it be necessary that you be saved, it is necessary that you value and seek salvation; and if so, it is necessary that you know your need of it, and what you must be and do if you will obtain it! It is a childish or brutish thing, below a man of reason, to stick at a little present trouble, when death cannot otherwise be prevented: if you can prove that ever any was converted and saved by any other way than by coming to the knowledge of their sin and misery, then you have some excuse for your presumption; but if Scripture tell us of no other way, yea, that there is no other way, and you know of none that ever was saved by any other, I think it is time to fall to work, and search and try your hearts and lives, and not to stop at a straw when you are running for your lives, and when damnation is as it were at your backs. You should rather think with yourselves, If we can so hardly bear the forethoughts of hell, how shall we be able everlastingly to bear the torments?

And consider, that Christ hath made the discovery of your sin and misery to be now comparatively an easy burden, in that he hath made them pardonable and curable: if you had not had a Saviour to fly to, but must have looked on your misery as a remediless case, it had then been terrible indeed; and it had been no great mistake to have thought it the best way to take a little ease at present, rather than to disquiet yourselves in vain. But through the great mercy of God, this is not your case: you need not despair of pardon and salvation, if you will but hear while it is called to-day. The task that you are called to, is not to torment yourselves as the damned do with the thought of unpardonable sin, and of a misery that hath no help or hope; but it is only to find out your disease, and come and open it to the physician, and submit to his advice, and use his means, and he will freely and infallibly work the cure. It is but to find out the folly that you have been guilty of, and the danger that you have brought yourselves into, and come to Christ, and with hearty sorrow and resolution to give up yourselves unto his grace, to cast away your iniquities, and enter into his safe and comfortable service. And will you lie in hell and say, We are suffering here, that we might escape the trouble of foreseeing our danger of it, or of endeavouring in time to have prevented it! We died for fear of knowing that we were sick! We suffered our house to burn to ashes for fear of know-

ing that it was on fire! O sirs, be warned in time, and own not and practise not such egregious folly, in a business of everlasting consequence. Believe it, if you sin, you must know that you have sinned: and if you are in the power of Satan it cannot long be hid. Did you but know the difference between discovering it now while there is hope, and hereafter when there is none, I should have no need to persuade you to be presently willing to know the truth, whatever it should cost you.

Hind. 3. Another great impediment of the knowledge of ourselves, is, that self-love so blindeth men that they can see no great evil in themselves or any thing that is their own: it makes them believe that all things are as they would have them be; yea, and better than they would have them: for he that would not indeed be holy, is willing by himself and others to be thought so. Did not the lamentable experience of all the world confirm it, it were incredible that self-love could so exceedingly blind men. If charity think no evil of another, and we are very hardly brought to believe any great harm by those we love; much more will self-love cause men to see no evil by themselves, which possibly they can shut their eyes against, it being more radicately and powerful than the love of others. No arguments so cogent, no light so clear, no oratory so persuading, as can make a self-lover think himself as bad as indeed he is, till God by grace or terror shall convince him. When you are preaching the most searching sermons to convince him, self-love confuteth or misapplieth them; when the marks of trial are most plainly opened, and most closely urged, self-love doth frustrate the preacher's greatest skill and diligence: when nothing of sense can be said to prove the piety of the impious, and the sincerity of the formal hypocrite, yet self-love is that wonderful alchymist, that can make gold not only of the basest metal, but of dross and dirt. Let the most undeniable witness be brought to detect the fraud and misery of an unregenerated soul, self-love is his most powerful defender. No cause so bad which it cannot justify; and no person so miserable but it will pronounce him happy, till God by grace or wrath confute it. Self-love is the grand deceiver of the world.

Direct. 3. Subdue this inordinate self-love, and bring your minds to a just impartiality in judging. Remember that self-love is only powerful at your private bar; and it is not there that your cause must be finally decided: it can do nothing at the bar of God; it cannot there justify, where it is condemned itself; God will not so much as hear it, though you will hear none that speak against it. Self-love is but the vicegerent of the grand usurper, that shall be deposed, and have no show of power, at Christ's appearing, when he will judge his enemies.

And here it will be a helpful cause, to see your own sin and misery in others; and put the case as if it were theirs, and then see how you can discern the evil of it. Oh how easy is it with the most, to see and aggravate the faults of others! How safe were we, if we were as impartial to ourselves!

And also it will be very useful to desire often the help of more impartial judgments than your own: *Fit enim nescio quomodo* (inquit Cicero) *ut magis in aliis cernamus, quam in nobismet ipsis, siquid delinquitur*. Others can quickly spy our faults, as we can quickly find out theirs: therefore as poets and painters do expose their works before they finish them, to the common view, that so what is blamed by many may be considered and amended; so should we, in order to the judging of ourselves, observe both what our friends and enemies say of us, and the more suspiciously try what others blame. But espe-

cially have some near, judicious friends, that will prudently and faithfully assist you. A true friend is an excellent looking-glass. Saith Seneca, Deliberate well first in the choosing of a friend, and then with him deliberate of all things.

And if you would have the benefits of friendship, discourage not plain-dealing. *Magis amat oburgator sanans* (inquit August.) *quam adulator dissimilans*. I know a reprover should be wise, and love must be predominant if he will expect success: for if he speak *tacerato animo*, as Augustine saith, it will seem but *punitis impetus*, and not *corrigentis charitas*. But we must take heed of judging that we are hated because we are reproved; that is, that a friend is not a friend because he doth the office of a friend. Of the two, it is fitter to say of a reproving enemy, He dealeth with me like a friend, than of a reproving friend, He dealeth with me like an enemy: for, as Augustine saith, *Accusare vitia officium est bonum, quod cum mali faciunt, alienas partes agunt*: It is a good office to speak ill of vice, which when bad men do, they play another's part. It is a happy enmity that helpeth you to deliver you from sin and hell; and a cruel friendship that will let you undo your soul for ever, for fear of displeasing you by hindering it.

There are two sorts that deprive themselves of the saving benefit of necessary reproof, and the most desirable fruits of friendship: the one is the hypocrite, that so cunningly hideth his greatest faults, that his friend and enemy never tell him of them: he hath the happiness of keeping his physician unacquainted with his disease, and consequently of keeping the disease. The other is the proud, that can better endure to be ungodly than to be told of it, and to live in many sins, than to be freely admonished of one.

Consider, therefore, that it will prove self-hatred in the effect, which is now called self-love: and that it would seem but a strange kind of love from another, to suffer you to fall into a coal-pit, for fear of telling you that you are near it; or to suffer you to fall into the enemy's hands, lest he should affright you by telling you that they are near. If you love another no better than thus, you have no reason to call yourself his friend: and shall this be your wisest loving of yourselves? If it be love to damn your souls for fear of knowing your danger of damnation, the devil loveth you. If it be friendship to keep you out of heaven, for fear of disquieting you with the light that should have saved you, then you have no enemies in hell. The devil himself can be content to grant you a temporal quietness and ease, in order to your everlasting disquietness and woe. Let go your hopes of heaven, and he can let you be merry awhile on earth: while the strong armed man keepeth his house, the things that he possesseth are in peace. If it be not friendship, but enmity, to trouble you with the sight of sin and danger, in order to your deliverance, then you have none but enemies in heaven: for God himself doth take this course with the dearest of his chosen. No star doth give such light as the sun doth; no minister doth so much to make a sinner know himself, as God doth. Love yourselves therefore in the way that God loveth you: be impartially willing that God and man should help you to be thoroughly acquainted with your state: love not to be flattered by others, or yourselves. Vice is never the more lovely because it is yours; and you know that pain is never the more easy or desirable to you because it is yours. Your own diseases, losses, injuries, and miseries, seem the worst and most grievous to you: and why should not your own sins also be most grievous? You love not po-

verty or pain, because it is your own; O love not sin, because it is your own!

Hind. 4. Another impediment to self-acquaintance, is, that men observe not their hearts in a time of trial, but take them always at the best, when no great temptation puts them to it. A man that never had any opportunity to rise in the world, perhaps, doth think he is not ambitious, and desireth not much to be higher than he is, because the coal was never blown. When a little affront doth ferment their pride into disquietness and desires of revenge, or applause doth ferment it into tumour or self-exaltation, they observe not then the distemper when it is up and most observable, because the nature of sin is to please, and blind, and cheat the mind into a consent. And when the sin seems past, and they find themselves in a seeming humility and meekness, they judge of themselves as then they find themselves, as thinking that distemper is past and cured, and they are not to judge of themselves by what they were, but what they are. And by that rule every drunkard or whoremonger should judge themselves temperate and chaste, as soon as they forbear the act of sin. And what if poverty, age, or sickness, hinder them from ever committing either of them again? For all this, the person is a drunkard or fornicator still; because the act is not pardoned, nor the heart sanctified, and the habit or corrupt inclination mortified. And thus passionate persons do judge of themselves by their milder temper, when no temptation kindleth the flame. But little doth many a one know himself, what corruption is latent in his heart, till trial shall disclose it, and draw it into sight. *Jam diu diabolus* (inquit Aug.) *sopitum ignem sine ulvis flammis occultat, donec duas faculas jungens ambas simul accendat, &c.* If these persons be not always sinning they will not take themselves for sinners; but he that hath once sinned knowingly, in God's account continueth in the sin, till his heart be changed by true repentance.

Yet, on the other side, I would not wrong any upright soul, by persuading them to judge of themselves, as they are at the worst, in the hour of temptation; for so they will be mistaken as certainly, though not as dangerously, as the other.

You will ask then, What is to be done in such a difficult case? If we must neither judge of ourselves as we are at the best out of temptation, nor yet as we are at the worst in the hour of temptation, when and how then shall we judge of ourselves?

I answer, it is one thing to know our particular sins, and their degrees, and another thing to know our state in general, whether we are justified and sanctified or not. To discern what particular sin is in us, and how apt it is to break forth into act, we must watch all the stirrings and appearances of it, in the time of the temptation; but to discern whether it be unmortified and have dominion, we must observe these rules:

1. There is no man on earth that is perfectly free from sin: and therefore it is no good consequence that sin reigneth unto death, because it is not perfectly extinguished, or because it is sometimes committed, unless in the cases after expressed.

2. No sin that is truly mortified and repented of, shall condemn the sinner: for pardon is promised to the truly penitent.

3. Whatever sin the will, according to its habitual inclination, had rather leave than keep, is truly repented of and mortified. For the will is the principal seat of sin; and there is no more sinfulness than there is wilfulness, Rom. vii. 15, 16, 19—22.

4. There are some sins which cannot be frequently committed in consistency with true grace, or sincere

repentance; and some which may be frequently committed in consistency with these. As where sins are known and great, or such as are easily subject to the power of a sanctified will, so that he that will reject them, may: as one such sin must have actual repentance, if actually known; so the frequent committing of such will not consist with habitual repentance. Whereas those sins, that are so small as upright persons, perhaps, may not be sufficiently excited to resistance, or such as upon the sincere use of means are still unknown, or such as a truly sanctified will may not subdue, are all of them consistent with repentance and a justified state: and in this sense we reject not that distinction between moral and venial sin; that is, between sin inconsistent with a state of spiritual life, and sin consistent with it, and consequently pardoned. He that had rather leave the former sort, (the mortal sins,) will leave them; and he that truly repents of them, will forsake them. But of the other (consistent with life) we must say, that a man may possibly retain them, that yet had rather leave them, and doth truly repent of them.

5. A sin of carnal interest (esteemed good, in order to something which the flesh desireth; and so loved and deliberately kept) hath more of the will, and is more inconsistent with repentance, than a sin of mere passion or surprise, which is not so valued upon the account of such an interest.

6. They that have grace enough to avoid temptations to mortal or reigning sin, and consequently that way to avoid the sin, shall not be condemned for it, whatever a stronger temptation might have done.

7. Where bodily diseases necessitate to an act, or the omission of an act, the will is not to be charged with that which it cannot overcome, notwithstanding an unfeigned willingness. As if a man in a frenzy or distraction should swear, or curse, or blaspheme; or one in a lethargy, or potent melancholy, cannot read, or pray, or meditate, &c.

8. As frequent commissions of venial sins (or such as are consistent with true grace) will not prove the soul unsanctified; so the once committing of a gross sin by surprise, which is afterward truly repented of, will not prove the absence of habitual repentance, or spiritual life, so as the frequent committing of such sins will.

So that I conclude, in order to the detection of the sin itself, we must all take notice of ourselves as at the worst, and see what it is that temptation can do: but in order to the discovery of our state, and whether our sins are pardoned or no, we must especially observe whether their eruptions are such as will consist with true habitual repentance, and to note what temptations do with us. To this end,

Direct. 4. Observe then the workings and discoveries of the heart, and judge of its abundance, or habits, by your words and deeds. Note what you were when you had opportunity to sin, when the full cup of pleasure was held out to you, when preferment was before you, when injury or provoking words did blow the coal: if then sin appeared, judge not that you are free, and that none of the roots are latent in your hearts: or if you are sure that such dispositions are hated, repented of, and mortified, yet you may hence observe what diseases of soul you should chiefly strive against, to keep them under, and prevent a new surprise or increase. It is usual for such licentiousness, such self-seeking, such ugly pride and passion, to break forth upon some special temptations, which for many years together did never appear to the person that is guilty, or to any other, that it should keep the best in fear and self-suspicion, and cause them to live in constant watch-

fulness, and to observe the bent and motions of their souls; and to make use afterward of such discoveries as they have made to their cost in time of trial.

And it much concerneth all true christians, to keep in remembrance the exercise and discoveries of grace, which formerly upon trial did undoubtedly appear, and did convince them of the sincerity which afterward they are apt again to question. Will you not believe that there is a sun in the firmament, unless it always shine upon you; or that it is hot, unless it be always summer? Will you not believe that a man can speak, unless he be always speaking? It is weakness and injurious rashness in those christians, that upon every damp that seizeth on their spirits, will venture to deny God's former mercies, and say, that they had never special grace, because they feel it not at present; that they never prayed in sincerity, because some distemper at present discomposeth or overwhelmeth them; that their former zeal and life was counterfeit, because they are grown more cold and dull; that former comforts were all but hypocritical delusions, because they are turned now to sorrows: as much as to say, Because I am now sick, I was never well, nor so much as alive. O were it not for the tender compassions of our Father, and the sure performance of our Lord and Comforter, and that our peace is more in his hand than our own, (though more in our own than any others,) it could never be that a poor distempered, imperfect soul should here have any constancy of peace, considering the power of self-love and partiality on one side, and of grief, and fear, and other passions on the other: and how little a thing doth shake so movable and weak a thing, and muddy and trouble a mind so easily disturbed; and how hard it is again to quiet and compose a mind so troubled, and bring a grieved soul to reason, and make passion understand the truth, and to cause a weak, afflicted soul to judge clean contrary to what they feel! All this considered, no wonder if the peace and comfort of many christians be yet but little, and interrupted, and uneven: and if there be much crying in a family that hath so many little ones, and much complaining where there are so many weak and poor; and many a groan where there is so much pain. To show us the sun at midnight; and convince us of love while we feel the rod; and to give us the comfortable sense of grace, while we have the uncomfortable sense of the greatness of our sin; to give us the joyful hopes of glory, in a troubled, melancholy, dejected state: all this is a work that requireth the special help of the Almighty, and exceeds the strength of feeble worms. Let God give us never so full discoveries of his tenderest love and our own sincerity, as if a voice from heaven had witnessed it unto us, we are questioning all if once we seem to feel the contrary, and are perplexed in the tumult of our thoughts and passions, and bewildered and lost in the errors of our own disturbed minds. Though we have walked with God, we are questioning whether indeed we ever knew him, as soon as he seemeth to hide his face. Though we have felt another life and spirit possess and actuate us than heretofore, and found that we love the things and persons which once we loved not, and that we were quite fallen out with that which was our former pleasure, and that our souls broke off from their old delights, and hopes, and ways, and resolvedly did engage themselves to God, and unfeignedly delivered up themselves unto him; yet all is forgotten, or the convincing evidence of all forgotten, if the lively influences of heaven be but once so far withdrawn, as that our present state is clouded and afflicted, and our former vigour and assurance is

abated. And thus unthankfully we deny God the praise and acknowledgment of his mercies, longer than we are tasting them, or they are still before us: all that he hath done for us is as nothing, and all the love which he hath manifested to us is called hatred; and all the witnesses that have put their hands to his acts of grace are questioned, and his very seals denied, and his earnest misinterpreted, as long as our darkened, distempered souls are in a condition unfit for the apprehension of mercy, and usually when a diseased or afflicted body doth draw the mind into too great a participation of the affliction. And thus as we are disposed ourselves, so we judge of ourselves and of all our receivings, and all God's dealings with us. A soul in a cheerful, lively frame, thinks well of all that God doth to him, and hath thoughts of hope, and peace, and joy; as health disposes the body to alacrity, and can make a man merry, that hath little else: whereas a soul overwhelmed with cares, and fears, and griefs, and muddled with sinful excessive thoughtfulness, and habituated in a diseased, sickly frame, is afraid of every thing, and turneth matter of comfort into sorrow, and is in daily pain by its own imaginations; like a man that hath a sore, and is hurt with the thought that somebody touched it. When we feel ourselves well, all goes well with us, and we put a good interpretation upon all things: and when we are out of order, we complain of every thing, and take pleasure in nothing, and no one can content us, and all is taken in the worse part; as the poet said,

Lata fere lætus cecini, cano tristia tristis.

You shall have a merry song from a merry heart, and a sad ditty from a troubled, grieved mind.

And thus while the discoveries both of sin and grace, are at present overlooked, or afterwards forgotten, and almost all men judge of themselves by present feeling, no wonder if few are well acquainted with themselves.

But as the word and the works of God must be taken together, if they be understood, and not a sentence, part, or parcel, taken separated from the rest, which must make up the sense; so also the workings of God upon your souls must be taken altogether, and you must read them over from the first till now, and set all together, and not forget the letters, the part that went before, or else you will make no sense of that which followeth. And I beseech all weak and troubled christians to remember, also, that they are but children and scholars in the school of Christ; and therefore when they cannot set the several parts together, let them not overvalue their unexperienced understandings, but by the help of their skilful, faithful teachers, do that which of themselves they cannot do. Inquire what your former mercies signify; open them to your guides, and tell them how God hath dealt with you from the beginning, and tell them how it is with you now; and desire them to help you to perceive how one condueth to the right understanding of the other. And be not of froward, but of tractable, submissive minds; and thus your self-acquaintance may be maintained, at least to safety, and to some degree of peace, if not to the joys which you desire, which God reserveth for their proper season.

I should have added more on this necessary subject, but that I have said so much of it in other writings, especially in the "Saints' Rest," part iii. chap. 7; and in my "Treatise of Self-denial;" and in "The Right Method for Peace of Conscience."

I must confess I have written on this subject as I did of Self-denial, viz. with expectation that all men should confess the truth of what I say; and yet so few be cured by it of their self-ignorance, as that still we must stand by, and see the world distracted by it, the church divided, the love of brethren interrupted, and the work of Satan carried on by error, violence, and pride; and the hearts of men so strangely stupified, as to go on incorrigibly in all this mischief, while the cause and cure are opened before them, and all in vain, while they confess the truth; so that they will leave us nothing to do, but exercise our compassion, by lamenting the delirium of frenetic men, while we are unable to save the church, their brethren, or their own souls, from the dilacerations and calamitous effects of their furious self-ignorance. But Christ that hath sent us with the light, which may be resisted, and abused, and in part blown out, will speedily come with light irresistible, and will teach the proud, the scornful, the unmerciful, the self-conceited, the malicious, and the violent, so effectually to know themselves, as that no more exhortations shall be necessary for the reception of his convictions; nor will he or his servants any more beseech men to consider and know their sin and misery, nor be beholden to them to believe and confess it. See Jude 14, 15. And is there no remedy for a stupified, inconsiderate soul? Is there no prevention of so terrible a self-knowledge, as the light of judgment and the fire of hell will else procure? Yes, the remedy is certain, easy, and at hand: "Even to know themselves, till they are driven to study, and seek, and know the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ," John xvii. 3; and yet is the salvation of most as hopeless almost as if there were no remedy, because no persuasion can prevail with them to use it. Lord, what hath thus locked up the minds and hearts of sinners against thy truth and thee? What hath made reasonable man so unreasonable, and a self-loving nature so mortally to hate itself? O thou that openest, and no man shutteth, use the key that openeth hearts; come in with thy wisdom, and thy love, and all this blindness and obstinacy will be gone. At least commit not the safety of thy flock to such as will not know themselves: but "gather thy remnant, and bring them to their folds, and let them be fruitful and increase; and set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them, and let them fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor be lacking," Jer. xxiii. 3, 4. "Ordain a place for them, plant them, and let them dwell therein unmoved; and let not the children of wickedness waste them any more," 1 Chron. xvii. 9. "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so seek out thy sheep, and deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day," Ezek. xxxiv. 12. "Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever," Psal. xxviii. 9.

THE
RIGHT METHOD
FOR
A SETTLED PEACE OF CONSCIENCE
AND SPIRITUAL COMFORT.
IN THIRTY-TWO DIRECTIONS.

MATT. XI. 28—30.—COME UNTO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU, AND LEARN OF ME; FOR I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART: AND YE SHALL FIND REST UNTO YOUR SOULS. FOR MY YOKE IS EASY, AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.

TO MY MUCH VALUED, BELOVED, AND HONOURED FRIENDS,
COLONEL JOHN BRIDGES, WITH MRS. MARGARET BRIDGES, HIS WIFE, AND MR.
THOMAS FOLEY, WITH MRS. ANNE FOLEY, HIS WIFE.

THOUGH in publishing our writings we intend them for the good of all; yet custom, not without reason, doth teach us, sometimes to direct them more especially to some. Though one only had the original interest in these papers, yet do I now direct them to you all, as not knowing how in this to separate you. You dwell together in my estimation and affection: one of you a member of the church which I must teach, and legally the patron of its maintenance and minister: the other, a special branch of that family, which I was first indebted to in this county. You lately joined in presenting to the parliament the petition of this county for the gospel and a faithful ministry. When I only told you of my intention of sending some poor scholars to the university, you freely and jointly offered your considerable annual allowance thereto, and that for the continuance of my life, or their necessities there. I will tell the world of this, whether you will or no; not for your applause, but for their imitation; and the shame of many of far greater estates, that will not be drawn to do the like. The season somewhat aggravates the goodness of your works. When Satan hath a design to burn up those nurseries, you are watering God's plants; when the greedy mouth of sacrilege is gaping for their maintenance, you are voluntarily adding for the supply of its defect. Who knows how many souls they may win to Christ (if God shall send them forth into his harvest) whom you have thus assisted? And what an addition to your comfort this may be! When the gospel is so undermined, and the ministry so maligned, and their maintenance so envied, you have, as the mouth of this county, appeared for them all. What God will yet do with us, we cannot tell; but if he will continue his gospel to us, you may have the greater comfort in it. If he will remove it, and forsake a proud, unworthy, false-hearted people, yet may you have the comfort of your sincere endeavours; you (with the rest that sincerely furthered it) may escape the gnawings of conscience, and the public curse and reproach which the history of this age may fasten upon them, who after all their engagements in blood and covenants, would either in ignorant fury, or malicious subtlety, or base, temporizing cowardice, oppugn or undermine the gospel, or in perfidious silence look on whilst it is destroyed. But because it is not the work of a flatterer that I am doing, but of a friend, I must second these commendations with some caution and counsel, and tell yourselves of your danger and duty, as I tell others of your exemplary deeds. Truly, the sad experiences of these times have much abased my confidence in man, and caused me to have lower thoughts of the best than sometime I have had. I confess I look on man as such a distempered, slippery, and unconstant thing, and of such a natural mutability of apprehensions and affections, that as I shall never more call any man on earth my friend, but with a supposition that he may possibly become mine enemy; so I shall never be so confident of any man's fidelity to Christ, as not withal to suspect that he may

possibly forsake him. Nor shall I boast of any man's service for the gospel, but with a jealousy that he may be drawn to do as much against it (though God, who knows the heart, and knows his own decrees, may know his sincerity, and foreknow his perseverance). Let me therefore remember you, that had you expended your whole estates, and the blood of your hearts, for Christ and his gospel, he will not take himself beholden to you. He oweth you no thanks for your deepest engagements, highest adventures, greatest cost, or utmost endeavours. You are sure beforehand that you shall be no losers by him : your seeming hazards increase your security : your losses are your gain : your giving is your receiving : your expenses are your revenues : Christ returns the largest usury. The more you do and suffer for him, the more you are beholden to him. I must also remember you, that you may possibly live to see the day, when it will cost you dearer to show yourselves faithful to the gospel, ordinances, and ministers of Christ, than now it doth ; and that many have shrunk in greater trials, that pass through lesser with resolution and honour. Your defection at the last, would be the loss of all your works and hopes. " If any man draw back (Christ saith) his soul shall have no pleasure in him." Even those that have endured the great fight of affliction, being reproached and made a gazing-stock, and that have taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, in assurance of a better and enduring substance, have yet need to be warned that they cast not away their confidence, and draw not back to perdition, and lose not the reward for want of patience and perseverance, Heb. x. 22, to the end. That you may escape this danger and be happy for ever, take this advice. 1. Look carefully to the sincerity of your hearts, in the covenant-closure with Christ. See that you take him with the happiness he hath promised for your all. Take heed of looking after another felicity ; or cherishing other hopes ; or esteeming too highly any thing below. Be jealous, and very jealous, lest your hearts should close deceitfully with Christ, maintaining any secret reserve for your bodily safety ; either resolving not to follow him, or not resolving to follow him through the most desolate, distressed condition that he shall lead you in. Count what it may cost you to get the crown ; study well his precepts of mortification and self-denial. There is no true hopes of the glory to come, if you cannot cast over-board all worldly hopes, when the storm is such that you must hazard the one. Oh how many have thought that Christ was most dear to them, and that the hopes of heaven were their chiefest hopes, who have left Christ, though with sorrow, when he bid them let go all ! 2. Every day renew your apprehensions of the truth and worth of the promised felicity, and of the delusory vanity of all things here below : let not heaven lose with you its attractive force, through your forgetfulness or unbelief. He is the best christian that knows best why he is a christian ; and he will most faithfully seek and suffer, that best knows for what he doth it. Value not wealth and honour above that rate which the wisest and best experienced have put upon them, and allow them no more of your affections than they deserve. A mean wit may easily discover their emptiness. Look on all present actions and conditions with a remembrance of their end. Desire not a share in their prosperity, who must pay as dear for it as the loss of their souls. Be not ambitious of that honour which must end in confusion, nor of the favour of those that God will call enemies. How speedily will they come down, and be levelled in the dust, and be laid in the chains of darkness, that now seem so happy to the purblind world, that cannot see the things to come ! Fear not that man that must shortly tremble before that God whom all must fear. 3. Be more solicitous for the securing of your consciences and salvation, than of your honours or estates : in every thing that you are put upon, consult first with God and conscience, and not with flesh and blood. It is your daily and most serious care and watchfulness that is requisite to maintain your integrity, and not a few careless thoughts or purposes, conjunct with a minding of earthly things. 4. Deal faithfully with every truth which you receive. Take heed of subjecting it to carnal interests : if once you have affections that can master your understandings, you are lost, and know it not. For when you have a resolution to cast off any duty, you will first believe it is no duty ; and when you must change your judgment for carnal advantages, you will make the change seem reasonable and right : and evil shall be proved good when you have a mind to follow it. 5. Make gospel truths your own, by daily humble studies, arising to such a soundness of judgment, that you may not need to take too much upon trust, lest if your guides should miscarry, you miscarry with them. Deliver not up your understanding in captivity to any. 6. Yet do not overvalue your own understandings. This pride hath done that in church and state, which all discerning men are lamenting. They that know but little, see not what they want, as well as what they have ; nor that imperfection in their knowledge which should humble them, nor that difficulty in things which should make them diligent and modest. 7. Apprehend the necessity and usefulness of Christ's officers, order, and ordinances, for the prosperity of his church : pastors must guide you, though not seduce you, or lead you blindfold. But choose (if you may) such as are judicious and not ignorant, not rash, but sober, not formal, but serious and spiritual ; not of carnal, but heavenly conversations : especially avoid them that divide and follow parties, and seek to draw disciples to themselves, and can sacrifice the church's unity and peace to their proud humours or carnal interests. Watch carefully that no weaknesses of the minister do draw you to a disesteem of the ordinances of God ; nor any of the sad miscarriages of professors, should cause you to set less by truth or godliness. Wrong not Christ more, because other men have so wronged him. Quarrel more with your own unfitness and unworthiness in ordinances, than with other men's. It is the frame of your own heart that doth more to help or hinder your comforts, than the quality of those you join with. To these few directions, added to the rest in this book, I shall subjoin my hearty prayers, that you may receive from that gospel and ministry which you have owned, such stability in the faith, such victory over the flesh and the world, such apprehensions of the love of God in Christ, such direction in every strait and duty, that you may live uprightly, die peaceably, and reign gloriously. Amen.

Your servant in the faith

and gospel of Christ,

RICHARD BAXTER.

May 9, 1653.

TO THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

My dearly beloved fellow-christians, whose souls are taken up with the careful thoughts of attaining and maintaining peace with God, who are vile in your own eyes, and value the blood, and Spirit, and word of your Redeemer, and the hope of the saints in their approaching blessedness, before all the pomp and vanities of this world, and resolve to give up yourselves to his conduct, who is become "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him;" for you do I publish these following directions, and to you it is that I direct this preface. The only glorious and infinite God, who made the worlds, and upholdeth them by his word; who is attended with millions of his glorious angels, and praised continually by his heavenly hosts; who pulleth down the mighty from their seats, and scattereth the proud in the imaginations of their hearts, and maketh his enemies lick the dust; to whom the kings and conquerors of the earth are as the silliest worms, and the whole world is nothing, and lighter than vanity, which he will shortly turn into flames before your eyes. This God hath sent me to you, with that joyful message, which needs no more but your believing entertainment, to make it sufficient to raise you from the dust, and banish those terrors and troubles from your hearts, and help you to live like the sons of God. He commandeth me to tell you, that he takes notice of your sorrows. He stands by when you see him not, and say he hath forsaken you. He minds you with greatest tenderness, when you say he hath forgotten you. He numbereth your sighs. He bottles up your tears; the groans of your hearts do reach his own. He takes it unkindly, that you are so suspicious of him, and that all that he hath done for you in the work of redemption, and all the gracious workings of his Spirit on your souls, and all your own peculiar experiences of his goodness, can raise you to no higher apprehensions of his love! Shall not love be acknowledged to be love, when it is grown to a miracle? when it surpasseth comprehension? Must the Lord set up love and mercy in the work of redemption, to be equally admired with his omnipotency manifested in the creation? and call forth the world to this sweet employment, that in secret and in public it might be the business of our lives? And yet shall it be so overlooked or questioned, as if you lived without love and mercy in the world? Providence doth its part, by heaping up mountains of daily mercies, and these it sets before your eyes. The gospel hath eminently done its part by clear describing them, and fully assuring them, and this is proclaimed frequently in your ears. And yet is there so little in your hearts and mouths? Do you see, and hear, and feel, and taste mercy and love? Do you live wholly on it? And yet do you still doubt of it? and think so meanly of it, and so hardly acknowledge it? God takes not this well; but yet he considereth your frailty, and takes you not at the worst. He knows that flesh will play its part, and the remnants of corruption will not be idle. And the serpent will be suggesting false thoughts of God, and will be still striving most to obscure that part of his glory which is dearest to him, and especially which is most conjoined with the happiness of man. He knows also, that sin will breed sorrows and fears; and that man's understanding is shallow, and all his conceivings of God are exceeding low. And that we are so far from God as creatures, and so much farther as sinners, and especially as conscious of the abuse of his grace, that there must needs follow such a strangeness as will damp and dull our apprehensions of his love; and such an abatement of our confidence, as will make us draw back, and look at God afar off. Seeing therefore that at this distance no full apprehensions of love can be expected, it is the pleasure of our Redeemer shortly to return, with ten thousands of his saints, with the noble army of his martyrs, and the attendance of his angels, and to give you such a convincing demonstration of his love, as shall leave no room for one more doubt. Your comforts are now but a taste, they shall be then a feast. They are now but intermittent, they shall be then continual. How soon now do your conquered fears return; and what an unconstaney and unevenness is there in our peace. But then our peace must needs be perfect and permanent, when we shall please God, and enjoy him in perfection to perpetuity. Certainly, christians, your comforts should be now more abundant, but that they are not ripe. It is that, and not this, that is your harvest. I have told you in another book, the mistake and danger of expecting too much here, and the necessity of looking and longing for that rest, if we will have peace indeed! But, alas, how hard is this lesson learned! Unbelievers would have happiness, but how fain would they have it in the creature rather than in God! Believers would rather have their happiness in God than in the creature, but how fain would they have it without dying! And no wonder, for when sin brought in death, even grace itself cannot love it, though it may submit to it. But though churlish death do stand in our way, why look we not at the soul's admittance into rest, and the body's resurrection that must shortly follow? Doubtless that faith by which we are justified and saved, as it sits down on the word of truth as the present ground of its confident repose, so doth it thence look with one eye backward on the cross, and with the other forward on the crown. And if we well observe the Scripture descriptions of that faith, we shall find them as frequently magnifying it and describing it from the latter, as from the former. As it is the duty and glory of faith to look back with thankful acknowledgment to a crucified Christ, and his payment of our ransom; so is it the duty and glory of that same justifying, saving faith to look forward with desire and hope to the return of King Jesus, and the glorious celebration of the marriage of the Lamb, and the sentential justification, and the glorification of his saints. To believe these things unfeignedly which we never saw, nor ever spoke with man that did see, and to hope for them so really as to let go all present forbidden pleasures, and all worldly hopes and seeming happiness, rather than to hazard the loss of them; this is an eminent part of that faith by which the just do live, and which the Scripture doth own as justifying and saving. For it never distinguishes between justifying faith and saving faith, as to their nature. It is therefore a great mistake of some to look only at that one eye of justifying faith which looks back upon the cross, and a great mistake of them on the other hand that look only at that eye of it which beholds the crown. Both Christ crucified, and Christ interceding, and Christ returning to justify and glorify, are the objects even of justifying, saving faith, most strictly so called. The Scripture oft expresseth the one only, but then it still implieth the other. The Socinians erroneously, therefore, from Heb. xi. where the examples and eulogies of faith are set forth, do exclude Christ crucified,

or the respect to his satisfaction, from justifying faith, and place it in a mere expectation of glory. And others do as ungroundedly affirm, that it is not the justifying act of faith which Heb. xi. describeth, because they find not the cross of Christ there mentioned. For as believing in Christ's blood comprehendeth the end, even the expectation of remission and glory merited by that blood, so the believing of that glory doth always imply that we believe and expect it as the fruit of Christ's ransom. It is for health and life that we accept and trust upon our physician. And it is for justification and salvation that we accept and trust on Christ. The salvation of our souls is the end of our faith. They that question whether we may believe and obey for our own salvation, do question whether we may go to the physician and follow his advice for health and life. Why then do you that are believers so much forget the end of your faith, and that for which it is that you believe? Believing in Christ for present mercies only, be they temporal or spiritual, is not the true believing. They are dangerously mistaken that think the thoughts of heaven to be so accidental to the nature and work of faith, as that they tend only to our comfort, and are not necessary to salvation itself. It is upon your apprehensions and expectations of that unseen felicity that both your peace and safety do depend. How contrary therefore is it to the nature of a believer, to forget the place of his rest and consolation! and to look for so much of these from the creatures, in this our present pilgrimage and prison, as, alas, too commonly we do! Thus do we kill our comforts, and then complain for want of them. How should you have any life or constancy of consolations, that are so seldom, so slight, so unbelieving, and so heartless in your thoughts of heaven! You know what a folly it is to expect any peace, which shall not come from Christ as the fountain. And you must learn as well to understand what a folly it is to expect any solid joys, or stable peace, which is not fetched from heaven, as from the end. Oh that christians were careful to live with one eye still on Christ crucified, and with the other on Christ coming in glory! If the everlasting joys were more in your believing thoughts, spiritual joys would more abound at present in your hearts. It is no more wonder that you are comfortless when heaven is forgotten, or doubtfully remembered, than that you are faint when you eat not, or cold when you stir not, or when you have not fire or clothes.

But when christians do not only let fall their expectations of the things unseen, but also heighten their expectations from the creature, then do they most infallibly prepare for their fears and troubles, and estrangement from God, and with both hands draw calamities on their souls. Who ever meets with a distressed, complaining soul, where one or both of these is not apparent? their low expectations from God hereafter, or their high expectations from the creature now? What doth keep us under such trouble and disquietness, but that we will not expect what God hath promised, or we will needs expect what he promised not? And then we complain when we miss of those expectations which we foolishly and ungroundedly raised to ourselves. We are grieved for crosses, for losses, for wrongs from our enemies, for unkind or unfaithful dealings of our friends, for sickness, for contempt and disesteem in the world! But who bid you look for any better? Was it prosperity, and riches, and credit, and friends, that God called you to believe for? or that you became christians for? or that you had an absolute promise of in the word? If you will make promises to yourself, and then your own promises deceive you, whom should you blame for that? Nay, do we not, as it were, necessitate God hereby to imbitter all our comforts below, and to make every creature as a scorpion to us, because we will needs make them our petty deities? We have less comfort in them than else we might have, because we must needs have more than we should have. You might have more faithfulness from your friends, more reputation in the world, more sweetness in all your present enjoyments, if you looked for less. Why is it that you can scarce name a creature near you, that is not a scourge to you, but because you can scarce name one that is not your idol, or at least which you do not expect more from than you ought? Nay, (which is one of the saddest considerations of this kind that can be imagined,) God is fain to scourge us most even by the highest professors of religion, because we have most idolized them, and had such excessive expectations from them. One would have thought it next to an impossibility, that such men, and so many of them, could ever have been drawn to do that against the church, against that gospel ministry and ordinances of God, (which once seemed dearer to them than their lives,) which hath since been done, and which yet we fear! But a believing eye can discern the reason of this sad providence in part. Never men were more idolized, and therefore no wonder if we were never so afflicted by any. Alas, when will we learn by Scripture and providence so to know God and the creature, as to look for far more from him, and less from them? We have looked for wonders from Scotland, and what is come of it? We looked that war should have even satisfied our desires; and when it had removed all visible impediments, we thought we should have had such a glorious reformation as the world never knew! And now behold a Babel, and a mangled deformation! What high expectations had we from an assembly! what expectations from a parliament! and where are they now? O hear the word of the Lord, ye low-spirited people! "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. ii. 22. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters," &c. Jer. xvii. 5-8. "Surely men of low degree are vanity; and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity," Psal. lxxii. 9. Let me warn you all, christians, for the time to come, take the creature as a creature; remember its frailty; look for no more from it than its part. If you have the nearest, dearest, godly friends, expect to feel the sting of their corruptions, as well as to taste the sweetness of their grace. And they must expect the like from you.

If you ask me why I speak so much of these things here? It is, 1. Because I find that much of the trouble of ordinary christians comes from their crosses in the creature, and the frustration of these their sinful expectations. 2. And because I have said so little of it in the following directions, they being intended for the cure of another kind of trouble, therefore I have said thus much here of this.

Having premised this advice, I take myself bound to add one thing more; that is, an apology for the publication of this imperfect piece, whether just or insufficient other men must judge. I confess I am so apprehensive of the luxuriant fertility or licentiousness of the press of late, as being a design of the enemy to bury and overwhelm in a crowd those judicious, pious, excellent writings, that before were so commonly

read by the people, that I think few men should now print without an apology, much less such as I. Who hath more lamented this inundation of impertinences? or more accused the ignorance and pride of others, that must needs disgorge themselves of all their crudities, as if they were such precious conceptions proceeding from the Holy Ghost, that the world might not, without very great injury, be deprived of; and it were pity that all men should not be made partakers of them? And how come I to go on in the same fault myself? Truly I have no excuse or argument, but those of the times, necessity, and providence; which how far they may justify me, I must leave to the judge. Being in company with a troubled, complaining friend, I perceived that it must be some standing counsel which might be frequently perused, that must satisfactorily answer the complaints that I heard, and not a transient speech, which would quickly slip away. Being therefore obliged as a pastor, and as a friend, and as a christian, to tender my best assistance for relief, I was suddenly, in the moment of speaking, moved to promise one sheet of paper, which might be useful to that end. Which promise, when I attempted to perform, the one sheet lengthened to thirty, and my one day's (intended) work was drawn out to a just month. I went on far before I had the least thought to let any eye behold it, except the party for whom I wrote it. But at last I perceived an impossibility of contracting, and I was presently possessed with confident apprehensions, that a copy of those directions might be useful to many other of my poor neighbours and friends that needed them as much. Upon which apprehension I presently permitted my pen to run more at large, and to deviate from the case of the party that I wrote for, and to take in the common case of most troubled, doubting souls. By that time that I had finished it, I received letters from several parts, from learned and judicious divines, importuning me to print more, having understood my intentions to desist, as having done too much already, even at first. I confess I was not much moved by their importunity, till they seconded it with their arguments; whereof one was, the experience of the success of former writings, which might assure me it was not displeasing to God. I had many that urged me; I had no one but myself to draw me back. I apprehended that a writing of this nature might be useful to the many weak, perplexed christians through the land. Two reasons did at first come in against it. The first was, that if there were no more written on this subject than Dr. Sibbs' "Bruised Reed, and Soul's Conflict," and Mr. Jos. Symonds' "Deserted Soul's Case and Cure," there need no more. Especially there being also Dr. Preston's Works, and many of Perkins' to this use; and Mr. Ball, and Mr. Culverwell "of Faith," and divers the like. To this my own judgment answered, that yet these brief directions might add somewhat that might be useful to the weak, as to the method of their proceedings, if not to the matter. And my brethren stopped my mouth by telling me, that others had written before me of heaven and baptism, and yet my labours were not lost. Next this, I thought the crudity and weakness of the writing was such, as should prohibit the publication, it being unfit to thrust upon the world the hasty, undigested lines, that were written for the use of one person. To this my thoughts replied, that, 1. For all that it might be useful to poor women, and country people, who most commonly prove the troubled spirits, for whose sakes I wrote it. Had I wrote for the use of learned men, I would have tried to make it fitter for their use; and if I could not, I would have suppressed it. 2. It was my pride that nourished this scruple, which moved me not to appear so homely to the world, and therefore I cast it by. One thing more I confess did much prevail with me to make these papers public, and that is, the antinomians' common confident obtrusion of their anti-evangelical doctrines and methods for comforting troubled souls. They are the most notorious mountebanks in this art, the highest pretenders, and unhappiest performers, that most of the reformed churches ever knew. And none usually are readier to receive their doctrines, than such weak women, or unskilful people, that being in trouble, are like a sick man in great pain, who is glad to hear what all can say, and to make trial of every thing by which he hath any hope of ease. And then there is so much opium in these mountebanks' Nephthies, or antidote of rest; so many principles of carnal security and presumption, which tend to the present ease of the patient, whatever follow; that it is no wonder if some well-meaning christians do quickly swallow the bait, and proclaim the rare effects of this medicament, and the admirable skill of this unskilful sect, to the insnaring of others, especially that are in the like distress. Especially when they meet with some divines of our own, who do deliver to them some master-points of this system of mistakes, which are so necessarily concatenated to the rest, that they may easily see, if they have one, they must have all, unless they will hold contradictions. As to instance in the doctrine of justification before faith, or the dissolving the obligation to punishment, which is nothing but remission of sin, before faith. So that nothing remains since Christ's death, (as some,) or since God's decree, (as others,) but only to have our pardon manifested, or to be justified in conscience, or (as some phrase it) to have that justification which is terminated in conscience. There is a very judicious man, Mr. Benjamin Woodbridge, of Newbury, hath written so excellent well against this error, and in so small room, being but one sermon, that I would advise all private christians to get one of them, and peruse it, as one of the best, easiest, cheapest preservatives against the contagion of this part of antinomianism.

I had not troubled the reader with this apology, had I thought so well of this writing, as to be a sufficient apology for itself; or had I not taken it for a heinous crime to speak idly in print.

For the doctrine here contained, it is of a middle strain, between (I think) the extremes of some others. I have laboured so to build up peace, as not thereby to fortify presumption. And perhaps in some points you may see my meaning more plainly, which through the obscurity of former writings I was misunderstood in. As for the manner of this writing, I must desire them that expect learning or exactness, to turn away their eyes, and know, that I wrote it not for such as they. I use not to speak any thing but plain English to that sect, or to that use and end, for which I wrote these lines. I wrote to the utmost verge of my paper, before I thought to make it public, and so had no room for marginal quotations, (nor time to transcribe that copy, that I might have room,) nor indeed much mind of them, if I had both room and time.

As in all the removes of my life I have been still led to that place or state which was farthest from my own thoughts, and never designed or contrived by myself; so all the writings that yet I have published, are such as have been by some sudden, unexpected occasion extorted from me, while those that I most affected have been stifled in the conception; and those that I have most laboured in, must lie buried in the dust, that I may know it is God that is the disposer of all. Experience persuadeth me to think, that God, who

hath compelled me hitherto, intendeth to make this hasty writing a means for the calming of some troubled souls; which if he do, I have my end. If I can do nothing to the church's public peace, either through my own unskilfulness and unworthiness, or through the prevalency of the malady; yet will it be my comfort, to further the peace of the poorer christian. (Though to the former also I shall contribute my best endeavours, and am with this sending to the press some few sheets to that end, with our "Worcestershire Agreement.") The full accomplishment of both; the subduing of the prince of darkness, confusion, and contention; the destroying of that pride, self-esteem, self-seeking, and carnal-mindedness, which, remaining even in the best, are the disturbers of all peace; the fuller discovery of the sinfulness of unpeaceable principles, dispositions, and practices; the nearer closure of all true believers, and the hastening of the church's everlasting peace;—these are his daily prayers, who is

A zealous desirer of the peace of the
church, and of every faithful soul,

May 7, 1653.

RICHARD BAXTER.

It must be understood, that the case here to be resolved is not, How an unhumiliated, profane sinner, that never was convinced of sin and misery, should be brought to a settled peace of conscience. Their carnal peace must first be broken, and they must be so far humbled, as to find the want and worth of mercy, that Christ and his consolations may not seem contemptible in their eyes. It is none of my business now, to give any advice for the furthering of this conviction or humiliation. But the case in hand is, How a sinner may attain to a settled peace of conscience, and some competent measure of the joy of the Holy Ghost, who hath been convinced of sin and misery, and long made a profession of holiness, but liveth in continual doubtings of their sincerity, and fears of God's wrath, because of an exceeding deadness of spirit, and a want of that love to God, and delight in him, and sweetness in duty, and witness of the Spirit, and communion with God, and other the like evidences which are found in the saints. How far the party is right or wrong in the discovery of these wants, I now meddle not. Whether they judge rightly or wrongly, the directions may be useful to them. And though I purposely meddle not with the unhumiliated, that feel not the want of Christ and mercy, yet most that falls may be useful to all that profess the christian faith. For I shall study so to avoid the extremes in my doctrinal directions, as may conduce to your escaping the desperate extremes of ungrounded comforts, and causeless terrors in your own spirit.

Of my directions, the first shall be only general, and the rest more particular. And in all of them I must entreat you, 1. To observe the order and method, as well as the matter; and that you would practise them in the same order as I place them. 2. And to remember that it is not only comfortable words, but it is directions for your own practice, which here I prescribe you; and therefore that it is not the bare reading of them that will cure you; but if you mean to have the benefit of them, you must bestow more time in practising them, than I have done in penning them; yea, you must make it the work of your life. And let not that startle you, or seem tedious to you, for it will be no more grievous a work to a well-tempered soul, than eating, or drinking, or sleep, or recreation is to a healthful body; and than it is to an honest woman to love and delight in her husband and her children, which is no grievous task.

Direct. I. Get as clear a discovery as you can of the true cause of your doubts and troubles; for if

you should mistake in the cause, it would much frustrate the most excellent means for the cure.

The very same doubts and complaints may come from several causes in several persons, and therefore admit not of the same way of cure. Sometimes the cause begins in the body, and thence proceedeth to the mind; sometimes it begins in the mind, and thence distempereth the body. Sometimes in the mind, it is most or first from worldly crosses, and thence proceedeth to spiritual things. And of spiritual matters, sometimes it begins upon scruples or differences in religion, or points of doctrine; sometimes, and most commonly, from the sense of our own infirmities; sometimes it is only from ordinary infirmities; sometimes from some extraordinary decays of inward grace; sometimes from the neglect of some weighty duty; and sometimes from the deep wounds of some heinous, secret, or scandalous sin; and sometimes it is merely from the fresh discovery of that which before we never did discern; and sometimes from the violent assault of extraordinary temptations. Which of these is your own case, you must be careful to find out, and to apply the means for cure accordingly. Even of true christians, the same means will not fit all. The difference of natures, as well as of actual cases, must be considered. One hath need of that tender handling, which would undo another; and he again hath need of that rousing which another cannot bear. And therefore understand, that when I have given you all the directions that I can, I must, in the end hereof, advise you to take the counsel of a skilful minister, in applying and making use of them: for it is in this, as in the case of physic, when we have written the best books of receipts, or for methodical cures; yet we must advise people to take heed how they use them, without the advice of a learned and faithful physician; for medicines must not be only fitted to diseases, but to bodies: that medicine will kill one man, which will cure another of the same distemper; such difference there may be in their age, strength, complexion, and other things. So is it much in our present case. And therefore as when all the physic books in the world are written, and all receipts known, yet will there be still a necessity of physicians; so when all discoveries and directions are made in divinity, there will still be a necessity of a constant standing ministry. And as ignorant women and empirics do kill oftentimes more than they cure, though they have the best receipts, for want of judgment and experience to use them aright; so do ignorant teachers and guides by men's souls, though

they can say the same words as a judicious pastor, and repeat the same texts of Scripture. Not that I mean, that such can do no good: yes, much no doubt, if they will humbly, compassionately, and faithfully improve their talents within the verge of their own calling; which if they go beyond, ordinarily a remarkable judgment followeth their best labours; both to the churches, and particular souls, that make use of them. And therefore because (if my conjectural prognostics fail not, as I daily pray they may) we are like to be more tried and plagued this way, than ever were any of our forefathers, since Adam's days, till now; and seeing this is the hour of our temptation, wherein God is purposely separating the chaff, and discovering to the world the dangers of injudicious, misguided zeal; I shall therefore both first and last advise you, as ever you would have a settled peace of conscience, keep out of the hand of vagrant and seducing mountebanks, under what names, or titles, or pretences soever they may assault you. Especially suspect all that bestow as much pains to win you to their party, as to win you to Christ.

Direct. II. Make as full a discovery as you can, how much of the trouble of your mind doth arise from your melancholy and bodily distempers, and how much from discontenting afflictions in your worldly estate, or friends, or name, and according to your discovery make use of the remedy.

I put these two causes of trouble here together in the beginning, because I will presently dismiss them, and apply the rest of these directions only to those troubles that are raised from sins and wants in grace.

1. For melancholy, I have by long experience found it to have so great and common a hand in the fears and troubles of mind, that I meet not with one of many, that live in great troubles and fears for any long time together, but melancholy is the main seat of them; though they feel nothing in their body, but all in their mind. I would have such persons make use of some able godly physician, and he will help them to discern how much of their trouble comes from melancholy. Where this is the cause, usually the party is fearful of almost every thing; a word or a sudden thought will disquiet them. Sometimes they are sad, and scarce know why: all comforts are of no continuance with them; but as soon as you have done comforting them, and they be never so well satisfied, yet the trouble returns in a few days or hours, as soon as the dark and troubled spirits return to their former force: they are still addicted to musing and solitariness, and thoughts will run in their minds, that they cannot lay them by: if it go any thing far, they are almost always assaulted with temptations to blasphemy, to doubt whether there be a God or a Christ, or the Scriptures be true; or whether there be a heaven or a hell; and oft tempted to speak some blasphemous words against God; and this with such importunity, that they can hardly forbear: and oftentimes they are tempted to make away themselves. When it goes so far, they are next the loss of the use of reason, if it be not prevented.

Now to those that find that melancholy is the cause of their troubles, I would give this advice.

1. Expect not that rational, spiritual remedies, should suffice for this cure; for you may as well expect that a good sermon, or comfortable words, should cure the falling sickness, or palsy, or a broken head, as to be a sufficient cure to your melancholy fears; for this is as real a bodily disease as the other; only because it works on the spirits and fantasy, on which words of advice do also work, therefore such words, and Scripture and reason, may somewhat resist it, and may palliate or allay some of the effects

at the present; but as soon as time hath worn off the force and effects of these reasons, the distemper presently returns.

For the humour hath the advantage, 1. Of continual presence. 2. Of a more necessary, natural, and sensible way of working. As if a man be in an easy lethargy, you may awake him so long as you are calling on him aloud; but as soon as you cease, he is asleep again. Such is the case of the melancholy in their sorrows; for it is as natural for melancholy to cause fears and disquietness of mind, as for phlegm in a lethargy to cause sleep.

Do not therefore lay the blame on your books, friends, counsels, instructions, (no nor all on your soul,) if these troubles be not cured by words: but labour to discern truly how much of your trouble comes this way, and then fix it in your mind in all your inquiries, reading, and hearing, that it is the other part of your trouble which is truly rational, and not this part of it which is from melancholy, that these means were ordained to remove (though God may also bless them extraordinarily to do both). Only constant importunate prayer is a fit and special means for the curing of all.

2. When you have truly found out how much of your disquietness proceeds from melancholy, acquit your soul from that part of it; still remember in all your self-examinations, self-judgments, and reflections on your heart, that it is not directly to be charged with those sorrows that come from your spleen; save only remotely, as all other diseases are the fruits of sin: as a lethargic dullness is the deserved fruit of sin; but he that should charge it immediately on his soul, should wrong himself; and he that would attempt the cure, must do it on the body.

3. If you would have these fears and troubles removed, apply yourself to the proper cure of melancholy. 1. Avoid all passion of sorrow, fear, and anger, as much as you can; and all occasions, and discontents and grief. 2. Avoid much solitariness, and be most commonly in some cheerful company. Not that I would have you do as the foolish sinners of the world do, to drink away melancholy, and keep company with sensual, vain, and unprofitable persons, that will draw you deeper into sin, and so make your wound greater instead of healing it, and multiply your troubles when you are forced to look back on your sinful loss of time. But keep company with the more cheerful sort of the godly. There is no mirth like the mirth of believers, which faith doth fetch from the blood of Christ, and from the promises of the word, and from experiences of mercy, and from the serious fore-apprehensions of our everlasting blessedness. Converse with men of strongest faith, that have this heavenly mirth, and can speak experimentally of the joy of the Holy Ghost; and these will be a great help to the reviving of your spirit, and changing your melancholy habit, so far as without a physician it may be expected. Yet sometimes it may not be amiss to confer with some that are in your own case, that you may see that your condition is not singular. For melancholy people, in such distresses, are ready to think, that never any was in the case as they are in; or at least never any that were truly godly. When you hear people of the most upright lives, and that truly fear God, to have the very same complaints as you have yourself, it may give you some hopes that it is not so bad as you before did imagine. However, be sure that you avoid solitariness as much as you well can. 3. Also take heed of too deep, fixed, musing thoughts: studying and serious meditating be not duties for the deeply melancholy (as I shall show more in the following directions); you must let those alone till

you are better able to perform them, lest by attempting those duties which you cannot perform you shall utterly disable yourself from all: therefore I would advise you, by all means, to shake and rouse yourself out of such musings, and suddenly to turn your thoughts away to something else. 4. To this end, be sure that you avoid idleness and want of employment; which as it is a life not pleasing to God, so is it the opportunity for melancholy thoughts to be working, and the chiefest season for Satan to tempt you. Never let the devil find you unemployed, but see that you go cheerfully about the works of your calling, and follow it with diligence; and that time which you redeem for spiritual exercises, let it be most spent in thanksgiving, and praises, and heavenly conference.

These things may do much for prevention, and abating your disease, if it be not gone too far; but if it be, you were best have recourse to the physician, and expect God's blessing in the use of means; and you will find, when your body is once cured, the disquietness of your mind will vanish of itself.

2. The second part of this direction, was, that you take notice how much of your disquietness may proceed from outward crosses; for it is ordinary for these to lie at the root, and bring the heart into a disquiet and discontent, and then trouble for sin doth follow after. Alas, how oft have I seen that verified of the apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 10, "The sorrow of the world worketh death." How many, even godly people, have I known, that through crosses in children, or friends, or losses in their estates, or wrongs from men, or perplexities, that through some unadvisedness they were cast into, or the like, have fallen into mortal diseases, or into such a fixed melancholy, that some of them have gone beside themselves; and others have lived in fears and doubting ever after, by the removal of the disquietness to their consciences? How sad a thing is it, that we should thus add to our own afflictions! And the heavier we judge the burden, the more we lay on! As if God had not done enough, or would not sufficiently afflict us. We may more comfortably bear that which God layeth on us, than that which we immediately lay upon ourselves. Crosses are not great or small, according to the bulk of the matter, but according chiefly to the mind of the sufferer. Or else, how could holy men "rejoice in tribulation, and be exceeding glad that they are accounted worthy to suffer for Christ?" Reproaches, wrongs, losses, are all without you; unless you open them the door wilfully yourself, they cannot come into the heart. God hath not put the joy or grief of your heart in any other man's power, but in your own. It is you therefore that do yourselves the greatest mischief. God afflicts your body, or men wrong you in your state or name, (a small hurt if it go no further,) and therefore you will afflict your soul! But a sadder thing yet is it to consider of, that men fearing God should so highly value the things of the world. They who in their covenants with Christ, are engaged to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; they that have taken God in Christ for their portion, for their all; and have resigned themselves and all that they have to Christ's dispose; whose very business in this world, and their christian life, consisteth so much in resisting the devil, mortifying the flesh, and overcoming the world; and it is God's business in his inward works of grace, and his outward teachings, and sharp afflictions, and examples of others, to convince them of the vanity and vexation of the world, and thoroughly to wean them from it; and yet that it should be so high in their estimation, and sit so close to their hearts, that they cannot bear the loss of it

without such discontent, disquiet, and distraction of mind; yea, though when all is gone, they have their God left them, they have their Christ still, whom they took for their treasure; they have opportunities for their souls, they have the sure promise of glory, yea, and a promise, that "all things shall work together for their good;" yea, and for that one thing that is taken from them, they have yet a hundred outward mercies remaining, that yet even believers should have so much unbelief; and have their faith to seek, when they should use it, and live by it; and that God should seem so small in their eye, as not to satisfy or quiet them, unless they have the world with him; and that the world should still seem so amiable, when God hath done so much to bring it into contempt: truly this (and more) shows that the work of mortification is very imperfect in professors, and that we bend not the force of our daily strivings and endeavours that way. If christians did bestow but as much time and pains in mortifying the flesh, and getting down the interest of it in the soul, that Christ's interest may be advanced, as they do about controversies, external duties, formalities, tasks of devotion, and self-tormenting fears, oh what excellent christians should we then be! and how happily would most of our disquiet be removed! Alas, if we are so unfit to part with one outward comfort now, upon the disposal of our Father's providence, how should we forsake all for Christ? or what shall we do at death, when all must be parted with? As ever therefore you would live in true christian peace, set more by Christ, and less by the world, and all things in it; and hold all that you possess so loosely, that it may not be grievous to you when you must leave them.

So much for the troubles that arise from your body and outward state. All the rest shall be directed for the curing of those troubles that arise immediately from more spiritual causes.

Direct. III. Be sure that you first lay sound apprehensions of God's nature in your understanding, and lay them deeply.

This is the first article of your creed, and the first part of "life eternal, to know God!" His substance is quite past human understanding; therefore never make any attempt to reach the knowledge of it, or to have any positive conceivings of it, for they will be all but idols, or false conceptions; but his attributes are manifested to our understandings. Well, consider, that even under the terrible law, when God proclaims to Moses his own name, and therein his nature, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, the first and greatest part is, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." And he hath sworn, "That he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he return and live." Think not therefore of God's mercifulness, with diminishing, extenuating thoughts, nor limit it by the bounds of our frail understandings; for the heavens are not so far above the earth, as his thoughts and ways are above ours. Still remember, that you must have no low thoughts of God's goodness, but apprehend it as bearing proportion with his power. As it is blasphemy to limit his power, so it is to limit his goodness. The advantages that your soul will get by this right knowledge and estimation of God's goodness, will be these:

1. This will make God appear more amiable in your eyes, and then you will love him more readily and abundantly. And love, 1. Is effectually consolatory in the very working; so much love, usually so much comfort (I mean this love of complacency;

for a love of desire there may be without comfort).
 2. It will breed persuasions of God's love to you again, and so comfort. 3. It will be an unquestionable evidence of true grace, and so comfort.

The affections follow the understanding's conceptions. If you think of God as one that is glad of all advantages against you, and delighteth in his creatures' misery, it is impossible you should love him. The love of ourselves is so deeply rooted in nature, that we cannot lay it by, nor love any thing that is absolutely and directly against us. We conceive of the devil as an absolute enemy to God and man, and one that seeks our destruction, and therefore we cannot love him. And the great cause why troubled souls do love God no more, is because they represent him to themselves in an ugly, odious shape. To think of God as one that seeks and delighteth in man's ruin, is to make him as the devil. And then what wonder if instead of loving him, and delighting in him, you tremble at the thoughts of him, and fly from him. As I have observed children, when they have seen the devil painted on a wall, in an ugly shape, they have partly feared, and partly hated it. If you do so by God in your fancy, it is not putting the name of God on him when you have done, that will reconcile your affections to him as long as you strip him of his divine nature. Remember the Holy Ghost's description of God, 1 John iv. 16, "God is love." Write these words deep in your understanding.

2. Hereby you will have this advantage also, that your thoughts of God will be more sweet and delightful to you. For as glorious and beautiful sights to your eyes, and melodious sounds to your ears, and sweet smells, tastes, &c. are all delightful; when things deformed, stinking, &c. are all loathsome, and we turn away from one with abhorrence, but for the other, we would often see, taste, &c. and enjoy them; so it is with the objects of our mind: God hath given no command for duty, but what most perfectly agreeth with the nature of the object. He hath therefore bid us love God and delight in him above all, because he is above all in goodness; even infinitely and unconceivably good; else we could not love him above all, nor would he ever command us so to do. The object is ever as exactly fitted to its part, as to draw out the love and delight of our hearts, as the precept is on its part, to oblige us to it. And indeed the nature of things is a precept to duty, and it which we call the law of nature.

3. Hereupon will follow this further advantage, that your thoughts will be both easier drawn toward God, and more frequent and constant on him; for delightful objects draw the heart to them, as the loadstone doth the iron. How gladly, and freely, and frequently do you think of your dearest friends! And if you did firmly conceive of God, as one that is ten thousand times more gracious, loving, and amiable than any friend that you have in the world, it would make you not only to love him above all friends, but also more freely, delightfully, and unweariedly to think of him.

4. And then you would hence have this further advantage, that you would have less backwardness to any duty, and less weariness in duty; you would find more delight in prayer, meditation, and speech of God, when once God himself were more lovely and delightful in your eyes.

5. All these advantages would produce a further, that is, the growth of all your graces. For it is impossible, but this growth of love, and frequent delightful thoughts of God, and addresses to him, should cause an increase of all the rest.

6. Hereupon your evidences would be more clear

and discernible. For grace in strength and action would be easily found; and would not this resolve all your doubts at once?

7. Yea, the very exercise of these several graces would be comfortable.

8. And hereupon you would have more humble familiarity and communion with God; for love, delight, and frequent addresses, would overcome strangeness and disacquaintance, which make us fly from God, as a fish, or bird, or wild beast, will from the face of a man, and would give us access with boldness and confidence. And this would banish sadness and terror, as the sun dispelleth darkness and cold.

9. At least you would hence have this advantage, that the fixed apprehension of God's goodness and merciful nature, would cause a fixed apprehension of the probability of your happiness, as long as you are willing to be happy in God's way. For reason will tell you, that he who is love itself, and whose goodness is equal to his almightiness, and who hath sworn that he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he repent and live, will not destroy a poor soul that lieth in submission at his feet, and is so far from resolved rebellion against him, that it grieveth that it is no better, and can please him no more.

10. However, these right apprehensions of God would overcome those terrors which are raised only by false apprehensions of him. And doubtless a very great part of men's causeless troubles, are raised from such misapprehensions of God. For Satan knows, that if he can bring you to think of God as a cruel tyrant and blood-thirsty man-hater, then he can drive you from him in terror, and turn all your love and cheerful obedience into hatred and slavish fear. I say therefore again, do not only get, but also fix deep in your understanding, the highest thoughts of God's natural goodness and graciousness that possibly you can raise. For when they are at the highest, they come short ten thousandfold.

Object. But God's goodness lieth not in mercy to men, as I have read in great divines: he may be perfectly good, though he should for ever torment the most innocent creatures.

Ans. These are ignorant, presumptuous intrusions into that which is unsearchable. Where doth Scripture say as you say? Judge of God as he revealeth himself, or you will but delude yourself, and abuse him. All his works represent him merciful; for "his mercy is over all his works," and legible in them all. His word saith, "He is good, and doth good," Psal. cxix. 68; cxlv. 9. How himself doth proclaim his own name, (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7,) I told you before. The most merciful men are his liveliest image; and therefore he plants mercy in them in their conversion, as a principal part of their new nature. And commands of mercifulness are a great part of his law; and he bids us "Be merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful," Luke vi. 36. Now if this were none of his nature, how could he be the pattern of our new nature herein? And if he were not infinitely merciful himself, how could we be required to be merciful, as he is? Who dare say, I am more merciful than God?

Object. But God is just as well as merciful; and for all his merciful nature, he will damn most of the world for ever in hell.

Ans. 1. But James saith, "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment," James ii. 13. 2. God is necessarily the Governor of the world, (while there is a world,) and therefore must govern it in justice, and so must not suffer his mercy to be perpetually abused by wicked, wilful, contemptuous sinners. But then consider two things: 1. That he destroyeth not

humble souls that lie at his feet, and are willing to have mercy on his easy terms, but only the stubborn despisers of his mercy. He damneth none but those that will not be saved in his way: that is, that will not accept of Christ and salvation freely given them. (I speak of those that hear the gospel; for others, their case is more unknown to us.) And is it any diminution to his infinite mercy, that he will not save those that will not be entreated to accept of salvation? 2. And consider how long he useth to wait on sinners, and even beseech them to be reconciled to him, before he destroyeth them; and that he heapeth multitudes of mercies on them, even in their rebellion, to draw them to repentance, and so to life. And is it unmercifulness yet if such men perish?

Object. But if God were so infinite in mercy, as you say, why doth he not make all these men willing, that so they may be saved?

Answ. God having created the world, and all things in it, at first, did make them in a certain nature and order, and so establish them as by a fixed law; and he thereupon is their Governor, to govern every thing according to its nature. Now man's nature was to be principled with an inclination to his own happiness, and to be led to it by objects in a moral way, and in the choice of means to be a free agent, and the guider of himself under God. As Governor of the rational creature, God doth continue that same course of ruling them by laws, and drawing them by ends and objects as their natures do require. And in this way he is not wanting to them; his laws are now laws of grace, and universal in the tenor of the free gift and promise, for he hath there given life in Christ to all that will have it; and the objects propounded are sufficient in their kind, to work even the most wonderful effects on men's souls, for they are God himself, and Christ, and glory. Besides, God giveth men natural faculties, that they may have the use of reason; and there is nothing more unreasonable than to refuse this offered mercy. He giveth inducing arguments in the written word, and sermons, and addeth such mercies and afflictions, that one would think should bow the hardest heart. Besides, the strivings and motions of his Spirit within, which are more than we can give an account of. Now is not this as much as belongs to God as Governor of the creature according to its nature? And for the giving of a new nature, and creating new hearts in men, after all their rebellious rejecting of grace, this is a certain miracle of mercy, and belongs to God in another relation, (even as the free chooser of his elect,) and not directly as the Governor of the universe. This is from his special providence, and the former from his general. Now special providences are not to be as common as the general, nor to subvert God's ordinary, established course of government. If God please to stop Jordan, and dry up the Red sea, for the passage of the Israelites, and to cause the sun to stand still for Joshua, must he do so still for every man in the world, or else be accounted unmerciful? The sense of this objection is plainly this. God is not so rich in mercy, except he will new-make all the world, or govern it above its nature. Suppose a king know his subjects to be so wicked, that they have every one a full design to famish or kill themselves, or poison themselves, with something which is enticing by its sweetness, the king not only makes a law, strictly charging them all to forbear to touch that poison, but he sendeth special messengers to entreat them to it, and tell them the danger. If these men will not hear him, but wilfully poison themselves, is he therefore unmerciful? But suppose that he hath three or four of his sons that are infect-

ed with the same wickedness, and he will not only command and entreat them, but he will also lock them up, or keep the poison from them, or will feed them by violence with better food, is he unmerciful unless he will do so by all the rest of his kingdom?

Lastly. If all this will not satisfy you; consider, 1. That it is most certain that God is love, and infinite in mercy, and hath no pleasure in the death of sinners. 2. But it is utterly uncertain to us how God worketh on man's will inwardly by his Spirit. 3. Or yet what intolerable inconvenience there may be if God should work in other ways; therefore we must not upon such uncertainties deny certainties, nor from some unreasonable scruples about the manner of God's working grace, deny the blessed nature of God, which himself hath most evidently proclaimed to the world.

I have said the more of this, because I find Satan harp so much on this string with many troubled souls, especially on the advantage of some common doctrines. For false doctrine still tends to the overthrow of solid peace and comfort. Remember therefore, before all other thoughts for the obtaining of peace, to get high thoughts of the gracious and lovely nature of God.

Direct. IV. Next this, Be sure that you deeply apprehend the gracious nature, disposition, and office of the Mediator, Jesus Christ.

Though there can no more be said of the gracious nature of the Son than of the Father's, even that his goodness is infinite; yet these two advantages this consideration will add unto the former. 1. You will see here goodness and mercy in its condescension, and nearer to you than in the divine nature alone it was. Our thoughts of God are necessarily more strange, because of our infinite distance from the Godhead; and therefore our apprehensions of God's goodness will be the less working, because less familiar. But in Christ God is come down into our nature, and so Infinite goodness and mercy is incarnate. The man Christ Jesus is able now to save to the utmost all that come to God by him. We have a merciful High Priest that is acquainted with our infirmities. 2. Herein we see the will of God putting forth itself for our help in the most astonishing way that could be imagined. Here is more than merely a gracious inclination. It is an office of saving and showing mercy also that Christ hath undertaken; even "to seek and to save that which was lost." To bring home straying souls to God. To be the great peace-maker between God and man, to reconcile God to man, and man to God; and so to be the Head and Husband of his people. Certainly the devil strangely wrongeth poor, troubled souls in this point, that he can bring them to have such hard, suspicious thoughts of Christ, and so much to overlook the glory of mercy which so shineth in the face of the Son of Mercy itself. How can we more contradict the nature of Christ, and the gospel description of him, than to think him a destroying hater of his creatures, and one that watcheth for our halting, and hath more mind to hurt us than to help us? How could he have manifested more willingness to save, and more tender compassion to the souls of men, than he hath fully manifested? That the Godhead should condescend to assume our nature is a thing so wonderful, even to astonishment, that it puts faith to it to apprehend it; for it is ten thousand times more condescension than for the greatest king to become a fly or a toad to save such creatures. And shall we ever have low and suspicious thoughts of the gracious and merciful nature of Christ, after so strange and full a discovery of it? If twenty were ready to drown in the sea, and if one that was able to swim and

fetch them all out, should cast himself into the water, and offer them his help, were it not foolish ingratitude for any to say, I know not yet whether he be willing to help me or not; and so to have jealous thoughts of his good will, and so perish in refusing his help? How tenderly did Christ deal with all sorts of sinners! He professed that he "came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Did he weep over a rejected, unbelieving people, and was he desirous of their desolation? "How oft would he have gathered them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, (mark, that he would have done this for them that he cast off,) and they would not!" When his disciples would have had "fire come down from heaven to consume those that refused him," he reproves them, and tells them, "they knew not what spirit they were of" (the common case of them that miscarry, by suffering their zeal to overrun their christian wisdom and meekness). Yea, he prayeth for his crucifiers, and that on the cross, not forgetting them in the heat of his sufferings. Thus he doth by the wicked; but to those that follow him, his tenderness is unspeakable, as you would have said yourself, if you had but stood by and seen him washing his disciples' feet, and wiping them; or bidding Thomas put his finger into his side, "and be not faithless, but believing." Alas! that the Lord Jesus should come from heaven to earth, from glory into human flesh, and pass through a life of misery to a cross, and from the cross to the grave, to manifest openly to the world the abundance of his love, and the tenderness of his heart to sinners; and that after all this, we should suspect him of cruelty, or hard-heartedness, and unwillingness to show mercy; and that the devil can so far delude us, as to make us think of the Lamb of God as if he were a tiger or devourer!

But I will say no more of this, because Dr. Sibbs, in his "Bruised Reed," hath said so much already. Only remember, that if you would methodically proceed to the attaining of solid comfort, this is the next stone that must be laid. You must be deeply possessed with apprehensions of the most gracious nature and office of the Redeemer, and the exceeding tenderness of his heart to lost sinners.

Direct. V. The next step in right order to comfort is this: You must believe and consider the full sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice and ransom for all.

The controversies about this you need not be troubled at. For as almost all confess this sufficiency, so the Scripture itself, by the plainness and fulness of its expression, makes it as clear as the light, that Christ died for ALL. The fuller proof of this I have given you in public, and shall do yet more publicly, if God will. If Satan would persuade you either that no ransom or sacrifice was ever given for you, or that therefore you have no Redeemer to trust in, and no Saviour to believe in, and no sanctuary to fly to from the wrath of God, he must first prove you either to be no lost sinner, or to be a final, impenitent unbeliever; that is, that you are dead already; or else he must delude your understanding, to make you think that Christ died not for all; and then I confess he hath a sore advantage against your faith and comfort.

Direct. VI. The next thing in order to be done is this: Get clear apprehensions of the freeness, fullness, and universality of the new covenant or law of grace.

I mean the promise of remission, justification, adoption, and salvation to all, so they will believe. No man on earth is excluded in the tenor of this covenant. And therefore certainly you are not ex-

cluded; and if not excluded, then you must needs be included. Show where you are excluded if you can! You will say, But for all this, all men are not justified and saved. *Answer.* True, because they will not be persuaded to accept the mercy that is freely given them.

The use that I would have you make of this, I will show in the next.

Direct. VII. You must get the right understanding of the difference between general grace and special. And between the possibility, probability, conditional certainty, and absolute certainty of your salvation. And so between the comfort on the former ground and on the latter.

And here I shall open to you a rich mine of consolation.

Understand, therefore, that as every particular part of the house is built on the foundation, so is every part of special grace built on general grace. Understand also, that all the four last-mentioned particulars do belong to this general grace. As also, that though no man can have absolute certainty of salvation, from the consideration of this general grace alone, yet may it afford abundance of relief to distressed souls, yea, much true consolation. Lastly, Understand that all that hear the gospel may take part in this consolation, though they have no assurance of their salvation at all, no nor any special, saving grace.

Now when you understand these things well, this is the use that I would have you make of them.

1. Do not begin the way to your spiritual peace by inquiring after the sincerity of your graces, and trying yourselves by signs. Do not seek out for assurance of salvation in the first place, nor do not look and study after the special comforts which come from certainty of special grace, before you have learned, 1. To perform the duty. 2. And to receive the comforts which general grace affordeth. Such immethodical, disorderly proceedings keepeth thousands of poor, ignorant christians in darkness and trouble almost all their days. Let the first thing you do, be to obey the voice of the gospel, which calleth you to accept of Christ and special mercy. "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life." Fix this deep in your mind, that the nature of the gospel is first to declare to our understandings the most gracious nature, undertakings, and performances of Christ for us, which must be believed to be true. And, 2. To offer this Christ with all his special mercy to every man to whom this gospel comes, and to entreat them to accept Christ and life, which is freely given and offered to them. Remember then you are a lost sinner. For certain Christ and life in him is given and offered to you. Now your first work is, presently to accept it; not to make an unseasonable inquiry, whether Christ be yours, but to take him that he may be yours. If you were condemned, and a pardon were freely given you, on condition you would thankfully take it, and it were offered to you, and you entreated to take it, what would you do in this case? Would you spend your time and thoughts in searching whether this pardon be already yours? or would you not presently take it that it may be yours? Or if you were ready to famish, and food were offered you, would you stand asking first, How shall I know that it is mine? or rather take and eat it, when you are sure it may be yours if you will? Let me entreat you therefore, when the devil clamours in your ears, Christ and salvation is none of thine, suppose that this voice of God in the gospel were still in your ears, yea, let it be still in your memory, O take

Christ, and life in him, that thou mayst be saved. Still think that you hear Paul following you with these words: "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." Will you but remember this, when you are on your knees in sorrow; and when you would fain have Christ and life, and you are afraid that God will not give them to you? I say, remember then, God stands by beseeching you to accept the same thing which you are beseeching him to give. God is the first suitor and solicitor. God prays you to take Christ, and you pray him to give you Christ. What have you now to do but to take him? And here understand, that this taking is no impossible business; it is no more but your hearty consenting, as I shall tell you more anon. If you did but well understand and consider, that believing is the great duty that God calls you to perform, and promiset to save you if you do truly perform it; and that this believing is to take, or consent to have, the same mercy which you pray for, and are troubled for fear lest you shall miss of it, even Christ and life in him; this would presently draw forth your consent, and that in so open and express a way, as you could not but discover it, and have the comfort of it. Remember this then, that your first work is to believe, or accept an offered Saviour.

2. You must learn (as I told you) to receive the comforts of universal or general grace, before you search after the comforts of special grace. I here suppose you so far sound in the doctrine of the gospel, as neither with some on one hand, to look so much at special grace, as to deny that general grace, which is the ground of it, or presupposed to it. Nor with others, so far to look at universal mercy, as to deny special. Satan will tell you, that all your duties have been done in hypocrisy, and you are unsound at the heart, and have not a drop of saving grace. You are apt to entertain this, and conclude that all this is true: if I had any grace, I should have more life, and love, and delight in God; more tenderness of heart, more growth in grace. I should not carry about such a rock in my breast; such a stupid, dull, insensible soul, &c.

At the present, let us suppose that all this be true: yet see what a world of comfort you may gather from universal or general mercy. I have before opened to you four parts of it, in the cause of your happiness, and three in the effect, which may each of them afford much relief to your troubled soul.

1. Suppose you are yet graceless, is it nothing to you that it is a God of infinite mercy that you have to do with, whose compassions are ten thousand times greater than your dearest friend's, or your own husband's?

Object. O but yet he will not save the graceless.

Ans. True, but he is the more ready to give grace, that you may be saved. "If any of you (mark, any of you) do lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally (without desert) and upbraideth not, (with our unworthiness or former faults,) and it shall be given him?" James i.

4. "If you that are evil can give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it?" Luke xi.

13. Suppose your life were in the hands of your own husband, or your children's life in your hands, would it not exceedingly comfort you or them, to consider whose hands they are in, though yet you had no further assurance how you should be used? It may be you will say, But God is no Father to the graceless. I answer, He is not their Father in so near and strict a sense as he is the Father of be-

lievers; but yet a Father he is, even to the wicked; and to convince men of his fatherly mercy to them, he often so styleth himself. He saith by Moses, Deut. xxxii. 6, to a wicked generation, whose spot was not the spot of his children, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father that bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?" And the prodigal could call him Father for his encouragement before he returned to him, Luke xv. 16-18. For my own part I must needs profess, that my soul hath more frequent support from the consideration of God's gracious and merciful nature, than from the promise itself.

2. Furthermore, Suppose you were graceless at the present; yet is it not an exceeding comfort, that there is one of such infinite compassions as the Lord Christ who hath assumed our nature, and is come down to seek and save that which was lost; and is more tender-hearted to poor sinners than we can possibly conceive? yea, who hath made it his office to heal, and relieve, and restore, and reconcile? yea, that hath himself endured such temptations as many of ours? "For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, without sin. Let us therefore (saith the Holy Ghost) come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 15, 16. "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part with them, that he might destroy, through death, him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted," Heb. ii. 14-18. Have you discountenance from men? Christ had much more. Doth God seem to forsake you? So he did by Christ. Are you fain to lie on your knees crying for mercy? Why Christ in the days of his flesh was fain to offer up "strong cries and tears, to him that was able to save him. And was heard in that he feared." It seems that Christ had distressing fears as well as you, though not sinful fears. Have you horrid temptations? Why Christ was tempted to cast himself headlong, and to worship the devil, for worldly preferment; yea, the devil had power to carry his body up and down to the pinnacle of the temple, and the top of a mountain. If he had such power of you, would you not think yourself certainly his slave? I conclude therefore, as it is an exceeding ground of comfort to all the sick people in a city, to know that there is a most merciful and skilful physician, that is easily able to cure them, and hath undertaken to do it freely for all that will take him for their physician; so is it a ground of exceeding comfort to the worst of sinners, to all sinners that are yet alive, and have not blasphemed the Holy Ghost, to know what a merciful and sufficient Saviour hath undertaken the work of man's redemption.

3. Also, Suppose yet that you are graceless, is it nothing that a sufficient sacrifice and ransom is given for you? This is the very foundation of all solid peace. I think this is a great comfort, to know that God looks now for no satisfaction at your hand; and that the number or greatness of your sins, as

such, cannot now be your ruin. For certainly no man shall perish for want of the payment of his ransom, or of an expiatory sacrifice for sin, but only for want of a willing heart to accept him that hath freely ransomed them.

4. Also, Suppose you are graceless, is it nothing that God hath under his hand and seal made a full and free deed of gift, to you and all sinners, of Christ, and with him of pardon and salvation? and all this on condition of your acceptance or consent? I know the despisers of Christ shall be miserable for all this. But for you that would fain have Christ, is it no comfort to know that you shall have him if you will? and to find this to be the sum of the gospel? I know you have often read those free offers, Rev. xxii. 17, "Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come and drink," &c. Almost all that I have hitherto said to you is comprised in that one text, John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And as I have showed it you in the causes, what comfort even general mercy may afford, so let me a little show it you in the effects. I mean, not only in that God is now satisfied; but as to yourself and every sinner, these three things are produced hereby.

1. There is now a possibility of salvation to you. And certainly even that should be a very great comfort. I know you will meet with some divines, who will tell you that this is no effect of Christ's death; and that else Christ should die for God, if he procured him a power to save which he had not before. But this is no better than a reproaching of our Redeemer. Suppose that a traitor have so abused a king, that it will neither stand with his own honour, nor justice, nor laws to pardon him; if his compassion were so great, that his own son shall suffer for him, that so the king might be capable of pardoning him, without any diminution of his honour or justice; were it not a vile reproach, if this traitor should tell the prince that suffered for him, It was for your father that you suffered, to procure him a power of pardoning, it was not for me? It is true, the king could not pardon him without satisfaction to his honour and justice. But this was not through any impotency, but because the thing was not fit to be done, and so was morally impossible. For in law we say, dishonest things are impossible. And it had been no less to the king if the traitor had not been pardoned. So it is in our case. And therefore Christ's sufferings could not be more eminently for us, than by enabling the offended Majesty to forgive us; and so taking the greatest impediment out of the way. For when impediments are once removed, God's nature is so gracious and prone to mercy, that he would soon pardon us when once it is fit to be done, and so morally possible in the fullest sense; only men's own unwillingness now stands in the way, and makes it to be not fully fit to be yet done. It is true, in a remote sense, the pardon of sin was always possible; but in the nearest sense it was impossible, till Christ made it possible by his satisfaction.

2. Nay, though you were yet graceless, you have now this comfort, that your salvation is probable as well as possible. You are very fair for it. The terms be not hard in themselves, on which it is tendered. For Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light, and his commands are not grievous. "The word is nigh you," even the offer of grace. You need not say, "Who shall ascend to heaven, or go

down to hell?" Rom. x. But this will appear in the next.

3. Yea, this exceeding comfort there is, even for them that are graceless, that their salvation is conditionally certain, and the condition is but their own willingness. They may all have Christ and life if they will. Now I desire you in all your doubts, that you will well consider and improve this one truth and ground of comfort. Would you, in the midst of your groans, and complaints, and fears, take it for a small mercy, to be certain that you shall have Christ if you will? When you are praying for Christ in fear and anguish of spirit, if an angel or voice from heaven should say to you, It shall be unto thee according to thy will, if thou wilt have Christ and live in him, thou shalt; would this be no comfort to you? would it not revive you and overcome your fears?

By this time I hope you see what abundance of comfort general mercy or grace may afford the soul, before it perceive (yea, or receive) any special grace: though few of those that receive not special grace can make much use of general, yet it is propounded to them as well as others.

1. All the terrifying temptations which are grounded on misrepresentations of God, as if he were a cruel destroyer to be fled from, are dispelled by the due consideration of his goodness, and the deep settled apprehensions of his gracious, merciful, lovely nature (which indeed is the first work of true religion, and the very master radical act of true grace, and the chief maintainer of spiritual life and motion).

2. All these temptations are yet more effectually dispelled, by considering this merciful divine nature dwelling in flesh, becoming man, by condescending to the assumption of our human nature; and so come near us, and assuming the office of being the Mediator, the Redeemer, the Saviour of the world.

3. All your doubts and fears that proceed from your former sins, whether of youth or of age, of ignorance or of knowledge, and those which proceed from your legal unworthiness, have all a present remedy in the fulness and sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction, even for all the world; so that no sin (except the excepted sin) is so great, but it is fully satisfied for; and though you are unworthy, yet Christ is worthy; and he came into the world to save only the unworthy (in the strict and legal sense).

4. All your doubts and fears that arise from an apprehension of God's unwillingness to show you mercy, and to give you Christ and life in him, arise from the misapprehensions of Christ's unwillingness to be yours; or at least from the uncertainty of his willingness; these have all a sufficient remedy in the general extent and tenor of the new covenant. Can you doubt whether God be willing to give you Christ and life, when he had given them already, even by a deed of gift under his hand, and by a law of grace? 1 John v. 10—12.

Object. But yet all are not pardoned, nor possessed of Christ, and so saved.

Ans. I told you, that is because they will not; so that (I pray you mark it well) God hath in these four means before mentioned, given even to the graceless so much ground of comfort, that nothing, but their unwillingness to have Christ, is left to be their terror. For though sin be not actually remitted to them, yet is it conditionally remitted, viz. If they will but accept of Christ offered them. Will you remember this, when your doubts are greatest, and you conclude, that certainly Christ is not yours, because you have no true grace? Suppose it be true, yet still know, that Christ may be yours if you will, and when you will. This comfort you may

have when you can find no evidences of true grace in yourself. So much for that direction.

Direct. VIII. The next thing that you have to do, for building up a stable comfort, and settling your conscience in a solid peace, is this: Be sure to get and keep a right understanding of the nature of saving faith.

As you must have right thoughts of the covenant of grace, (of which before,) the want thereof doth puzzle and confound very many christians; so you must be sure to have right thoughts of the condition of the covenant. For indeed that grace which causeth you to perform this condition, is your first special saving grace, which you may take as a certain evidence of your justification. And this condition is the very link which conjoineth all the general foregoing grace to all the rest of the following special grace. The Scripture is so full and plain in assuring pardon and salvation to all true believers, that if you can but be sure that you are a believer, you need not make any doubt of your interest in Christ, and your salvation. Seeing therefore that all the question will be, Whether you have true faith? Whether you do perform the condition of the new covenant? (for all other doubts God hath given you sufficient ground to resolve, as he said;) how much then doth it concern you to have a right understanding of the nature of this faith? Which that you may have, let me tell you briefly what it is. Man's soul hath two faculties, understanding and will: accordingly the objects of man's soul (all beings which it is to receive) have two modifications; truth and goodness (as those to be avoided are evil). Accordingly God's word or gospel hath two parts; the revelation of truth, and the offer and promise of some good. This offered good is principally and immediately Christ himself, to be joined to us by covenant, as our Head and Husband. The secondary consequential good, is pardon, justification, reconciliation, adoption, further sanctification, and glorification, which are all offered with Christ. By this you may see what saving faith is; it is first, a believing that the gospel is true; and then an accepting of Christ therein offered to us, with his benefits; or a consenting that he be ours, and we be his; which is nothing but a true willingness to have an offered Christ. Remember this well, that you may make use of it when you are in doubt of the truth of your faith. Thousands of poor souls have been in the dark, and unable to see themselves to be believers, merely for want of knowing what saving faith is. The papists place almost all in the mere assent of the understanding. Some of our reformers made it to be either an assurance of the pardon of our own sins, or a strong persuasion of their pardon, excluding doubting; or (the moderatest) a persuasion of our particular pardon, though mixed with some doubting. The antinomians strike in with them, and say the same. Hence some divines conclude, that justification and remission go before faith, because the act doth always suppose its object. For they thought that remission altho' past was the object of justifying faith, supposing faith to be nothing else but a belief that we are pardoned. Yea, ordinarily, it hath been taught in the writings of our greatest refuters of the papists, that this belief is properly a divine faith, or the belief of a divine testimony, as is the believing of any proposition written in the Scripture (a foul error, which I have confuted in my Book of Rest, part iii. chap. vii.) Most of late have come nearer the truth, and affirmed justifying faith to consist in affiance, or recumbency, or resting on Christ for salvation. No doubt this is one act of justifying faith, but not that which a poor troubled soul should first search after

and try itself by (except by affiance, any should mean as Amesius doth, election of Christ, and then it is the same act which I am asserting, but very unfitly expressed). For, 1. Affiance is not the principal act, nor that wherein the very life of justifying faith doth consist, but only an imparate allowing act, and an effect of the vital act (which is consent, or willing, or accepting Christ offered); for it lieth mainly in that which we call the sensitive part, or the passions of the soul. 2. It is therefore less constant, and so unfitter to try by. For many a poor soul that knows itself unfeignedly willing to have Christ, yet feeleth not a resting on him, or trusting in him, and therefore cries out, O I cannot believe; and think they have no faith. For recumbency, affiance, or resting on Christ, implieth that easing of themselves, or casting off their fears, or doubts, or cares, which true believers do not always find. Many a poor soul complains, O I cannot rest on Christ; I cannot trust him! who yet would have him to be their Lord and Saviour, and can easily be convinced of their willingness. 3. Besides affiance is not the adequate act of faith, suited to the object in that fullness as it must be received, but willingness or acceptance is. Christ is rested on not only for ourselves as our Deliverer, but he is accepted also for himself as our Lord and Master. The full proof of these I have performed in other writings, and oft in your hearing in public, and therefore omit them now. Be sure then to fix this truth deep in your mind, That justifying faith is not an assurance of our justification; no, nor a persuasion or belief that we are justified or pardoned, or that Christ died more for us than for others. Nor yet is affiance or resting on Christ the vital, principal, certain, constant, full act; but it is the understanding's belief of the truth of the gospel, and the will's acceptance of Christ and life offered to us therein; which acceptance is but the hearty consent or willingness that he be yours, and you his. This is the faith which must justify and save you.

Object. But, 1. May not wicked men be willing to have Christ? 2. And do not you oft tell us that justifying faith comprehends love to Christ and thankfulness, and that it receiveth him as a Lord to be obeyed, as well as a Deliverer? And that repentance and sincere obedience are parts of the condition of the new covenant?

Answe. I will give as brief a touch now on these as may be, because I have handled them in fitter places.

1. Wicked men are willing to have remission, justification, and freedom from hell (for no man can be willing to be unpardoned, or to be damned); but they are not willing to have Christ himself in that nature and office which he must be accepted; that is, as a holy Head and Husband to save both from the guilt and power, and all defilement and abode of sin, and to rule them by his law, and guide them by his Spirit, and to make them happy by bringing them to God, that being without sin, they may be perfectly pleasing and amiable in his sight, and enjoy him for ever. Thus is Christ offered, and thus to be accepted of all that will be saved; and thus no wicked man will accept him (but when he ceaseth to be wicked). 2. To cut all the rest short in a word, I say, That in this fore-described willingness or acceptance, repentance, love, thankfulness, resolution to obey, are all contained, or nearly implied, as I have elsewhere manifested; so that the heart of saving faith is this acceptance of Christ, or willingness to have him to justify, sanctify, guide, and govern you. Find but this willingness, and you find all the rest, whether you expressly see them or not. So much for that direction.

Direct. IX. Having thus far proceeded, in discovering and improving the general grounds of comfort, and then in discovering the nature of faith, which gives you right to the special mercies of the covenant following it; your next work must be, To perform this condition by actual believing.

Your soul stands in extreme need of a Saviour. God offereth you a Saviour in the gospel. What then have you next to do but accept him? Believe that this offer is general, and therefore to you. And that Christ is not set to sale, nor doth God require you to bring a price in your hand, but only heartily and thankfully to accept of what he freely giveth you. This must be done before you fall on trying your graces to get assurance, for you must have grace before you can discover it; and this is the first proper special saving grace (as it compriseth that knowledge and assent which necessarily go before it). This is not only the method for those that yet never believed, but also for them that have lost the sense of their faith, and so the sight of their evidence. Believe again, that you may know you do believe; or at least may possess an accepted Saviour. When God in the gospel bids you take Jesus Christ, and beseecheth you to be reconciled to him, what will you say to him? If your heart answer, Lord, I am willing, I will accept of Christ and be thankful; why then the match is made between Christ and you, and the marriage-covenant is truly entered, which none can dissolve. If Christ were not first willing, he would not be the suitor, and make the motion; and if he be willing, and you be willing, what can break the match? If you will say, I cannot believe; if you understand what you say, either you mean that you cannot believe the gospel is true, or else that you cannot be willing that Christ should be yours. If it be the former, and speak truly, then you are a flat infidel (yet many temptations to doubt of the truth of Scripture, a true believer may have, yea, and actual doubtings; but his faith prevaileth, and is victorious over them); but if you really doubt whether the gospel be true, use God's means for the discovery of its truth. Read what I have written in the second part of my Book of Rest. I will undertake now more confidently than ever I did, to prove the truth of Scripture by plain, full, undeniable force of reason. But I suppose this is none of your case. If therefore when you say, that you cannot believe, you mean, that you cannot accept an offered Christ, or be willing to have him; then I demand, 1. What is your reason? The will is led by the reason of the understanding. If you be not willing, there is something that persuades you to be unwilling. This reason must be from something real, or else upon a mistake, upon supposal of something that is not in being. If it be upon mistake, either it is that you be not convinced of Christ's willingness to be yours; and if you thought he did consent, you would consent willingly; if this be it, you do truly believe while you think you do not; for you do consent, (and that is all on your part to make the match,) and Christ doth certainly consent, though you do not understand it. In this case it concerneth you to understand better the extent of the new covenant, and then you will be past doubt of the willingness of Christ, and see that wherever the match breaks, it is only for want of consent in men; for Christ is the first suitor, and hath long ago in the covenant proclaimed his consent, to be the Head and Husband of every sinner, on condition they will but consent to be his.

If your mistake be from any false apprehension of the nature of Christ, as if he were not a sufficient Saviour, or were such an enemy to your comfort, that

he would do you more hurt than good; if these mistakes are prevalent, then you do not know Christ, and therefore must presently better study him in the gospel, till you have prevailed over such ignorant and blasphemous conceits (but none of this I suppose is your case).

If then the reason why you say you cannot believe, be from any thing that is really in Christ, (and not upon mistake,) then it must be either from some dislike of his saving work, by which he would pardon you, and save you from damnation (but that is impossible, for you cannot be willing to be damned or unpardoned, till you lose your reason); or else it is from a dislike of his work of sanctification, by which he would cleanse your heart and life, by saving you from your sinful nature and actions. Some grudgings against Christ's holy and undefiled laws and ways will be in the best, while there is that flesh in them which lusteth against the Spirit, so that they cannot do the things they would. But if truly you have such a dislike of a sinless condition, through the love of any sin or creature, that you cannot be willing to have Christ to cure you, and cleanse you from that sin, and make you holy; I say, if this be true, in a prevailing degree, so that if Christ and holiness were offered you, you would not accept them, then it is certain you have not true faith. And in this case it is easy to discern that your first work lieth not in getting comfort or ease to your troubled mind; but in getting better conceits of Christ and a holy state and life, that so you may be willing of Christ, as Christ is of you, and so become a true believer. And here I would not leave you at that loss as some do, as if there were nothing for you to do for the getting of faith; for certainly God hath prescribed you means for that end. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God preached," Rom. x. 17. I therefore see that you wait diligently on this ordinance of God. Read the Scriptures daily, and search them to see whether you may not there find that holiness is better than sin.

2. And however some seducers may tell you, that wicked men ought not to pray, yet be sure that you lie on your knees before God, and importunately beg that he would open your eyes, and change your heart, and show you so far the evil of sin, and the want and worth of Christ and holiness, that you may be unfeignedly glad to accept his offer.

Object. But the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.

Ans. 1. You must distinguish between wicked men, as actually wicked, and going on in the prosecution of their wickedness; and wicked men, as they have some good in them, or are doing some good, or are attempting a return to God. 2. You must distinguish between real prayer and seeming prayer. 3. You must distinguish between full acceptance of prayer, when God delighteth in them, and an acceptance only to some particular end, not imitating the acceptance of the person with his prayer; and between acceptance fully promised (as certain) and acceptance but half promised (as probable). And upon these distinctions I shall answer your objections in the conclusion.

1. When wicked men pray God to prosper them in their wickedness, yea, or to pardon them while they intend to go on in it, and so to give them an indulgence in sin; or when they think with a few prayers for some good, which they can endure, to put by that holiness which they cannot endure, and so to make a cloak for their rebellion; these prayers are all an abomination to the Lord.

2. When men use the words of a prayer, without the desire of the thing asked, this is no prayer, but

equivocally so called, as a carcass is a man; and therefore no wonder if God abhor that prayer, which truly is no prayer.

3. God hath not made a full promise, ascertaining any wicked man, while wicked, that he will hear his prayer; for all such promises are made to believers.

4. God doth never so hear an unbeliever's prayer, as to accept his person with his prayer, or to take a complacency in them. So much for the negative.

Now for the affirmative, I add; 1. Prayer is a duty which God enjoined even wicked men (I could prove it by a hundred Scripture texts).

2. There may be some good desires in unbelievers, which they may express in prayer, and these God may so far hear as to grant them, as he did in part to Ahab.

3. An unbeliever may lie under preparing grace, and be on his way in returning towards God, though yet he be not come to saving faith; and in this state he may have many good desires, and such prayers as God will hear.

4. Though God have not flatly engaged himself to unbelievers, so as to give them a certainty of hearing their prayers, and giving them true grace on the improvement of their naturals, yet he hath not only appointed them this and other means to get grace, but also given them half promises, or strong probabilities of speeding, so much as may be a sufficient encouragement to any such sinner to call on God, and use his means. For as he appointeth not any vain means to man, so no man can name that man who doth improve his naturals to the utmost, and in particular, sought God in prayer, so far as a natural man may do, who yet missed of grace, and was rejected (this is the true mean between Pelagianism and antinomianism in this point).

5. When God calls unbelievers to prayer, he withal calls them to believe. And when he works their heart to prayer by that call, he usually withal works them to believe, or at least towards believing. If he that was unwilling to have Christ, do pray God to make him willing, it is a beginning of willingness already, and the way to get more willingness. In prayer God useth to give in the thing prayed for, of this kind.

6. Prayer is the soul's motion God-ward; and to say an unbeliever should not pray, is to say he should not turn to God; who yet saith to the wicked, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way," &c. Isa. lv. 6, 7.

7. Prayer hath two parts; desire is the soul of it, and expression is the body. The soul can live separated from the body, but so cannot the body separated from the soul. So can desire without expression, but not expression without desire. When our blind antinomians (the great subverters of the gospel more than the law) do rail against ministers for persuading wicked men to pray, they are against us for persuading men to desire that they pray for; prayer having desire for its soul. And do not those men deserve to be exterminated the churches and societies of the saints, who dare say to a wicked unbeliever, Desire not faith? Desire not to leave thy wickedness? Desire not grace? or Christ? or God? And that will proclaim abroad the world (as I have oft heard of them with zealous reproaches) that our ministers are legalists, seducers, ignorant of the mysteries of the gospel, because they persuade poor sinners to pray for faith, grace, and Christ; that is, to desire these, and to express their desires; which in effect is to persuade them to repent, believe, and turn to God. Indeed, if these blind seducers had ever heard our ministers persuading wicked men to

dissemble and lie to God, and ask faith, grace, and Christ with their tongues, but not desire them in their hearts, then had they sufficient grounds for their reviling language (but I have been too long on this). I may therefore boldly conclude, that they that find themselves unbelievers, that is, unwilling to have Christ to deliver them from sin, must use this second means to get faith, even earnest, frequent prayer for it to God.

3. Let such also see that they avoid wicked seducing company and occasions of sin; and be sure that they keep company with men fearing God, especially joining with them in their holy duties.

4. Lastly, let such be sure that they use that reason which God hath given them, to consider frequently, retiredly, seriously, of the vanity of all those things that steal away their hearts from Christ; and of the excellency of holiness, and how blessed a state it is to have nothing in us in heart or life that is displeasing to God, but to be such as he taketh full delight in; also of the certainty of the damnation of unbelievers, and the intolerableness of their torments; and of the certainty and unconceivable greatness of believers' everlasting happiness. If wicked unbelievers would but do what they can in daily, serious, deep considering of these things, and the like, they would have no cause to despair of obtaining faith and sanctification. Believing is a rational act. God bids you not to believe any thing without full reason to cause you to consent. Think then often and soberly of those reasons that should move you to consent, and of the vanity of these that hinder you from consenting, and this is God's way for you to obtain faith or consent.

Remember then, that when you have understood and improved general grounds of comfort, (nay, before you can come to any full improvement of them,) your next business is to believe; to consent to the match with Christ, and to take him for your Lord and Saviour. And this duty must be looked to and performed, before you look after special comfort. But I said somewhat of this before under the sixth head, and therefore will say no more now.

Direct. X. When you have gone thus far, your soul is safe, and you are past your greatest dangers, though yet you are not past your fears: your next work therefore for peace and comfort is this; To review and take notice of your own faith, and thence to gather assurance of the certainty of your justification, and adoption, and right to glory.

The sum of this direction lieth in these things:

1. See that you do not content yourself with the forementioned general comforts, without looking after assurance and special comforts. The folly of this I have manifested in the third part of my Book of Rest, about Self-examination.

2. See that you dream not of finding assurance and special comfort from mere general grounds. This is the delusion of many antinomians, and of most of our profane people (who I find are commonly of the antinomian faith naturally, without teaching). For men to conclude that they shall certainly be saved, merely because God is merciful, or Christ is tender-hearted to sinners, and would not that any should perish, but all should come to repentance; or because God delights not in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he repent and live; or because Christ died for them; or because God hath given Christ and life in the gospel to all, on condition of believing; these are all but mere delusions. Much comfort, as I have showed you, may be gathered from these generals; but no certainty of salvation, or special comfort, can be gathered from them alone.

3. See that you reject the antinomian doctrine or dotage, which would teach you to reject the trial and judging of your state by signs of grace in yourself, and tell you that it is only the Spirit that must assure, by witnessing your adoption: I will further explain this caution when I have added the rest.

4. And on the other extreme, do not run to marks unreasonable, but in the order here laid down.

5. Nor trust to unsafe marks.

6. And therefore do not look at too many; for the true ones are but few. I do but name these things to you, because I have fuller handled them in my Book of Rest, whither I must refer you. And so I return to the third caution.

I have in the forementioned book told you, what the office of the Spirit is in assuring us, and what the use of marks are. The Spirit witnesseth first objectively, and so the Spirit and marks are all one. For it is the Spirit dwelling in us that is the witness or proof that we are God's sons; for he that hath not his Spirit is none of his. And the Spirit is not discerned by us in its essence, but in its workings; and therefore to discern these workings, is to discern the Spirit, and these workings are the marks that we speak of: so that the Spirit witnesseth our sonship, as a reasonable soul witnesseth that you are a man and not a beast. You find by the acts of reason, that you have a reasonable soul, and then you know, that having a reasonable soul, you are certainly a man. So you find by the works or fruits of the Spirit, that you have the Spirit; (that is, by marks; and Paul enumerates the fruits of the Spirit to that end;) and then by finding that you have the Spirit you may certainly know that you are the child of God. 2. Also, as the reasonable soul is its own discerner by the help of the body, (while it is in it,) and so witnesseth our humanity effectively as well as objectively (but first in order objectively, and next effectively); so doth the Spirit effectively discover itself to the soul, by illuminating us to discern it, and exciting us to search, and giving us that spiritual taste and feeling of its workings, and so of its presence, by which it is best known. But still it witnesseth objectively first, and its effective witnessing is but the causing us to discern its objective witness. Or, (to speak more plainly,) the Spirit witnesses first and principally, by giving us those graces and workings which are our marks; and then, secondly, by helping us to find and feel those workings or marks in ourselves; and then, lastly, by raising comforts in the soul upon that discovery. Take heed therefore of expecting any such inward witness of the Spirit, as some expect, viz. a discovery of your adoption directly, without first discovering the signs of it within you; as if by an inward voice he should say to you, Thou art a child of God, and thy sins are pardoned.

This that I described to you, is the true witness of the Spirit. This mistake is so dangerous, that I had thought to have made it a peculiar direction by itself, to warn you of it; and now I have gone so far, I will despatch it here. Two dangerous consequences I find do follow this unwarrantable expectation of the first immediate efficient revelation that we are adopted.

1. Some poor souls have languished in doubtings and trouble of mind almost all their days, in expectation of such a kind of witness as the Spirit useth not to give; when in the mean time they have other sufficient means of comfort, and knew not how to improve them; yea, they had the true witness of the Spirit in his inhabitation and holy workings, and did not know it; but run as Samuel did to Eli, not knowing the voice of God; and look for the Spirit's tes-

timony when they had it, as the Jews for Elias and the Messias.

2. Others do more dangerously err, by taking the strong conceit of their own fantasy for the witness of the Spirit; as soon as they do but entertain the opinion that it must be such a witness of the Spirit, without the use of marks, that must assure men of their adoption, presently they are confident that they have that witness themselves. It is scarce likely to be God's Spirit that is so ready upon the mere change of an opinion. The devil useth to do as much to cherish presumption, as to destroy true faith and assurance. It is a shrewd sign that our persuasions of our truth of grace is a delusion, when we find the devil a friend to it, and helping it on. And it is a probable sign it is a good persuasion, when we find the devil an enemy to it, and still troubling us and endeavouring our disquiet.

And here I remember the scruple that troubleth some about the spirit of bondage, and the spirit of adoption. But you must understand, that by the spirit of bondage is meant that spirit, and those operations on the soul, which the law of works did naturally beget in those that were under it; which was to be partly in bondage to a task of ceremonious duties, and partly to the curse and obligation to punishment for disobedience, without any power to justify. They were said therefore to be in bondage to the law; and the law was said to be a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, Acts xv.

And by the spirit of adoption is meant, 1. That spirit, or those qualifications or workings in their souls, which by the gospel God giveth only to his sons. 2. And which raise in us some childlike affections to God, inclining us in all our wants to run to him in prayer, as to a Father, and to make our moan to him, and open our griefs, and cry for redress, and look to him, and depend on him as a child on the father. This spirit of adoption you may have, and yet not be certain of God's special love to you. The knowledge only of his general goodness and mercy, may be a means to raise in you true childlike affections. You may know God to have fatherly inclinations to you, and yet doubt whether he will use you as a child, for want of assurance of your own sincerity. And you may hope God is your Father, when yet you may apprehend him to be a displeased, angry Father, and so he may be more your terror than your comfort. Are not you ready in most of your fears, and doubts, and troubles, to go to God before all other for relief? And doth not your heart sigh and groan to him, when you can scarcely speak? Doth not your troubled spirit there find its first vent? And say, Lord, kill me not; forsake me not; my life is in thy hands; O soften this hard heart; make this carnal mind more spiritual! O be not such a stranger to my soul! Woe to me that I am so ignorant of thee! so disaffected to thee! so backward and disinclined to holy communion with thee! Woe to me that I can take no more pleasure in thee! and am so mindless and disregarding of thee! Oh that thou wouldst stir up in me more lively desires and workings of my soul towards thee! and suffer me not to lie at such a distance from thee! Are not such as these the breathings of you spirit? Why these are childlike breathings after God! This is crying Abba, Father. This is the work of the spirit of adoption, even when you fear God will cast you off. You much mistake (and those that, tell you so) if you think that the spirit of adoption lieth only in a persuasion that you are God's child, or that you may not have the spirit of adoption without such a per-

suation of God's adopting you: For God may adopt you, and give you that spirit which he gives only to his children, and possess you with true filial affections towards him, before ever you know yourself to be adopted; much more, though you may have frequent returning doubts of your adoption.

Having thus showed you how far you may expect the witness of the Spirit, and how far you may and must make use of marks and qualifications, or actions of your own, for the obtaining of assurance and settled peace, I shall add an answer to the principal objections of the antinomians against this.

Object. They say, This is to draw men from Christ to themselves, and from the gospel to the law; to lay their comforts and build their peace upon any thing in themselves, is to forsake Christ, and make themselves their own saviours: and those teachers that persuade them to this, are teachers of the law, and false prophets, who draw men from Christ to themselves. All our own righteousness is as a menstruous cloth, and our best works are sin; and therefore we may not take up our assurance or comforts from them. We shall be always at uncertainties, and at a loss, or unconstant, up and down in our comforts, as long as we take them from any signs in ourselves; also our own graces are imperfect, and therefore unfit to be the evidences for our assurance.

Answer. Because I am not now purposely confuting the antinomians, but only forearming you against their assaults, I shall not therefore give you half that I should otherwise say, for the explication of this point, and the confutation of their errors, but only so much as is necessary to your preservation: which I do, because they pretend to be the only preachers of free grace, and the only right comforters of troubled consciences; and because they have written so many books to that end, which if they fall into your hands may seem so specious, as that you may need some preservative. I suppose you remember what I have taught you so oft, concerning the difference of the law of works and the law or covenant of grace, with their different conditions. Upon which supposition I explicate the point thus. 1. No man may look at his own graces or duties as his legal righteousness; that is, such as for which the law of works will pronounce him righteous. 2. Nor yet may he take them for part of his legal righteousness, in conjunction with Christ's righteousness as the other part; but here must go wholly out of ourselves, and deny and disclaim all such righteousness of our own. We have no works which make the reward to be not of grace but of debt. 3. We must not once think that our graces, duties, or sufferings, can make satisfaction to God's justice for our sin and unrighteousness; nor yet that they are any part of that satisfaction. Here we ascribe all to Christ, who is the only sacrifice and ransom. 4. Nor must we think that our duties or graces are properly meritorious; this also is to be left as the sole honour of Christ. 5. Yet that we may and must raise our assurance and comforts from our own graces and duties, shall appear in these clear reasons following, which show also the grounds on which we may do it.

1. Pardon, justification, and adoption, and salvation, are all given to us in the gospel only conditionally, (if we believe,) and the condition is an act, or rather several acts, of our own. Now till the condition be performed, no man can have any certainty that the benefit shall be his, nor can he by any other means (ordinarily) be certain of the benefit, but by that which ascertains him that he hath performed the condition. God saith, "He that believeth shall be saved." No man can know then that he shall

be saved, till he first know that he believeth. Else he should know either contrary to that which is written, or more than that which is written; and justification and adoption should be given some other way than by the gospel promise (for that promise giveth them only conditionally, and so suspendeth the actual right, upon the performance of the condition). But if any can show any other way, by which God maketh over pardon and adoption, besides the gospel promise, let them do it; but I will not promise suddenly to believe them, for it was never yet showed as I know of. Also, if men must not look at their own performance of the condition, to prove their right to the benefit, then either all or none must believe that they have that right; for the promise saith, "He that believeth shall be saved." And this is a promise of life conditionally to all. If all must believe that they shall be saved, then most of the world must believe a lie. If the true believer may not therefore conclude that he shall be saved, because he performeth the condition of the promise, then no man may believe it. And for that absolute promise of the new heart, no man can or may believe that it is his, till he have new heart which it promiseth; that is, till it be fulfilled. For there is no mark by which a man can know whether that promise belong to him or no beforehand, and if all should believe that it belongs to them, most would find it false.

2. God hath not redeemed us by his Son to be lawless. To be without law is to be without government. We are without the law; that is, of works or of Moses: but not without law; Jesus Christ is our Ruler, and he hath made us a law of grace; an easy yoke, and commands that are not grievous. This law hath precepts, promises, and threats; it must needs be either obeyed or disobeyed; and so the penalty must be due or not due, and the reward due or not due. He that performs the condition, and so to whom the reward is due, and not the penalty, is righteous in the sense of this law. As when we are accused to be sinners against the law of works, and so to deserve the penalty of that law, we must confess all, and plead the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction for our justification. So when we are accused to be final unbelievers or impenitent, and so not to have performed the conditions of the new covenant, we must be justified by our own faith and repentance, the performance of that condition; and must plead not guilty. And so far our own acts are our evangelical righteousness, and that of such necessity, that without it no man can have part in Christ's righteousness, nor be saved. I would desire any man else to tell me, what else he will plead at judgment, when the accuser chargeth him (or if he do so charge him) with final unbelief? Will he confess it, and say, Christ hath believed and repented for me? That is as much as to say, Christ was a believer for infidels, that he might save infidels. All false. If he will not say thus (and lying will do no good) then must he plead his own believing and repenting, as his righteousness, in opposition to that accusation. And if it be of such use then, and be called a hundred times in Scripture, "our righteousness," and we righteous for it, then doubtless we may accordingly try by it now, whether we shall then be able to come off and be justified, or no; and so may build our comfort on it.

3. Conscience is a witness and judge within us, and doth, as under God, accuse and condemn, or excuse and acquit. Now if conscience must absolve us only so far as we are innocent, or do well, or are qualified with grace, then it is impossible but these our qualifications and actions should be some ground

of our comfort. See Acts xxiv. 16; xxiii. 1; Rom. ii. 15, 16.

4. Those which are our graces and works, as we are the subjects and agents, are the graces and works of God, of Christ, of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. If therefore we may not rejoice in our own works, or graces, then we may not rejoice in the works or gifts of God, Christ, or the Holy Ghost. And,

5. Our graces are the spiritual life or health of the soul, and our holy actions are the vital operations. Now life and health are necessary; rejoicing, delighting things of themselves; and vital actions are necessarily pleasant and delectable.

6. Our graces and holy actions must needs rejoice us in respect of their objects; for the object of our love, trust, hope, meditation, prayer, conference, &c. is God himself, and the Lord Jesus, and the joys of heaven. And how can such actions choose but rejoice us?

7. Yea, rejoicing itself, and delighting ourselves in God, is not only one part of our duty, but that great duty wherein lieth the height of our christianity. And how vain a speech is it to say, that we may not take up our comforts from our own works, nor rejoice in any thing of our own; when even rejoicing itself, and delighting, and comforting ourselves, is one part of our duty!

8. As God in Christ is the chief object and ground of our comfort (so that we must rejoice in nothing but God, and the cross of Christ, in that kind, or in co-ordination with them); so it is the office of every grace, and holy work, and ordinance, and means, to be subservient to Christ, either for the attaining of Christ, or applying his merits, or they are the effects of his merits. Now if we must love and rejoice in Christ principally, then must we needs love and rejoice in all those things that stand in a necessary subordination to him, in their places. And therefore to say, We must rejoice in Christ only, and therefore not in any graces or duties of our own, is as wise, as if a wife should cast her husband's clothes and meat out of doors, and say, You charged me to admit none into my chamber but yourself. Or as if a physician, having told his patients, I will cure you, if you will trust me only for the cure; thereupon the patients should cast away his medicines, and shut the doors against his servants and apothecary, and say, We must trust none but the physician.

9. All the failings of our duties are pardoned, and they accepted in Christ; and therefore we may rejoice in them.

10. Our duties have a double tendency to our salvation. 1. As the condition to which God hath promised it as the crown and reward (in a hundred texts of Scripture): and may we not comfort ourselves in that which God promiseth heaven to?

2. As a natural means to our obedience and further perfection (as watchfulness, meditation, &c. tend to destroy sin); as Paul saith to Timothy, "Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine, and in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee," 1 Tim. iv. 16: and may we not take comfort in that which tends to save our own and our brethren's souls?

11. We shall be judged according to our works; therefore we must judge ourselves according to our works; and so must judge our state good or bad, according to our works. For can man judge by a righter way than God will? At least is it not lawful for man to judge as God doth?

12. We must judge of others in probability, according to their external works, even the tree by the fruits; therefore we must judge of ourselves in certainty, according to our internal and external works together, which we may certainly know.

13. If we may not rejoice in any of our graces, then we may not be thankful for them, for thanks is accompanied with joy; but we must be thankful.

14. If we may not rejoice in our duties, we may not repent or sorrow for the neglect of them; and if we may not rejoice in our graces, we may not lament the want of them (for these are as the two ends of the balance, that one goes down when the other goes up; or as day and night, light and darkness). But the consequent is intolerable.

15. This would overthrow all religion. For what a man cannot rejoice in, he cannot love, he cannot esteem, regard, be careful to obtain, be fearful of losing, &c.

16. God delighteth in our graces and holy duties, and is well pleased with them; and therefore it is lawful and needful that we do as God doth, Jer. ix. 24; Heb. xi. 5. Abel's sacrifice by faith obtained testimony that he pleased God. "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased," Heb. xiii. 16.

17. The saints of God have not only tried themselves by their graces and duties, and commanded others to try by them, but have gloried and rejoiced in their duties and sufferings. "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation among you," 2 Cor. i. 12. "They gloried that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ," Acts v. 41. "I have therefore whereof I may glory in Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God," Rom. xv. 17. "We glory in tribulation," &c. chap. v. 3. "Though I should desire to glory, I should not that be a fool. I glory in mine infirmities," 2 Cor. xii. 6, 9. "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me," Jer. ix. 24. "I had rather die than any should make my glorying void," 1 Cor. ix. 15. "Let every man prove his own work, so shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another," Gal. vi. 4.

18. Scripture nameth many of our own graces and duties, as the certain marks of our justification and right to glory. Even Christ with his own mouth gives us many: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," Matt. vi. 21. "He that doth evil hateth the light, &c. but he that doth good cometh to the light, that," &c. John iii. 10. Matt. v. is full of such, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, the pure in heart," &c.

19. We may rejoice in other men's good works and graces, (and do, if we be true christians,) therefore in our own.

20. We may rejoice in God's outward mercies; therefore much more in inward, and such as accompany salvation. All these arguments prove, that we may take up our comfort from our own gracious qualifications and actions (not in opposition to Christ, but in subordination to him): and most of them prove that we may fetch our assurance of salvation from them, as undoubted evidences thereof.

I have said the more in answer to these objections, 1. Because never any came with fairer pretences of exalting Christ, and maintaining the honour of his righteousness and free grace, and of denying ourselves and our own righteousness. 2. And yet few doctrines more dishonour Christ, and destroy the very substance of all religion. Even as if a man should cry down him that would praise and commend obedience to the king, and say, You must praise nothing but the king. So do these cry down our looking at and rejoicing in our love to Christ, and our thankfulness to him, and our obedience, and all under pretence of honouring him. Nay, they will not have us rejoice in one part of Christ's sal-

vation, (his saving us from the power of sin, and his sanctifying us,) under pretence that we dishonour the other part of his salvation (his justifying us). If ever Satan transformed himself into an angel of light, and his ministers into ministers of light, it is in the mistakes of the antinomians; and no people in the world (except carnal libertines, whom this doctrine fits to a hair) are in more danger of them, than poor, doubting christians, under trouble of conscience; especially if they be not judicious, and skilled in the doctrine of Christ. For the very pretence of extolling Christ and free grace, will take much with such; and any new way will sometimes seem to give them comfort, upon the very novelty and sudden change.

Having thus proved that you may and must fetch your special comfort and assurance from evidences, and that your first evidence is your faith, I shall open this fuller under the next direction.

Direct. XI. In the trial of your state, Be sure that you make use of infallible signs of sincerity, and take not those for certain which are not.

And to that end remember what I said before, that you must well understand wherein the nature of saving faith, and so of all saving grace, doth consist. And when you understand this, write it down in two or three lines; and both at your first trial, and afterward, whenever any doubts do drive you to a review of your evidence, still have recourse only to those signs, and try by them. What these signs are, I have showed you so fully in the forecited place in my Book of Rest, that I shall say but little now. Remember that infallible signs are very few; and that whatsoever is made the condition of salvation, that is the most infallible evidence of our salvation, and therefore the fittest mark to try by; and therefore faith in God the Father and the Redeemer, is the main evidence. But because I have elsewhere showed you, that this faith is comprehensive of love, gratitude, resolution to obey, and repentance, let me more particularly open it to help you in the trial. To prove any grace to be saving, it is necessary that you prove that salvation is fully promised to him that hath it. Now if you will know what it is that hath this promise, I will tell you, 1. As to the object. 2. The act. 3. The degree or modification of the act. For all these three must be inquired after if you will get assurance. 1. The object is principally God, and the Redeemer Christ. And secondarily the benefits given by Christ; and under that, he means to attain the principal benefits, &c. 2. The act hath many names drawn from respective and modal differences in the object, as faith, desire, love, choosing, accepting, receiving, consenting, &c. But properly all are comprised in one word, willing. The understanding's high estimation of God, and Christ, and grace, is a principal part of true saving grace; but yet it is difficult, and scarce possible, to judge of yourself by it rightly, but only as it discovers itself by prevailing with the will. 3. The degree of this act must be such, as ordinarily prevail against its contrary; I mean, both the contrary object, and the contrary act to the same object. But because I doubt school-terms do obscure my meaning to you, (though they are necessary for exactness,) I will express the nature of saving grace in two or three marks as plain as I can.

1. Are you heartily willing to take God for your portion? And had you rather live with him in glory in his favour and fullest love, with a soul perfectly cleansed from all sin, and never more to offend him, rejoicing with his saints in his everlasting praises, than to enjoy the delights of the flesh on earth, in a way of sin and without the favour of God?

2. Are you heartily willing to take Jesus Christ as he is offered in the gospel? that is, to be your only Saviour and Lord, to give you pardon by his bloodshed, and to sanctify you by his word and Spirit, and to govern you by his laws?

(Because this general containeth and implieth several particulars, I will express them distinctly.)

Here it is supposed that you know this much following of the nature of his laws. For to be willing to be ruled by his laws in general, and utterly unwilling when it comes to particulars, is no true willingness or subjection. 1. You must know that his laws reach both to heart and outward actions. 2. That they command a holy, spiritual, heavenly life. 3. That they command things so cross and unpleasing to the flesh, that the flesh will be still murmuring and striving against obedience. Particularly, 1. They command things quite cross to the inclinations of the flesh; as to forgive wrongs, to love enemies, to forbear malice and revenge, to restrain and mortify lust and passion, to abhor and mortify pride, and be low in our own eyes, and humble and meek in spirit. 2. They command things that cross the interest of the flesh and its inclination both together; I mean which will deprive it of its enjoyments, and bring it to some suffering: as, to perform duties even when they lay us open to disgrace and shame, and reproach in the world; and to deny our credit, rather than forsake Christ or our duty. To obey Christ in doing what he commandeth us, though it would hazard or certainly lose our wealth, friends, liberty, and life itself; forsaking all rather than to forsake him; to give to the poor, and other good uses, and that liberally, according to our abilities. To deny the flesh all forbidden pleasures, and make not provision to satisfy its lusts, but to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts the eof; and in this combat to hold on to the end, and to overcome. These are the laws of Christ, which you must know, before you can determine whether you are indeed unfeignedly willing to obey them. Put therefore these further questions to yourself, for the trial of your willingness to be ruled by Christ according to his laws.

3. Are you heartily willing to live in the performance of those holy and spiritual duties of heart and life, which God hath absolutely commanded you? And are you heartily sorry that you perform them no better? with no more cheerfulness, delight, success, and constancy?

4. Are you so thoroughly convinced of the worth of everlasting happiness, and the intolerableness of everlasting misery, and the truth of both; and of the sovereignty of God the Father, and Christ the Redeemer, and your many engagements to him; and of the necessity and good of obeying, and the evil of sinning, that you are truly willing; that is, have a settled resolution to cleave to Christ, and obey him in the dearest, most disgraceful, painful, hazardous, flesh-displeasing duties; even though it should cost you the loss of all your worldly enjoyments, and your life?

5. Doth this willingness or resolution already so far prevail in your heart and life, against all the interest and temptations of the world, the devil, and your flesh, that you do ordinarily practise the most strict and holy, the most self-denying, costly, and hazardous duties that you know God requireth of you, and do heartily strive against all known sin, and overcome all gross sins; and when you fall under any prevailing temptation, do rise again by repentance, and begging pardon of God, through the blood of Christ, do resolve to watch and resist more carefully for the time to come?

In these five marks is expressed the gospel description of a true christian.

Having laid down these marks, I must needs add a few words for the explaining of some things in them, lest you mistake the meaning, and so lose the benefit of them.

1. Observe that it is your willingness, which is the very point to be tried. And therefore, 1. Judge not by your bare knowledge. 2. Judge not by the stirring or passionate workings of your affections. I pray you forget not this rule in any of your self-examinings. It is the heart that God requireth. "My son, give me thy heart," Prov. xxiii. 26. If he hath the will, he hath the heart. He may have much of our knowledge, and not our heart. But when we know him so thoroughly as to will him unfeignedly, then he hath our heart. Affectionate workings of the soul to God in Christ, are sweet things, and high and noble duties, and such as all christians should strive for. But they are not the safest marks to try our states by. 1. Because there may be a solid, sincere intention and choice in and of the will, where there is little stirring perceived in the affections. 2. Because the will is the master-commanding faculty of the rational soul; and so if it be right, that man is upright and safe. 3. Because the passions and affections are so mutable and uncertain. The will can command them but imperfectly; it cannot perfectly restrain them from vanities; much less can it perfectly raise them to that height, as is suitable to the excellency of our heavenly objects. But the object itself, with its sensible manner of apprehension, moves them more than all the command of the will. And so we find by experience, that a godly man, when with his utmost private endeavour he cannot command one stirring pang of divine love or joy in his soul, yet upon the hearing of some moving sermon, or the sudden receiving of some extraordinary mercy, or the reading of some quickening book, he shall feel perhaps some stirring of that affection. So when we cannot weep in private one tear for sin, yet at a stirring sermon, or when we give vent to our sorrows, and ease our troubled hearts into the bosom of some faithful friend, then we can find tears. 4. Because passions and affections depend so much on the temperature of the body. To one they are easy, familiar, and at command; to another (as honest) they are difficult and scarce stirred at all. With most women, and persons of weaker tempers, they are easier than with men. Some cannot weep at the death of a friend, though never so dear, no, nor perhaps feel very sensible, inward grief; and yet perhaps would have redeemed his life at a far dearer rate, (had it been possible,) than those that can grieve and weep more abundantly. 5. Because worldly things have so great an advantage on our passions and affections. 1. They are sensible and near us, and our knowledge of them is clear. But God is not to be seen, heard, or felt by our senses; he is far from us, though locally present with us; we are capable of knowing but little, very little of him. 2. Earthly things are always before our eyes, their advantage is continual. 3. Earthly things being still the objects of our senses, do force our passions, whether we will or not, though they cannot force our wills. 6. Because affections and passions rise and fall, and neither are nor can be in any even and constant frame, and therefore are unfit to be the constant or certain evidence of our state; but the will's resolution and choice may be more constant. So that I advise you rather to try yourself by your will, than by your passionate stirrings of love or longing, of joy or sorrow.

Object. But doth not the Scripture lay as much on

love, as on any grace? And doth not Christ say, That except we love him above all, we cannot be his disciples?

Answer. It is all very true. But consider, love hath two parts: the one in the will, which is commonly called a faculty of the soul, as rational; and this is the same thing that I call willing, accepting, choosing, or consenting. This complacency is true love to Christ; and this is the sure, standing mark. The other is the passionate part, commonly said to be in the soul, as sensitive; and this, though most commonly called love, yet is less certain and constant, and so unfit to try your state by, though a great duty, so far as we can reach it.

2. You must understand and well remember, that it is not every willingness that will prove your sincerity: for wicked men may have slight apprehensions of spiritual things, which may produce some slight desires and wishes, which yet are so feeble and heartless, that every lust and carnal desire overcomes them; and it will not so much as enable them to deny the grossest sin. But it must be the prevalent part of your will that God must have. I mean a great share, a deeper and larger room than any thing in the world; that is, you must have a higher estimation of God, and everlasting happiness, and Christ, and a holy life, than of any thing in the world; and also your will must be so disposed hereby, and inclined to God, that if God and glory, to be obtained through Christ by a holy, self-denying life, were set before you on the one hand, and the pleasure, profits, and honours of the world, to be enjoyed in a way of sin, on the other hand, you would resolutely take the former, and refuse the latter. Indeed they are thus set before you, and upon your choice dependeth your salvation or damnation, though that choice must come from the grace of God.

3. Yet must you well remember, that this willingness and choice is still imperfect, and therefore when I mention a hearty willingness, I mean not a perfect willingness. There may be, and is in the most gracious souls on earth, much indisposedness, backwardness, and withdrawing of heart, which is too great a measure of unwillingness to duty; especially to those duties which the flesh is most averse from, and which require most of God and his Spirit to the right performance of them.

Among all duties, I think the soul is naturally most backward to these following. 1. To secret prayer, because it is spiritual, and requires great reverence, and hath nothing of external pomp or form to take us up with, and consisteth not much in the exercise of common gifts, but in the exercise of special grace, and the breathings of the Spirit, and searchings, pantings, and strivings of a gracious soul towards God. (I do not speak of the heartless repeating of bare words, learned by rote, and either not understood, or not uttered from the feeling of the soul.) 2. To serious meditation also is the soul very backward; that is, either to meditate on God, and the promised glory, or any spiritual subject, to this end, that the heart may be thereby quickened and raised, and graces exercised (though to meditate on the same subject, only to know or dispute on it, the heart is nothing near so backward). Or else to meditate on the state of our own hearts, by way of self-examination, or self-judging, or self-reprehension, or self-exciting. 3. Also to the duty of faithful dealing with each other's souls, in secret reproof and exhortation, plainly (though lovingly) to tell each other of our sins and danger, to this the heart is usually very backward; partly through a sinful bashfulness, partly for want of more believing, lively apprehensions of our duty, and our brother's danger; and

partly because we are loth to displease men and lose their favour, it being grown so common for men to fall out with those (if not hate them) that deal plainly and faithfully with them. 4. Also to take a reproof, as well as to give it, the heart is very backward. Even godly men, through the sad remainders of their sinfulness, do too commonly frown, and snarl, and retort our reproofs, and study presently how to excuse themselves, and put it by, or how to charge us with something that may stop our mouths, and make the reprover seem as bad as themselves. Though they dare not tread our reproofs under feet, and turn again, and all to rend us, yet they oft show the remnants of a dogged nature, though when they review their ways it costs them sorrow. We must sugar and butter our words, and make them liker to stroking than striking, liker an approving than a reproving them, liker a flattery than faithful dealing; and yet when we have all done, they go down very hardly, and that but half way, even with many godly people when they are under a temptation. 5. The like may be said of all those duties which do pinch upon our credit or profit, or tend to disgrace us, or impoverish us in the world; as the confessing of a disgraceful fault; the free giving to the poor or sacred uses, according to our estates; the parting with our own right or gain for peace; the patient suffering of wrong, and forgiving it heartily, and loving bitter, abusive enemies, especially the running upon the stream of men's displeasure, and incurring the danger of being utterly undone in our worldly state (especially if men be rich, who do therefore as hardly get to heaven as a camel through a needle's eye). And above all, the laying down of our lives for Christ. It cannot be expected, that godly men should perform all these with perfect willingness; the flesh will play its part, in pleading its own cause, and will strive hard to maintain its own interests. Oh the shifts, the subtle arguments, or at least the clamorous and importunate contradictions, that all these duties will meet with in the best, so far as they are renewed, and their graces weak! So that you may well hence conclude that you are a sinner, but you may not conclude that you are graceless, because of a backwardness and some unwillingness to duty.

Yet your willingness must be greater than your unwillingness, and so Christ must have the prevailing part of your will; and from that the denomination is usually taken. So that Scripture useth to affirm God's people to be willing even when they fail in the execution. So Paul (Rom. vii. 18) saith, "To will is present with me, when how to do or perform he found not;" that is, not to obey so perfectly as he would do; not to love God so intensely and fervently; not to subdue passions and lusts so thoroughly; not to watch our thoughts, and words, and ways so narrowly, and order them so exactly, as the bent of his will did consent to. And lest any Arminian should pretend (as they do) that Paul speaks here in the person of an unregenerate man, as under the convictions of the law, and not as a man regenerate; it is plain in the text that he speaks of himself in the state which he was then in, and that state was a regenerate state. He expressly saith, It is thus and thus with me; "So then I myself with my mind do serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin," ver. 25. And to put it out of doubt, the apostle speaks the like of all christians, Gal. v. 17, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This is the plain exposition of Rom. vii. Here Scripture maketh the

godly willing to do more than they do or can do, but yet it is not a perfect willingness, but it is the prevailing inclination and choice of the will, and that gives the name.

4. Observe further, that I add your actual performance of duty; because true hearty willingness will show itself in actions and endeavours. It is but dissembling, if I should say I am willing to perform the strictest, holiest duties, and yet do not perform them. To say I am willing to pray, and pray not; or to give to the poor, and yet give not; or to perform the most self-denying, costly duties, and yet when it should come to the practice, I will not be persuaded or drawn to them. I will not confess a disgraceful sin, nor further a good cause, to my danger, cost, or trouble; nor reprove, nor submit to reproof, nor turn from the way of temptations or the like. Action must discover true willingness. The son that said to his father, "I go, sir," but went not to labour in the vineyard, was not accepted or justified. If therefore you are in doubt whether your willingness be sincere, inquire into your practice and performance. God commandeth you to pray, to instruct your family, to be merciful to the poor, to forgive those that wrong you, &c. The flesh and the devil persuade you from these. Do you perform them, or do you not? Though you may do it with backwardness, and dulness, and weakness, yet do you do it? and desire you could do it better, and lament your misdoing it? and endeavour to do it better than you have formerly done? This shows then that the Spirit prevaileth, though the flesh do contradict it.

5. Yet here you must carefully distinguish of duties; for God hath made some to be secondary parts of the condition of the covenant, and so of flat necessity for the continuance of our justification, and for the attaining of glorification. Such are confessing Christ before men when we are called to it; confessing sin, praying, showing mercy to the poor, forgiving wrongs, hearing and yielding to God's word, &c. still supposing that there be opportunity and necessities for the performance of these. But some duties there are that God hath not laid so great a stress or necessity on, though yet the wilful, resolved omission in ordinary, of any known duty, is contrary to the nature of true obedience.

Also, the case may much differ with several persons, places, and seasons, concerning duty; that may be a duty to one man, that is not to another; and in one place, which is not in another, and at one season, which is not at another. And that may be a greater duty, and of indispensable necessity, to one, which to another is not so great. It may stand with true grace, to omit that duty which men know not to be a duty, or not to be so to them (except where the duty is such, as is itself of absolute necessity to salvation); but it cannot so stand with grace in those that know it, ordinarily to reject it.

6. Also you must understand, that when I say, that true willingness to be ruled by Christ will show itself in actual obedience; I do not mean it of every particular individual act which is our duty, as if you should judge yourself graceless for every particular omission of a duty; no, though you knew it to be a duty, and though you considered it to be a duty. For, 1. There may be a true habituated inclination and willingness to obey Christ rooted in the heart, when yet by the force of a temptation, the actual prevalency of it at that time, in that act, may be hindered and suppressed. 2. And at the same time, you do hold on in a course of obedience in other duties. 3. And when the temptation is overcome, and grace hath been roused up against the flesh,

and you soberly recollect your thoughts, you will return to obedience in that duty also. Yea, how many days, or weeks, or months, a true christian may possibly neglect a known duty, I will not dare to determine (of which more anon). Yet such omissions as will not stand with a sincere resolution and willingness to obey Christ universally, (I mean an habitual willingness,) will not consist with the truth of grace.

7. I know the fourth mark, about forsaking all for Christ, may seem somewhat unseasonable and harsh to propound for the quieting of a troubled conscience. But yet, I durst not omit it, seeing Christ hath not omitted it; nay, seeing he hath so urged it, and laid such a stress on it in the Scripture as he hath done, I dare not daub, nor be unfaithful, for fear of troubling. Such skinning over the wound will but prepare for more trouble and a further cure. Christ thought it meet even to tell young beginners of the worst, (though it might possibly discourage them, and did turn some back,) that they might not come to him upon mistaken expectations; and he requireth all that will be christians, and be saved, to count their cost beforehand, and reckon what it will stand them in to be Christ's disciples; and if they cannot undergo his terms (that is, to deny themselves, take up their cross, forsake all and follow him) they cannot be his disciples. And Christ had rather they knew it beforehand, than to deceive themselves, or to turn back when they meet with what they never thought of, and then to imagine that Christ had deceived them, and drawn them in, and done the wrong.

8. When I say in the fourth mark, that you must have a settled resolution, I mean the same thing as before I did by hearty willingness. But it is meet here to call it resolution, because this is the proper name for that act of the will, which is a determination of itself upon deliberation, after any wavering, to the doing or submitting to any thing as commanded. I told you it must be the prevailing act of the will that must prove you sincere: every cold, uneffectual wish will not serve turn. Christ seeks for your heart on one side, and the world with its pleasures, profits, and honours on the other side. The soul which, upon consideration of both, doth prefer Christ in his choice, and reject the world, (as it is competitor with him,) and this not doubtingly and with reservation for further deliberation or trial, but presently passeth his consent for better and worse, this is said to be a resolving. And I know no one word that more fitly expresseth the nature of that grace which differenceth a true christian from all hypocrites, and by which a man may safely judge of his estate.

9. Yet I here add, that it must be a settled resolution; and that to intimate, that it must be an habitual willingness or resolution. The prevalency of Christ's interest in the soul must be an habitual prevalency. If a man that is terrified by a rousing sermon, or that lieth in expectation of present death, should actually resolve to forsake sin, or perform duty, without any further change of mind, or habit, or fixedness of this resolution, it would be of no great value, and soon extinguished. Though yet I believe that no unsanctified man doth ever attain to that full resolution for Christ, which hath a complacency in Christ accompanying it, and which may be termed the prevailing part of the will. Those that seem resolved to day to be for Christ, and to deny the world and the flesh, and the next day are unresolved again, have cause to suspect that they were never truly resolved. Though the will of a godly man may lie under declinings in the degrees of resolution,

yet Christ hath always his habitual resolutions, and usually his actual in a prevalent degree.

10. I add also the grounds (in the fourth mark) on which this resolution must be raised. For false grounds in the understanding will not bear up a true resolution in the will. And therefore we put the articles of our creed before our profession of consent and obedience. Sound doctrine and sound belief of it breeds a sound resolution, and makes a sound heart and life. If a man resolve to obey Christ, upon a conceit that Christ will never put him upon any suffering, (else he would not resolve it,) and that he will give him such brutish pleasures when he is dead, as Mahomet hath promised to his disciples, this resolution were not sound; yet in many lesser points of doctrine a true christian may be unsound, and yet soundly cleave to the foundation. He may build hay and stubble possibly; but the foundation must be held.

11. Observe well (lest you mistake me) that I speak only of the necessity of your present resolving to forsake all for Christ, if he call you to it; but I speak not of your absolute promise or prediction, that eventually you shall not deny or forsake him. You may be uncertain how you shall be upheld in a day of trial, and yet you may now be resolved or fully purposed in your own mind what to do. To say, I will not consent, purpose, or resolve, unless I were certain to perform my resolutions, and not to flag or change again; this is but to say, I will be no christian, unless I were sure to persevere. I will not be married to Christ, lest I should be drawn to break my covenant with him.

12. Also observe, that when I speak of your resolving to forsake all for Christ, it is not to cast away your state or life, but to submit it to his dispose, and to relinquish it only in case that he command you so.

13. And I do not intend that you should be able thus to resolve of yourself without the special grace of God; nor yet without it to continue those resolutions, much less to perform them by actual suffering.

Object. But I cannot be sure that God will give me grace to persevere, or at least not to deny him, as Peter did; and therefore I should neither promise nor resolve what I cannot be certain to perform.

Ans. 1. I suppose you have read the many scriptures and arguments which our divines ordinarily use to prove that the true believers shall not fall quite away. And I know not how the opposers can answer that text which themselves use to allege for the contrary, Matt. xiii. 6, 21. Those that believe for a time, and in the time of persecution fall away, it is because the seed had not depth of earth, the word never took rooting in their hearts. Whence it seems that it may be well inferred, that those shall not fall away in time of temptation, in whom the word of God hath taken deep rooting. And that is, in them in whose hearts or wills Christ hath a stronger interest than the creature, or those that have a well-grounded, unreserved, habituated, or settled resolution to be for Christ. 2. However, your present resolution, and your covenanting with Christ, is no more but this; to say, I do consent; or this, I am resolved to do, by the help of God's grace. 3. Else no man should be baptized or become a christian, because he is uncertain to keep his covenants; for all that are baptized, do covenant and vow, "to forsake the world, flesh, and devil," and fight under Christ's banner to their lives' end. Understand me therefore, that you are not to promise to do this by your own strength, but by the strength of Christ, as knowing that he hath promised his Spirit and grace for the aid of every true believer.

14. If your resolution at present be hearty, you ought not to vex and disquiet your mind, with doubtful, tormenting fears what you should do, if you be put to it to forsake all, and suffer death for Christ, for he hath promised to lay no more on us than we can bear, but with the temptation will make us a way to come forth, 1 Cor. x. 13; either he will not bring us into trials beyond our strength, or else he will increase our strength according to our trials. He hath bid us pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:" and he hath promised, that "whatsoever we ask in the name of Christ according to his will, he will give us." So that if once you can but truly say, that it is your full resolution to forsake all for Christ if he call you to it, and that on the forementioned grounds, you ought not then to vex your soul with fears of the issue; for that is but to distrust God your Father and your Strength. Only you must be careful to do your duty to the keeping up of your present resolutions, and to wait obediently on God for the help of his Spirit, and to beg it earnestly at his hands.

15. Much less is it lawful for men to feign and suppose such calamities to themselves, as God doth never try men by, and then to ask themselves, Can I bear these for Christ? and so to try themselves on false and dangerous grounds. Some use to be troubled, lest if they were put to long and exquisite torments for Christ, they should renounce him. One saith, I cannot endure the torments of hell for Christ; another saith, Could I endure to be roasted, or torn in pieces so many weeks or days together? or, Could I endure to die so many times over? These are foolish, sinful questions, which Christ never desired you to put to yourselves. He never tries men's faith on this manner. Tormentors cannot go beyond his will. Nay, it is but very few that he tries by death, and fewer by an extreme tormenting death. All this therefore proceeds from error.

16. Observe from the fifth mark, that the present prevalence of your resolutions now against those temptations which you encounter with, may well encourage you to expect that they should prevail hereafter, if God bring you into greater trials. Can you now follow Christ in a holy life, though your flesh repine, and would have its liberties and pleasures; and though the world deride or threaten you, or great ones turn against you and threaten your undoing? Can you part with your money to the poor, or to the promoting of any work of Christ, according to the measure of estate that God hath allotted you, notwithstanding all temptations to the contrary? Some trials you have now; if you can go well through these, you have no cause to disquiet your mind with fears of falling in greater trials. But he that cannot now deny his greedy appetite in meats and drink, so far as to forbear excess; nor can deny his credit with men, nor bear the scorns or frowns of the world; but be on the stronger side, and decline his duty to avoid danger, whatever become of conscience or God's favour, this man is not like to forsake and lay down his life for Christ and his cause.

Object. But though I break through lesser trials, I am not sure to overcome in greater, for the same measure of grace will not enable a man to forsake all, which will enable him to forsake a little. Many have gone through smaller trials, and after forsaken Christ in greater. And Christ makes it the property of temporaries that are not rooted in the faith, that they fall when tribulation and persecution for the gospel ariseth, and therefore it seems they may stand till then; and if trial never come, they may never fall, and yet be unsound in the mean time.

Answ. 1. If your trial now be considerable, the

truth of grace may be manifested in it, though it be none of the greatest, and though in striving against sin you have not yet resisted unto blood. 2. If you carefully observe your own heart, you may discern whether the Spirit and your resolutions be prevalent, by their daily subduing and mortifying the flesh and its lusts. Nay, let me tell you, the victory of God's Spirit over the flattering, enticing world in prosperity, is as great and glorious, if not more, than that over the frowning, persecuting world in adversity. And therefore find the one, and you need not fear the other. Though I confess that hypocrites do not fall so visibly and shamefully always in prosperity as in adversity; for they have more pretences, advantages, and carnal shifts, to hide the shame of their falls. And for that in the parable in Matt. xiii. I pray you mark one thing. Christ seems to speak of every several sort of hearers by a gradation, speaking last of those that go farthest. The first sort are the common, ignorant, negligent hearers, in whom the word takes no root at all. The second sort are those that give it a slight and shallow rooting, but no deep rooting at all; these are they that fall away in tribulation. By falling away, is meant the plain deserting Christ or the substance of his cause. These men, till this falling away, though they professed Christ, and heard the word with joy, yet no doubt did not crucify the flesh and the world, whereby they might have discovered their unsoundness if they would, before tribulation came. First, by discerning that the word was not deep rooted: 1. In their judgment and estimation. 2. Or in their wills and settled resolution. Secondly; And by discerning the unmortified lusts of their hearts in the mean time. But it seems the third sort of hearers, likened to the thorny ground, went further than these; for here it is only said by Luke, viii. 14, "That they bring no fruit to perfection." However, whether these went further than the other, or not, it is certain that these also had their trial, and fell in the trial. The deceitfulness of riches overturned these, as the heat of persecution overturned the other. So that it is evident that prosperity puts faith to the trial, as well as adversity. But mark the different manner of their falls and overthrows. They that are overthrown by adversity, are said to fall away, that is, to forsake Christ openly; but they that fall by prosperity, are not said to fall away; but only that the "deceitfulness of riches, and cares of the world, choke the word, so that it becomes unfruitful," that is, brings no fruit to perfection. For usually these do not openly forsake Christ, but continue off an unfruitful and hypocritical profession; insomuch that at that very time, when the word is choked and fruitless, yet the blade of profession may be as green as ever, and they may be so much in some duties, and have such golden words and witty shifts to plead for every covetous practice, and put so fair a gloss on all their actions, that they may keep up the credit of being very eminent christians. So that if your grace can carry you well through prosperity, you may be confident of the truth of it. 3. And then if it be thus proved true and saving, you have cause to be confident that it will hold out in adversity also, and cause you to overcome the shake of tribulation. I think most men are better in adversity than in prosperity, though I confess no adversity is so shaking, as that which leaves it in a man's choice to come out of it by sinning. As for a man in health to be persecuted, and the persecutor to say, If thou wilt turn to my side and way, I will give thee thy life and preferment with it; but sickness or other sufferings imposed only by God, and which only God can take off, are nothing so shaking.

For as the former draws us to please men, that they may deliver us, so this draws even the wicked to think of pleasing God, that he may deliver them.

17. Observe that when I ask whether this resolution do already prevail, I do not mean any perfect prevailing; nay, sin may prevail to draw you to a particular act, (and how many, I will not undertake to tell you,) and yet still grace and the Spirit do conquer in the main. For you will say, that general and army get the victory who vanquish the other, and win the field, though yet perhaps a troop or regiment may be routed, and many slain.

18. When I speak of your overcoming all gross sins, as I mean in ordinary, not doubting but it is too possible for a believer to commit a gross sin; so I confess that it is hard to tell just which sins are to be called gross, and which infirmities only; or (as some speak) which are mortal, and which not. And therefore this mark hath some difficulties, as to the right trying by it (of which more anon).

19. Yet I desire that you join them all together in trial, seeing it is in the whole that the true and full description of a christian is contained. The same description of a true christian (presupposing his right belief) I have drawn up in our public church profession, which in this county the ministers have agreed on; in the profession of consent in these words: "I do heartily take this one God for my only God and chief good; and this Jesus Christ for my only Lord, Redeemer, and Saviour; and this Holy Ghost for my Sanctifier; and the doctrine by him revealed and sealed by his miracles, and now contained in the holy Scriptures, do I take for the law of God, and the rule of my faith and life; and repenting unfeignedly of my sins, I do resolve through the grace of God sincerely to obey him, both in holiness to God, and righteousness to man, and in special love to the saints, and communion with them, against all the temptations of the devil, the world, and my own flesh, and this to the death." He that sincerely can speak these words, is a sincere christian.

20. Lastly, that you may see that those five which I laid you down are all true marks, do but peruse these texts of Scripture following. For the first, Psal. xvi. 5, 2; lxxiii. 24—28; iv. 6, 7; i. 1—3; Josh. xxi. 16—18, 21—24; Matt. vi. 19—21; Rom. vii. 24; viii. 17, 18, 23; Heb. xi. 10, 15, 16, 25—27; Psal. xvi. 5—8. For the second, see John i. 10—12; iii. 16; Mark xvi. 16; Acts xvi. 31; John xiv. 21; xvi. 27; Rom. xiv. 9; Luke xvi. 27; James i. 12; Matt. xxii. 37; 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Matt. x. 22; Rev. xxii. 14; Heb. v. 9. For the third, most of the same will serve, and Heb. xii. 14; Matt. vii. 24; Psal. i. 2, 3; Matt. v. 20; Acts x. 35; Rom. vii. 22. For the two last, besides the former, see Heb. xi. 6; Rom. viii. 1—14; Gal. v. 17, 24; vi. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 9; Luke viii. 13; 1 John ii. 15; v. 4, 5; James i. 27; iv. 4; Gal. vi. 14; i. 4; Rom. xii. 2; Tit. ii. 14; Matt. x. 37; Rom. ii. 5—7; Rev. xiv. 13; Phil. ii. 14; Col. iii. 23, 24; 1 Cor. iii. 8, 14; John xii. 16; 1 John iii. 22, 23; Gen. xxii. 16; Matt. x. 22; xxiv. 13; Heb. iii. 6, 14; vi. 11; Rev. ii. 26, 10; xii. 11; Matt. xvi. 25; x. 39; Mark xvii. 33; Rom. viii. 9, 13; Luke xiii. 3, 5; Rom. xvi. 4—6, 12, 14, 16, 17, 22.

And thus I have given you such marks as you may safely try yourself by, and cleared the meaning of them to you. Now let me advise you to this use of them. 1. In your serious self-examination, try only by these, and not by any uncertain marks. I know there be promises of life made to some particular duties and single qualifications in Scripture, as to humility, meekness, alms-deeds, love to the godly, &c.; but it is still both on supposition that they be

not single in the person, but are accompanied with, and flow from, that faith and love to God before-mentioned; and also that they are in a prevailing degree.

2. Whenever any flesh doubtings arise in you upon the stirrings of corruption, or debility of graces, still have recourse to these former marks; and while you find these, let not any thing cause you to pass wrong judgments on yourself. Lay these now to your own heart, and tell me, Are you not unfeignedly willing to have Christ on the terms that he is offered? Are you not willing to be more holy? and beg of him to make you so? Would you not be glad if your soul were more perfectly sanctified, and rid of that body of sin, though it were to the smart and displeasing of your flesh? Are you not willing to wait on God, in the use of his ordinances, in that poor, weak measure as you are able to perform them? Durst you, or would you, quit your part in God, heaven, Christ, and forsake the way of holiness, and do as the profane world doth, though it were to please your flesh, or save your state of life? Do not you daily strive against the flesh and keep it under, and deny it its desires? Do you not deny the world when it would hinder you from works of mercy or public good, according to your ability? Is it not the grief of your soul when you fall, and your greatest trouble that you cannot walk more obediently, innocently, and fruitfully? And do you not after sinning resolve to be more watchful for the time to come? Are you not resolved to stick to Christ and his holy laws and ways, whatever changes or dangers come, and rather to forsake friends and all that you have, than to forsake him? yet in a godly jealousy and distrust of your own heart, do renounce your own strength, and resolve to do this only in the strength of Christ, and therefore daily beg it of him? Is it not your daily care and business to please God and do his will, and avoid sinning in your weak measure? I hope that all this is so, and your own case; which, if it be, you have infallible evidences, and want but the sight and comfort of them; you have the true grounds for assurance, though you want assurance itself; your chief danger is over, though your trouble remain. Your soul is at the present in a safe condition, though not in the sense of it. You are in the state of salvation, though not of consolation. It must be your next work therefore to study God's mercies, and take notice what he hath done for your soul. Let not so blessed a guest as the Holy Ghost dwell in you unobserved. Shall he do such wonders in you, and for you, and you not know it, or acknowledge it? Shall he new-beget you, and new-make you, and produce a spiritual, heavenly nature in you, who of yourself were so carnal and earthly, and will you not observe it? Had you any of these holy desires, endeavours, or resolutions of yourself by nature? or have the ungodly about you any of them? Oh that you knew what a work of wonderful mercy, wisdom, and power, the Spirit performeth in the renewing of a soul! then sure you would more observe and admire his love to you herein.

Direct. XII. The next rule for your direction for the right settling of your peace is this: You must know, that assurance of justification, adoption, and right of salvation, cannot be gathered from the smallest degree of saving grace.

1. Here I must say something for explaining my meaning to you. 2. And then give you my reasons of this assertion.

1. Understand that I speak of God's ordinary working by means, not denying but God may, by a voice from heaven, or an angel, or other supernatural revelation, bestow assurance on whom he pleaseth.

But I hope all wise christians will take heed of expecting this, or of trusting too much to seeming revelations, unless they could prove that God useth to confer assurance in this way; which I think they cannot.

2. By the smallest degree of grace, I mean, of faith, love, obedience, and those saving graces, whose acts are the condition of our salvation, and which in the fore-expressed marks I laid down to you. Do not therefore so far mistake me, as to think that I speak of a small measure of those common gifts which are separable from true sanctification; such as are extensive knowledge, memory, ability of utterance in preaching, repeating, exhorting, or praying; an ornate, plausible, winning deportment before men, such as is commonly called good breeding or manners; an affected, humble, complimentary familiarity and condescension, to creep into men's estimation and affections, and steal their hearts, &c. Many a one that is strong in saving grace, is weak in all these, and other the like.

Now for my reasons.

1. I conceive that it is not possible for any minister punctually to set down a discernible difference between the least measure of true saving grace, and the highest degree of common grace; and to say, just here it is that they part, or by this you may discern them. I do but say, I think so, because other men may know far more than I do; but I will say it as certain, that I am not able to do it, for my own part. This much I can tell, that the least degree of grace that is saving, doth determine the soul for God and Christ, against the world and flesh, that stand as competitors; and so where Christ's interest prevaileth in the least measure, there is the least measure of saving grace. As when you are weighing two things in the balance, and at last make it so near even weight, that one end is turned and no more: so when you are considering whether to be for Christ, or for the flesh and the world, and your will is but even a very little determined to Christ, and preferreth him; this is the least measure of saving grace. But then how a poor soul should discern this prevalent choice and determination of itself is all the question. For there is nothing more easy and common than for men to think verily, that they prefer Christ above the creature, as long as no temptation doth assault them, nor sensual objects stand up in any considerable strength to entice them. Nay, wicked men do truly, oftentimes, purpose to obey Christ before the flesh, and to take him for their Lord, merely in the general, when they do not know or consider the quality of his laws; that they are so strict and spiritual, and contrary to the flesh, and hazardous to their worldly hopes and seeming happiness. But when it comes to particulars, and God saith, Now deny thyself, and thy friend, and thy goods, and thy life for my sake; alas, it was never his resolution to do it; nor will he be persuaded to it. But he that said to God, who sends him to labour in his vineyard, "I go, Sir," when he comes to find the unpleasantness of the work, he goes not, nor ever sets a hand to it. So that it is evident, that it is not true, saving resolution or willingness, which prevaileth not for actual obedience. Now here comes in the unresolvable doubt, What is the least measure of obedience, that will prove a man truly willing and resolved, or to have truly accepted of Christ for his Lord? This obedience lieth in performing what is commanded, and avoiding what is forbidden. Now it is too certain, that every true believer is guilty of a frequent neglect of duty, yea, of known duty. We know we should love God more abundantly, and delight in him, and meditate more on him, and pray

more oft and earnestly than we do, and instruct our families more diligently, and speak against sin more boldly, and admonish our neighbours more faithfully, with many the like. "The good that we would do, we do not," Rom. vii. 19. Nay, the flesh so striveth against the Spirit, that "we cannot do the good we would," Gal. v. 17. Nay, many a true christian in time of temptation, hath been drawn to omit secret prayer, or family duties, almost wholly for a certain space of time; yea, and perhaps to be so corrupted in his judgment for a time, as to think he doth well in it, as also in forbearing praising God by psalms, receiving the sacraments, and communicating with the church, hearing the word publicly, &c. (for what duty almost is not denied of late?) and perhaps may not only omit relieving the poor for a time, but excuse it. Now what man can punctually determine just how often a true christian may be guilty of any such omission? and just how long he may continue it? and what the duties be which he may possibly so omit, and what not?

So also in sins of commission. Alas, what sins did Noah, Lot, David, Solomon, Asa, Peter, &c. commit!

If we should say as the papists and Arminians, that these being mortal sins, do for the time, till repentance restore him, cast a true christian out of God's favour into a state of damnation; then what man breathing is able to enumerate those mortal sins, and tell us which be so damning, and which not? Nay, if he could say, drunkenness is one, and gluttony another, who can set the punctual stint, and say, Just so many bits a man must eat before he be a glutton; or just so much he must drink before he be a drunkard? or by such a sign the turning point may be certainly known? We may have signs by which he may be tried at the bar of man; but these are none of them taken from that smallest degree, which specieth and denominates the sin before God. If we avoid the foresaid opinion that one such sin doth bring us into the state of damnation, yet is the difficulty never the less; for it is certain, that "he that commits sin is of the devil," 1 John iii. 8; and there are spots, which are not the spots of God's children; and all true faith will mortify the world to us, and us to it, Gal. vi. 14; and "he that is in Christ hath crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof," chap. v. 24; and that "if we live after the flesh we shall die," Rom. viii. 13. And "his servants we are to whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness," chap. vi. 16. And "if we delight in iniquity, or regard it, God will not hear our prayers," Psal. lxxvi. 18. And that "he that nameth the name of Christ must depart from iniquity," 1 Tim. ii. 19. And that "God will judge all men according to their works," and bid the workers of iniquity depart from him, Matt. vii. 23. Now can any man on earth tell us just how great or how often sinning will stand with true grace, and how much will not? Who can find those punctual bounds in the word of God? I conclude, therefore, that no minister, or at least, none who is no wiser than I am, can give a true, discernible difference between the worst of saints, and the best of the unsanctified, or the weakest degree of true grace, and the highest of common grace; and so to help such weak christians to true assurance of their salvation.

2. But as this is impossible to be declared by the teachers, so much more is it impossible to be discerned by the persons themselves, yea, though it could possibly be declared to him; and that for these reasons.

1. From the nature of the thing. Small things are hardly discerned. A little is next to none.

2. From the great darkness of man's understanding, and his unacquaintedness with himself (both the nature, faculties, and motions of his soul, naturally considered, and the moral state, dispositions, and motions of it); and is it likely that so blind an eye can discern the smallest thing, and that in so strange and dark a place? Every purblind man cannot see an atom, or a pin, especially in the dark. 3. The heart is deceitful above all things, as well as dark; full of seemings, counterfeits, and false pretences. And a child in grace is not able to discover its jugglings, and understand his book, where almost every word is equivocal or mysterious. 4. The heart is most confused, as well as dark and deceitful; it is like a house, or shop of tools, where all things are thrown together on a heap, and nothing keeps its own place. There are such multiplicity of cogitations, fancies, and passions, and such irregular thronging in of them, and such a confused reception, and operation of objects and conceptions, that it is a wonderful difficult thing for the best christian to discern clearly the bent and actions, and so the state of his own soul. For in such a crowd of cogitations and passions, we are like men in a fair or crowd of people, where a confused noise may be heard, but you cannot well perceive what any of them say, except either some one near you that speaks much louder than all the rest, or else except you single out some one from the rest, and go close to him to confer with him of purpose. Our intellect and passions are like the lakes of water in the common roads, where the frequent passage of horses doth so muddy it, that you can see nothing in it, especially that is near the bottom; when in pure untroubled waters you may see a small thing. In such a confusion and tumult as is usually in men's souls, for a poor weak christian to seek for the discovery of his sincerity, is, according to the proverb, to seek for a needle in a bottle of hay. 5. Besides all this, the corrupt heart of man is so exceeding backward to the work of self-examination, and the use of other means, by which the soul should be familiarly acquainted with itself, that in a case of such difficulty it will hardly ever overcome them, if it were a thing that might be done. In the best, a great deal of resolvedness, diligence, and unwearied constancy in searching into the state of the soul, is necessary to the attainment of a settled assurance and peace. How much more in them that have so small, and almost undiscernible a measure of grace to discover. 6. Yet further, the conceptions, apprehensions, and consequently the sensible motions of the will, and especially the passions, are all naturally exceeding mutable; and while the mobile, agile spirits are any way the instruments, it will be so; especially where the impression which is made in the understanding is so small and weak. Naturally man's mind and will is exceeding mutable, and turned into a hundred shapes in a few days, according as objects are presented to us, and the temperature of the body disposeth, helps, or hinders the mind. Let us hear one man reason the case, and we think he makes all as clear as the light; let us hear another solve all his arguments, and dispute for the contrary, and then we see that our apprehensions were abused. Let us hear him reply and confute all again, and confirm his cause, and then we think him in the right again. Nothing more changeable than the conceivings and mind of man, till he be thoroughly resolved and habituated. Now in this case, how shall those that have but little grace, be able to discern it? It will not keep the mind from fluctuating. If they seem resolved for obedience to Christ to-day, to-morrow they are so shaken by some enticing object, and force of the same temptation,

that their resolution is undiscernible; nay, actually they prefer sin at that time before obedience. It is impossible then but the soul should stagger and be at a loss; for it will judge of itself as it finds itself, and it cannot discern the habitual prevalency of Christ's interest, when they feel the actual prevalency of the flesh's interest. For the act is the only discoverer of the habit. And if Peter himself should have fallen to the examination of his heart, whether he preferred Christ before his life, at the same time when he was denying and forswearing Christ to save his life, do you think he could have discerned it? And yet even then Christ's interest was greatest in him habitually. If David should have gone to search, whether he preferred obedience to God, before his fleshly pleasure, when he was committing adultery; or before his credit, when he was plotting the death of Uriah, what discovery do you think he would have made? 7. Add to all these, that as these several distempers, were they but in the same measure in a weak christian, as they are in the best or in most, would yet make the smallest measure of grace undiscernible (if we might suppose the smallest grace to be consistent with such a frame); so it is certain, that whoever he be that hath the least measure of grace to discover in himself, he hath proportionably the least measure of abilities and helps to discover it, and the greatest measure of all the forementioned hinderances. He that hath but a very little repentance, faith, love, and obedience sincere, when he goeth to find it out, he hath in the same measure a darker understanding to discern it than others have; and a greater strangeness and disacquaintance with himself; and more deceitfulness in his heart, and a greater confusion and hurly-burly in his thoughts and affections, and all more out of order and to seek. Also he hath a greater backwardness to the work of self-examination, and can hardly get his heart to it, and more hardly to do it thoroughly, and search to the quick, and most hardly to hold on against all withdrawing temptations, till he have made a clearer discovery. And lastly, his soul is more mutable than stronger christians are; and therefore when cross actings are so frequent, he cannot discern the smallest prevailing habit. If (when you are weighing gold) the scales be turned but with one grain, every little jog, or wind, or unstedfast holding, will actually lift up the heavier end; and its preponderation is with great wavering and mobility. 8. Yet further, consider, that those that have least grace, have most sin, habitual and actual; and they are so frequent in transgressing, that their failings are still in their eye, and thereby the prevalency of Christ's interest is made more doubtful and obscure. For when he asketh his own conscience, Do I will or love most the world and my fleshly delights, or Christ and his ways? Presently conscience remembereth him, at such a time and such a time thou didst choose thy fleshly pleasures, profits, or credit, and refuse obedience. And it is so oft, and so foully, that the soul is utterly at a loss, and cannot discern the habitual prevalent bent and resolution of the will. 9. Besides, conscience is a judge in man's soul, and will be accusing and condemning men so far as they are guilty. Now, they that make work for the most frequent and terrible accusations of conscience that will stand with true grace, are unlikely to have assurance. For assurance quiets the soul, and easeth it; and a galled conscience works the contrary way. They that keep open the wound, and daily fret off the skin more, and are still grating on the galled part, are unlikely to have assurance. 10. Again, these weakest christians being least in duty, and most in sinning, (of any in whom sin reigneth

not,) they are consequently most in provoking and displeasing God. And they that do so shall find that God will show them his displeasure, and will displease them again. They must not look to enjoy assurance, or see the pleased face of God, till they are more careful to please him, and are more sparing and seldom in offending him. As God's universal justice in governing the world, will make as great a difference between the sincerely obedient and disobedient, as there is between heaven and hell, so God's paternal justice in governing his family, will make as wide a difference between the more obedient children, and the less obedient, as is between his dreadful frowns, and his joyous, reviving smiles; or between his smarting rod, or his encouraging rewards. 11. If God should give assurance and peace to the sinning and least obedient believers, he should not fit his providential disposals to their good. It is not that which their state requires, nor would it tend to their cure any more than a healing plaster to a sore that is rotten in the bottom, or a cordial to the removal of a cacochymy, or the purging out of corrupt, redundant humours. They are so inclined to the lethargy of security, that they have need of continual pinching, striking, or loud calling on, to keep them waking. (Still remember that by this weak christian, I mean not every doubting, distressed soul that is weak in their own apprehension, and little in their own eyes, and poor in spirit; but I mean those that have the least measure of sincere love to Christ, and desire after him, and tenderness of conscience, and care to please God, and the greatest measure of security, worldliness, pride, flesh-pleasing, and boldness in sinning, which is consistent with sincerity in the faith.) I believe there is no father or mother, that hath children to govern, but they know by experience, that there is a necessity of frowns and rods for the more disobedient; and that rewards and smiles are no cure for stubbornness or contempt. 12. Lastly, Do but well consider, what a solecism in government it would be, and what desperate inconveniences it would have brought into the world, if God should have set such a punctual land-mark between his kingdom and the kingdom of Satan, as we are ready to dream of. If God should have said in his word, just so oft a man may be drunk, or may murder, or commit adultery, or steal, or forswear himself, and yet be a true christian and be saved! Or just so far a man may go, in neglecting duty to God and man, and in cherishing his flesh, hiding his sin, &c. and yet be a true believer and be saved. This would, 1. Imbolden men in sinning, and make them think, I may yet venture, for I stand on safe ground. 2. And it would hinder repentance. Indeed it would be the way to rob God of his honour, and multiply provocations against him, and keep his children in disobedience, and hinder their growth in holiness, and cause a deformity in Christ's body, and a shame to his religion and sacred name. As for those that say, assurance never encourageth men in sin, but tends to destroy it; I answer, it is true of God's assurance, seasonably given to those that are fit for it, and used by them accordingly. But if God should have told all the world, just how far they may sin, and yet be certain of salvation, this would have bred assurance in those that were unfit for it; and it would have been but the putting of new wine into old cracked bottles, or a new piece into an old garment, that would break them, or make worse the rent. I must therefore freely tell these objectors, (I am sorry that so many of my old acquaintance now harp so much on this antinomian string,) that ignorance or error hath so blinded them, that they have forgotten, or know not,

1. What an imperfect piece the best is in this life, much more the worst true christian. 2. Nor what a subtle devil we have to tempt us. 3. Nor what an active thing corruption is, and what advantage it will take on unseasonable assurance. 4. Nor what the nature of grace and sanctification is; and how much of it lies in a godly jealousy of ourselves, and apprehension of our danger, and that "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom;" see Heb. iv. 1. Nay, 5. They have forgotten what a man is, and how inseparable from his nature is the principle of self-preservation, and how necessary the apprehension of danger, and the fear of evil to himself, is to the avoiding of that evil, and so to his preservation. 6. Yea, if they knew but what a commonwealth or a family is, they would know that fear of evil, and desire of self-preservation, is the very motive to associations, and the groundwork of all laws and government, and a great part of the life of all obedience.

And thus I have fully proved to you, that the smallest measure of grace cannot help men to assurance in God's ordinary way.

Perhaps you will say, What comfort is there in this to a poor weak christian? This is rather the way to put him quite out of heart and hope. I answer, No such matter. I shall show the uses of this observation in the following directions. In the mean time I will say but this, The expectations of unseasonable assurance, and out of God's way, is a very great cause of keeping many in languishing and distress, and of causing others to turn antinomians, and snatch at comforts which God never gave them, and to feign and frame an assurance of their own making, or build upon the delusions of the great deceiver, transforming himself into an angel of light.

Direct. XIII. From the last-mentioned observation, there is one plain consecretary arising, which I think you may do well to note by the way, viz. That according to God's ordinary way of giving grace, it cannot be expected that christians should be able to know the very time of their first receiving or acting true saving grace, or just when they were pardoned, justified, adopted, and put into a state of salvation.

This must needs be undeniable (if you grant the former point, That the least measure of grace yieldeth not assurance of its sincerity, which is proved); and withal, if you grant this plain truth, That it is God's ordinary way, to give a small measure of grace at the first. This I prove thus: 1. Christ liketh God's kingdom of grace to a grain of mustard seed, which is at the first the least of all seeds, but after cometh to a tree; and to a little leaven, which leaveneth the whole lump. I will not deny, but this may be applied to the visible progress of the gospel, and increase of the church. But it is plainly applicable also to the kingdom of Christ within us. 2. The Scripture oft calleth such young beginners, babes, children, novices, &c. 3. We are all commanded still to grow in grace: which implieth, that we have our smallest measure at the first. 4. Heb. v. 12, sheweth that strength of grace should be according to time and means. 5. Common experience is an invincible argument for this. Men are at a distance from Christ, when he first calleth them to come to him; and many steps they have toward him before they reach to him. We are first so far enlightened as to see our sin and misery, and the meaning and truth of the gospel, and so roused out of our security, and made to look about us, and see that we have souls to save or lose, and that it is no jesting matter to be a christian. And so we come to understand the tenor of the covenant, and Christ's terms of saving men. But, alas, how long is it usu-

ally after this, before we come sincerely to yield to his terms, and take him as he is offered, and renounce the world, flesh, and the devil, and give up ourselves to him in a faithful covenant! We are long deliberating, before we can get our backward hearts to resolve. How then should a man know just when he was past the highest step of common or preparative grace, and arrived at the first step of special grace?

Yet mark, that I here speak only of God's ordinary way of giving grace; for I doubt not, but in some God may give a higher degree of grace at the first day of their conversion, than some others do attain in many years. And those may know the time of their true conversion, both because the effect was so discernible, and because the suddenness makes the change more sensible and observable.

But this is not the ordinary course. Ordinarily convictions lie long on the soul before they come to a true conversion. Conscience is wounded, and smarting long, and long grudging against our sinful and negligent courses, and telling us of the necessity of Christ and a holy life, before we sincerely obey conscience, and give up ourselves to Christ. We seldom yield to the first conviction or persuasion. The flesh hath usually too long time given it to plead its own cause, and to say to the soul, Wilt thou forsake all thy pleasure and merry company and courses? Wilt thou beggar thyself? or make thyself a scorn and mocking-stock to the world? Art thou ever able to hold out in so strict a course? and to be undone? and to forsake all, and lay down thy life for Christ? Is it not better venture thyself in the same way as thou hast gone in, as well as others do, and as so many of thy forefathers have done before thee? Under such sinful deliberations as these we usually continue long before we fully resolve; and many demurs and delays we make before we conclude to take Christ on the terms that he is offered to us. Now I make no doubt but most or many christians can remember how and when God stirred their consciences, and wakened them from their security, and made them look about them, and roused them out of their natural lethargy. Some can tell what sermon first did it; others can remember by what degrees and steps God was doing it long. The ordinary way appointed by God for the doing of it first, is the instruction of parents. And (as I have fuller manifested in my book of Infant Baptism) if parents would do their duties, they would find that the word publicly preached was not appointed to be the first ordinary means of conversion and sanctification; but commonly, grace would be received in childhood: I speak not of baptismal relative grace, consisting in the pardon of original sin, nor yet any infusion of habits before they have the use of reason, (because I suppose it is hid from us, what God doth in that,) but I speak of actual conversion; and I prove that this should be the first ordinary way and time of conversion to the children of true christians, because it is the first means that God hath appointed to be used with them, Deut. vi. 6-8; Eph. vi. 4. Parents are commanded to teach their children the law of God urgently at home, and as they walk abroad, lying down, and rising up; and to bring them up in the admonition and nurture of the Lord; and to "train up a child in the way he should go, and when they are old they will not depart from it," Prov. xxii. 6. And children are commanded to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth," Eccles. xii. 1. And if this be God's first great means, then doubtless he will ordinarily bless his own means here, as well as in the preaching of the word.

From all this I would have you learn this lesson: That you ought not to trouble yourself with fears and doubts, you are not truly regenerate, because you know not the sermon or the very time and manner of your conversion; but find that you have grace, and then, though you know not just the time or manner of your receiving of it, yet you may nevertheless be assured of salvation by it. Search therefore what you are, and how your will is disposed and resolved, and how your life is ordered, rather than to know how you became such. I know the workings of the Spirit on the soul may be discerned, because they stir up discernible actings in our own spirits. The soul's convictions, considerations, resolutions, and affections, are no insensible things. But yet the work of grace usually begins in common grace, and so proceeds by degrees till it come to special saving grace, even as the work of nature doth, first producing the matter, and then introducing the form; first producing the embryo, before it introduce a rational soul. And as no child knows the time or manner of its own formation, vivification, or reception of that soul, so I think few true believers can say, just such a day, or at such a sermon, I became a true justified, sanctified man. That was the hour of your true conversion and justification, when you first preferred God, and Christ, and grace before all things in this world, and deliberately and seriously resolved to take Christ for your Saviour and Governor, and give up yourself to him to be saved, taught, and governed, and to obey him faithfully to the death against all temptations, whatsoever you should lose or suffer by it. Now I would but ask those very christians that think they do know the very sermon that converted them; Did that sermon bring you to this resolution? Or was it not only some troubling, rousing preparation hereto? I think some desperate sickness or the like affliction is a very usual means to bring resolutions to be downright and fixed, with many souls that long delayed and fluctuated in unresolvedness, and lay under mere uneffectual convictions.

Object. But this runs on your own grounds, that saving grace and common grace do differ but in degrees.

Ans. I think most will confess, that as to the acts of grace, and that is it that we are now inquiring after; and that is all the means that we have of discerning the habits. Yet remember that I still tell you, That there is a special moral difference, though grounded but in a gradual natural difference. Yea, and that one grain of the Spirit's working, which turns the will in a prevalent measure for Christ, (together with the illumination necessary thereto,) deserves all those eulogies and high titles that are given it in the word; so great a change doth it make in the soul! Well may it be called, "the new creature;" "born of the Spirit;" "the workmanship of God;" "the new life;" yea, "the image of God," and "the divine nature." (If that text be not meant of the divine nature in Christ which we are relatively made partakers of in our union with him.) When you are weighing things in the balance, you may add grain after grain, and it makes no turning or motion at all, till you come to the very last grain, and then suddenly that end which was downward is turned upward. When you stand at a loss between two highways, not knowing which way to go, as long as you are deliberate, you stand still: all the reasons that come into your mind do not stir you; but the last reason which resolves you, setteth you in motion. So is it in the change of a sinner's heart and life; he is not changed (but preparing towards it) while he is not deliberating, whether he should choose Christ or

the world? But the last reason that comes in and determineth his will to Christ, and makes him resolve and enter a firm covenant with Christ, and say, I will have Christ for better or worse; this maketh the greatest change that ever is made by any work in this world. For how can there be greater than the turning of a soul from the creature to the Creator? So distant are the terms of this change. After this one turning act Christ hath that heart, and the main bent and endeavours of the life, which the world had before. The man hath a new end, a new rule and guide, and a new Master. Before the flesh and the devil were his masters, and now Christ is his Master. So that you must not think so meanly of the turning, determining, resolving act of grace, because it lieth but in a gradual difference naturally from common grace. If a prince should offer a condemned beggar to marry her, and pardon her, and make her his queen, her deliberation may be the way to her consent, and one reason after another may bring her near to consenting; but it is that which turns her will to consent, resolve, covenant, and deliver herself to him, which makes the great change in her state. Yet all the foregoing work of common grace hath a hand in the change, though only the turning resolution do effect it: it is the rest with this that doth it: as when the last grain turns the scales, the former do concur. I will conclude with Dr. Preston's words, in his "Golden Sceptre," page 210: *Object.* It seems then that the knowledge of a carnal man, and of a regenerate man, do differ but in degrees and not in kind. *Ans.* The want of degrees here alters the kind, as in numbers the addition of a degree alters the species and kind." Read for this also, Dr. Jackson "Of Saving Faith," sect. iii. chap. iii. p. 297, 298, and frequently in other places. So much for that observation.

Direct. XIV. Yet further I would have you to understand this: That as the least measure of saving grace is ordinarily undiscernible from the greatest measure of common grace, (notwithstanding the greatness of the change that it makes,) so a measure somewhat greater is so hardly discernible, that it seldom brings assurance: and therefore it is only the stronger christians that attain assurance ordinarily; even those who have a great degree of faith and love, and keep them much in exercise, and are very watchful and careful in obedience: and consequently (most christians being of the weaker sort) it is but few that do attain to assurance of their justification and salvation.

Here are two or three points which I would have you distinctly to observe, though I lay them all together for brevity. 1. That it is only a greater measure of grace that will ordinarily afford assurance. 2. That therefore it is only the stronger, and holier, and more obedient sort of christians that usually reach to a certainty of salvation. 3. That few christians do reach to a strong or high degree of grace. 4. And therefore it is but few christians that reach to assurance.

For the two first of these, it will evidently appear that they are true, by reviewing the reasons which I gave of the last point save one. He that will attain to a certainty of salvation, must, 1. Have a large measure of grace to be discerned. 2. He must have that grace much in action, and lively action; for it is not mere habits that are discernible. 3. He must have a clear understanding to be acquainted with the nature of spiritual things; to know what is a sound evidence, and how to follow the search, and how to repel particular temptations. 4. He must have a good acquaintance and familiarity with his own heart, and to that end must be much at home, and be

used sometimes to a diligent observation of his heart and ways. 5. He must be in a good measure acquainted with, and a conqueror of, contradicting temptations. 6. He must have some competent cure of the deep deceitfulness of the heart, and it must be brought to an open, plain, ingenuous frame, willing to know the worst of itself. 7. He must have some cure of that ordinary confusion and tumultuous disorder that is in the thought and affections of men, and get things into an order in his mind. 8. He must be a man of diligence, resolution, and unwearied patience, that will resolutely set on the work of self-examination, and painfully watch in it, and constantly follow it from time to time till he attain a certainty. 9. He must be one that is very fearful of sinning, and careful in close obedient walking with God, and much in sincere and spiritual duty, that he keep not conscience still in accusing and condemning him, and God still offended with him, and his wounds fresh bleeding, and his soul still smarting. 10. He must be a man of much fixedness and constancy of mind, and not of the ordinary mutability of mankind; that so he may not by remitting his zeal and diligence, lose the sight of his evidences, nor by leaving open his soul to an alteration by every new intruding thought and temptation, let go his assurance as soon as he attaineth it. All these things in a good degree are necessary to the attaining of assurance of salvation.

And then do I need to say any more to the confirmation of the third point, That few christians reach this measure of grace? Oh that it were not as clear as the light, and as discernible as the earth under our feet, that most true christians are weaklings, and of the lower forms in the school of Christ! Alas, how ignorant are most of the best! how little love, or faith, or zeal, or heavenly-mindedness, or delight in God have they! How unacquainted with a frequent exercise of these graces! How unacquainted with the way of self-examination! and how backward to it! and how dull and careless in it! doing it by the halves, as Laban searched Rachel's tent! How easily put off with an excuse! How little acquainted with their own hearts! or with Satan's temptations and ways of deceiving! How much deceitfulness remaineth in their hearts! How confused are their minds! and what distractions and tumults are there in their thoughts! How bold are they in sinning! and how little tenderness of conscience, and care of obeying have they! How frequently do they wound conscience, provoke God, and obscure their evidences! And how mutable are their apprehensions! And how soon do they lose that assurance which they once attained? and upon every occasion quite lose the sight of their evidences! yea, and remit their actual resolutions, and so lose much of the evidence itself! Is not this the common case of godly people? Oh that we could truly deny it! Let their lives be witness; let their visible neglects, worldliness, pride, impatience of plain reproof, remissness of zeal, dulness and customariness in duty, strangeness to God, unwillingness to secret prayer and meditation, unacquaintedness with the Spirit's operations and joys, their unpeaceableness one with another, and their too frequent blemishing the glory of their holy profession by the unevenness of their walking; let all these witness, whether the school of Christ have not most children in it; and how few of them ever go to the university of riper knowledge; and how few of those are fit to begin here the works of their priestly office, which they must live in for ever, in the high and joyful praises of God, and of the Lamb, who hath redeemed them by his blood, and made them kings and priests

to God, that they may reign with him for ever. I am content to stand to the judgment of all humble, self-knowing christians, whether this be not true of most of themselves; and for those that deny it, I will stand to the judgment of their godly neighbours, who perhaps know them better than they know themselves.

And then this being all so, the fourth point is undeniable, That it is but very few christians that reach to assurance of salvation. If any think (as intemperate, hot-spirited men are like enough to charge me) that in all this I countenance the popish doctrine of doubting and uncertainty, and contradict the common doctrine of the reformed divines that write against them; I answer, 1. I do contradict both the papists that deny assurance, and many foreign writers, who make it far more easy, common, and necessary than it is (much more both them and the antinomists, who place justifying faith in it). But I stand in the midst between both extremes; and I think I have the company of most English divines. 2. I come not to be of this mind merely by reading books, but mainly by reading my own heart, and consulting my own experience, and the experience of a very great number of godly people of all sorts, who have opened their hearts to me, for almost twenty years' time. 3. I would entreat the gainsayers to study their own hearts better for some considerable time, and to be more in hearing the case and complaints of godly people; and by that time they may happily come to be of my mind. 4. See whether all those divines that have been very practical and successful in the work of God, and much acquainted with the way of the recovery of lost souls, be not all of the same judgment as I in this point, (such as T. Hooker, Jo. Rogers, Preston, Sibbs, Bolton, Dod, Culverwell, &c.) And whether the confidentest men for the contrary be not those that study books more than hearts, and spend their days in disputing, and not in winning souls to God from the world.

Lastly, Let me add to what is said, these two proofs of this fourth point here asserted.

1. The constant experience of the greatest part of believers tells us, that certainty of salvation is very rare. Even of those that live comfortably and in peace of conscience, yet very few of them do attain to a certainty. For my part, it is known that God in undeserved mercy hath given me long the society of a great number of godly people, and great interest in them, and privacy with them, and opportunity to know their minds, and this in many places (my station by Providence having been oft removed); and I must needs profess, that of all these I have met with few, yea, very few indeed, that if I seriously and privately asked them, Are you certain that you are a true believer, and so are justified, and shall be saved, durst say to me, I am certain of it. But some in great doubts and fears; most too secure and neglective of their states without assurance; and some in so good hopes (to speak in their own language) as calmed their spirits, that they can comfortably cast themselves on God in Christ. And those few that have gone so far beyond all the rest, as to say, they were certain of their sincerity and salvation, were the professors, whose state I suspected more than any of the rest, as being the most proud, self-conceited, censorious, passionate, unpeaceable sort of professors; and some of them living scandalously, and some fallen since to more scandalous ways than ever; and the most of their humble, godly acquaintance or neighbours suspected them as well as I. Or else some very few of them that said they were certain were honest, godly people,

(most women,) of small judgment and strong affections, who depended most on that which is commonly called, The sense or feeling of God's love; and were the lowest at some times as they were the highest at other times; and they that were one month certain to be saved, perhaps the next month were almost ready to say, they should certainly be damned. So that taking out all these sorts of persons, the sober, solid, judicious believers that could groundedly and ordinarily say, I am certain that I shall be saved, have been so few, that it is sad to me to consider it. If any other men's experiences be contrary, I am glad of it, so be it they be sober, judicious men, able to gather experiences; and so they live not among mere antinomians, and take not the discovery of their mere opinion for a discovery of experience. For I have seen in divers professors of my long acquaintance, the strange power of opinion and fancy in this thing. I have known those that have lived many years in doubting of their salvation, and all that while walked uprightly: and in the late wars, falling into the company of some anabaptists, they were by them persuaded that there was no right way to their comfort, but by being re-baptized, and associating themselves with the re-baptized church, and abstaining from the hearing of the unbaptized parish priests (as they called them). No sooner was this done, but all their former doubts and troubles were over, and they were as comfortable as any others (as themselves affirmed); which no doubt proceeded from partly the strength of fancy, conceiting it should be so, and partly from the novelty of their way which delighted them, and partly from the strong opinion they had that this was the way of salvation, and that the want of this did keep them in the dark so long; and partly from Satan's policy, who troubleth people least, when they are in a way that pleaseth him. But when these people had lived a year or two in this comfortable condition, they fell at last into the society of some libertines or familists, who believe that the Scriptures are all but a dream, fiction, or allegory: these presently persuaded them, that they were fools to regard baptism or such ordinances, and that they might come to hear again in our congregations, seeing all things were lawful, and there was no heaven or hell but within men, and therefore they should look to their safety and credit in the world, and take their pleasure. This lesson was quickly learned, and then they cried down the anabaptists, and confessed they were deluded, and so being grown loose while they were anabaptists, to mend the matter, they grew epicures when they had been instructed by the libertines; and this was the end of their new-gotten comfort. Others I have known that have wanted assurance, and falling among the antinomians, were told by them that they undid themselves by looking after signs and marks of grace, and so laying their comforts upon something in themselves; whereas they should look only to Christ for comfort, and not at any thing in themselves at all; and for assurance, it is only the witness of the Spirit without any marks that must give it them; and to fetch comfort from their own graces and obedience, was to make it themselves instead of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and was a legal way. No sooner was this doctrine received, but the receivers had comfort at will, and all was sealed up to them presently by the witness of the Spirit in their own conceits. Whence this came, judge you. I told you my judgment before. Sure I am that the sudden looseness of their lives, answering their ignorant, loose, ungospel-like doctrine, did certify me that the Spirit of comfort was not their comforter; for he is

also a Spirit of holiness, and comforteth men by the means of a holy gospel, which hath precepts and threatenings as well as promises.

2. And as the experience of the state of believers assureth us that few of them attain to certainty; so experience of the imperfection of their understanding shows us, that few of them are immediately capable of it. For how few believers be there that understand well what is sound evidence and what not! Nay, how many learned men have taught them, that the least unfeigned desire of grace, is the grace itself, (as some say,) or at least a certain evidence of it (as others say). Whereas, alas! how many have unfeignedly desired many graces, and yet have desired the glory and profits of the world so much more, that they have miscarried and perished. How many have taught them, that the least unfeigned love to God or to the brethren, is a certain mark of saving grace; whenas many a one hath unfeignedly loved God and the brethren, who yet have loved house, land, credit, pleasure, and life so much more, that God hath been thrust as it were into a corner, and hath had but the world's leavings. And the poor saints have had but little compassion or relief from them, nor would be looked on in times of danger and disgrace. As Austin and the schoolmen used to say, "*Wicked men do uti Deo, et frui creaturis*, use God and enjoy the creatures; godly men *do frui Deo, et uti creaturis*, enjoy God and use the creatures." The meaning is, both regenerate and unregenerate have some will or love, both to God and to the creature: but the wicked do will or love the creature as their chief good, with their chiefest love, and they only love God as a means to help them to the creature, with a love subordinate to their love to the creature; whereas the godly do will or love God as their chief good, with their chiefest love or complacency; and love the creature but as a means to God, with an inferior love.

If then the nature of sincerity be so little known, then assurance of sincerity cannot be very common. More might be said to prove that certainty of salvation is not common among true christians; but that it is labour in vain, as to them, seeing experience and their own ready confession doth witness it.

Now what is the use that I would have you make of this? Why it is this. If assurance of sincerity and justification (much more of salvation) be so rare among true christians, then you have no cause to think that the want of it proveth you to be no true christian. You see then that a man may be in a state of salvation without it; and that it is not justifying faith, as some have imagined, nor yet a necessary concomitant of that faith. You see that you were mistaken in thinking that you had not the Spirit of adoption, because you had no assuring witness within you effectively testifying to you that you are the child of God. All God's children have the Spirit of adoption. (For because they are sons, therefore hath God sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, whereby they cry, Abba, Father, Gal. iv. 6.) But all God's children have not assurance of their adoption, therefore the Spirit of adoption doth not always assure those of their adoption in whom it abideth. It is always a witness-bearer of their adoption; but that is only objectively by his graces and operations in them; as a land-mark is a witness whose land it is where it standeth, or as your sheep-mark witnesseth which be your sheep; or rather as a sensible soul witnesseth a living creature, or a rational soul witnesseth that we are men. But efficiently it doth not always witness; as a land-mark or sheep-mark is not always discerned; and a brute knows not itself to be a brute; and a man is not al-

ways actually knowing his own humanity, nor can know it at all in the womb, in infancy, in distraction, in an epilepsy, apoplexy, or the like disease, which depriveth him of the use of reason. Besides, it is no doubt but the apostle had some respect to the eminent gift of the Spirit, for tongues, prophecies, miracles, and the like, which was proper to that age; though still as including the Spirit of holiness.

You see then that you need not be always in disquiet when you want assurance. For else how disquiet a life should most christians live! I shall show you more anon, that all a man's comforts depend not so on his assurance, but that he may live a comfortable life without it. Trouble of mind may be overcome; conscience may be quieted; true peace obtained; yea, a man may have that joy in the Holy Ghost, wherein the kingdom of God is said to consist, without certainty of salvation. (If there be any passages in my Book of Rest, part iii. in pressing to get assurance, which seem contrary to this, I desire that they may be reduced to this sense, and no otherwise understood.) This shall be further opened anon, and other grounds of comfort manifested, besides assurance.

Direct. XV. Yea, thus much more I would here inform you of, That many holy, watchful, and obedient christians, are yet uncertain of their salvation, even then when they are certain of their justification and sanctification; and that because they are uncertain of their perseverance and overcoming; for a man's certainty of his salvation can be no stronger than is his certainty of enduring to the end and overcoming.

That you may not misunderstand me in this, observe, 1. That I do not say perseverance is a thing uncertain in itself. 2. Nor that it is uncertain to all christians. 3. But that it is uncertain to many, even strong and self-knowing christians. Divines use to distinguish of the certainty of the object and of the subject; and the former is either of the object of God's knowledge, or of man's. I doubt not but God knows certainly who shall be saved, which, with his decree, doth cause that which we call certainty of the object as to man's understanding; but men themselves do not always know it.

If a man have the fullest certainty in the world that he is God's child, yet if he be uncertain whether he shall so continue to the end, it is impossible that he should have a certainty of his salvation; for it is he only that endureth to the end that shall be saved.

Now that many eminent christians of great knowledge, and much zeal and obedience, are uncertain of their perseverance, is proved by two infallible arguments. 1. By experience: if any should be so censorious as to think that none of all those nations and churches abroad, that deny the doctrine of certain perseverance of all believers, have any strong christians among them, yet we have had the knowledge of such at home. 2. Besides, the difficulty of the subject is a clear argument that a strong christian may be uncertain of it. God hath made all those points plain in Scripture, which must be believed as of necessity to salvation; but the certainty of all believers' perseverance, is not a point of flat necessity to salvation to be believed. Otherwise it would be a hard matter to prove, that any considerable number were ever saved till of late; or are yet saved, but in a very few countries. It is a point that the churches never did put into their creed, where they summed up those points that they held necessary to salvation. There are a great number of texts of Scripture, which seeming to intimate the contrary, do make the point of great difficulty to many of the wisest; and those

texts that are for it, are not so express as fully to satisfy them. Besides, that the examples of these ten years last past have done more to stagger many sober, wise christians in this point, than all the arguments that ever were used by papists, Arminians, or any other, to see what kind of men in some places have fallen, and how far, as I am unwilling further to mention.

But I think by this time I have persuaded you, that a proper certainty of our salvation is not so common a thing as some controversial doctors, or some self-conceited professors, do take it to be; and therefore that you must not lay all your comfort on your assurance of salvation. As for them who are most highly confident both of the doctrine of the certain perseverance of every believer, merely upon tradition and prejudice, or else upon weak grounds, which will not bear them out in their confidence; and are as confident of their own salvation on as slender grounds, having never well understood the nature of saving grace, sincerity, examination, nor assurance, nor understood the causes of doubting, which might else have shaken them; I will not call their greatest confidence by the name of assurance or certainty of salvation, though it be accompanied with never so great boastings, or pretences, or expressions of the highest joys. And for yourself, I advise you first use those comforts which those may have who come short of assurance.

Direct. XVI. The next thing which I would have you learn is this, That there are several grounds of the great probability of our salvation, besides the general grounds mentioned in the beginning: and by the knowledge of these, without any further assurance, a christian may live in much peace and comfort, and in delightful, desirous thoughts of the glory to come. And therefore the next work which you have to do, is to discover those probabilities of your sincerity and your salvation, and then to receive the peace and comfort which they may afford you, before you can expect assurance itself.

I shall here open to you the several parts of this proposition and direction distinctly. 1. I told you in the beginning of the four grounds of probability which all may have in general; from, 1. The nature of God. 2. And of the Mediator and his office. 3. And the universal sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction. 4. And the general tenor of the promise, and offer of pardon and salvation. Now I add, that besides all these, there are many grounds of strong probability, which you may have of your own sincerity, and so of your particular interest in Christ and salvation, when you cannot reach to a certainty.

1. Some kind of probability you may gather by comparing yourself with others. Though this way be but delusory to unregenerate men, whose confidence is plainly contradicted by the Scriptures, yet may it be lawful and useful to a humble soul that is willing to obey and wait on God: I mean, to consider, that if such as you should perish how few people would God have in the world! Consider first in how narrow a compass the church was confined before Christ's coming in the flesh; and how carnal and corrupt even that visible church then was; and even at this day, the most learned do compute, that if you divide the world into thirty parts, nineteen of them are heathenish idolaters, six of them are Mahometans, and only five of them are christians. And of these five that are christians, how great a part are of the Ethiopian, Greek, and popish churches! so ignorant, rude, and superstitious, and erroneous, that salvation cannot be imagined to be near so easy or ordinary with them as with us: and of the reformed churches, commonly called protestants, how

small is the number! And even among these, what a number are grossly ignorant and profane! And of those that profess more knowledge and zeal, how many are grossly erroneous, schismatical, and scandalous! How exceeding small a number is left then that are such as you! I know this is no assuring argument, but I know withal that Christ died not in vain, but he will see the fruit of his sufferings to the satisfaction of his soul; and the God of mercy, who is a lover of mankind, will have a multitude innumerable of his saved ones in the earth.

2. But your strongest probabilities are from the consideration of the work of God upon your souls, and the present frame and inclination of your soul to God. You may know that you have workings above nature in you; and that they have been kept alive and carried on these many years against all opposition of the flesh and the world; it hath not been a mere flash of conviction, which hath been extinguished by sensuality, and left you in the darkness of security and profaneness as others are. You dare not give up your hopes of heaven for all the world. You would not part with Christ, and say, Let him go, for all the pleasures of sin, or treasures of the earth. If you had (as you have) an offer of God, Christ, grace, and glory on one side, and worldly prosperity in sin on the other side, you would choose God, and let go the other. You dare not, you would not give over praying, hearing, reading, and christian company, and give up yourself to worldly, fleshly pleasures; yet you are not assured of salvation, because you find not that delight and life in duty, and that witness of the Spirit, and that communion with God, nor that tenderness of heart as you desire. It is well that you desire them; but though you be not certain of salvation, do not you see a great likelihood, a probability in all this? Is not your heart raised to a hope, that yet God is merciful to you, and means you good? Doubtless, this you might easily discern.

The second thing that I am to show you, is, that there may much spiritual comfort and peace of conscience be enjoyed, without any certainty of salvation, even upon these forementioned probabilities. Which I prove thus: 1. No doubt but Adam in innocence had peace of conscience, and comfort, and communion with God, and yet he had no assurance of salvation; I mean, either of continuing in Paradise, or being translated to glory. For if he had, either he was sure to persevere in innocence, and so to be glorified, (but that was not true,) or else he must foreknow both that he should fall and be raised again, and saved by Christ. But this he knew not at all. 2. Experience tells us, that the greatest part of christians on earth do enjoy that peace and comfort which they have, without any certainty of their salvation. 3. The nature of the thing telleth us, that a likelihood of so great a mercy as everlasting glory, must needs be a ground of great comfort. If a poor condemned prisoner do but hear that there is hopes of a pardon, especially if very probable, it will glad his heart. Indeed, if an angel from heaven were brought into this state, it would be sad to him; but if a devil or condemned sinner have such hope, it must needs be glad news to them. The devils have it not, but we have.

3. Let me next, therefore, entreat you to take the comfort of your probabilities of grace and salvation. Your horse or dog know not how you will use them certainly; yet will they lovingly follow you, and put their heads to your hand, and trust you with their lives without fear, and love to be in your company, because they have found you kind to them, and have tried that you do them no hurt, but good: yea,

though you do strike them sometimes, yet they find that they have their food from you, and your favour doth sustain them. Yea, your little children have no certainty how you will use them; and yet finding that you have always used them kindly, and expressed love to them, though you whip them sometimes, yet are glad of your company, and desire to be in your lap, and can trust themselves in your hands, without tormenting themselves with such doubts as these, I am uncertain how my mother will use me, whether she will wound me, or kill me, or turn me out of doors, and let me perish. Nature persuades us not to be too distrustful of those that have always befriended us, and especially whose nature is merciful and compassionate; nor to be too suspicious of evil from them that have always done us good. Every man knows that the good will do good, and the evil will do you evil; and accordingly we expect that they should do to us. Naturally we all fear a toad, a serpent, an adder, a mad dog, a wicked man, a madman, a cruel, blood-thirsty tyrant, and the devil. But no one fears a dove, a lamb, a good man, a merciful, compassionate governor, except only the rebels or notorious offenders that know he is bound in justice to destroy or punish them. And none should fear distrustfully the wrath of a gracious God, but they who will not submit to his mercy, and will not have Christ to reign over them, and therefore may know that he is bound in justice, if they come not in, to destroy them. But for you that would be obedient and reformed, and are troubled that you are no better, and beg of God to make you better, and have no sin but what you would be glad to be rid of, may not you, at least, see a strong probability that it shall go well with you? O make use therefore of this probability; and if you have but hopes that God will do you good, rejoice in those hopes till you can come to rejoice in assurance.

And here let me tell you, that probabilities are of divers degrees, according to their divers grounds. Where men have but a little probability of their sincerity, and a greater probability that they are not sincere in the faith, these men may be somewhat borne up, but it behoves them presently to search in fear, and to amend that which is the cause of their fear. Those that have more probability of the sincerity of their hearts than of the contrary, may well have more peace than trouble of mind. Those that have yet a higher degree of probability, may live in more joy, and so according to the degree of probability may their comforts still arise.

And observe also, that it is but the highest degree of this probability here which we call a certainty; for it is a moral certainty, and not that which is called a certainty of divine faith, nor that which is called a certainty of evidence in the strictest sense, though yet evidence there is for it. But it is the same evidences materially, which are the ground of probability and of certainty; only sometimes they differ gradually, (one having more grace and another less,) and sometimes not so neither; for he that hath more grace may discern but a probability in it, (through some other defect,) no more than he that hath less. But when one man discerns his graces and sincerity but darkly, he hath but a probability of salvation manifested by them; and when another discerneth them more clearly, he hath a stronger probability; and he that discerneth them most clearly (if other necessities concur) hath that which we call a certainty.

Now I am persuaded that you frequently see a strong probability of your sincerity; and may not that be a very great stay and comfort to your soul? nay, may it not draw out your heart in love, delight,

and thankfulness? Suppose that your name were written in a piece of paper, and put among a hundred, or fifty, or but twenty other like papers into a lottery, and you were certain that you should be the owner of this whole land, except your name were drawn the first time, and if it were drawn you should die, would your joy or your sorrow for this be the greater? Nay, if it were but ten to one, or but two to one odds on your side, it would keep you from drooping and discouragement; and why should it not do so in the present case?

Direct. XVII. My next advice to you is this, For the strengthening your apprehensions of the probability of your salvation, gather up and improve all your choicest experiences of God's good-will and mercy to you; and observe also the experiments of others in the same kind.

I. We do God and ourselves a great deal of wrong by forgetting, neglecting, and not improving our experiences. How doth God charge it on the Israelites, especially in the wilderness, that they forgot the works of God, by which he had so often manifested his power and goodness! Psalm lxxviii. cvii. See cv. cvi. When God had by one miracle silenced their unbelief, they had forgotten it in the next distress. It was a sign the disciples' hearts were hardened, when they forgot the miracles of the loaves, and presently after were distrustful and afraid, Mark vi. 52. God doth not give us his mercies only for the present use, but for the future; nor only for the body, but for the soul. I would this truth were well learned by believers. You are in sickness, in troubles, and dangers, and pinching straits, in fears and anguish of mind; in this case you cry to God for help, and he doth in such a manner deliver you as silenceth your distrust, and convinceth you of his love; at least, of his readiness to do you good. What a wrong is it now to God and yourself, to forget this presently, and in the next temptation to receive no strengthening by the consideration of it? Doth God so much regard this dirty flesh, that he should do all this merely for its ease and relief? No, he doth it to kill your unbelief, and convince you of his special providence, his care of you, and love to you, and power to help you, and to breed in you more loving, honourable, and thankful thoughts of him. Lose this benefit, and you lose all. You may thus use one and the same mercy a hundred times: though it be gone as to the body, it is still fresh in a believing, thankful, careful soul. You may make as good use of it at your very death, as the first hour. But oh the sad forgetfulness, mutability, and unbelief of these hearts of ours! What a number of these choice experiences do we all receive! When we forget one, God giveth another, and we forget that too. When unbelief doth blasphemously suggest to us, Such a thing may come once or twice by chance. God addeth one experience to another, till it even shame us out of our unbelief, as Christ shamed Thomas, and we cry out, "My Lord and my God." Hath it not been thus oft with you? Have not mercies come so seasonably, so unexpectedly, either by small means, or the means themselves unexpectedly raised up, without your designing or effecting, and plainly in answer to prayers, that they have brought conviction along with them, and you have seen the name of God engraven on them? Sure it is so with us, when through our sinful negligence we are hardly drawn to open our eyes, and see what God is doing. Much more might we have seen, if we had but observed the workings of Providence for us; especially they that are in an afflicted state, and have more sensibly daily use for God, and are awakened to seek him, and regard his dealings. I know a mercy to the body is no certain

evidence of God's love to the soul. But yet from such experiences a christian may have very strong probabilities. When we find God hearing prayers, it is a hopeful sign that we have some interest in him. We may say as Manoa's wife said to him, "If the Lord had meant to destroy us, he would not have received a sacrifice at our hands, nor have done all this for us," Judges xiii. 23. To have God so near to us in all that we call upon him for, and so ready to relieve us, as if he could not deny an earnest prayer, and could not endure to stop his ears against our cries and groans, these are hopeful signs that he meaneth us good. I know special grace is the only certain evidence of special love; but yet these kind of experiences are many times more effectual to refresh a drooping, doubting soul, than the first evidences: for evidences may be unseen, and require a great deal of holy skill and diligence to try them, which few have; but these experiences are near us, even in our bodies, and show themselves; they make all our bones say, "Lord, who is like unto thee?" And it is a great advantage to have the help of sense itself for our consolation. I hope you yet remember the choice particular providences, by which God hath manifested to you his goodness, even from your youth till now; especially his frequent answering of your prayers! Methinks these should do something to the dispelling of those black, distrustful thoughts of God. I could wish you would write them down, and oft review them; and when temptations next come, remember with David, who helped you against the lion and the bear, and, therefore, fear not the uncircumcised Philistine.

2. And you may make great use also of the experiences of others. Is it not a great satisfaction to hear twenty, or forty, or a hundred christians, of the godliest lives, to make the very same complaints as you do yourself? The very same complaints have I heard from as many. By this you may see your case is not singular, but the ordinary case of the tenderest consciences, and of many that walk uprightly with God. And also is it not a great help to you, to hear other christians tell how they have come into those troubles, and how they have got out of them? What hurt them? and what helped them? And how God dealt with them, while they lay under them? How desirous are diseased persons to talk with others that have had the same disease! and to hear them tell how it took them, and how it held them, and especially what cured them! Besides, it will give you much stronger hopes of cure and recovery to peace of conscience, when you hear of so many that have been cured of the same disease. Moreover, is it not a reviving thing, to hear christians open the goodness of the Lord? and that in particular, as upon experience they have found him to their own souls? To hear them tell you of such notable discoveries of God's special providence and care of his people, as may repel all temptations to atheism and unbelief? To hear them give you their frequent and full experiences of God's hearing and answering their prayers, and helping them in their distresses? Though the carnal part of the mercy were only theirs, yet by improvement, the spiritual part may be yours: you may have your faith, and love, and joy, confirmed by the experiences of David, Job, Paul, which are past so long ago; and by the experiences of all your godly acquaintance, as if they were your own. This is the benefit of the unity of the church; the blessings of one member of the body are blessings to the rest; and if one rejoice, the rest may rejoice with them, not only for their sakes, but also for their own. Such as God is to the rest of his children, such he is and will be to you. He is

as ready to pity you as them, and to hear your complaints and moans as theirs. And lest we should think that none of them were so bad as we, he hath left us the examples of his mercies to worse than ever we were. You never were guilty of witchcraft, and open idolatry, as Manasses was, and that for a long time, and drawing the whole nation, and chief part of the visible church on earth, into idolatry with him. You never had your hand in the blood of a saint, and even of the first martyr (Stephen) as Paul had. You never hunted after the blood of the saints, and persecuted them from city to city as he did; and yet God did not only forgive him, but was found of him when he never sought him, yea, when he was persecuting him in his members, and kicking against the pricks; yea, and made him a chosen vessel to bear about his name, and as noble an instrument of the propagation of his gospel, as if he had never been guilty of any such crimes, that he might be an encouraging example to the unwortheist sinners, and in him might appear to the riches of his mercy, 1 Tim. iii. 13, 16. See also Tit. iii. 3—7. Is there no ground of comfort in these examples of the saints? The same we may say of the experiences of God's people still; and doubtless it were well if experimental christians did more fully and frequently open to one another their experiences; it were the way to make private particular mercies to be more public and common mercies; and to give others a part in our blessings, without any diminution of them to ourselves. Not that I would have this so openly and rashly done, (by those, who through their disability to express their minds, do make the works and language of the Spirit seem ridiculous to carnal ears,) as I perceive some in a very formality would have it (as if it must be one of their church customs, to satisfy the society of the fitness of each member before they will receive them); but I would have christians that are fit to express their minds, to do it in season and with wisdom; especially those to whom God hath given any more eminent and notable experiments, which may be of public use. Doubtless, God hath lost very much of the honour due to his name, and poor christians much of the benefit which they might have received, (and may challenge by the mutual interest of fellow-members,) for want of the public communication of the extraordinary and more notable experiences of some men. Those that write the lives of the holiest men when they are dead, can give you but the outside and carcass of their memorials; the most observable passages are usually secret, known only to God and their own souls, which none but themselves are able to communicate. For my own part, I do soberly and seriously profess to you, that the experiences I have had of God's special providences, and fatherly care, and specially of his hearing prayers, have been so strange, and great, and exceeding numerous, that they have done very much to the quieting of my spirit, and the persuading of my soul of God's love to me, and the silencing and shaming of my unbelieving heart, and especially for the conquering of all temptations that lead to atheism, or infidelity, to the denying of special providence, or of the verity of the gospel, or of the necessity of holy prayer and worshipping of God. Yea, those passages that in the bulk of the thing seem to have no great matter in them, yet have come at such seasons, in such a manner, in evident answer to prayers, that they have done much to my confirmation. Oh happy afflictions and distresses! Sufferings and danger force us to pray, and force the cold and customary petitioner to seriousness and importunity. Importunate prayers bring evident returns;

such returns give us sensible experiences; such experiences raise faith, love, and thankfulness, kill unbelief and atheism, and encourage the soul in all distresses, to go the same way as when it sped so well. I often pity the poor seduced infidels of this age, that deny Scripture and Christ himself, and doubt of the usefulness of prayer and holy worship; and I wish that they had but the experiences that I have had. Oh how much more might it do than all their studies and disputes! Truly I have once or twice had motions in my mind, to have publicly and freely communicated by experiences in a relation of the more observable passages of my life; but I found that I was not able to do it to God's praise, as was meet, without a show of ostentation and vanity, and therefore I forbore.

Direct. XVIII. Next, that you may yet further understand the true nature of assurance, faith, doubting, and desperation, I would have you observe this, That God doth not command every man, nor properly any man, ordinarily by his word, to believe that his sins are forgiven, and himself is justified, adopted, and shall be saved. But he hath prescribed a way by which they may attain to assurance of these, in which way it is men's duty to seek it: so that our assurance is not properly that which is called a certainty of belief.

I have said enough for the proof of this proposition in the third part of my Book of Rest, chap. 11, whither I must refer you. But there is more to be said yet for the application of it. But first I must briefly tell you the meaning of the words. 1. God commandeth us all to believe, (wicked and godly,) that our sins are made pardonable by the sufficient satisfaction of Christ for them; and that God is very merciful and ready to forgive; and that he hath conditionally forgiven us all in the new covenant, making a deed of gift of Christ, and pardon, and life in him to all, on condition they believe in him, and accept what is given. 2. But no man is commanded to believe that he is actually forgiven. 3. Therefore I say our assurance is not strictly to be called belief, or a certainty of belief; for it is only our certain belief of those things which we take on the mere credit of the witness or revealer, which we call certainty of faith. Indeed, we commonly in English use the word belief, to express any confident, but uncertain, opinion or persuasion; and if any will so take it, then I deny not but our assurance is a belief. But it is commonly taken by divines for an assent to any thing on the credit of the word of the revealer, and so is distinguished both from the sensible apprehension of things, and from principles that are known by the mere light and help of nature; and from the knowledge of conclusions, which by reasoning we gather from those principles. Though yet one and the same thing may be known, as revealed in nature, and believed as revealed immediately or supernaturally; and so we both know and believe that there is one only God, who made and preserveth all things. 4. But our assurance is an act of knowledge, participating of faith and internal sense or knowledge reflect. For divine faith saith, "He that believeth is justified, and shall be saved." Internal sense and knowledge of ourselves saith, But I believe. Reason or discursive knowledge saith, Therefore I am justified and shall be saved.

Only I must advise you, that you be not troubled when you meet with that which is contrary to this in any great divines: for it is only our former divines, whose judgments were partly hurt by hot disputations with the papists herein, and partly not come to that maturity as others since them have had opportunity to do. And therefore in their expositions of the

creed, and such like passages in the text, they eagerly insist on it, that when we say, We believe the forgiveness of sin, and life everlasting, every man is to profess that he believeth that his own sins are forgiven, and he shall have life everlasting himself. But our later divines, and especially the English, and most especially those that deal most in practicals, do see the mistake, and lay down the same doctrine which I teach you here; God bids us not believe as from him, more than he hath revealed. But only one of the propositions is revealed by God's testimony, "He that believeth shall be saved." But it is no where written that you do believe, nor that you shall be saved; nor any thing equivalent. And therefore you are not commanded to believe either of these. How the Spirit revealeth these, I have fully told you already. In our creed therefore we do profess to believe remission of sins to be purchased by Christ's death, and in his power to give, and given in the gospel to all, on condition of believing in Christ himself for remission: but not to believe that our own sins are actually and fully pardoned.

My end in telling you this again, (which I have told you elsewhere,) is this, That you may not think (as I find abundance of poor troubled souls do) that faith (much less justifying faith) is a believing that you have true grace, and shall be saved; and so fall a condemning yourself unjustly every time that you doubt of your own sincerity, and think that so much as you doubt of this, so much unbelief you have: and so many poor souls complain that they have no faith, or but little, and that they cannot believe, because they believe not their own faith to be sincere: and when they wholly judge themselves unsanctified, then they call that desperation, which they think to be a sin inconsistent with true grace. These are dangerous errors, all arising from that one error which the heat of contention did carry some good men to, that faith is a belief that our sins are forgiven by Christ. Indeed all men are bound to apply Christ and the promise to themselves. But that application consisteth in a belief that this promise is true, as belonging to all, and so to me, and then in acceptance of Christ and his benefits as an offered gift; and after this, in trusting on him for the full performance of his promise. Hence therefore you may best see what unbelief and desperation are, and how far men may charge themselves with them. When you doubt whether the promise be true, or when you refuse to accept Christ and his benefits offered in it, and consequently to trust him as one that is able and willing to save you, if you do assent to his truth, and accept him, this is unbelief. But if you do believe the truth of the gospel, and are heartily willing to accept Christ as offered in it, and only doubt whether your belief and acceptance of him be sincere, and so whether you shall be saved; this is not unbelief, but ignorance of your own sincerity, and its consequents. Nay, and though that affiance be wanting, which is a part of faith, yet it is but a hindering of the exercise of it, for want of a necessary concomitant condition; for the grace of affiance is in the habit, and virtually is there, so that it is not formally distrust or unbelief any more than your not trusting God in your sleep is distrust. If a friend do promise to give you a hundred pounds, on condition that you thankfully accept it; if you now do believe him, and do thankfully accept it; but yet through some vain scruple shall think, my thankfulness is so small, that it is not sincere, and therefore I doubt I do not perform his condition, and so shall never have the gift; in this case now you do believe your friend, and you do not distrust him properly; but you distrust yourself, that you

perform not the condition; and this hindereth the exercise of that confidence or affiance in your friend which is habitually and virtually in you. Just so is it in our present case.

The same may be said of desperation, which is a privation of hope; when we have believed the truth of the gospel, and accepted Christ offered, we are then bound to hope that God will give us the benefits promised: so hope is nothing but a desirous expectation of the good so promised and believed. Now if you begin to distrust whether God will make good this promise or no, either thinking that it is not true, or he is not able, or hath changed his mind since the making of it, and on these grounds you let go your hopes, this is despair. If because that Christ seems to delay his coming, we should say I have waited in hope till now, but now I am out of hope that ever Christ will come to judge the world, and glorify believers, I will expect it no longer. This is despair. And it hath its several degrees more or less, as unbelief hath. Indeed the schoolmen say that affiance is nothing but strengthened hope. Affiance in the properest sense is the same in substance with hope; only it more expresseth a respect to the promise and promiser, and indeed is faith and hope expressed both together in one word. So that what I said before of distrust is true of despair. If you do continue to believe the truth of the gospel, and particularly of Christ's coming and glorifying his saints, and yet you think he will not glorify you, because you think that you are not a true believer or saint; this is not desperation in the proper sense. For desperation is the privation of hope, where the formal cause, the heart and life of it, is wanting. But you have here hope in the habit, and virtually do hope in Christ; but the act of it, as to your own particular salvation, is hindered, upon an accidental mistake. In the forementioned example, if your friend promise to give you a hundred pounds on condition of your thankful acceptance, and promiseth to come at such an hour and bring it you; if now you stay till the hour be almost come, and then say, I am out of hope of his coming now; he hath broke his word; this is properly a despair in your friend. But if you only think that you have oversteaid the time, and that it is past, and therefore you shall not have the gift, this may be called a despair of the event, and a despair in yourself, but not properly a despair of your friend; only the act of hoping in God is hindered, as is said. So it is in our present case. Men may be said to despair of their salvation, and to despair in themselves, but not to despair in God, except the formal cause of such despair were there present; and except they are drawn to it, by not believing his truth and faithfulness. The true nature of despair is expressed in that of the apostles, Luke xxiv. 21, "We trusted that this was he that should redeem Israel;" only it was but imperfect despair, else it had been damnable. Their hopes were shaken. And for my part, I am persuaded that it is only this proper despair in God, which is the damnable desperation, which is threatened in the Scripture, and not the former. And that if a poor soul should go out of this world without any actual hope of his own salvation, merely because he thinks that he is no true believer, that this soul may be saved, and prove a true believer for all this. Alas! the great sin that God threateneth is our distrust of his faithfulness, and not the doubting of our own sincerity and distrust of ourselves. We have great reason to be very jealous of our own hearts, as knowing them to be deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know them? But we have no reason at all to be jealous of God. Where

find you in Scripture that any is condemned for hard thoughts of themselves, or for not knowing themselves to have true grace, and for thinking they had none? It is true, unbelief in God's promise is that men are condemned for, even that sin which is an aversion of the soul from God. But perhaps you will ask, is doubting of our own sincerity and salvation no sin? I answer, doubting is either taken in opposition to believing, or in opposition to knowing, or to conjecturing.

1. Doubting, as it signifieth only a not believing that our sins are pardoned, and we shall be saved, is no sin (still remember that I take believing in the strict, proper sense of the crediting of a divine testimony or assertion). For God hath no where commanded us ordinarily to believe either of these. I say ordinarily, (as I did in the proposition before,) because when Christ was on earth he told a man personally, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" (whether he meant only as to the present disease inflicted for them, or also all punishment temporal and eternal, I will not now discuss;) so Nathan from God told David, his sin was forgiven. But these were privileges only to these persons, and not common to all. God hath no where said, either that all men's sins are actually forgiven, or that yours or mine by name are forgiven; but only that all that believe are forgiven, which supposeth them to believe before they are forgiven, and that they may be forgiven, and therefore it is not true that they are forgiven before they believe. And therefore this faith is not a believing that they are forgiven, but a believing on Christ for forgiveness. Else men must believe an untruth, to make it become true by their believing it.

2. But now doubting, as it is opposed to the knowledge of our remission and justification, in those that are justified, is a sin. For it can be no sin for an unjustified person to know that he is unjustified. But then I pray you mark how far it is a sin in the godly, and what manner of sin it is. 1. It is a sin, as it is part of our natural ignorance, and original depravedness of our understandings, or a fruit hereof, and of our strangeness to our own hearts, and of their deep deceitfulness, confusion, mutability, or negligence. 2. And further, as all these are increased by long custom in sinning, and so the discerning of our states is become more difficult, it is yet a greater sin. 3. It is a sin as it is the fruit of any particular sin by which we have obscured our own graces, and provoked God to hide his face from us. And so all ignorance of any truth which we ought to know is a sin; so the ignorance of our own regeneration and sincerity is a sin, because we ought to know it. But this is so far from being the great condemning sin of unbelief which Christ threateneth in his new law, that it is none of the greatest or most heinous sort of sins, but the infirmity in some measure of every christian.

And let me further acquaint you with this difference between these doubtings, and your fears and sorrows that follow thereupon. Though the doubtings itself be your sin, yet I suppose that the fears, and sorrows, and cares that follow it may be your duty. Yet respectively, and by remote participation, even these also must be acknowledged sinful; even as our prayers for that pardon which we have received and knew it not, may by remote participation be called sinful; because if we had not sinned we should not have been ignorant of our own hearts. And if we had not been ignorant, we should not have doubted of the least true grace we have. And if we had not so doubted, we should not have feared, or sorrowed, or prayed for that remission in that sense. But yet, though these may be called sinful, as they

come from sin, yet more nearly and in themselves considered, on supposition of our present estate, they are all duties, and great duties necessary to our salvation. You may say to a thief that begs for pardon, If thou hadst not stolen, thou hadst not need to have begged pardon. Yet supposing that he hath stolen, it may be his duty to beg pardon. And so you may say to a poor, fearing soul, that fears damnation and God's wrath, Thou needst not fear if thou hadst not sinned. But when he hath once by sin obscured his evidences, and necessitated doubting, then is fear, and sorrow, and praying for justification and pardon, his duty, and indeed not fitly to be called sin, but rather a fruit of sin in one respect, (and so hath some participation in it,) but a fruit of the Spirit and of Christ's command in another respect, and so a necessary duty. For else we should say, that it is a sin to repent and believe in Christ, and to love him as our Redeemer; for you may say to any sinner, Thou needst not to have repented, believed in a Redeemer, &c. but for thy sin; yet I hope none will say, that so doing is properly a sin, though doing them defectively is. God doth not will and approve of it, that any soul that can see no signs of grace and sincerity in itself, should yet be as confident, and merry, and careless, as if they were certain that all were well. God would not have men doubt of his love, and yet make light of it. This is a contempt of him. Else what should poor carnal sinners do that find themselves unsanctified. No, nor doth God expect that any man should judge of himself better than he hath evidence to warrant such a judgment. But that every man should "prove his own work, that so he may have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For he that thinketh he is something when he is nothing, deceiveth himself," Gal. vi. 3—6. And no man should be a self-deceiver, especially in a case of such unexpressible consequence. It is therefore a most desperate doctrine of the antinomians, (as most of theirs are,) that all men ought to believe God's special love to them, and their own justification. And that they are justified by believing that they were justified before, and that no man ought to question his faith (saith Saltmarsh, any more than to question Christ). And that all fears of our damnation, or not being justified after this believing, are sin; and those that persuade to them, are preachers of the law. (How punctually do the most profane, ungodly people, hold most points of the antinomian belief, though they never knew that sect by name?) God commandeth no man to believe more than is true, nor immediately to cast away their doubts and fears, but to overcome them in an orderly, methodical way; that is, using God's means till their graces become more discernible, and their understandings more clear and fit to discern them, that so we may have assurance of their sincerity, and thereby of our justification, adoption, and right to glorification. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it," Heb. iv. 1. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish," Psal. ii. 11, 12. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling," Phil. ii. 12. Not only, 1. A reverent fear of God's majesty; 2. And a filial fear of offending him; 3. And an awful fear of his judgments, when we see them executed on others, and hear them threatened; 4. And a filial fear of temporal chastisements, are lawful and our duty: but also, 5. A fear of damnation exciting to most careful importunity to escape it; whenever we have so far obscured our evidences, as to see no strong probability of our sincerity in the faith, and so of our salvation. The sum

of my speech therefore is this: Do not think that all your fears of God's wrath are your sins; much of them is your great duty. Do you not feel that God made these fears at your first conversion, the first and a principal means of your recovery? to drive you to a serious consideration of your state and ways, and to look after Christ with more longing and estimation? and to use the means with more resolution and diligence? Have not these fears been chief preservers of your diligence and integrity ever since? I know love should do more than it doth with us all. But if we had not daily use for both (love and fear) God would not, 1. Have planted them both in our natures. 2. And have renewed them both by regenerating grace. 3. And have put into his word the objects to move both (viz. threatenings as well as promises). That fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, includeth the fear of his threatened wrath. I could say abundance more to prove this, but that I know as to you it is needless for conviction of it; but remember the use of it. Do not put the name of unbelief upon all your fears of God's displeasure. Much less should you presently conclude that you have no faith, and that you cannot believe, because of these fears. You may have much faith in the midst of these fears; and God may make them preservers of your faith, by quickening you up to that means that must maintain it, and by keeping you from those evils that would be as a worm at the root of it, and eat out its precious strength and life. Security is no friend to faith, but a deadlier enemy than fear itself.

Object. Then Cain and Judas sinned not by despairing, or at least not damnable.

Ans. 1. They despaired not only of themselves, and of the event of their salvation, but also of God; of his power or goodness, and promise, and the sufficiency of any satisfaction of Christ. Their infidelity was the root of their despair. 2. Far is it from me to say or think that you should despair of the event, or that it is no sin; yea, or that you should cherish causeless and excessive jealousies and fears. I shall show you towards the end the sinfulness of so doing. Take heed of all fears that drive you from God, or that distract or weaken your spirit, or disable you from duty, or drown your love to God and delight in him, and destroy your apprehensions of God's loveliness and compassion, and raise black, and hard, and unworthy thoughts of God in your mind. Again I entreat you, avoid and abhor all such fears. But if you find in you the fears of godly jealousy of your own heart, and such moderated fears of the wrath of God, which banish security, presumption, and boldness in sinning, and are (as Dr. Sibbes calls them) the awe-band of your soul; and make you fly to the merits and bosom of the Lord Jesus, as the affrighted child to the lap of the mother, and as the manslayer under the law to the city of refuge, and as a man pursued by a lion to his sanctuary or hold; do not think you have no faith, because you have these fears, but moderate them by faith and love, and then thank God for them. Indeed perfect love (which will be in heaven when all is perfected) will cast out this fear; and so it will do sorrow and care, and prayer and means. But see you lay not these by till perfect love cast them out. See Jer. v. 22, 23; Heb. xii. two last verses. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."

I am sensible that I am too large on these foregoing heads; I will purposely shorten the rest, lest I weary you.

Direct. XIX. Further understand, That those few

who do attain to assurance, have it not either perfectly or constantly, (for the most part,) but mixed with imperfection, and oft clouded and interrupted.

That the highest assurance on earth is imperfect, I have showed you elsewhere. If we be imperfect, and our faith imperfect, and the knowledge of our own hearts imperfect, and all our evidences and graces imperfect; then our assurance must needs be imperfect also. To dream of perfection on earth, is to dream of heaven on earth. And if assurance may be here perfect, why not all our graces? Even when all doubtings are overcome, yet is assurance far short of the highest degree.

Besides, that measure of assurance which godly men do partake of, hath here its many sad interruptions, in the most. Upon the prevalency of temptations, and the hidings of God's face, their souls are oft left in a state of sadness, that were but lately as in the arms of Christ. How fully might this be proved from the examples of Job, David, Jeremy, and others in Scripture! And much more abundantly by the daily complaints and examples of the best of God's people now living among us! As there is no perfect evenness to be expected in our obedience while we are on earth, so neither will there be any constant or perfect evenness in our comforts. He that hath life in one duty, is cold in the next. And therefore he that hath much joy in one duty, hath little in the next. Yea, perhaps duty may but occasion the renewal of his sorrows; that the soul who before felt not its own burden at a sermon, or in prayer, or holy meditation, which were wont to revive him, now seems to feel his miseries to be multiplied. The time was once with David, when the thoughts of God were sweet to him, and he could say, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul." And yet he saw the time also when he remembered God and was troubled; he complained, and his spirit was overwhelmed. God so held his eyes waking, that he was troubled and could not speak. He considered the days of old, and the years of ancient time; he called to remembrance his song in the night, he communed with his own heart, and his spirit made diligent search. "Will the Lord (saith he) cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercy?" Was not this a low ebb, and a sad case that David was in? Till at last he saw, this was his infirmity, Psal. lxxvii. 1—10. Had David no former experiences to remind? no arguments of comfort to consider of? Yes, but there is at such a season an incapacity to improve them. There is not only a want of comfort, but a kind of averseness from it. The soul bendeth itself to break its own peace, and to put away comfort far from it. So saith he in ver. 2, "My soul refused to be comforted." In such cases men are witty to argue themselves into distress, that it is hard for one that would comfort them to answer them; and they are witty in repelling all the arguments of comfort that you can offer them, so that it is hard to fasten any thing on them. They have a weak wilfulness against their own consolations.

Seeing then that the best have such storms and sad interruptions, do not you wonder or think your case strange if it be so with you? Would you speed better than the best? Long for heaven then, where only is joy without sorrow, and everlasting rest without interruption.

Direct. XX. Let me also give you this warning, That you must never expect so much assurance on earth, as shall set you above the possibility of the

loss of heaven, or above all apprehensions of real danger of your miscarrying.

I conceive this advertisement to be of great necessity. But I must first tell you the meaning, and then the reasons of it. Only I am sorry that I know not how to express it fully, but in school-terms, which are not so familiar to you. 1. That which shall certainly come to pass, we call a thing future. That which may and can be done we call possible. All things are not future which are possible. God can do more than he hath done or will do. He could have made more worlds, and so more were possible than were future. Moreover a thing is said to be possible in reference to some power which can accomplish it; whether it be God's power, or angels', or man's. God hath decreed that none of his elect shall finally or totally fall away and perish; and therefore their so falling and perishing is not future; that is, it is a thing that shall never come to pass. But God never decreed that it should be utterly impossible, and therefore it still remaineth possible, though it shall never come to pass.

Object. But it is said, They shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.

Ans. A most comfortable place, which many opposers of election and free grace do in vain seek to obscure. But let me tell you for the right understanding of it, 1. That, as I said, possible and impossible are relative terms, and have relation to the power of some agent, as proportioned to the thing to be done. Now this text speaks only of the power of false Christs, and false prophets, and the devil by them: their power of deceiving is exceeding great, but not great enough to deceive the elect; which is true in two respects: 1. Because the elect are guided and fortified by God's Spirit. 2. Because seducers work not efficiently, but finally, by propounding objects; or by a moral, improper efficiency only. All their seducement cannot force or necessitate us to be deceived by them. But though it be impossible to them to do it, yet it is possible to God to permit, (which yet he never will,) and so possible for ourselves to be our own deceivers, or to give deceivers strength against us, by a wilful receiving of their poisoned baits. 3. Besides Christ spoke not in Aristotle's school, but among the vulgar, where words must be used in the common sense, or else they will not be understood. And the vulgar use to call that impossible which shall never come to pass.

There is a consequential impossibility of the event, because it is directly impossible that God should be mutable or deceived; even as contingents may be consequentially and accidentally necessary. But in its own nature, alas, our apostasy is more than possible.

And indeed when we say that it is possible or impossible for a man to sin or fall away, there is some degree of impropriety in the terms, because possible and impossible are terms properly relating to some power apportioned to a work; but sinning and falling away thereby, are the consequents of impotency, and not the effects of power; except we speak of the natural act, wherein the sin abideth. But this must be borne with, for want of a fitter word to express our meaning by. But I will leave these things, which are not fit for you, and desire you to leave them and overpass them, if you understand them not.

2. I here told you also, that you must not look to be above all apprehension of danger of your miscarrying. The grounds of this are these: 1. Because, as is said, our miscarrying remaineth still possible. 2. Because the perfect, certain knowledge of our election, and that we shall not fall away, is proper to God only; we have ourselves but a defective,

interrupted assurance of it. 3. The covenant gives us salvation but on condition of our perseverance, and perseverance on condition that we quench not the Spirit, which we shall do if we lose the apprehension of our danger. 4. Accordingly there is a connexion in our assurance, between all the several causes of our salvation and necessities thereto; whereof the apprehension of danger is one. We are sure we shall be saved, if we be sure to persevere; else not. We are sure to persevere, if we be sure faithfully to resist temptations. We can be no surer of faithful resisting of temptations, than we are sure to be kept in an apprehension of our danger.

I still say, therefore, that the doctrine of antinomians is the most ready way to apostasy and perdition; and no wonder if it lead to licentiousness and scandals, which our eyes have seen to be its genuine fruits! They cry down the weakness, unbelief, and folly of poor christians, that will apprehend themselves in danger of falling away, and so live in fear, after they are once justified; and that if they fall into sin, (as whoredom, drunkenness, murder, perjury, destroying the ministry, and expelling the gospel, &c.) will presently question or fear their estates and their justification. Such like passages I lately read in some printed sermons of one of my ancient acquaintance, who would never have come to that pass that he is at now, if his judgment and humility had been as great as his zeal. I entreat you therefore never to expect such an assurance as shall extinguish all your apprehensions of danger. He that sees not the danger, is nearest it, and likely to fall into it. Only he that seeth and apprehendeth it, is likely to avoid it. He that seeth no danger of falling away, is in greatest danger of it. I doubt not but that is the cause of the seditions, scandals, heresies, bloodguiltiness, destroyers of the churches of Christ, and most horrid apostasies, hypocrisy, and wickedness, which these late times have been guilty of; that they apprehend not the danger of ever coming into such a state, or ever doing such things, but would have said, Am I a dog? to him that should have foretold them what is come to pass. Wonderful! that men should be so blinded by false doctrine, as not to know that the apprehension of danger is made in the very fabrication of the nature of man, to be the very engine to move his soul in all ways of self-preservation and salvation! Yea, it is that very supposed principle upon which all the government of the world, and the laws and order of every nation, are grounded. We could not keep the very brutes from tearing us in pieces, but for their own safety, because they apprehend themselves to be in danger by it. The fear of man is it that restraineth them. But for this, no man's life would be in any safety, for every malicious man would be a murderer. He that feareth not the loss of his own life, is master of another man's. Do these men think that the apprehension of bodily dangers may carry them on through all undertakings, and be the potent spring of most of their actions, and warrant all those courses that else would be unwarrantable, so that they dare plead necessity to warrant those fearful things which by extenuating language (like Saul's) are called irregularities? and yet that it is unlawful or unmeet for a christian, yea, the weakest christian, to live in any apprehensions of danger to their souls; either danger of sinning, or falling away, or perishing for ever? No wonder if such do sin, and fall away and perish. Would these men have fought well by sea or land, if they had apprehended no danger? Would the earth have been so covered with carcasses, and with blood, (yea, even of saints,) and the world filled with the doleful calamities that accompanied and have

followed, if there had been no apprehensions of danger? Would they take physic when they are sick? Would they avoid fire, or water, or thieves, but through an apprehension of danger? Let them talk what they please, if ever they escape hell, without a deep apprehension of the danger of it, it must be in a way not known by Scripture, or by nature. Sure I am Paul did tame his body, and bring it into subjection, through an apprehension of this danger, lest when he had preached to others, himself should be a cast-away or reprobate, 2 Cor. ix. 27. And Christ himself, when he biddeth us "fear not them that can kill the body," (whom yet these men think it lawful to fear and fight against,) yet chargeth us with a double charge, to "fear him that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell: yea, I say unto you, (saith Christ,) fear him." Luke xii. 5. What can be plainer? and to his disciples? My detestation of these destructive antinomian principles, makes me to run out further against them than I intended; though it were easy more abundantly to manifest their hatefulness. But my reasons are these: 1. Because the mountebanks are still thrusting in themselves, and impudently proclaiming their own skill, and the excellency of their remedies for the cure of wounded consciences, and the settling of peace; when indeed their receipts are rank poison, gilded with the precious name of Christ and free grace. 2. Because I would not have your doubtings cured by the devil; for he will but cure one disease with another, and a lesser with a far greater. If he can so cure your fears and doubtings, as to bring you into carnal security and presumption, he will lose nothing by the cure, and you will get nothing. If he can turn a poor, doubting, troubled christian to be a secure antinomian, he hath cured the smart of a cut finger by casting them into a lethargy, or stupefaction, by his opium. To go to antinomian receipts to cure a troubled soul, is as going to a witch to cure the body. 3. I would have you sensible of God's goodness to you, in these very troubles that you have so long lain under. Your blessed Physician knew your disease, and the temperature of your soul. Perhaps he saw that you were in some danger of being carried away with the honours, profits, or pleasures of this world; and would have been entangled in either covetousness, pride, voluptuousness, or some such desperate sin. And now by these constant and extraordinary apprehensions of your danger, these sins have been much kept under, temptations weakened, and your danger prevented. If you have found no such inclinations in yourself, yet God might find them. Had it not been far worse for you to have lain so many years in pride, sensuality, and forgetfulness of God, and utter neglect of the state of your soul, than to have lain so long as you have done in the apprehensions of your danger? O love and admire your wise Physician! Little do you know now what he hath been doing for you; nor shall you ever fully know it in this life; but hereafter you shall know it, when your sanctification, and consolation, and his praises shall be perfected together. 4. If you should for the time to come, expect or desire that God should set you out of all apprehension of danger, you know not what it is that you desire. It were to desire your own undoing. Only see that you apprehend not your danger to be greater than it is; nor so apprehend it as to increase it, by driving you from Christ, but as to prevent it by driving you to him. Entertain not fancies and dreams of danger, instead of right apprehensions. Apprehend your happiness and grounds of hope, and comfort, and safety in Christ, and let these quite exceed your apprehensions of the danger. Look not on it as a

remediless danger, or as greater than the remedy. Do not conclude that you shall perish in it, and it will swallow you up. But only let it make you hold fast on Christ, and keep close to him in obedience. Shall I lay open all the matter expressed in this section, by a familiar comparison?

A king having many subjects and sons, which are all beyond sea, or beyond some river, they must needs be brought over to him before they can live or reign with him. The river is frozen over on the sides, till it come almost to the middle. The foolish children are all playing on the ice, where a deceiving enemy enticeth them to play on till they come to the deep, where they drop in one by one and perish. The eldest son, who is with the father on the other side, undertaketh to cast himself into the water, and swim to the further side, and break the ice, and swim back with them all that will come with him and hold him. The father bids him, Bring all my subjects with you, if they will come and hold by you; but be sure you fail not to bring my sons. This is resolved on; the prince casteth himself into the water, and swimmeth to the further side. He maketh a way through the ice, and offereth all of them his safe carriage, if they will accept him to be their bearer and helper, and will trust themselves on him, and hold fast by him till they come to the further side. Some refuse his help, and think he would deceive them, and lead them into the deep, and there leave them to perish. Some had rather play on the ice, and will not hearken to him. Some dare not venture through the streams, or will not endure the coldness of the water. Some waveringly agree to him, and hold faintly by his skirt; and when they feel the cold water, or are near the deep, or are weary of holding, they lose him; either turning back, or perishing suddenly in the gulf. The children are of the same mind with the rest; but he is resolved to lose none of them, and therefore he chargeth them to come with him, and tells them fully what a welcome they shall have with their father; and ceaseth not his importunity till he persuade them to consent. Some of them say, How shall we ever get over the river? we shall be drowned by the way. He tells them, I will carry you safe over, so you will but hold fast by me. Never fear, I warrant you. They all lay hold on him, and venture in with him. When they are in the midst some are afraid, and cry out, We shall be drowned. These he encourageth, and bids them trust him; hold fast, and fear not. Others, when they hear these words, that they need not fear, they grow so bold and utterly secure, as to lose their hold. To these he speaketh in other language, and chargeth them to hold fast by him; for if they lose their hold, they will fall into the bottom, and if they stick not to him they will be drowned. Some of them upon this warning hold fast; others are so boldly confident of his skill, and good-will, and promise, that they forget or value not his warning and threatening, but lose their hold. Some through laziness and weariness do the like. Whereupon he lets them sink till they are almost drowned, and cry out for help, "Save us or we perish," and think they are all lost; and then he layeth hold of them and fetcheth them up again, and chideth them for their bold folly, and biddeth them look better to themselves, and hold faster by him hereafter, if they love themselves. Some at last, through mere weariness and weakness, before they can reach the bank, cry out, O I am tired, I faint, I shall never hold fast till I reach the shore, I shall be drowned. These he comforteth, and gives them cordials, and holdeth them by the hand, and bids them, Despair not. Do your

best. Hold fast, and I will help you. And so he brings them all safe to the haven.

This king is God; heaven is his habitation; the subjects are all men; the sons, who are part of the subjects, are the elect; the rest are the non-elect; the river or sea is the passage of this life. The further side is all men's natural, sinful distance and separation from God and happiness; the ice that bears them, is this frail life of pleasures, profits, and honours, which delight the flesh; the depth unfrozen is hell; he that enticeth them thither is the devil. The eldest son that is sent to bring them over, is Jesus Christ; his commission and undertaking is, to help all over that refuse not his help; and to see that the elect be infallibly recovered and saved. Do I need to go over the other particulars? I know you see my meaning in them all: especially that which I aim at is this, that as Paul had a promise of the life of all that were with him in the ship, and yet when some would have gone out, he told them, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved," Acts xxvii. 31, (so that he makes their apprehension of danger in a possibility of being drowned, to be the means of detaining them in the ship till they came all safe to land,) so Jesus Christ, who will infallibly save all his elect, (they being given him by his Father to be infallibly saved,) will do it by causing them to hold fast by him, through all the troubles, and labours, and temptations of this tumultuous, tempestuous world, and that till they come to land; and the apprehension of their dangers shall be his means to make them hold fast: yet is not their safety principally in themselves, but in him; nor is it their holding fast by him that is the chief cause of their difference from those that perish, but that is his love and resolution to save them. And therefore when they do let go their hold, he will not so lose them, but will fetch them up again; only he will not bring them through this sea of danger as you would draw a block through the water; but as men that must hold fast, and be commanded and threatened to that end; and therefore when they lose their hold, it is the fear of drowning which they felt themselves near, which shall cause them to hold faster the next time; and this must needs be the fear of a possible danger. And for those that perish, they have none to blame but themselves. They perish not for want of a Saviour, but because they would not lay hold on him, and follow him through the tempests and waves of trial. Nor can they quarrel at him because he did more for others, and did not as much for them as long as he offered them so sufficient help, that only their own wilful refusal was their ruin, and their perdition was of themselves.

I conclude therefore, that seeing our salvation is laid by God upon our faithful, obedient holding fast to Christ through all trials and difficulties, and our holy fear is the means of that holding fast, (Christ being still the principal cause of our safety,) therefore never look for such a certainty of salvation, as shall put you above such fears and moderated apprehensions of danger; for then it is ten to one you will lose your hold. You read in Scripture very many warnings to take heed lest we fall, and threatnings to those that do fall away and draw back. What are all these for, but to excite in us those moderate fears, and cares, and holy diligence, which may prevent our falling away? And remember this, that there can be no such holy fears, and cares, and diligence, where there is no danger or possibility of falling away; for there can be no act without its proper object; and the object of fear is a possible hurt, at least in the apprehension of him that feareth

it. No man can fear the evil which he knoweth to be impossible.

Direct. XXI. The next advice which I must give you is this, Be thankful if you can but reach to a settled peace, and composure of your mind, and lay not too much on the high raptures and feelings of comfort which some do possess; and if ever you enjoy such feeling joys, expect not that they should be either long or often.

It is the cause of miserable languishing to many a poor soul, to have such importunate expectations of such passionate joys, that they think without these they have no true comfort at all; no witness of the Spirit, no spirit of adoption, no joy in the Holy Ghost. Some think that others have much of this, though they have not; and therefore they torment themselves because it is not with them as with others, when, alas, they little know how it goes with others. Some taste of such raptures sometimes themselves have had, and therefore when they are gone, they think they are forsaken, and that all grace, or peace at least, is gone with them. Take heed of these expectations. And to satisfy you, let me tell you these two or three things: 1. A settled calm and peace of soul is a great mercy, and not to be undervalued, and looked at as nothing. 2. The highest raptures and passionate feeling joys, are usually of most doubtful sincerity. Not that I would have any suspect the sincerity of them without cause; but such passions are not so certain signs of grace, as the settled frame of the understanding and will; nor can we so easily know that they are of the Spirit; and they are liable to more questioning, and have in them a greater possibility of deceit. Doubtless it is very much that fancy and melancholy, and especially a natural weakness and movable temper, will do in such cases. Mark whether it be not mostly these three sorts of people that have, or pretend to have, such extraordinary raptures and feelings of joy.

1. Women and others that are most passionate. 2. Melancholy people. 3. Men that by erroneous opinions have lost almost all their understandings in their fancies, and live like men in a continual dream. Yet I doubt not but solid men have oft high joys; and more we might all have, if we did our duty. And I would have no christian content himself with a dull quietness of spirit, but by all means possible to be much in labouring to rejoice in God and raising their souls to heavenly delights. Oh what lives do we lose, which we might enjoy! But my meaning is this: look at these joys and delights as duties and as mercies, but look not at them as marks of trial, so as to place more necessity in them than God hath done, or to think them to be ordinary things. If you do but feel such a high estimation of Christ and heaven, that you would not leave him for all the world, take this for your surest sign. And if you have but so much probability or hope of your interest in him, that you can think of God as one that loveth you, and can be thankful to Christ for redeeming you, and are gladder in these hopes of your interest in Christ and glory, than if you were owner of all the world; take this for a happy mercy, and a high consolation. Yet I mean not that your joy in Christ will be always so sensible, as for worldly things; but it will be more rational, solid, and deeper at the heart. And that you may know by this, you would not for all the pleasures, honours, or profits in the world, be in the same case as once you were, (supposing that you were converted since you had the use of reason and memory,) or at least as you see the ungodly world still lie in.

3. And let me add this: commonly those that have the highest passionate joys, have the saddest lives;

for they have withal the most passionate fears and sorrows. Mark it, whether you find not this prove true. And it is partly from God's will in his dispensations; partly from their own necessities, who after their exaltations do usually need a prick in the flesh, and a messenger of Satan to buffet them, lest they be exalted above measure; and partly, and most commonly, it is from the temperature of their bodies. Weak, passionate women, of movable spirits and strong affections, when they love, they love violently, and when they rejoice, especially in such cases, they have most sensible joys, and when any fears arise, they have most terrible sorrows. I know it is not so with all of that sex; but mark the same people that usually have the highest joys, and see whether at other times they have not the greatest troubles. This week they are as at the gates of heaven, and the next as at the doors of hell; I am sure, with many it is so. Yet it need not be so, if christians would but look at these high joys as duties to be endeavoured, and mercies to be valued; but when they will needs judge of their state by them, and think that God is gone from them or forsaken them, when they have not such joys, then it leaves them in terror and amazement. Like men after a flash of lightning, that are left more sensible of the darkness. For no wise man can expect that such joys should be a christian's ordinary state, or God should so diet us with a continual feast. It would neither suit with our health, nor the condition of this pilgrimage. Live therefore on your peace of conscience as your ordinary diet; when this is wanting, know that God appointeth you a fast for your health; and when you have a feast of high joys, feed on it and be thankful; but when they are taken from you, gape not after them as the disciples did after Christ at his ascension; but return thankfully to your ordinary diet of peace. And remember that these joys, which are now taken from you, may so return again. However, there is a place preparing for you, where your joys shall be full.

Direct. XXII. My next direction is this, Spend more of your time and care about your duty than about your comforts; and for the exercise and increase of your graces, than for the discovery of them: and when you have done all that you can for assurance and comfort, you shall find that it will very much depend on your actual obedience.

This direction is of as great importance as any that I have yet given you; but I shall say but little of it, because I have spoke of it so fully already in my Book of Rest, part iii. chap. 8—11. My reasons for what I here assert are these: 1. Duty goeth in order of nature and time before comfort, as the precept is before the promise; comfort is part of the reward, and therefore necessarily supposeth the duty. 2. Grace makes men both so ingenuous and divine, as to consider God's due as well as their own; and what they should do, as well as what they shall have, still remembering that our works cannot merit at God's hands. 3. As we must have grace before we can know we have it, so ordinarily we must have a good measure of grace, before we can so clearly discern it as to be certain of it. Small things, I have told you, are next to none, and hardly discernible by weak eyes. When all ways in the world are tried, it will be found that there is no way so sure for a doubting soul to be made certain of the truth of his graces, as to keep them in action, and get them increased. And it will be found that there is no one cause of christians doubting of the truth of their faith, love, hope, repentance, humility, &c. so great or so common as the small degree of these graces. Doth not the very language of complaining christians

show this? One saith, I have no faith; I cannot believe; I have no love to God; I have no delight in duty. Another saith, I cannot mourn for sin, my heart was never broken; I cannot patiently bear an injury; I have no courage in opposing sin, &c. If all these were not in a low and weak degree, men could not so ordinarily think they had none. A lively, strong, working faith, love, zeal, courage, &c. would show themselves, as do the highest towers, the greatest mountains, the strongest winds, the greatest flames, which will force an observance by their greatness and effects. 4. Consider also that it is more pleasing to God to see his people study him and his will directly, than to spend the first and chiefest of their studies about the attaining of comforts to themselves. 5. And it is the nature of grace to tend first and chiefly toward God; and but secondarily to be the evidence of our own happiness. We have faith given us principally that we might believe, and live by it in daily applications of Christ: we have repentance, that it might break us off from sin, and bring us back to God; we have love, that we might love God and our Redeemer, his saints, and laws, and ways; we have zeal, that we might be quickened in all our holy duties; and we have obedience, to keep us in the way of our duty. The first thing we have to do with these graces, is to use them for those holy ends which their nature doth express: and then the discerning of them that we may have assurance, followeth after this both in time and dignity. 6. And it is a matter of far greater concernment to ourselves to seek after the obtaining of Christ and grace, than after the certain knowledge that we have them. You may be saved though you never get assurance here, but you cannot be saved without Christ and grace. God hath not made assurance the condition of your salvation. It tends indeed exceedingly to your comfort, and a precious mercy it is; but your safety lieth not on it. It is better to go sorrowful and doubting to heaven, than comfortably to hell. First therefore ask what is the condition of salvation and the way to it, and then look that you do your best to perform it, and to go that way, and then try your performance in its season. 7. Besides, as it is a work of far greater moment, so also of quicker despatch, to believe and love Christ truly, than to get assurance that you do truly believe and love him. You may believe immediately, (by the help of God's grace,) but getting assurance of it may be the work of a great part of your life. Let me therefore entreat this one thing of you, that when you feel the want of any grace, you would not presently bend all your thoughts upon the inquiry, whether it be true or no; but rather say to yourself, I see trying is a great and difficult, a long and tedious work: I may be this many years about it, and possibly be unresolved still. If I should conclude that I have no grace, I may be mistaken; and so I may if I think that I have it. I may inquire of friends and ministers long, and yet be left in doubt; it is therefore my surest way to seek presently to obtain it if I have it not, and to increase it if I have it. And I am certain none of that labour will be lost: to get more is the way to know I have it.

But perhaps you will say, How should I get more grace? That is a business of greater difficulty than so. I answer, Understand what I told before, that as the beginning of grace is in your understanding, so the heart and life of it is in your will; and the affections and passionate part are but the fruits and branches. If therefore your grace be weak, it is chiefly in an unwillingness to yield to Christ, and his word and Spirit. Now, how should an unwilling soul be made willing? Why thus, 1. Pray constant-

ly as you are able, for a willing mind, and yielding, inclinable heart to Christ. 2. Hear constantly those preachers that bend their doctrine to inform your understanding of the great necessity and excellency of Christ, and grace, and glory; and to persuade the will with the most forcible arguments. A persuading, quickening ministry, that helps to excite your graces, and draw up your heart to Christ, is more useful than they that spend most of their time to persuade you of your sincerity, and give you comfort. 3. But especially lay out your thoughts more in the most serious considerations of those things which tend to breed and feed those particular graces which you would have increased. Objects and moving reasons kept much upon the mind by serious thoughts, are the great engine appointed both by nature and by grace, to turn about the soul of man. Thoughts are to your soul, as taking in the air, and meat, and drink, to your body. Objects considered do turn the soul into their own nature. Such as are the things that you most think and consider of, (I mean in pursuance of them,) such will you be yourself. Consideration, frequent, serious consideration, is God's great instrument to convert the soul, and to confirm it; to get grace, and to keep it, and increase it. If any soul perish for want of grace, it is ten to one it is mainly for want of frequent and serious consideration. That the most of us do languish under such weaknesses, and attain to small degrees of grace, is for want of sober, frequent consideration. We know not how great things this would do, if it were but faithfully managed. This then is my advice, when you feel so great a want of faith and love, (for those be the main graces for trial and use,) that you doubt whether you have any or none, lay by those doubting thoughts awhile, and presently go and set yourself to consider of God's truth, goodness, amiableness, and kind-heartedness to miserable, unworthy sinners: think what he is in himself, and what he is to you, and what he hath done for you, and what he will do for you if you do but consent. And then think of the vanity of all the childish pleasures of this world; how soon, and in how sad a case they will leave us; and what silly, contemptible things they are, in comparison of the everlasting glory of the saints! By that time you have warmed your soul a little with such serious thoughts, you will find your faith and love revive, and begin to stir and work within you; and then you will feel that you have faith and love. Only remember what I told you before, that the heart and soul of saving faith and love, (supposing a belief that the gospel is true,) is all in this one act of willingness and consent to have Christ as he is offered. Therefore if you doubt of your faith and love, it is your own willingness that you doubt of, or else you know not what you do. Now methinks, if you took but a sober view of the goodness of God and the glory of heaven on one side, and of the silly, empty, worthless world on the other side; and then ask your heart which it will choose; and say to yourself, O my soul, the God of glory offers thee thy choice of dung and vanity for a little time, or of the unconceivable joys of heaven for ever; which wilt thou choose? I say, methinks the answer of your own soul should presently resolve you, that you do believe, and that you love God above this present world! For if you can choose him before the world, then you are more willing of him than the world; and if he have more of your will, for certain he hath more of your faith and love. Use, therefore, instead of doubting of your faith, to believe till you put it out of doubt. And if yet you doubt, study God, and Christ, and glory yet better, and keep those objects by consider-

ation close to your heart, whose nature is to work the heart to faith and love. For certainly objects have a mighty power on the soul; and certainly God, and Christ, and grace, and glory, are mighty objects; as able to make a full and deep impression on man's soul, as any in the world; and if they work not, it is not through any imperfection in them, but because they be not well applied, and by consideration held upon the heart, that they may work. Perhaps you will say, that meditation is too hard a work for you, and that your memory is so weak that you want matter to meditate upon; or if you do meditate on these, yet you feel no great motion or alteration on your heart. To this I answer; if you want matter, take the help of some book that will afford you matter; and if you want life in meditation, peruse the most quickening writings you can get. If you have not better at hand, read over (and seriously consider as you read it) those passages in the end of my Book of Rest, which direct you in the exercises of these graces, and give you some matter for your meditation to work upon: and remember, that if you can increase the resolved choice of your will, you increase your love, though you feel not those affectionate workings that you desire.

Let me ask you now whether you have indeed taken this course in your doubtings? If not, how unwisely have you done! Doubting is no cure, but actual believing and loving is a cure. If faith and love were things that you would fain get, but cannot, then you had cause enough to fear, and to lie down and rise in trouble of mind from one year to another. But it is no such matter; it is so far from being beyond your reach or power to have these graces, though you would, that they themselves are nothing else but your very willingness; at least your willingness to have Christ, is both your faith and love. It may be said therefore to be in the power of your will, which is nothing else but that actual willingness which you have already. If therefore you are unwilling to have him, what makes you complain for want of the sense of his presence, and the assurance of his love, and the graces of his Spirit, as you frequently do? It is strange to me, that people should make so many complaints to God and men, and spend so many sad hours in fears and trouble, and all for want of that which they would not have. If you be not willing, be willing now. If you say you cannot, do as I have before directed you. One hour's sober, serious thoughts of God and the world, of Christ and Satan, of sin and holiness, of heaven and hell, and the differences of them, will do very much to make you willing. Yet mistake me not; though I say you may have Christ if you will, and faith and love if you will, and no man can truly say, I would be glad to have Christ (as he is offered) but cannot; yet this gladness, consent, or willingness which I mention, is the effect of the special work of the Spirit, and was not in your power before you had it; nor is it yet so in your power as to believe, without God's further help. But he that hath made you willing, will not be wanting to maintain your willingness. Though I will say to any man, You may have Christ if you will; yet I will say to no man, You can be willing of yourself, or without the special grace of God.

Nay, let me further ask; Have not you darkened, buried, or weakened your graces, instead of exercising and increasing them, even then when you complained for want of assurance of them? When you found a want of faith and love, have not you weakened them more, and so made them less discernible? Have you not fed your unbelief, and disputed for your doubtings, and taken Satan's part

against yourself; and (which is far worse) have you never, through these doubtings, entertained hard thoughts of God, and presented him to your soul as unwilling to show you mercy, and in an unlovely, dreadful, hideous shape, fitter to affright you from him than to draw you to him, and likelier to provoke your hatred than your love? If you have not done thus, I know too many troubled souls that have. And if you have, you have taken a very unlikely way to get assurance. If you would have been certain that you loved God in sincerity, you should have laboured to love him more, till you had been certain; and that you might do so, you should have kept better thoughts of God in your mind. You will hardly love him while you think of him as evil, or at least as hurtful to you. Never forget this rule which I laid you down in the beginning, that He that will ever love God, must apprehend him to be good. And the more large and deep are our apprehensions of his goodness, the more will be our love. For such as God appears to be to men's fixed conceivings, such will their affections be to him. For the fixed, deep conceptions, or apprehensions of the mind, do lead about the soul, and guide the life.

I conclude therefore with this important and impetunate request to you, that, Though it be a duty necessary in its time and place, to examine ourselves concerning our sincerity, in our several graces and duties to God; yet be sure that the first and far greater part of your time, and pains, and care, and inquiries, be for the getting and increasing of your grace, than for the discerning it; and to perform your duty rightly, than to discern your right performance. And when you confer with ministers, or others, that may teach you, see that you ask ten times at least, How should I get or increase my faith, my love to Christ, and to his people? for once that you ask, How shall I know that I believe or love? Yet so contrary hath been, and still is, the practice of most christians among us in this point, that I have heard it twenty times asked, How shall I know that I truly love the brethren? for once that I have heard it demanded, How should I bring my heart to love them better? And the like I may say of love to Christ himself.

I should next have spoke of the second part of the direction, How much our assurance and comfort will still depend on our actual obedience. But this will fall in in handling the two or three next following directions.

Direct. XXIII. My next advice is this, Think not those doubts and troubles of mind, which are caused and continued by wilful disobedience, will ever be well healed but by the healing of that disobedience; or that the same means must be used and will suffice to the cure of such troubles, which must be used and will suffice to cure the troubles of a tender conscience, and of an obedient christian, whose trouble is merely through mistakes of their condition.

I will begin with the latter part of this direction. He that is troubled upon mere mistakes, may be quieted upon the removal of them. If he understood not the universal extent of Christ's satisfaction, or of the covenant or conditional grant of Christ and life in him; and if upon this he be troubled, as thinking that he is not included, the convincing him of his error may suffice to the removal of his trouble. If he be troubled through his mistaking the nature of true faith, or true love, or other graces, and so think that he hath them not, when he hath them, the discovery of his error may be the quieting of his soul. The soul that is troubled upon such mistakes, must be tenderly dealt with. Much more they that are disquieted by groundless fears, or too deep ap-

prehensions of the wrath or justice of God, of the evil of sin, and of their unworthiness, and for want of fuller apprehensions of the loving-kindness of God, and the tender, compassionate nature of Christ. We can scarce handle such souls too gently. God would have all to be tenderly dealt with, that are tender of displeasing and dishonouring him by sin. God's own language may teach all ministers what language we should use to such: Isa. lvii. 15-21, "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth. For the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made, &c. But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Much more tender language may such expect from Christ in the gospel, where is contained a fuller revelation of his grace. If Mary, a poor, sinful woman, lie weeping at his feet, and washing them with her tears, he hath not the heart to spurn her away; but openly proclaims the forgiveness of her many sins. As soon as ever the heart of a sinner is turned from his sins, the heart of Christ is turned to him. The very sum of all the gospel is contained in those precious words, which fully express this: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light," Matt. xi. 28-30. When the prodigal (Luke xv. 20) doth once come home to his father, with sorrow and shame, confessing his unworthiness, yea, but resolved to confess it; his father preventeth him, and sees him afar off, and stays not his coming, but runs and meets him. And when he comes to him, he doth not upbraid him with his sins, nor say, Thou rebel, why hast thou forsaken me, and preferred harlots and luxury before me? Nay, he doth not so much as frown upon him, but compassionately falls on his neck and kisseth him. Alas, God knows that a poor sinner in this humbled, troubled case, hath burden enough on his back already, and indeed more than he is able of himself to bear. The sense of his own sinful folly and misery is burden enough. If God should add to this his frowns and terrors, and should spurn at a poor sinner that lies prostrate at his feet, in tears or terrors, who then should be able to stand before him, or to look him in the face? But he will not break the bruised reed; he will not make heavier the burden of a sinner. He calls them to come to him for ease and rest, and not to oppress them, or kill them with terrors. We have not a king like Rehoboam, that will multiply our pressures; but one whose office it is to break our yokes, and loose our bonds, and set us free. When he was a preacher himself on earth, you may gather what doctrine he preached by his text, which he chose at one of his first public sermons; which, as you may find in Luke iv. 18, '19, was this, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Oh if a poor, bruised, wounded soul, had but heard this sermon from his Saviour's own mouth, what heart-meltings would it have caused! What pangs of love would it have raised in him! You would sure

have believed then that the Lord is gracious, when "all (that heard him) bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth," Luke iv. 22. I would desire no more for the comfort of such a soul, than to see such a sight, and feel such a feeling, as the poor penitent prodigal did, when he found himself in the arms of his father, and felt the kisses of his mouth, and was surprised so unexpectedly with such a torrent of love. The soul that hath once seen and felt this, would never sure have such hard and doubtful thoughts of God, except through ignorance they knew not whose arms they were that thus embraced them, or whose voice it was that thus bespoke them; or unless the remembrance of it were gone out of their minds. You see then what is God's own language to humbled penitents, and what is the method of his dealings with them; and such must be the language and dealing of his ministers: they must not wound when Christ would heal; nor make sad the heart that Christ would comfort, and would not have made sad, Ezek. xiii. 22.

But will this means serve turn, or must the same course be taken to remove the sorrows of the wilfully disobedient? No: God takes another course himself, and prescribes another course to his ministers; and requires another course from the sinner himself. But still remember who it is that I speak of: it is not the ordinary, unavoidable infirmities of the saints that I speak of; such as they cannot be rid of, though they fain would; such as Paul speaks of, Rom. vii. 19, "The good that I would do, I do not;" and "when I would do good, evil is present with me." And Gal. v. 17, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, &c. so that we cannot do the things that we would." A true christian would love God more perfectly, and delight in him more abundantly, and bring every thought in subjection to his will, and subdue the very remnants of carnal concupiscence, that there should be no stirrings of lust, or unjust anger, or worldly desires, or pride within him; and that no vain word might pass his lips: all this he would do, but he cannot. Striving against these unavoidable infirmities, is conquering.

But though we cannot keep under every motion of concupiscence, we can forbear the execution. Anger will stir upon provocations; but we may restrain it in degree, that it set us not in a flame, and do not much distemper or discompose our minds. And we can forbid our tongues all raging, furious, or abusive words in our anger; all cursing, swearing, or reproachful speaking. If an envious thought against our brother do arise in our hearts, because he is preferred before us, we may hate it, and repress it, and chide our hearts for it, and command our tongues to speak well of him, and no evil. Some pride and self-esteem will remain and be stirring in us, do what we can, it is a sin so deeply rooted in our corrupt natures. But yet we can detest it, and resist it, and meet with abhorrence of our self-conceited thoughts, and rejoicings in our own reputations and fame, and inward heart-risings against those that undervalue us, and stand in the way of our repute; and we may forbear our boasting language, and our contestings for our credit, and our excuses of our sins, and our backbitings and secret defaming of those that cross us in the way of credit. We may forbear our quarrels, and estrangements, and dividings from our brethren, and stiff insisting on our own conceits, and expecting that others should make our judgments their rule, and say and do as we would have them, and all dance after our pipe; all which are the effects of inward pride. We cannot, while we are on earth, be free from all inordinate love of the world, and the

riches and honours of it; but we may so watch against it and repress it, as that it shall neither be preferred before God, nor draw us to unlawful ways of gain, by lying, deceit, and overreaching our brethren; by stealing, unjust or unmerciful dealings, oppressing the poor, and insulting over those that are in the way of our thriving, and crushing them that would hinder our aspiring designs, and treading them down that will not bow to us, and taking revenge of them that have crossed or disparaged us, or cruelly exacting all our rights and debts of the poor, and squeezing the purses of subjects or tenants, or those that we bargain with, like a sponge, as long as any thing will come out. Yea, we may so far subdue our love of the world, as that it shall not hinder us from being merciful to the poor, compassionate to our servants and labourers, and bountiful to our power in doing good works; nor yet shut out God's service from our families or closets; nor rob him of our frequent, affectionate thoughts, especially on the Lord's day. So for sensuality, or the pleasing of our flesh more immediately; we shall never on earth be wholly freed from inordinate motions, and temptations, and fleshly desires, and urgent inclinations and solicitations to forbidden things. But yet we may restrain our appetite by reason, so far that it brings us not to gluttony and drunkenness, and a studying for our bellies, and pampering of our flesh, or a taking care for it, and making provision to satisfy its lusts, Rom. xiii. 14. We may forbear the obeying it, in excess of apparel, in undecent, scandalous, or time-wasting recreations, in uncleanness, or unchaste speeches or behaviour, or the reading of amorous books and sonnets, or feeding our eyes or thoughts on filthy or enticing objects, or otherwise wilfully blowing the fire of lust. So also for the performance of duty. We shall never in this life be able to hear or read so diligently, and understandingly, or affectionately, as we would do; nor to remember or profit by what we hear, as we desire. But yet we can bring ourselves to the congregation, and not prefer our ease, or business, or any vain thing before God's word and worship, or loathe or despise it because of some weakness in the speaker. And we may in a great measure restrain our thoughts from wandering, and force ourselves to attend; and labour when we come home to recall it to mind. We cannot call on God so fervently, believingly, or delightfully, as we would; but yet we may do it sincerely as we can, and do it constantly. We cannot instruct our children and servants, and reprove or exhort our neighbours, with that boldness, or love, and compassion, and discretion, and meet expressions, as we would; but yet we may do it faithfully and frequently as we are able.

So that you may see in all this, what sin it is that Paul speaks of, Rom. vii. when he saith, When he would do good, evil is present with him; and that he is led captive to the law of sin, and serves the law of sin with his flesh. And Gal. iv. 17, when he saith, "We cannot do the things that we would," he speaks not of wilful sinning or gross sin, but of unavoidable infirmities; whereby also we are too often drawn into a committing of many sins which we might avoid (for so the best do).

And because you may often read and hear of sins of infirmity, as distinguished from other sins, let me here give you notice, that this word may be taken in several senses, and that there are three several sorts of sins of infirmity in the godly.

1. There are those sins which a man cannot avoid though he would; which are in the gentlest sense called sins of infirmity. Here note, 1. That Adam had none such. 2. And that the reason of them is,

because, 1. Our reason which should direct, and our wills themselves which should command, are both imperfect. 2. And our faculties that should be commanded and directed, are by sin grown impotent and obstinate, and have contracted a rebelling, disobedient disposition. 3. And that degree of grace, which the best attain to in this life, is not such as wholly to overcome either the imperfection of the guiding and commanding faculty, or the rebellion of the obeying faculties: otherwise if our own wills were perfect, and the rebellion of the inferior faculties cured, no man could then say, The good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do. For the will would so fully command, that all would obey, and itself being perfect, all would be perfect. And therefore in heaven it is and will be so.

I know philosophers conclude, that all acts of the inferior faculties are but acts commanded by the will; it should be so, I confess. It is the office of the will to command, and the understanding to direct, and the rest to obey. But in our state of sinful imperfection, the soul is so distempered and corrupted, that the will cannot fully rule those faculties that it should rule; so that it may be said, I would forbear sin, but cannot. For, 1. The understanding is become a dark, imperfect director. 2. The will is become an imperfect receiver of the understanding's directions; yea, an opposer, as being tainted with the neighbourhood of a distempered sense. 3. When the will is rectified by grace, it is but in part; and therefore when Paul or any holy man saith, I would do good, and I would not do evil, they mean it not of a perfect willingness, but of a sincere; to wit, that this is the main bent of their will, and the resolved prevalent act of it is for good. 4. When the will doth command, yet the commanded faculties do refuse to obey, through an unfitness of impotency and corruption. 1. The will hath but an imperfect command of the understanding. (I mean as to the exercise of the act, in which respect it commandeth it, and not as to the specification of the act.) A man may truly and strongly desire to know more, and apprehend things more clearly, and yet cannot. 2. The will hath but an imperfect command of the fancy or thoughts; so that a man may truly say, I would think more frequently, more intensively, and more orderly of good, and less of vanity, and yet I cannot. For objects and passions may force the fancy and cogitations in some degree. 3. The will hath but an imperfect command of the passions; so that a man may truly say, I would not be troubled, or afraid, or grieved, or disquieted, or angry, but I cannot choose, and I would mourn more for sin, and be more afraid of sinning, and of God's displeasure, and more zealous for God, and more delighted in him, and joy more in holy things, but I cannot. For these passions lie so open to the assault of objects, (having the senses for their inlet, and the movable spirits for their seat or instruments,) that even when the will commands them one way, an object may force them in part against the will's command, as we find sensibly in cases of fear, and sorrow or anger, which we can force a man to whether he will or no. And if there be no contradicting object, yet cannot the will excite these passions to what height it shall command; for their motion depends as much (and more) on the lively manner of representing the object, and the working nature and weight of the object represented, and upon the heat and mobility of the spirits, and temperature of the body, as upon the command of the will. 4. Much less can the will command out all vicious habits, and sensual or corrupt inclinations; and therefore a true christian may well say in respect of these, that he would be more

holy, heavenly, and disposed to good, and less to evil, but he cannot. 5. As for complacency and displacency, liking or disliking, love and hatred, so far as they are passions, I have spoke of them before: but so far as they are the immediate acts of the will, (willing and nilling,) they are not properly said to be commanded by it, but elicited, or acted by it (wherein, how far it hath power is a most noble question, but unfit for this place or your capacity). And thus you see that there are many acts of the soul, beside habits, which the will cannot now perfectly command, and so a christian cannot be what he would be, nor do the things that he would. And these are the first sort of sins of infirmity.

If you say, Sure these can be no sins, because we are not willing of them, and there is no more sin than there is will in it; I answer, 1. We were in Adam willing of that sin which caused them. 2. We are in some degree inclining in our wills to sin, though God have that prevalent part and determination, which in comparative cases doth denominate them. 3. The understanding and will may be most heinously guilty where they do not consent, in that they do not more strongly dissent, and more potently and rulingly command all the subject faculties; and so a negation of the will's act, or of such a degree of it as is necessary to the regiment of the sensual part, is a deep guilt and great offence; and it may be said, that there is will in this sin. It is morally or reputatively voluntary, though not naturally; because the will doth not its office when it should: as a man is guilty of voluntary murder of his own child, that stands by and seeth his servant kill him, and doth not do his best to hinder him. I would this were better understood by some divines; for I think that the commonest guilt of the reason and will in our actual sins, is by omission of the exercise of their authority to hinder it; and that most sins are more brutish, as to the true efficient cause, than many imagine; and yet they are human or moral acts too, and the soul nevertheless guilty; because the commanding faculties performed not their office, and so are the moral or imputative causes, and so the great culpable causes of the fact. But I am drawn nearer to philosophy and points beyond your reach than I intended; a fault that I must be still resisting in all my writings, being upon every occurring difficulty carried to forget my subject, and the capacity of the meanest to whom I write: but what you understand not, pass over, and go to the next.

The second kind of sins of infirmity, are, the smaller sort of sins, which we may forbear if we will; that is, if we be actually, though not perfectly, yet prevalently, willing; or if our will be determined to forbear them; or if the chief part of the will actually be for such forbearance. The first sort are called sins of infirmity in an absolute sense. These last I call sins of infirmity in both an absolute and comparative sense; that is, both as they proceed from our inward corruption, which through the weakness of the soul having but little grace, is not fully restrained, and also as it is compared with gross sins: and so we may call idle words, and rash expressions in our haste, and such like, sins of infirmity, in comparison of murder, perjury, or the like gross sins, which we commonly call crimes or wickedness, when the former we use to call but faults. These infirmities are they which the papists (and some learned divines of our own, as Rob. Baronius in his excellent tractate "De Peccat. Mortali et Veniali") do call venial sins; some of them in a fair and honest sense, viz. because they are such sins as a true christian may live and die in, though not unrepented or unresisted, yet not subdued so far as to

forsake or cease from the practice of them, and yet they are pardoned. But other papists call them venial sins in a wicked sense, as if they needed no pardon, and deserved not eternal punishment. (And why should they call them venial if they need not pardon?) A justified man liveth in the daily practice of some vain thoughts, or the frequent commission of some other sins, which by his utmost diligence he might restrain; but he liveth not in the frequent practice of adultery, drunkenness, false-witnessing, slandering, hating his brother, &c.

Yet observe, that though the forementioned lesser sins are called infirmities, in regard of the matter of them, yet they may be so committed in regard of the end and manner of them, as may make them crimes or gross sins. As for example, if one should use idle words wilfully, resolvedly, without restraint, reluctance, or tenderness of conscience, this were gross sinning; or the nearer it comes to this, and the more wilfulness, or neglect, or evil ends there is in the smallest forbidden action, the worse it is, and the grosser. And observe (of which more anon) that the true bounds or difference between gross sins, and those lesser faults, which we call infirmities, cannot be given; (I think by any man, I am sure not by me;) either as to the act itself, to say just what acts are gross sins, and what not; or else as to the manner of committing them, as to say just how much of the will must go to make a gross sin, or just how far a man may proceed in the degree of evil intents, or how far in the frequency of sinning before it must be called a gross sin.

3. The third sort of sins, which may be called sins of infirmity, are these last-mentioned gross sins themselves, so far as they are found in the regenerate: these are gross sins put in opposition to the former sort of infirmities; but our divines use to call them all sins of infirmity, in opposition to the sins of unbelievers, who are utterly unholy. And they call them sins of infirmity, 1. Because the person that committeth them is not dead in sins, as the unregenerate are, but only diseased, wounded, and infirm. 2. Because that they are not committed with so full consent of will, as those of the unregenerate are; but only after much striving, or at least contrary to habitual resolutions, though not against actual.

Here we are in very great difficulties, and full of controversies: some say, that these gross sins do extinguish true grace, and are inconsistent with it; and that David and Peter were out of the state of grace till they did again repent. Others say, that they were in the state of grace, and not at all so liable to condemnation, but that if they had died in the act, they had been saved, because "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," and that therefore all the sins of believers are alike sins of infirmity, pardoned on the same terms: and therefore as a rash word may be pardoned without a particular repentance, so possibly may these gross sins. To others this seems dangerous and contrary to Scripture, and therefore they would fain find out a way between both; but how to do it clearly and satisfactorily is not easy (at least to me, who have been long upon it, but am yet much in the dark in it). I think it is plain that such persons are not totally unsanctified by their sin; I believe that Christ's interest is habitually more in their wills than is the interest of the flesh or world, at that very time when they are sinning; and so Christ's interest is least as to their actual willing; and so sin prevaileth for that time against the act of their faith and love, but not wholly against the prevalent part of the habit. And therefore when the shaking wind of that stormy temptation is over, the soul will

return to Christ by repentance, love, and renewed obedience. But then to know what state he is relatively in this while, as to his justification, and reconciliation, and right to glory, is the point of exceeding difficulty. Whether as we distinguish habitual faith, and love, and obedience, which he hath not lost; and actual, which he hath lost; so we must make some answerable distinction of justification (habitual and actual it cannot be) into virtual justification which he hath not lost, and actual justification which he hath lost; or into plenary justification (which he hath not) and imperfect justification, wanting a further act to make it plenary (which may remain). But still it will be more difficult to show punctually what this imperfect or virtual justification is; and most difficult to show, whether with the loss of actual plenary justification, and the loss of a plenary right to heaven, a man's salvation may consist; that is, whether if he should die in that condition, he should be saved or condemned? Or if it be said, that he shall certainly repent, 1. Yet such a supposition may be put, while he yet repenteth not; for the inquiry into his state, how far there is any intercession of his justification, pardon, adoption, or right to salvation? 2. And whether it can fully be proved that it is impossible (or that which never was or shall be) for a regenerate man to die in the very act of a gross sin (as self-murder or the like)? For my part, I think God hath purposely left us here in the dark, that we may not be too bold in sinning, but may know that whether the gross sins of believers be such as destroy their justification and the right to glory, prevalently or not, yet certainly they leave them in the dark as to any certainty of their justification or salvation.

And then more dark is it and impossible to discover how far a man may go in these grosser sins, and yet have the prevalent habits of grace. As to the former question about the intercession of justification, I am somewhat inclinable to think, that the habit of faith hath more to do in our justification than I have formerly thought, and may as properly be said to be the condition as the act: and that as long as a man is (in a prevalent degree) habitually a believer, he is not only imperfectly and virtually justified, but so far actually justified, that he should be saved, though he were cut off before he actually repent: and that he being already habitually penitent, having a hatred of all sin as sin, should be saved if mere want of opportunity do prevent the act: and that only those sins do bring a man into a state of condemnation, prove him in such, which consist not with the habitual pre-eminence of Christ's interest in our souls, above the interest of the flesh and world; and that David's and Peter's were such as did consist with the pre-eminence of Christ's interest in the habit. But wital, that such gross sins must needs be observable; and so the soul that is guilty doth ordinarily know its guilt, yea, and think of it: and that it is inconsistent with this habitual repentance, not to repent actually as soon as time is afforded, and the violence of passion so far allayed, as that the soul may recollect itself, and reason have its free use: and that he that hath this leisure and opportunity for the free use of reason, and yet doth not repent, it is a sign that the interest of the flesh is habitually as well as actually stronger than Christ's interest in him. I say, in this doubtful case, I am most inclined to judge thus: but as I would have no man take this as my resolved judgment, much less a certain truth, and least of all to venture on sin or impitenency ever the more for such a doubtful opinion, which doth not conclude him to be cer-

tainly unjustified; so I am utterly ignorant both how long sensual passions may possibly rage, and keep the soul from sober consideration; or how far they may interpose in the very time of consideration, and frustrate it, and prevail against it, and so keep the sinner from actual repenting, or at least from a full, ingenuous acknowledgment and bewailing of the sin, which is necessary to full repentance; and how long repentance may be so far stifled, as to remain only in some inward grudgings of conscience, and trouble of mind, hindered from breaking out into free confession (which seemeth to have been David's case long). Nay, it is impossible to know just how long a man may live in the very practice of such gross sin, before Christ's habitual interest above the flesh be either overthrown, or proved not to be there; and how oft a man that hath true grace may commit such sins: these things are undiscernible, besides that none can punctually define a gross sin, so as to exclude every degree of infirmities, and include every degree of such gross sin.

Perhaps you will marvel why I run so far in this point: it is both to give you as much light as I can, what sins they be which be to be called infirmities, and so what sins they be that do forbid that gentle, comforting way of cure, when the soul is troubled for them, which must be used with those that are troubled more than needs, or upon mistakes; and also to convince you of this weighty truth, That our comfort, yea, and assurance, hath a great dependence on our actual obedience: yea, so great, that the least obedient sort of sincere christians cannot by ordinary means have any assurance; and the most obedient (if other necessities concur) will have the most assurance; and for the middle sort, their assurance will rise and fall, ordinarily, with their obedience, so that there is no way to comfort such offending christians, but by reducing them to fuller obedience by faith and repentance, that so the evidences of their justification may be clear, and the great impediments of their assurance and comfort be removed.

This I will yet make clearer to you by its reasons, and then tell you how to apply it to yourself.

1. No man can be sure of his salvation or justification, but he that is sure of his true faith and love. And no man can be sure of his true faith and love, but he that is sure of the sincerity of his obedience. For true faith doth ever take God for our great Sovereign, and Christ for our Lord Redeemer, and containeth a covenant delivery of a man's self to God and the Redeemer, to be ruled by him, as a subject, child, servant, and spouse. This is not done sincerely and savingly, unless there be an actual and habitual resolution to obey God and the Redeemer, before all creatures, and against all temptations that would draw us from him. To obey Christ a little and the flesh more, is no true obedience: if the flesh can do more with us to draw us to sin, than faith and obedience do to keep us from sin, ordinarily, this is no true faith or obedience. If Christ have not the sovereignty in the soul, and his interest be not the most predominant and potent, we are no true believers. Now it is plain, that the interest of the world and flesh doth actually prevail, when a man is actually committing a known sin, and omitting a known duty; and then it is certain that habits are known but by the acts. And therefore it must needs be that the soul that most sinneth, must needs be most in doubt whether the interest of Christ or the flesh be predominant, and so whether his obedience be true or no; and so whether he did sincerely take Christ for his Sovereign: and that is, whether he be a true believer; for when a man is inquiring into

the state of his soul, Whether he do subject himself to Christ as his only Sovereign; and whether the authority and love of Christ will do more with him, than the temptations of the world, flesh, and devil; he hath no way to be resolved but by feeling the pulse of his own will. And if he say, I am willing to obey Christ before the flesh, and yet do actually live in an obedience to the flesh before Christ, he is deceived in his own will; for this is no saving willingness. A wicked man may have some will to obey Christ principally; but having more will to the contrary, viz. to please the flesh before Christ, therefore he is wicked still; so that you see in our self-examination, the business is for the most part finally resolved into our sincere actual obedience. For thus we proceed: we first find, He that believeth and loveth Christ sincerely, shall be saved. Then we proceed, He that believeth sincerely taketh Christ for his Sovereign. Then, He that truly taketh Christ for his Sovereign, doth truly resolve to obey him and his laws, before the world, flesh, or devil. Then, He that truly resolveth thus to obey Christ before all, doth sincerely perform his resolution, and doth so obey him. For that is no true resolution ordinarily, that never comes to performance. And here we are cast unavoidably to try whether we do perform our resolutions by actual obedience, before we can sit down with settled peace; much more before we get assurance. Now those that are diligent and careful in obeying, and have greatest conquest over their corruptions, and do most seldom yield to temptations, but do most notably and frequently conquer them, these have the clearest discovery of the performance of their resolutions by obedience, and consequently the fullest assurance; but they that are oftenest overcome by temptations, and yield most to sin, and live most disobediently, must needs be furthest from assurance of the sincerity of their obedience, and consequently of their salvation.

2. God himself hath plainly made our actual obedience, not only a sign of a true faith, but a secondary part of the condition of our salvation, as promised in the new covenant. And therefore it is as impossible to be saved without it, as without faith, supposing that the person have opportunity to obey, in which case only it is made necessary, as a condition. This I will but cite several scriptures to prove, and leave you to peruse them if you be unsatisfied. Rom. viii. 1-14. They that are in Christ Jesus, are they that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gate into the city," Rev. xxii. 14. "He is become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him," Heb. v. 9. "Take my yoke upon you, for it is easy, and my burden, for it is light. Learn of me to be meek and lowly, &c. and ye shall find rest," &c. Matt. xi. 28-30. John xvi. 27; Luke xiii. 24; Phil. ii. 12; Rom. ii. 7, 10; John xv. 12, 17; xii. 21; Matt. v. 44; Luke vi. 27, 35; Prov. viii. 17, 21; Matt. x. 37; 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19; 2 Tim. ii. 5, 12; Matt. xxv. 41, 42; James ii. 21-24, 26; i. 22; ii. 5; Prov. i. 23; xxviii. 13; Luke xiii. 3, 5; Matt. xii. 37; xi. 25, 26; vi. 12, 14, 15; 1 John i. 9; Acts viii. 22; iii. 19; xxii. 16; Luke vi. 37; 1 Pet. iv. 18; i. 2, 22; Rom. vi. 16; with abundance more the like. Now when a poor sinner that hath oft fallen into drunkenness, railing, strife, envying, &c. shall read that these are the works of the flesh; and that for these things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; and that every man shall

be judged according to his works, and according to what he hath done in the flesh; and that they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God; it cannot be but that his assurance of salvation must needs have so great a dependence on his obedience, as that these sins will diminish it. When he reads Rom. vi. 16, "His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness," he must needs think, how such a time, and such a time, he obeyed sin; and the oftener and the more wilfully he did it, the doubtfuller will his case be; especially if he be yet in a sinful course, which he might avoid, whether of gross sin, or any wilful sin, it cannot be but this will obscure the evidence of his obedience. Men cannot judge beyond evidence; and he that hath not the evidence of his true obedience, hath not the evidence of the sincerity of his faith.

3. Moreover, assurance and comfort are God's gifts, and without his gracious aid we cannot attain them. But God will not give such gifts to his children, while they stand out in disobedience, but when they carefully please him. Paternal justice requires this.

4. And it would do them abundance of hurt, and God much dishonour, if he should either tell them just how oft or how far they may sin, and yet be saved; or yet should keep up their peace and comforts, as well in their greatest disobedience, as in their tenderest careful walking with him. But these things I spoke of before, and formerly elsewhere.

You see then, that though some obedient, tender Christians may yet on several occasions be deprived of assurance, yet ordinarily no other but they have assurance; and that assurance and comfort will rise and fall with obedience.

And for all the antinomian objections against this, as if it were a leading men to their own righteousness from Christ, I refer you to the twenty arguments which I before laid you down, to prove that we may and must fetch our assurance and comfort from our own works and graces; and so from our own evangelical righteousness, which is subordinate to Christ's righteousness, (which he speaks of, Matt. xxv. last, and in forty places more,) though we must have no thoughts of a legal righteousness (according to the law of works or ceremonies) in ourselves. They may as well say, that a woman doth forsake her husband, because she comforteth herself in this, that she hath not forsaken him, or been false and unchaste, thence gathering that he will not give her a bill of divorce. Or that a servant forsakes his master, or a subject his prince, or a parent is forsaken by his child; because they comfort themselves in their obedience and loyalty, gathering thence that they are not flat rebels, and shall not be used as rebels. Or that any that enter covenant with superiors do forsake them, because they comfort themselves in their keeping covenant, as a sign that the covenant shall be kept with them. All these are as wise collections, as to gather, that a man forsakes Christ and his righteousness, and setteth up his own instead of it, because he looks at his not forsaking, refusing, and vilifying of Christ, his love and faithful obedience to Christ, as comfortable signs that Christ will not forsake and reject him. Do these men think that a rebel may have the love of his prince, and as much comfort from him as a loyal subject? Or a whorish woman have as much love and comfort from her husband, as a faithful wife? Or a stubborn, rebellious son or servant have as much love and comfort from their father or mother as the dutiful? If there be so near a relation as hitherto we have supposed, between a sovereign and subjection to him, and a husband and marriage faithfulness to him, and

a master and service to him, and a father and loving obedience to him, it is strange that men should suppose such a strange opposition as these men do. Certainly God doth not so, when he saith, "If I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" Mal. i. 6. And Isa. i. 2—4, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward." And Jer. iii. 19, "Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not depart away from me." And 2 Tim. ii. 19, "The Lord knoweth who are his. And, Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." And Psal. lxxvi. 18, "If I delight in iniquity, or regard it, God will not hear my prayer," saith David himself. Doubtless Paul did not forsake Christ's righteousness by confidence in his own, when he saith, "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation among you," 2 Cor. i. 12; with many the like which I before mentioned. Nor doth the Lord Jesus at the day of judgment turn men off from his righteousness, when he saith, "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, I will make thee ruler over much," Luke xix. 17; Matt. xxv. 23. and calls them thereupon righteous, saying, "And the righteous shall go into life everlasting," Matt. xxv. last.

It remains now that I further acquaint you what use you should make of this observation, concerning the dependence of assurance upon actual obedience. And, I. I advise you, if your soul remain in doubts and troubles, and you cannot enjoy God in any way of peace and comfort, nor see any clear evidence of the sincerity of your faith, take a serious view of your obedience, and faithfully survey your heart and life, and your daily carriage to God in both. See whether there be nothing that provokes God to an unusual jealousy; if there be, it is either the increase of some carnal interest in your heart, or else the wilful or negligent falling into some actual sin, of commission or of omission. In the making of this search, you have need to be exceeding cautious; for if I have any acquaintance with the mystery of this business, your peace or trouble, comfort or discomfort, will mainly depend on this. And your care must lie in this point, that you diligently avoid these two extremes: first, That you do not deal negligently and unfaithfully with your own soul, as either unwilling to know the truth, or unwilling to be at that labour which you must needs be at before you can know it. Secondly, That you do not either condemn yourself when your conscience doth acquit you; or vex your soul with needless scruples, or make unavoidable or ordinary infirmities to seem such wilful, heinous sins, as should quite break your settled peace. Oh how narrow is the path between these two mistaken roads, and how hard a thing, and how rare is it to find it and to keep in it! For yourself, and all tender-conscience christians, that are heartily willing to be ruled by Christ, I would persuade you equally to beware of both these; because some souls are as inclinable to the latter extreme as to the former (during their troubles). But for the most christians in the world, I would have them first and principally avoid the former, and that with far greater diligence than the latter. For, I. Naturally all men's hearts

are far proner to deal too remissly, yea, unfaithfully with themselves, in searching after their sins, than too scrupulously and tenderly. The best men have so much pride and carnal self-love, that it will strongly incline them to excuse, or mince, or hide their sin, and to think far lighter and more favourably of it than they should do, because it is theirs. How was the case altered with Judah towards Tamar, when he once saw it was his own act! How was David's zeal for justice allayed, as soon as heard, "Thou art the man!" This is the most common cause why God is fain to hold our eyes on our transgressions by force, because we are so loth to do it more voluntarily; and why he openeth our sin in such crimson and scarlet colours to us, because we are so apt either to look on them as nothing, or to shut our eyes and overlook them; and why God doth hold us so long on the rack, because we would still ease ourselves by ingenious excuses and extenuations; and why God doth break the skin so oft, and keep open our wounds, because we are still healing them by such carnal shifts. This proud, sin-excusing distemper needs no other proof or discovery, than our great tenderness and backwardness in submitting to reproofs: how long do we excuse sin, and defend our pretended innocence, as long as we can find a word to say for it! Doth not daily experience of this sad distemper, even in most of the godly, discover fully to us, that most men (yea, naturally all) are far proner to overlook their sins, and deal faithlessly and negligently in the trial, than to be too tender, and to charge themselves too deep?

Besides, if a christian be heartily willing to deal impartially, and search to the quick, yet the heart is lamentably deceitful, that he shall overlook much evil in it, when he hath done his best. And the devil will be far more industrious to provoke and help you to hide, excuse, and extenuate sin, than to open it, and see it as it is. His endeavour to drive poor souls into terrors, is usually but when he can no longer keep them in presumption. When he can hide their sin no longer, nor make it seem small, to keep them in impenitency, then he will make it seem unpardonable and remediless if he can; but usually not before. So that you see the frame of most men's spirits doth require them to be rather over-jealous in searching after their sins, than over-careless and confident of themselves.

2. Besides this, I had rather of the two that christians would suspect and search too much than too little, because there is a hundred times more danger in seeing sin less than it is, or overlooking it, than in seeing it greater than it is, and being over-fearful. The latter mistake may bring us into sorrow, and make our lives uncomfortable to us (and therefore should be avoided); but usually it doth not endanger our happiness; but is often made a great occasion of our good. But the former mistake may hazard our everlasting salvation, and so bring us to remediless trouble.

3. Yea, lest you should say, This is sad language to comfort a distressed, wounded soul, let me add this one reason more. So far as I can learn by reading the Scriptures, and by long experience of very many souls under troubles of conscience, it is most commonly some notable cherished corruption, that breedeth and feedeth the sad, uncomfortable estate of most professors, except those who by melancholy, or very great ignorance, are so weak in their intellects, as that they are incapable of making any true discovery of their condition, and of passing a right judgment upon themselves thereupon.

Lest I should make sad any soul that God would not have sad, let me desire you to observe, I. That

I say but of most professors, not all; for I doubt not but God may hide his face for some time from some of the holiest and wisest of believers, for several and great reasons. 2. Do but well observe most of the humble, obedient christians, that you know to lie under any long and sad distress of mind, and you will find that they are generally of one of the two forementioned sorts: either so ignorant as not to know well what faith is, or what the conditions of the covenant are, or what is the extent of the promise, or the full sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction for all sinners, or what are the evidences by which they may try themselves; or else they are melancholy persons, whose fancy is still molested with these perturbing vapours, and their understandings so clouded and distempered, that reason is not free. And so common is this latter, that in my observation of all the christians that have lived in any long and deep distress of mind, six, if not ten for one, have been deeply melancholy; except those that feed their troubles by disobedience. So that besides these ignorant and melancholy persons, and disorderly, declining christians, the number of wounded spirits I think is very small, in comparison of the rest. Indeed it is usual for many at, or shortly after, their first change, to be under trouble and deep fears; but that is but while the sense of former sin is fresh upon their hearts. The sudden discovery of so deep a guilt, and so great a danger, which a man did never know before, must needs amaze and affright the soul: and if that fear remain long, where right means are either not known, or not used for the cure, it is no wonder; and sometimes it will be long, if the rightest means be used. But for those that have been long in the profession of holiness, and yet lie, or fall again, under troubles of soul, (except those before excepted,) I would have them make a diligent search, whether God do not observe either some fleshly interest encroach upon his right, or some actual sin to be cherished in their hearts or conversations.

And here let me tell you, when you are making this search, what particulars they be which I would have you to be most jealous of. 1. The former sort, which I call contrary carnal interest, encroaching on Christ's right, are they that you must look after with far more diligence than your actual sins. (1.) Because they are the far greatest and most dangerous of all sins, and the root of all the rest: for as God is the end and chief good of every saint, so these sins do stand up against him, as our end and chief good, and carry away the soul by that act which we call simply willing, or complacency; and so these interests are men's idols, and resist God's very sovereignty and perfect goodness; that is, they are against God himself as our God. Whereas those which I now call actual sins, as distinct from these, are but the violation of particular precepts, and against God's means and laws directly, and but remotely or indirectly against his Godhead: and they have but that act of our will, which we call election, consent, or use, which is proper to means, and not to the end. (2.) Because, as these sins are the most damnable, so they lie deepest at the heart, and are not so easily discovered. It is ordinary with many, to have a covetous, worldly, ambitious heart, even damnable such, that yet have wit to carry it fairly without; yea, and seem truly religious to themselves and others. (3.) Because these sins are the most common; for though they reign only in hypocrites and other un sanctified ones, yet they dwell too much in all men on earth.

If you now ask me what these sins are, I answer, They are as denominated from the point or term

from which men turn, all comprised in this one, unwillingness of God, or the turning of the heart from God, or not loving God. But as we denominate them from the term or object to which they run, they are all comprised in this one, carnal self-love, or turning to and preferring our carnal self before God: and as it inclineth to action, all, or most of it, is comprehended in this one word, flesh-pleasing. But because there are a trinity of sins in this unity, we must consider them distinctly. Three great objects there are, about which this sin of flesh-pleasing is exercised: 1. Credit or honour. 2. Profit or riches. 3. Sensual pleasure, more strictly so called, consisting in the more immediate pleasing of the senses; whereas the two first do more remotely please them, by laying in provision to that end; otherwise all three are in the general but flesh-pleasing. The three great sins therefore that do most directly fight against God himself in his sovereignty, are, 1. Pride, or ambition. 2. Worldliness, or love of riches. 3. Sensuality, voluptuousness, or inordinate love of pleasures. There are in the understanding indeed other sins, as directly against God as these, and more radical: as, 1. Atheism, denying a God. 2. Polytheism, denying our God to be the alone God, and joining others with him. 3. Idolatry, owning false gods. 4. Infidelity, denying Jesus Christ our Lord Redeemer. 5. Owning false saviours and prophets, in his stead, or before him, as do the Mahometans. 6. Joining other redeemers and saviours with him, as if he were not the alone Christ. 7. Denying the Holy Ghost, and denying credit to his holy and miraculous testimony to the christian faith, and blasphemously ascribing all to the devil; which is the sin against the Holy Ghost. 8. Owning and believing in devils, or lying spirits, instead of the Holy Ghost; as the Montanists, Mahometans, ranters, familists do. 9. Owning and adjoining devils, or lying spirits, in co-ordination or equality with the Holy Ghost, and believing equally his doctrine and theirs; as if he were not sole and sufficient in his work. All these are sins directly against God himself, and if prevalent, most certainly damning; three against the Father, three against the Son, and three against the Holy Ghost. But these be not they that I need now to warn you of. These are prevalent only in pagans, infidels, and blasphemers. Your troubles and complaints show that these are not predominant in you. It is therefore the three forementioned sins of the heart or will, that I would have you carefully to look after in your troubles, to see whether none of them get ground and strength in you.

1. Inquire carefully into your humility. It is not for nothing that Christ hath said so much of the excellency and necessity of this grace; when he bids us learn of him to be meek and lowly; when he blesseth the meek and poor in spirit; when he setteth a little child in the midst of them, and telleth them, except they become as that child, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven; when he stoopeth to wash and wipe his disciples' feet, requiring them to do so by one another. How oft doth the Holy Ghost press this upon us! Commanding us, to submit ourselves to one another, and not to mind high things; but to condescend to men of low estate, Rom. xii. 16; and not to be wise in our own esteem, but in honour prefer others before ourselves, Rom. xii. 10. How oft hath God professed to resist and take down the proud, and to give grace to the humble, and dwell with them! Search carefully, therefore, lest this sin get ground upon you. For though it may not be so predominant and raging as to damn you, yet may it cause God to af-

flict you, and hide his face from you, and humble you by the sense of his displeasure, and the concealment of his love. And though one would think that doubting, troubled souls should be always the most humble and freest from pride, yet sad experience hath certified me, that much pride may dwell with great doubtings and distress of mind. Even some of the same souls that cry out of their own unworthiness, and fear lest they shall be firebrands of hell, yet cannot endure a close reproof, especially for any disgraceful sin, nor bear a disparaging word, nor love those, nor speak well of them, who do not value them, nor endure to be crossed or contradicted in word or deed, but must have all go their way, and follow their judgment, and say as they say, and dance after their pipe, and their hearts rise against those that will not do it, much more against those that speak or do any thing to the diminishing of their reputation: they cannot endure to be low, and passed by, and overlooked, when others are preferred before them, or to be slighted and disrespected, or their words, or parts, or works, or judgments to be contemned or disparaged. Nay, some are scarce able to live in the same house, or church, or town, in love and peace, with any but those that will humour and please them, and speak them fair, and give them smooth and stroking language, and forbear crossing, reproving, and disparaging them. Every one of these singly is an evident mark and fruit of pride; how much more all jointly! I seriously profess it amazeth me to consider, how heinously most professors are guilty of this sin! even when they know it to be the devil's own sin, and the great abomination hated of God, and read and hear so much against it as they do, and confess it so oft in their prayers to God, and yet not only inwardly cherish it, but in words, actions, gestures, apparel, express it and passionately defend these discoveries of it. The confusions and distractions in church and state are nothing else but the proper fruits of it; so are the contentions among christians, and the unpeaceableness in families; "for only from pride cometh contention," saith Solomon, Prov. xiii. 10. For my part, when I consider the great measure of pride, self-conceitiveness, self-esteem, that is in the greatest part of christians that ever I was acquainted with, (we of the ministry not excepted,) I wonder that God doth not afflict us more, and bring us down by foul means, that will not be brought down by fair. For my own part, I have had as great means to help me against this sin, as most men living ever had; first, in many years' trouble of mind, and then in near twenty years' languishing and bodily pains, having been almost twenty times at the grave's mouth, and living near it continually; and lastly, and above all, I have had as full a sight of it in others, even in the generality of professors, and in the doleful state of the church and state, and heinous, detestable abominations of this age, which one would think should have fully cured it. And yet if I hear but either an applauding word from any of fame on one side, or a disparaging word on the other side, I am fain to watch my heart as narrowly as I would do the thatch of my house when fire is put to it, and presently to throw on it the water of detestation, resolution, and recourse to God. And though the acts through God's great mercy be thus restrained, yet the constancy of these inclinations assures me, that there is still a strong and deep root. I beseech you therefore, if you would ever have settled peace and comfort, be watchful against this sin of pride, and be sure to keep it down, and get it mortified at the very heart.

2. The next sin that I would have you be specially jealous of, is covetousness, or love of the profits or

riches of the world. This is not the sin of the rich only, but also of the poor: and more heinous is it in them, to love the world inordinately, that have so little of it, than in rich men, that have more to tempt them, though dangerous in both. Nor doth it lie only in coveting that which is another's, or in seeking to get by unlawful means; but also in overvaluing and overloving the wealth of the world, though lawfully gotten. He that loveth the world, (that is, above Christ and holiness,) the love of the Father is not in him, (that is, savingly and sincerely,) 1 John ii. 15. He that loveth house or lands better than Christ, cannot be his disciple. I beseech you therefore, when God hides his face, search diligently, and search again and again, lest the world should encroach on Christ's interest in your heart. If it should be so, can you wonder if Christ seem to withdraw, when you begin to set so light by him, as to value dung and earth in any comparison with himself? May he not well say to you, If you set so much by the world, take it, and see what it will do for you? If you can spare me better than your wealth, you shall be without me. Must not the Lord Jesus needs take it exceedingly unkind, that after all his love, and bloodshed, and pains with your heart, and seals of his kindness, and discoveries of his amiableness, and the treasures of his kingdom, you should now so much forget and slight him, to set up the world in any comparison with him? and to give such loving entertainment to his enemy? and look so kindly on a competitor? Is his glory worth no more than so? and hath he deserved no better at your hands? Again, therefore, do I beseech you to be afraid, lest you should be guilty of this sin. Examine whether the thoughts of the world grow not sweeter to you, and the thoughts of God and glory more unwelcome and unpleasing? whether you have not an eagerness after a fuller estate, and too keen an edge upon your desires after riches, or at least after a fuller portion and provision for your children; or after better accommodations and contentments in house, goods, or other worldly things? Do not worldly hopes delight you too much? and much more your worldly possessions? Are you not too busily contriving how to be richer? forgetting God's words, 1 Tim. vi. 8, 9, 17. Doth not the world eat out the life of your duties, that when you should be serious with God, you have left your heart behind you, and drowned your affections in things below? Doth not your soul stick so fast in this mud and clay, that you can scarce stir it God-ward in prayer or heavenly meditation? Do not you cut short duties in your family and in secret, if not frequently omit them, that so you may be again at your worldly business? Or do you not customarily hurry them over, because the world will not allow you leisure to be serious, and so you have no time to deal in good earnest with Christ or your soul? Do not your very speeches of Christ and heaven grow few and strange, because the world must first be served? When you see your brother have need, do you not shut up the bowels of your compassions from him? Doth not the love of the world make you hard to your servants, hard to those you buy and sell with? and doth it not encroach much on the Lord's own day? Look after this earthly vice in all these discoveries, search for your enemy in each of these corners. And if you find that this is indeed your case, you need not much wonder if Christ and you be stranger than heretofore. If this earth get between your heart and the Sun of life, no wonder if all your comforts are in an eclipse, seeing your light is but as the moon's, a borrowed light. And you must be the more careful in searching after this sin, both because

it is certain that all men have too much of it, and because it is of so dangerous a nature, that should it prevail it would destroy; for covetousness is idolatry; and among all the heinous sins that the godly have fallen into, look into the Scripture, and tell me how many of them you find charged with covetousness. And also, because it is a blinding, befooling sin, not only drawing old men, and those that have no children, and rich men, that have no need to pursue these things as madly as others, but also hiding itself from their eyes, that most that are guilty of it will not know it; though, alas! if they were but willing, it were very easy to know it. But the power of the sin doth so set to work their wits to find excuses and fair names and titles for to cloak it, that many delude others by it, and more delude themselves, but none can delude God. The case of some professors of godliness that I have known, is very lamentable on this point, who being generally noted for a dangerous measure of worldliness, by most that know them, could yet never be brought to acknowledge it in themselves. Nay, by the excellency of their outward duties and discourse, and the strength of their wits, (alas! ill employed,) and by their great ability of speech, to put a fair gloss on the foulest of their actions, they have gone on so smoothly and plausibly in their worldliness, that though most accused them of it behind their backs, yet no man knew how to fasten any thing on them. By which means they were hindered from repentance and recovery.

In this sad case, though it be God's course very often to let hypocrites and other enemies go on and prosper, because they have their portion in this life, and the reckoning is to come; yet I have oft observed, that for God's own people, or those that he means to make his people by their recovery, God useth to cross them in their worldly desires and designs. Perhaps he may let them thrive awhile, and congratulate the prosperity of their flesh, but at last he breaks in suddenly on their wealth, and scatters it abroad, or addeth some cross to it, that embitters all to them, and then asketh them, Where is now your idol? And then they begin to see their folly. If you do dote on any thing below, to the neglecting of God, he will make a rod for you of that very thing you dote upon, and by it will he scourge you home to himself.

3. The third great heart sin which I would have you jealous of, is sensuality or voluptuousness, or pleasing the senses inordinately. The two former are in this the more mortal sins, in that they carry more of the understanding and will with them, and make reason itself to be serviceable to them in their workings; whereas sensuality is more in the flesh and passion, and hath oftentimes less assistance of reason or consent of the will. Yet is the will tainted with sensual inclinations, and both reason and will are at the best guilty of connivance, and not exercising their authority over the sensual part. But in this sensuality is the more dangerous vice, in that it hath so strong and inseparable a seat as our sensual appetite; and in that it acteth so violently and ragingly as it doth; so that it beareth down a weak opposition of reason and will, and carrieth us on blindfold, and transformeth us into brutes. I will not here put the question concerning the gross acting of this sin, (of that anon,) but I would have you very jealous of a sensual disposition. When a man cannot deny his appetite what it would have, or at least, covetousness can do more in restraining it than conscience; when a man cannot make a covenant with his eyes, but must gaze on every alluring object; when the flesh draws to forbidden pleasures, in meats, drinks, apparel, recreations, lasciviousness,

and all the considerations of reason cannot restrain it; this is a sad case, and God may well give over such to sadness of heart. If we walk so pleasantly to the flesh, God will walk more displeasingly to us.

And as you should be jealous of these great heart transgressions, so should you be of particular, actual sins. Examine whether the jealous eye of God see not something that much offendeth him, and causeth your heaviness. I will not enlarge so far as to mind you of the particular sins that you should look after, seeing it must be all, and your obedience must be universal. Only one I will give you a hint of. I have observed God sometimes show himself most displeased and angry to those Christians, who have the least tenderness and compassion towards the infirmities of others. He that hath made the forgiving others a necessary condition of God's forgiving us, will surely withdraw the sense of our forgiveness, when we withdraw our forgiveness and compassion to men. He that casts the unmerciful servant into hell, who takes his fellow-servant by the throat, will threaten us, and frown upon us, if we come but near it. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. He shall have judgment without mercy that sheweth no mercy," James ii. 13. Study well Rom. xiv. xv.; Gal. vi.; which the proud, censorious, self-esteeming professors of this age have studied so little, and will not understand. When we deal sourly and churlishly with our weak brethren, and instead of winning an offender by love, we will vilify him, and disdain him, and say, How can such a man have any grace? and will think and speak hardly of those that do but cherish any hopes that he may be gracious, or speak of him with tenderness and compassion; no wonder if God force the consciences of such persons to deal as churlishly and sourly with them, and to clamour against them, and say, How canst thou have any true grace, who hast such sins as these? When our Lord himself dealt a way so tenderly with sinners, that it gave occasion to the slanderous Pharisees to say, he was "a friend of publicans and sinners" (and so he was, even their greatest Friend). And his command to us is, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification: for even Christ pleased not himself," Rom. xv. 1-3. And Gal. vi. 1, 2, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken with a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." When people can bear with almost no infirmity in a neighbour, in a servant, or in their nearest friends, but will make the worst of every fault, no wonder if God make such feel their dealings with others, by his dealings with them. Had such that love to their poorest brethren, which thinketh no evil, and speaketh not evil, which "suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, becometh not itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 7; had we more of this love, which covereth a multitude of infirmities, God would cover our infirmities the more, and tell us of them, and trouble us for them the less.

To this sin I may add another, which is scarce another, but partly the same with this, and partly its immediate effect; and that is, unpeaceableness and unquietness with those about us; this commonly occasioneth God to make us as unpeaceable and unquiet in ourselves. When people are so froward, and peevish, and troublesome, that few can live in

peace with them, either in family or neighbourhood, except those that have little to do with them, or those that can humour them in all things, and have an extraordinary skill in smooth speaking, flattering, or man-pleasing; so that neighbours, servants, children, and sometimes their own yoke-fellows, must be gone from them, and may not abide near them, as a man gets out of the way from a wild beast or a mad dog, or avoideth the flames of a raging fire; is it any wonder if God give these people as little peace in their own spirits, as they give to others? When people are so hard to be pleased, that nobody about them or near them can tell how to fit their humours; neighbours cannot please them, servants cannot please them, husband or wife cannot please each other; every word is spoke amiss, and every thing done amiss to them; what wonder if God seem hard to be pleased, and as frequently offended with them? Especially if their unpeaceableness trouble the church, and in their turbulency and self-conceitedness, they break the peace thereof.

Thus I have told you what sins you must look after when you find your peace broken, and your conscience disquieted; search carefully lest some iniquity lie at the root. Some I know will think that it is an unseasonable discourse to a troubled conscience, to mind them so much of their sins, which they are apt to look at too much already. But to such I answer, Either those sins are mortified and forsaken, or not. If they be, then these are not the persons I speak of, whose trouble is fed by continued sin. But I shall speak more to them anon. If not, then it seems for all their trouble of conscience, sin is not sufficiently laid to heart yet.

The chiefest thing therefore that I intend in all this discourse, is this following advice to those that upon search do find themselves guilty in any of these cases. As ever you would have peace of conscience, set yourselves presently against your sins. And do not either mistakenly cry out of one sore, when it is another that is your malady; nor yet spend your days in fears and disquietness of mind, and fruitless complainings, and in the mean time continue in wilful sinning. But resist sin more, and torment your minds less; and break off your sin and your terrors together.

In these words I tell you what must be done for your cure; and I warn you of two sore mistakes of many sad christians hereabout. The cure lieth in breaking off sin, to the utmost of your power. This is the Achan that disquieteth all. It is God's great mercy that he disquieteth you in sinning, and gives you not over to so deep a slumber and peace in sin, as might hinder your repentance and reformation. The dangerous mistakes here are these two.

1. Some do as the lapwing, cry loudest when they are furthest from the nest, and complain of an aching tooth when the disease is in the head or heart. They cry out, Oh I have such wandering thoughts in prayer, and such a bad memory, and so hard a heart, that I cannot weep for sin; or such doubts and fears, and so little sense of the love of God, that I doubt I have no true grace. When they should rather say, I have so proud a heart, that God is fain by these sad means to humble me. I am so high in my own eyes, so wise in my own conceit, and so tender of my own esteem and credit, that God is fain to make me base in my own eyes, and to abhor myself. I am so worldly and in love with earth, that it draws away my thoughts from God, dulls my love, and spoils all my duties. I am so sensual, that I venture sooner to displease my God than my flesh. I have so little compassion on the infirmities of neighbours and servants, and other brethren, and

deal so censoriously, churlishly, and unmercifully with them, that God is fain to hide his mercy from me, and speak to me as in anger, and vex me as in sore displeasure. I am so froward, peevish, quarrelsome, unpeaceable, and hard to be pleased, that it is no wonder if I have no peace with God, or in my own conscience; and if I have so little quietness who love and seek it no more. Many have more reason, I say, to turn their complaints into this tune.

2. Another most common, unhappy miscarriage of sad christians lieth here, That they will rather continue complaining and self-tormenting, than give over sinning, so far as they might give it over if they would. I beseech you in the name of God, to know and consider what it is that God requireth of you. He doth not desire your vexation, but your reformation. No further doth he desire the trouble of your mind, than as it tendeth to the avoiding of that sin which is the cause of it. God would have you less in your fears and troubles, and more in your obedience. Obey more, and disquiet your mind less. Will you take this counsel presently, and see whether it will not do you more good than all the complaints and doubtings of your whole life have done. Set yourself with all your might against your pride, worldliness, and sensuality, your unpeaceableness and want of love and tenderness to your brethren, and whatever other sin your conscience is acquainted with. I pray you tell me, if you had gravel in your shoe, in your travel, would it not be more wisdom to sit down and take off your shoe, and cast it out, than to stand still, or go complaining, and tell every one you meet of your soreness? If you have a thorn in your foot, will you go on halting and lamenting? or will you pull it out? Truly sin is the thorn in your conscience; and those that would not have such troubled consciences told of their sins for fear of increasing their distress, are unskilful comforters, and will continue the trouble while the thorn is in. As ever you would have peace then, resolve against sin to the utmost of your power. Never excuse it, or cherish it, or favour it more. Confess it freely. Thank those that reprove you for it. Desire those about you to watch over you, and to tell you of it, yea, to tell you of all suspicious signs that they see of it, though it be not evident. And if you do not see so much pride, worldliness, unpeaceableness, or other sins in yourself, as your friends think they see in you, yet let their judgment make you jealous of your heart, seeing self-love doth oft so blind us that we cannot see that evil in ourselves, which others see in us; nay, which all the town may take notice of. And be sure to engage your friends that they shall not smooth over your faults, or mince them, and tell you of them in extenuating language, which may hinder conviction and repentance, much less silence them, for fear of displeasing you; but that they will deal freely and faithfully with you. And see that you distaste them not, and discountenance not their plain dealing, lest you discourage them, and deprive your soul of so great a benefit. Think best of those as your greatest friends, who are least friends to your sin, and do most for your recovery from it. If you say, Alas, I am not able to mortify my sins. It is not in my power. I answer, 1. I speak not of a perfect conquest; nor of a freedom from every passion or infirmity. 2. Take heed of pretending disability when it is unwillingness. If you were heartily willing, you would be able to do much, and God would strengthen you. Cannot you resist pride, worldliness, and sensuality, if you be willing? Cannot you forbear most of the actual sins you commit, and perform the duties that you omit, if you be willing (though not so well as you would perform them?)

Yea, let me say thus much, lest I endanger you by sparing you. Many a miserable hypocrite doth live in trouble of mind and complaining, and after all perish for their wilful disobedience. Did not the rich young man go far before he would break off with Christ? And when he did leave him, he went away sorrowful. And what was the cause of his sorrow? Why, the matter was, that he could not be saved without selling all, and giving it to the poor, when he had great possessions. It was not that he could not be rid of his sin, but that he could not have Christ and heaven without forsaking the world. This is the case of unsanctified persons that are enlightened to see the need of Christ, but are not weaned from worldly profits, honours, and pleasures; they are perhaps troubled in mind, (and I cannot blame them,) but it is not that they cannot leave sinning, but that they cannot have heaven without leaving their delights and contentments on earth. Sin as sin they would willingly leave; for no man can love evil as evil. But their fleshly profits, honours, and pleasures they will not leave, and there is the stop; and this is the cause of their sorrows and fears. For their own judgment cries out against them, "He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him. If ye live after the flesh ye shall die. God resisteth the proud." This is the voice of their informed understandings. And conscience seconds it, and saith, "Thou art the man." But the flesh cries louder than both these, Wilt thou leave thy pleasures? Wilt thou undo thyself? Wilt thou be made a scorn or laughing-stock to all? Or rather it strongly draws and provoketh, when it hath nothing to say. No wonder if this poor sinner be here in a strait, and live in distress of mind. But as long as the flesh holds so fast, that all this conviction and trouble will not cause it to lose its hold, the poor soul is still in the bonds of iniquity. The case of such a hypocrite, or half-christian, is like the case of the poor papist, that having glutted himself with flesh in the Lent, was in this strait, that either he must vomit it up, and so disclose his fault, and undergo penance; or else he must be sick of his surfeit, and hazard his life. But he resolveth rather to venture on the danger, than to bear the penance. Or their case is like that of a proud woman, that hath got on a strait garment, or a pinching shoe, and because she will not be out of the fashion, she will rather choose to bear the pain, though she halt or suffer at every step. Or like the more impudent sort of them, who will endure the cold, and perhaps hazard their lives, by the nakedness of their necks, and breasts, and arms, rather than they will control their shameless pride. What cure now should a wise man wish to such people as these? Surely, that the shoe might pinch a little harder, till the pain might force them to cast it off. And that they might catch some cold that would pay them for their folly, (so it would but spare their lives,) till it should force them to be ashamed of their pride, and cover their nakedness. Even so when disobedient hypocrites do complain that they are afraid they have no grace, and afraid God doth not pardon them, and will not save them, I should tell them, if I knew them, that I am afraid so too; and that it is not without cause and desire; that their fears were such as might affright them from their disobedience, and force them to cast away their wilful sinning. I have said the more on this point, because I know if this advice do but help you to mortify your sin, the best and greatest work is done, whether you get assurance and comfort or no; and withal, that it is the most probable means to this assurance and comfort.

I should next have warned you of the other ex-

treame, viz. needless scruples; but I mean to make that a peculiar direction by itself, when I have first added a little more of this great means of peace—a sound obedience.

Direct. XXIV. My next advice for the obtaining of a settled peace of comfort, is this, Take heed that you content not yourself with a cheap course of religion, and such a serving of God as costeth you little or nothing. But in your abstaining from sin, in your rising out of sin, and in your discharge of duty, incline most to that way which is most self-denying, and displeasing to the flesh (so you be sure it be a lawful way). And when you are called out to any work which will stand you in extraordinary labour and cost, you must be so far from shrinking and drawing your neck out of the yoke, that you must look upon it as a special price that is put into your hand, and a singular advantage and opportunity for the increase of your comforts.

This rule is like the rest of the christian doctrine, which is not thoroughly understood by any way but experience. Libertines and sensual professors that never tried it, did never well understand it. I could find in my heart to be large in explaining and applying it, but that I have been so large beyond my first intentions in the former directions, that I will cut off the rest as short as I well can.

Let none be so wickedly injurious to me, as to say, I speak or think of any merit, properly so called, in any the costliest work of man. Fasten not that on me, which I both disclaim, and desire the reader to take heed of. But I must tell you these two things.

1. That a cheap religion is a far more uncertain evidence of sincerity, than a dear. It will not discover so well to a man's own soul, whether he prefer Christ before the world, and whether he take him and his benefits for his portion and treasure.

2. That a cheap religion is not usually accompanied with any notable degree of comforts, although the person be a sincere-hearted christian.

Every hypocrite can submit to a religion that will cost him little; much more, which will get reputation with men of greatest wisdom and piety; yea, he may stick to it, so it will not undo him in the world. If a man have knowledge, and gifts of utterance, and strength of body, it is no costly matter to speak many good words, or to be earnest in opposing the sins of others, and to preach zealously and frequently (much more if he have double honour by it, reverent obedience, and maintenance, as ministers of the gospel have, or ought to have). It is hard to discern sincerity in such a course of piety and duty. Woe to those persecutors that shall put us to the trial how far we can go in suffering for Christ! but it should be a matter of rejoicing to us, when we are put upon it. To be patient in tribulation is not enough; but to rejoice in it is also the duty of a saint. Let those that think this draweth men to rejoice too much in themselves, but hear what the Lord Jesus himself saith, and his Spirit in his apostles: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake: rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven," Matt. v. 10-12. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (not inward temptations of the devil and our lust, but trials by persecution); knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that

love him," James i. 2, 3, 12. See Luke vi. 23; 1 Pet. iv. 13; Acts v. 41; 2 Cor. vi. 10; vii. 4; Col. i. 11; Heb. x. 34; 2 Cor. xiii. 9; xii. 15. Oh how gloriously doth a tried faith shine, to the comfort of the believer, and the admiration of the beholders! How easily may a christian try himself at such a time, when God is trying him! One hour's experience, when we have found that our faith can endure the furnace, and that we can hazard or let go all for Christ, will more effectually resolve all our doubtings of our sincerity, than many a month's trial by mere questioning of our own deceitful hearts.

Object. But, you may say, what if God call me not to suffering or hazards? Must I cast myself upon it without a call? or must I be therefore without comfort?

Answ. No; you shall not need to cast yourself upon suffering, nor yet to be without comfort for want of it. I know no man but may serve God at dearer rates to the flesh than most of us do, without stepping out of the way of his duty. Nay, he must do it, except he will avoid his duty. Never had the church yet such times of prosperity, but that faithful duty would hazard men, and cause their trouble in the flesh. Can you not, nay, ought you not, to put yourself to greater labour for men's souls? If you should but go day after day among the poor, ignorant people where you live, and instruct them in the knowledge of God, and bear with all their weakness and rudeness, and continue thus with patience, this might cost you some labour, and perhaps contempt from many of the unthankful. And yet you should not do more than your duty, if you have opportunity for it, as most have, or may have, if they will. If you should further hire them to learn catechisms; if you should extend your liberality to the utmost, for relief of the poor, this would cost you somewhat. If you carry on every just cause with resolution, though never so many great friends would draw you to betray it; this may cost you the loss of those friends. If you would but deal plainly with the ungodly, and against all sin, as far as you have opportunity, especially if it be the sins of rulers and gentlemen of name and power in the world, it may cost you somewhat. Nay, though you were ambassadors of Christ, whose office is to deal plainly, and not to please men in evil, upon pain of Christ's displeasure; you may perhaps turn your great friends to be your great enemies. Go to such a lord, or such a knight, or such a gentleman, and tell him freely, that God looketh for another manner of spending his time, than in hunting, and hawking, and sporting, and feasting, and that this precious time must be dearly reckoned for. Tell him that God looks he should be the most eminent in holiness, and in a heavenly life, and give an example thereof to all that are below him, as God hath made him more eminent in worldly dignity and possessions. Tell him, that where much is given, much is required; and that a low profession, and dull approbation of that which is good, will serve no man, much less such a man. Tell him, that his riches must be expended to feed and clothe the poor, and promote good uses, and not merely for himself and family, or else he will make but a sad account. And that he must freely engage his reputation, estate, and life, and all for Christ and his gospel, when he calls you to it; yea, and forsake all for him, if Christ put him to it, or else he can be no disciple of Christ; and then what good will his honours and riches do him, when his soul shall be called for? Try this course with great men, yea with great men that seem religious, and that no further than faithfulness and compassion to men's souls doth bind you, and do it with all the wisdom you

can, that is not carnal; and then tell me what it doth cost you. Let those ministers that are near them, plainly and roundly tell both the parliament-men and commanders of the army, of their unquestionable transgressions, and that according to their nature; (and woe to them if they do not!) and then let them tell me what it doth cost them. Alas, sirs, how great a number of professors are base, daubing, self-seeking hypocrites, that cull out the safe, the cheap, the easy part of duty, and leave all the rest! And so ordinarily is this done, that we have made us a new christianity by it; and the religion of Christ's own making, the self-denying course prescribed by our Master, is almost unknown; and he that should practise it would be taken for a madman, or some self-conceited cynic, or some saucy, if not seditious fellow. It is not, therefore, because Christ hath not prescribed us a more self-denying, hazardous, laborious way, that men so commonly take up in the cheapest religion; but it is through our false-heartedness to Christ, and the strength of sensual, carnal interests in us, which make us put false interpretations on the plainest precepts of Christ, which charge any displeasing duty on us, and familiarly turn them into allegories, or at least we will not yield to obey him. And truly, I think that our shifting off Christ in this unworthy manner, and even altering that very frame and nature of christian religion, (by turning that into a flesh-pleasing religion, which is more against the flesh than all the religions else in the world,) and dealing so reservedly, superficially, and unfaithfully in all his work, is a great cause why Christ doth now appear no more openly for men, and pour out no larger a measure of his Spirit in gifts and consolations. When men appeared ordinarily in the most open manner for Christ, in greatest dangers and sufferings, then Christ appeared more openly and eminently for them (yet is none more for meekness, humility, and love, and against unmerciful or dividing zeal, than Christ).

2. And as you see that a cheap religiousness doth not so discover sincerity; so secondly, it is not accompanied with that special blessing of God. As God hath engaged himself in his word, that they shall not lose their reward that give but a cup of water in his name, so he hath more fully engaged himself to those that are most deeply engaged for him; even that they that forsake all for him, shall have manifold recompence in this life, and in the world to come eternal life. Let the experience of all the world of christians be produced, and all will attest the same truth, That it is God's usual course to give men larger comforts in dearer duties, than in cheap: nay, seldom doth he give large comforts in cheap duties, and seldom doth he deny them in dearer; so be it they are not made dear by our own sin and foolish indiscretion, but by his command, and our faithfulness in obeying him. Who knows not that the consolation of martyrs is usually above other men's, who hath read of their sufferings and strange sustentations? Christian, do but try this by thy own experiences, and tell me, when thou hast most resolutely followed Christ in a good cause; when thou hast stood against the faces of the greatest for God; when thou hast cast thy life, thy family, and estate, upon Christ, and run thyself into the most apparent hazards for his sake; hast thou not come off with more inward peace and comfort, than the cheaper part of thy religion hath afforded thee? When thou hast stood to the truth and gospel, and hast done good through the greatest opposition, and lost thy greatest and dearest friends, because thou wouldst not forsake Christ and his service, or deal falsely in some cause that he hath trusted thee in;

hast thou not come off with the blessing of peace of conscience? Nay, when thou hast denied thy most importunate appetite, and most crossed thy lusts, and most humbled and abased thyself for God, and denied thy credit, and taken shame to thyself in a free confessing of thy faults, or patiently put up with the greatest abuses, or humbled and tamed thy flesh by necessary abstinence, or any way most displeased it, by crossing its interest, by bountiful giving, laborious duty, dangers, or sufferings, for the sake of the Lord Jesus, his truth and people; hath it not been far better with thee in thy peace and comforts than before? I know some will be ready to say, That may be from carnal pride in our own doing or suffering. I answer, It may be so; and therefore let all watch against that. But I am certain that this is God's ordinary dealing with his people, and therefore we may ordinarily expect it. It is for their encouragement in faithful duty; and I may truly say, for their reward, when himself calls that a reward which he gives for a cup of water. Lay well to heart that example of Abraham, for which he is so often extolled in the Scripture, viz. His readiness to sacrifice his only son. This was a dear obedience: And, saith God, "Because (mark, because) thou hast done this thing, in blessing I will bless thee," &c. David would not offer to God that which cost him nothing, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24; 1 Chron. xxi. 24. God will have the best of your hearts, the best of your labours, the best of your estates, the best of all, or he will not accept it. Abel's sacrifice was of the best, and it was accepted; and God saith to Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt not thou be accepted?"

Seeing this is so, let me advise you, Take it not for a calamity, but for a precious advantage, when God calls thee to a hazardous, costly service, which is like to cost thee much of thy estate, to cost thee the loss of thy chiefest friends, the loss of thy credit, the indignation of great ones, or the painfullest diligence and trouble of body; shift it not off, but take this opportunity thankfully, lest thou never have such another for the clearing of thy sincerity, and the obtaining of more than ordinary consolations from God: thou hast now a prize in thy hand for spiritual riches, if thou hast but a heart to improve it. I know all this is a paradox to the unbelieving world; but here is the very excellency of the christian religion, and the glory of faith. It looks for its greatest spoils and richest prizes from its conquests of fleshly interests; it is not only able to do it, but it expecteth its advancement and consolations by this way. It is engaged in a war with the world and flesh; and in this war it plays not the vapouring fencer, that seems to do much, but never strikes home, as hypocrites, and carnal, worldly professors do: but he says it home, and spares not, as one that knows that the flesh's ruin must be his rising, and the flesh's thriving would be his ruin. In these things the true christian alone is in good sadness, and all the rest of the world but in jest. The Lord pity poor deluded souls! You may see by this one thing, how rare a thing true christianity is among the multitude that take themselves for christians; and how certain, therefore, it is that few shall be saved. Even this one point of true mortification and self-denial, is a stranger among the most of professors. Oh how sad a testimony of it are the actions of these late times, wherein so much hath been done for self, and safety, and carnal interests, and so little for Christ! yea, and that after the deepest engagements of mercies and vows that ever lay on a people in the world! Inasmuch, that through the just judgment of God, they are now given up to doubt, whether it be the duty of rulers to do any thing as rulers

for Christ, or no; or whether they should not let Christ alone to do it himself. Well, this which is such a mystery to the unregenerate world, is a thing that every genuine christian is acquainted with; for "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof," Gal. v. 24; and the world is dead to them, and they to the world.

Take this counsel therefore in all the several cases mentioned in the direction.

1. In your preventing sin, and maintaining your innocence, if you cannot do it without denying your credit, and exposing yourself to disgrace, or without the loss of friends, or a breach in your estate, do it nevertheless: yea, if it would cost you your utter ruin in the world, thank God that put such an opportunity into your hand for extraordinary consolations. For ordinarily the martyrs' comforts exceed other men's, as much as their burden of duty and suffering doth. Cyprian is fain to write for the comfort of some christians in his times, that at death were troubled that they missed of their hopes of martyrdom. So also if you cannot mortify any lust without much pinching the flesh, do it cheerfully; for the dearer the victory costeth you, the sweeter will be the issue and review.

2. The same counsel I give you also in your rising from sin. It is the sad condition of those that yield to a temptation, and once put their foot within the doors of Satan, that they insnare themselves so, that they must undergo thrice as great difficulties to draw back, as they needed to have done beforehand for prevention and forbearance. Sin unhappily engageth the sinner to go on; and one sin doth make another seem necessary. Oh how hard a thing is it for him that hath wronged another by stealing, deceit, overreaching in bargaining, or the like, to confess his fault, and ask him forgiveness, and to the utmost of his ability to make restitution! What abundance of difficulties will be in the way! It will likely cost him the loss of his credit, besides the breach in his estate, and perhaps lay him open to the rage of him that he hath wronged. Rather he will be drawn to cover his sin with a lie, or at least by excuses. And so it is in many other sins. Now in any of these cases, when men indulge the flesh, and cannot find in their hearts to take that loss or shame to themselves, which a thorough repentance doth require, they do but feed the troubles of their soul, and hide their wounds and sores, and not ease them. Usually such persons go on in a galled, unpeaceable condition, and reach not to solid comfort. (I speak only of those to whom such confession or restitution is a duty.) And I cannot wonder at it; for they have great cause to question the truth of that repentance, and consequently the soundness of that heart, which will not bring them to a self-denying duty, nor to God's way of rising from their sin. It seems at present the interest of the flesh is actually predominant, when no reason or conviction will persuade them to contradict it. As ever you would have sound comfort then in such a case as this, spare not the flesh. When you have sinned, you must rise again or perish. If you cannot rise without fasting, without free confessing, without the utter shaming of ourselves, without restitution, never stick at it. This is your hour of trial: O yield not in the conflict. The dearer the victory costeth you, the greater will be your peace. Try it; and if you find it not so, I am mistaken. Yet if you have sinned so that the opening of it may more discredit the gospel, than your confession will honour it, and yet your conscience is unquiet, and urgeth you to confess, in such a case be first well informed, and pro-

ceed warily and upon deliberation; and first open the case to some faithful minister or able christian in secret, that you may have good advice.

3. The same counsel also would I give you in the performance of your duty. A magistrate is convinced he must punish sinners, and put down ale-houses, and be true to every just cause; but then he must steel his face against all men's reproaches, and the solicitations of all friends. A minister is convinced that he must teach from house to house, as well as publicly, if he be able; and that he must deal plainly with sinners according to their conditions; yea, and require the church to avoid communion with them, if they be obstinate in evil after other sufficient means; but then he shall lose the love of his people, and be accounted proud, precise, rigid, lordly, and perhaps lose his maintenance. Obey God now; and the dearer it costeth you, the more peace and protection, and the larger blessing may you expect from God: for you do, as it were, oblige God the more to stick to you; as you will take yourself obliged to own, and bear out, and reward those that hazard estate, and credit, and life for you. And if you cannot obey God in such a trial, it is a sad sign of a false-hearted hypocrite, except your fall be only in a temptation, from which you rise with renewed repentance and resolutions, which will conquer for the time to come. As Peter, who being left to himself for an example of human frailty, and that Christ might have no friend to stick by him when he suffered for our sin, yet presently wept bitterly, and afterwards spent his strength and time in preaching Christ, and laid down his life in martyrdom for him.

So perhaps many a poor servant, or hard labourer, hath scarce any time, except the Lord's day, to pray or read. Let such pinch the flesh a little the more, (so they do not overthrow their health,) and either work the harder, or fare the harder, or be clothed the more meanly, or especially break a little of their sleep, that they may find some time for these duties; and try whether the peace and comfort will not recompense it. Never any man was a loser for God. So private christians cannot conscionably discharge the great plain duty of reproof and exhortation, joyfully yet plainly telling their friends and neighbours of their sins, and danger, and duty, but they will turn friends into foes, and possibly set all the town on their heads. But is it a duty, or is it not? If it be, then trust God with the issue, and do your work, and see whether he will suffer you to be losers.

For my part I think, that if christians took God's work before them, and spared the flesh less, and trusted themselves and all to Christ alone, and did not balk all the troublesome, costly part of religion, and that which most crosseth the interest of the flesh, it would be more ordinary with them to be filled with the joys of the Holy Ghost, and walk in that peace of conscience which is a continual feast; and to have such full and frequent views both of the sincerity of their evidencing graces, and of God's reconciled face, as would banish their doubts and fears, and be a greater help to their certainty of salvation, than much other labour doth prove. If you flinch not the fiery furnace, you shall have the company of the Son of God in it. If you flinch not the prison and stocks, you may be able to sing as Paul and Silas did. If you refuse not to be stoned with Stephen, you may perhaps see heaven opened as he did. If you think these comforts so dear bought, that you will rather venture without them; let me tell you, you may take your course, but the end will convince you to the very heart, of the folly of your choice. Never then complain for want of

comfort; remember you might have had it, and would not. And let me give you this with you. You will shortly find, though worldly pleasures, riches, and honours, were some slight salves to your molested conscience here, yet there will no cure nor ease for it be found hereafter. Your merry hours will then all be gone, and your worldly delights forsake you in distress; but these solid comforts which you judged too dear, would have ended in the everlasting joys of glory. When men do flinch God and his truth in straits, and juggle with their consciences, and will take out all the honourable, easy, cheap part of the work of Christ, and make a religion of that by itself, leaving out all the disgraceful, difficult, chargeable, self-denying part; and hereupon call themselves christians, and make a great show in the world with this kind of religiousness, and take themselves injured if men question their honesty and uprightness in the faith; these men are notorious self-deceivers, mere hypocrites; and in plain truth, this is the very true description by which damnable hypocrites are known from sound christians. The Lord open men's eyes to see it in time while it may be cured! Yea, and the nearer any true christian doth come to this sin, the more doth he disoblige God, and quench the Spirit of comfort, and darken his own evidences, and destroy his peace of conscience, and create unavoidable troubles to his spirit, and estrangement betwixt the Lord Jesus and his own soul. Avoid this, therefore, if ever you will have peace.

Direct. XXV. My next advice shall be somewhat near of kin to the former. If you would learn the most expeditious way to peace and settled comfort, study well the art of doing good; and let it be your every day's contrivance, care, and business, how you may lay out all that God hath trusted you with, to the greatest pleasing of God, and to your most comfortable account.

Still remember, (lest any antinomian should tell you that this savours of popery, and trusting for peace to our own works,)

1. That you must not think of giving any of Christ's honour or office to your best works. You must not dream that they can do any thing to the satisfaction of God's justice for your sins; nor that they have any proper merit in them, so as for their worth to oblige God to reward you; nor that you must bring them as a price to purchase Christ and heaven; nor that you have any righteousness or worthiness in yourself and works, which the law of works will so denominate or own. But only you must give obedience its due under Christ; and so you honour Christ himself, when those that detract from obedience to him, do dishonour him; and you must have an evangelical worthiness and righteousness, (so called many and many times over in the gospel,) which partly consisteth in the sincerity of your obedience and good works; as the condition of continuing your state of justification, and right to eternal life.

2. Remember I have given you many arguments before, to prove that you may take comfort from your good works and gracious actions.

3. If any further objections should be made against this, read considerately and believingly, Matt. xxv.; v.; vii. throughout, or the former only; and I doubt not but you will be fully resolved. But to the work.

Those men that study no other obedience than only to do no (positive) harm, are so far from true comfort, that they have yet no true christianity; I mean such as will be saving to them. Doing good is a high part of a christian's obedience, and must be the chief part of his life. The heathen could tell

him that asked him, how men might be like to God; that one way was, To do good to all. That is beyond our power, being proper to God the universal good, whose mercy is over all his works. But our goodness must be communicative, if we will be like God, and it must be extended and diffused as far as we can. The apostle's charge is plain, and we must obey it if we will have any peace; "While you have time, do good to all men, but especially to them of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 10. "Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Isa. i. 16, 17. "To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased," Heb. xiii. 16. "Charge them that be rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life," 1 Tim. vi. 17—19. See Luke vi. 33—35; Mark xiv. 7; Matt. v. 44; 1 Pet. iii. 11; James iv. 17; Psalm xxxiv. 14; xxxvii. 27; xxxvi. 3; xxxvii. 3, "Trust in the Lord, and do good." "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? But if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," Gen. iv. 7. "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him," Acts x. 3, 4, 34, 35. "Know you not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? Yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God," Rom. vi. 13, 16; Matt. v. 16; Acts ix. 36; Eph. ii. 10, "We are created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them." 1 Tim. ii. 10; v. 10, 25; 2 Tim. iii. 17; Tit. ii. 7; iii. 8, 14; ii. 14, "He redeemed us from all iniquity, that he might purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." 1 Pet. ii. 12; Heb. x. 24, "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works." What a multitude of such passages may you find in Scripture!

You see then how great a part of your calling and religion consisteth in doing good. Now it is not enough to make this your care now and then, or do good when it falls in your way; but you must study it, or it will not be done well. You must study which are good works, and which are they that you are called to; and which are the best works, and to be preferred, that you choose not a less instead of a greater. God looks to be served with the best. You must study for opportunities of doing good, and of the means of succeeding and accomplishing it; and for the removing of impediments; and for the overcoming of dissuaves, and withdrawing temptations. You must know what talents God hath intrusted you with, and those you must study to do good with: whether it be time, or interest in men, or opportunity, or riches, or credit, or authority, or gifts of mind, or of body: if you have not one, you have another, and some have all.

This therefore is the thing that I would persuade you to: take yourself for God's steward; remember the time when it will be said to you, "Give account of thy stewardship; thou shalt be no longer stew-

ard." Let it be your every day's contrivance, how to lay out your gifts, time, strength, riches, or interest, to your Master's use. Think which way you may do most, first to promote the gospel and the public good of the church; and then, which way you may help toward the saving of particular men's souls; and then, which way you may better the commonwealth, and how you may do good to men's bodies, beginning with your own and those of your family, but extending your help as much further as you are able. Ask yourself every morning, Which way may I this day most further my Master's business, and the good of men? Ask yourself every night, What good have I done to-day? And labour as much as may be, to be instruments of some great and standing good, and of some public and universal good, that you may look behind you at the year's end, and at your lives' end, and see the good that you have done. A piece of bread is soon eaten, and a penny or a shilling is soon spent; but if you could win a soul to God from sin, that would be a visible, everlasting good. If you could be instruments of setting up a godly minister in a congregation that want, the everlasting good of many souls might, in part, be ascribed to you. If you could help to heal and unite a divided church, you might more rejoice to look back on the fruits of your labour, than any physician might rejoice to see his poor patient recovered to health. I have told rich men in another book, what opportunities they have to do good, if they had hearts. How easy were it with them to refresh men's bodies, and to do very much for the saving souls; to relieve the poor; to set their children to trades; to ease the oppressed! How easy to maintain two or three poor scholars at the Universities, for the service of the church! But I hear but a few that do ever the more in it, except three or four of my friends in these parts. Let me further tell you, God doth not leave it to them as an indifferent thing. Matt. xxv. They must feed Christ in the poor, or else starve in hell themselves: they must clothe naked Christ in the poor, or be laid naked in his fiery indignation for ever. How much more diligently then must they help men's souls, and the church of Christ, as the need is greater, and the work better! Oh the blinding power of riches! Oh the easiness of man's heart to be deluded! Do rich men never think to lie rotting in the dust? Do they never think that they must be accountable for all their riches, and for all their time, and power, and interests? Do they not know that it will comfort them at death and judgment, to hear in their reckoning, Item, so much given to such and such poor; so much to promote the gospel; so much to maintain poor scholars, while they study to prepare themselves for the ministry? &c. Than to hear, So much in such a feast; to entertain such gallants; to please such noble friends; so much at dice, at cards, at horse-races, at cock-fights; so much in excess of apparel; and the rest to leave my posterity in the like pomp? Do they not know that it will comfort them more to hear then of their time spent in reading Scripture, secret and open prayer, instructing and examining their children and servants; going to their poor neighbours' houses to see what they want, and to persuade them to godliness; and in being examples of eminent holiness to all; and in suppressing vice, and doing justice; than to hear of so much time spent in vain recreations, visits, luxuries, and idleness? O deep unbelief and hardness of heart, that makes gentlemen that they tremble not to think of this reckoning! Well, let me tell both them and all men, that if they knew but either that indispensable duty of doing good that

lieth on them, or how necessary and sure a way (in subordination to Christ) this act of doing good is for the soul's peace and consolation, they would study it better, and practise it more faithfully, than now they do: they would then be glad of an opportunity to do good, for their own gain, as well as for God's honour, and for the love of good itself. They would know, that lending to the Lord is the only thriving usury; and that no part of all their time, riches, interest in men, power, or honours, will be then comfortable to them, but that which was laid out for God: and they will one day find, that God will not take up with the scraps of their time and riches, which their flesh can spare; but he will be first served, even before all comers, and that with the best, or he will take them for no servants of his. This is true, and you will find it so, whether you will now believe it or no.

And because it is possible these lines may fall into the hands of some of the rulers of this commonwealth, let me here mind them of two weighty things:

1. What opportunities of doing very great good hath been long in their hands, and how great an account of it they have to make. It hath been long in their power to have done much to the reconciling of our differences, and healing our divisions, by setting divines a work of different judgments, to find out a temperament for accommodation. It hath long been in their power to have done much towards the supply of all the dark congregations in England and Wales, with competently able, sound, and faithful teachers. We have many congregations that do contain three thousand, five thousand, or ten thousand souls, that have but one or two ministers, that cannot possibly do the tenth part of the ministerial work of private oversight, and so poor souls must be neglected, let ministers be never so able or painful. We have divers godly, private christians, of so much understanding, as to be capable of helping us, as officers in our churches; but they are all so poor, that they are not able to spare one hour in a day or two from their labour, much less to give up themselves to the work. How many a congregation is in the same case! Nothing almost is wanting to us, to have set our congregations in the order of Christ, and done this great work of reformation which there is so much talking of, so much as want of maintenance for a competent number of ministers or elders to attend the work. I am sure, in great congregations this is the case, and a sore that no other means will remedy. Was it never in the power of our rulers to have helped us here? Was nothing sold for other uses, that was once devoted and dedicated to God, and might have helped us in this our miserable distress? Were our churches able to maintain their own officers, our case were more tolerable; but when a congregation that wants six, or seven, or ten, is not able to maintain one, it is hard.

2. The second thing that I would mind our rulers of, is, what mortal enemies those men are to their souls, that would persuade them that they must not, as rulers, do good to the souls of men, and to the church as such; nor further the reformation, nor propagate the gospel, nor establish Christ's order in the churches of their country, any otherwise than by a common maintaining the peace and liberties of all. What doctrine could more desperately undo you, if entertained? If you be once persuaded that it belongs not to you to do good, and the greatest good, to which all your successes have made way, then all the comfort, the blessing and reward, is lost; and consequently all the glorious preparative successes, as to you, are lost. If once you take yourselves to have nothing to do as rulers for Christ, you cannot

promise yourselves that Christ will have any thing to do for you, as rulers, in a way of mercy. This, Mr. Owen hath lately told you in his sermon, October 13: "The God of heaven forbid, that ever all the devils in hell, the Jesuits at Rome, or the seduced souls in England, should be able to persuade the rulers of this land, who are so deeply bound to God by vows, mercies, professions, and high expenses of treasure and blood, to reform his church, and propagate his gospel; that now after all this, it belongeth not to them, but they must, as rulers, be no more for Christ than for Mahomet. But if ever it should prove the sad case of England to have such rulers, (which I strongly hope will never be,) if my prognostics fail not, this will be their fate: the Lord Jesus will forsake them, as they have forsaken him, and the prayers of his saints will be fully turned against them; and his elect shall cry to him night and day, till he avenge them speedily, by making these his enemies to lick the dust, and dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel, because they would not that he should reign over them: and then they shall know whether Christ be not King of kings and Lord of lords."

Perhaps you may think I digress from the matter in hand; but as long as I speak but for my Lord Christ, and for doing good, I cannot think that I am quite out of my way. But to return nearer to those for whose sakes I chiefly write, this is that sum of my advice; study with all the understanding you have, how to do as much good, while you have time, as possibly you can, and you shall find that (without any popish or Pharisical self-confidence) to be the most excellent art for obtaining spiritual peace, and a large measure of comfort from Christ.

To that end use seriously and daily to bethink yourself, what way of expending your time and wealth, and all your talents, will be most comfortable for you to hear of, and review at judgment; and take that as the way most comfortable now. Only consult not with flesh and blood; make not your flesh of your counsel in this work, but take it for your enemy; expect its violent, unwearied opposition, but regard not any of its clamours or repinings. But know, as I said before, that your truest spiritual comforts are a prize that must be won, upon the conquest of the flesh. I will only add to this, the words of blessed Dr. Sibbs, (a man that was no enemy to free grace, nor unjust patron of man's works,) in his preface to his "Soul's Conflict:" "Christ is first a King of righteousness, and then of peace. The righteousness that works by his Spirit brings a peace of sanctification; whereby though we are not freed from sin, yet we are enabled to combat with it, and to get the victory over it. Some degree of comfort follows every good action, as heat accompanies fire, and as beams and influences issue from the sun. Which is so true, that very heathens upon the discharge of a good conscience, have found comfort and peace answerable: this is a reward before our reward." Again, "In watchfulness and diligence we sooner meet with comfort, than in idle complaining." Again, p. 44, 45, "An unemployed life is a burden to itself. God is a pure Act; always working; always doing. And the nearer our soul comes to God, the more it is in action and the freer from disquiet. Men experimentally feel that comfort in doing that which belongs unto them, which before they longed for and went without." And in his preface to the "Bruised Reed;" "There is no more comfort to be expected from Christ than there is care to please him. Otherwise, to make him an abettor of a lawless and loose life, is to transform him into a fancy; nay,

into the likeness of him, whose works he came to destroy; which is the most detestable idolatry of all. One way whereby the Spirit of Christ prevaileth in his, is to preserve them from such thoughts; yet we see people will frame a divinity to themselves, pleasing to the flesh, suitable to their own ends; which being vain in the substance, will prove likewise vain in the fruit, and a building upon the sands." So far Dr. Sibbs. It seems there were libertines and antinomians then, and will be as long as there are any carnal, unsanctified professors.

Direct. XXVI. Having led you thus far towards a settled peace, my next direction shall contain a necessary caution, lest you run as far into the contrary extreme; viz. Take heed that you neither trouble your own soul with needless scruples, about matters of doctrine, of duty, or of sin, or about your own condition. Nor yet that you do not make yourself more work than God hath made you, by feigning things unlawful, which God hath not forbidden; or by placing your religion in will-worship, or in an over-curious insisting on circumstantial, or an over-rigorous dealing with your body.

This is but the exposition of Solomon, "Be not over-wise, and be not righteous over-much," Eccles. vii. 16. A man cannot serve God too much, formally and strictly considering his service; much less love him too much. But we may do too much materially intending thereby to serve God, which though it be not true righteousness, yet being intended for righteousness, and done as a service of God, or obedience to him, is here called over-much righteousness. I know it is stark madness in the profane, secure world, to think that the doing of no more than God hath commanded us, is doing too much, or more than needs; as if God had bid us do more than needs, or had made such laws as few of the foolish rulers on earth would make. This is plainly to blaspheme the Most High, by denying his wisdom and his goodness, and his just government of the world; and to blaspheme his holy laws, as if they were too strict, precise, and made us more to do than needs; and to reproach his sweet and holy ways, as if they were grievous, intolerable, and unnecessary. Much more is their madness, in charging the godly with being too pure, and too precise, and making too great a stir for heaven, and that merely for their godliness and obedience; when, alas, the best do fall so far short of what God's word, and the necessity of their own souls, do require, that their consciences do more grievously accuse them of negligence, than the barking world doth of being too precise and diligent. And yet more mad are the world, to lay out so much time, and care, and labour, for earthly vanities, and to provide for their contemptible bodies for a little while; and in the mean time to think, that heaven, and their everlasting happiness there, and the escaping of everlasting damnation in hell, are matters not worth so much ado, but may be had with a few cold wishes, and that it is but folly to do so much for it as the godly do. That no labour should be thought too much for the world, the flesh, and the devil, and every little is enough for God. And that these wretched souls are so blinded by their own lusts, and so bewitched by the devil into an utter ignorance of their own hearts, that they verily think, and will stand in it, that for all this they love God above all, and love heavenly things better than earthly, and therefore shall be saved.

But yet extremes there are in the service of God, which all wise christians must labour to avoid. It is a very great question among divines, Whether the common rule in ethics, that virtue is ever in the

middle between two extremes, be sound, as to christian virtues? Amesius saith no. The case is not very hard, I think, to be resolved, if you will but use these three distinctions: 1. Between the acts of the mere rational faculties, understanding and will, called elicit acts, and the acts of the inferior faculties of soul and body, called imperate acts. 2. Between the acts that are about the end immediately, and those that are about the means. 3. Between the intention of an act, and the objective extension, and comparison of object with object. And so I say, 1. The end (that is, God and salvation) cannot be too fully known, or too much loved, with a pure, rational love of complacency, nor too much sought by the acts of the soul, as purely rational: for the end being loved and sought for itself, and being of infinite goodness, must be loved and sought without measure or limitation, it being impossible here to exceed. *Prop. 2.* The means, while they are not misapprehended, but taken as means, and materially well understood, cannot be too clearly discerned, nor too rightly chosen, nor too resolutely prosecuted. *Prop. 3.* It is too possible to misapprehend the means, and to place them instead of the end, and so to overlove them. *Prop. 4.* The nature of all the means consisteth in a middle or mean between two extremes, materially; both which extremes are sin: so that it is possible to overdo about all the means, as to the matter of them, and the extent of our acts. Though we cannot love God too much, yet it is possible to preach, hear, pray, read, meditate, confer of good too much: for one duty may shut out another, and a greater may be neglected by our overdoing in a lesser; which was the Pharisees' sin in sabbath resting. *Prop. 5.* If we be never so right in the extension of our acts, yet we may go too far in the intention of the imperate acts or passions of the soul, and that both on the means and end; though the pure acts of knowing or willing cannot be too great towards God and salvation, yet the passions and acts commonly called sensitive may. A man may think on God not only too much, (as to exclude other necessary thoughts,) but too intensely, and love and desire too passionately: for there is a degree of thinking or meditating, and of passionate love and desire, which the brain cannot bear, but it will cause madness, and quite overthrow the use of reason, by overstretching the organs, or by the extreme turbulency of the agitated spirits. Yet I never knew the man, nor ever shall do, I think, that was ever guilty of one of these excesses; that is, of loving or desiring God so passionately, as to distract him. But I have often known weak-headed people, (that be not able to order their thoughts,) and many melancholy people, guilty of the other; that is, of thinking too much, and too seriously and intensely, on good and holy things, whereby they have overthrown their reason, and been distracted. And here I would give all such weak-headed, melancholy persons this warning, that whereas in my Book of Rest I so much press a constant course of heavenly meditation, I do intend it only for sound heads, and not for the melancholy, that have weak heads and are unable to bear it. That may be their sin, which to others is a very great duty; while they think to do that which they cannot do, they will but disable themselves for that which they can do. I would therefore advise those melancholy persons whose minds are so troubled, and heads weakened, that they are in danger of overthrowing their understandings, (which usually begins in multitudes of scruples, and restlessness of mind, and continual fears, and blasphemous temptations; where it begins with these, distraction is at hand, if not prevented,)

that they forbear meditation, as being no duty to them, though it be to others; and instead of it be the more in those duties which they are fit for, especially conference with judicious christians, and cheerful and thankful acknowledgment of God's mercies. And thus have I showed you how far we may possibly exceed in God's service. Let me now a little apply it.

It hath ever been the devil's policy to begin in persuading men to worldliness, flesh-pleasing, security, and presumption, and utter neglect of God and their souls, or at least preferring their bodies and worldly things, and by this means he destroyeth the world. But where this will not take, but God awaketh men effectually, and casteth out the sleepy devil, usually he fills men's heads with needless scruples, and next setteth them on a religion not commanded, and would make poor souls believe they do nothing, if they do not more than God hath commanded them. When the devil hath no other way left to destroy religion and godliness, he will pretend to be religious and godly himself, and then he is always over-religious and over-godly in his materials. All over-doing in God's work is undoing; and whoever you meet with that would overdo, suspect him to be either a subtle, destroying enemy, or one deluded by the destroyer. Oh what a tragedy could I here show you of the devil's acting! And what a mystery in the hellish art of deceiving could I open to you! And shall I keep the devil's counsel? No: oh that God would open the eyes of his poor desolate churches at last to see it!

The Lord Jesus, in wisdom and tender mercy, establisheth a law of grace, and rule of life, pure and perfect, but simple and plain; laying the condition of man's salvation more in the honesty of the believing heart, than in the strength of wit, and subtlety of a knowing head. He comprised the truths which were of necessity to salvation in a narrow room; so that the christian faith was a matter of great plainness and simplicity. As long as christians were such and held to this, the gospel rule in triumph through the world, and an omnipotency of the Spirit accompanied it, bearing down all before it. Princes and sceptres stooped; subtle philosophy was noplussed; and all useful sciences came down, and acknowledged themselves servants, and took their places, and were well contented to attend the pleasure of Christ. As Mr. Herbert saith in his "Church Militant;"—

"Religion thence fled into Greece, where arts
Gave her the highest place in all men's hearts;
Learning was proposed; philosophy was set;
Sophisters taken in a fisher's net.
Plato and Aristotle were at a loss,
And wheeled about again to spell Christ's cross.
Prayers chased syllogisms into their den,
And ergo was transformed into Amen."

The serpent envying this happiness of the church, hath no way to undo us, but by drawing us from our christian simplicity. By the occasion of heretics' quarrel and errors, the serpent steps in, and will needs be a spirit of zeal in the church; and he will so overdo against heretics, that he persuades them they must enlarge their creed, and add this clause against one, and that against another, and all was but for the perfecting and preserving of the christian faith. And so he brings it to be a matter of so much wit to be a christian, (as Erasmus complains,) that ordinary heads were not able to reach it. He had got them, with a religious, zealous cruelty to their own and others' souls, to lay all their salvation, and the peace of the church, upon some unsearchable mysteries about the Trinity, which God either never

revealed, or never clearly revealed, or never laid so great a stress upon: yet he persuades them that there was Scripture proof enough for these; only the Scripture spoke it but in the premises, or in darker terms, and they must but gather into their creed the consequences, and put it into plainer expressions, which heretics might not so easily corrupt, pervert, or evade. Was not this reverent zeal? And was not the devil seemingly now a christian of the most judicious and forward sort? But what got he at this one game? 1. He necessitated implicit faith even in fundamentals, when he had got points beyond a vulgar reach among fundamentals. 2. He necessitated some living judge for the determining of fundamentals *quoad nos*, though not *in se*, (the soul of popish wickedness,) that is, what it is in sense that the people must take for fundamentals. 3. He got a standing verdict against the perfection and sufficiency of Scripture, (and consequently against Christ, his Spirit, his apostles, and the christian faith,) that it will not afford us so much as a creed or system of fundamentals, or points absolutely necessary to salvation and brotherly communion, in fit or tolerable phrases; but we must mend the language at least. 4. He opened a gap for human additions, at which he might afterwards bring in more at his pleasure. 5. He framed an engine for an infallible division, and to tear in pieces the church, casting out all as heretics that could not subscribe to his additions, and necessitating separation by all dissenters, to the world's end, till the devil's engine be overthrown. 6. And hereby he lays a ground upon the divisions of christians, to bring men into doubt of all religion, as not knowing which is the right. 7. And he lays the ground of certain heart-burnings, and mutual hatred, contentions, revilings, and enmity. Is not here enough got at one cast? Doth there need any more to the establishing of the Romish and hellish darkness? Did not this one act found the seat of Rome? Did not the devil get more in his gown in a day than he could get by his sword in three hundred years? And yet the Holy Ghost gave them full warning of this beforehand: "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ;" 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations," Rom. xiv. 1. "The law of the Lord is perfect," Psal. xix. "All Scripture is given by inspiration from God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no truth in them," Isa. viii. 20. With many the like.

This plot the serpent hath found so successful, that he hath followed it on to this day. He hath made it the great engine to get Rome on his side, and to make them the great dividers of Christ's church. He made the pope and the council of Trent believe, that when they had owned the ancient creed of the church, they must put in as many and more additional articles of their own, and anathematize all gainsayers; and these additions must be the peculiar mark of their church as Romish; and then all that are not of that church, that is, that own not those superadded points, are not of the true church of Christ, if they must be judges. Yea, among ourselves hath the devil used successfully this plot!

What confession of the purest church hath not some more than is in Scripture? The most modest must mend the phrase and speak plainer, and somewhat of their own in it, not excepting our own most reformed confession.

Yea, and where modesty restrains men from putting all such inventions and explications in their creed, the devil persuades men, that they being the judgments of godly, reverend divines, (no doubt to be revered, valued, and heard,) it is almost as much as if it were in the creed; and therefore whoever dissenteth must be noted with a black coal, and you must disgrace him, and avoid communion with him as a heretic. Hence lately is your union, communion, and the church's peace, laid up upon certain unsearchable mysteries about predestination, the order and objects of God's decrees, the manner of the Spirit's secretest operations on the soul, the nature of the will's essential liberty, and its power of self-determining the divine concurrence, determination, or predestination of man's and all other creatures' actions, &c.; that he is scarcely to be accounted a fit member for our fraternal communion that differs from us herein. Had it not been for this one plot, the christian faith had been kept pure; religion had been one; the church had been one; and the hearts of christians had been more one than they are. Had not the devil turned orthodox, he had not made so many true christians heretics, as Epiphanius and Austin have enrolled in the black list. Had not the enemy of truth and peace got into the chair, and made so pathetic an oration as to inflame the minds of the lovers of truth to be over-zealous for it, and to do too much, we might have had truth and peace to this day. Yea, still, if he see any man of experience and moderation stand up to reduce men to the ancient simplicity, he presently seems the most zealous for Christ, and tells the unexperienced leaders of the flocks, that it is in favour of some heresy that such a man speaks; he is plotting a carnal syncretism, and attempting the reconciliation of Christ and Belial; he is tainted with popery, or Socinianism, or Arminianism, or Calvinism, or whatsoever may make him odious with those he speaks to. Oh what the devil hath got by over-doing!

And as this is true in doctrines, so is it in worship and discipline, and pastoral authority, and government. When the serpent could not get the world to despise the poor fishermen that published the gospel, (the devil being judged, and the world convinced by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Agent, Advocate, and Vicar of Christ on earth,) he will then be the forwardest to honour and promote them. And if he cannot make Constantine a persecutor of them, he will persuade him to raise them in worldly glory to the stars, and make them lords of Rome, and possess them with princely dignities and revenues. And he hath got as much by over-honouring them, as ever he did by persecuting and despising them. And now in England, when this plot is described, and we had taken down that superfluous honour, as antichristian, what doth the devil but set in again on the other side? And none is so zealous a reformer as he. He cries down all as antichristian, which he desireth should fall. Their titles and maintenance are antichristian and oppressive, (O pious, merciful devil,) down with them! These church lands were given by papists to popish uses, to maintain bishops, and deans, and chapters; down with them! These college lands, these cathedrals, nay, these church houses, or temples, (for so I will call them, whether the devil will or no,) all come from idolaters, and are abused to idolatry; down with them! Nay, think you but he hath taken the

boldness to cry out, These priests, these ministers, are all antichristian, seducers, needless, envious of the spirit of prophecy, and of the gifts of their brethren, monopolizers of preaching; down with them too! So that though he yet have not what he would have, the old serpent hath done more as a reformer by overdoing, than he did in many a year as a deformer or hinderer of reformation. Yet if he do but see that there is a sovereign power that can do him a mischief, he is ready to tell them, they must be merciful, and not deal cruelly with sinners! Nay, it belongs not to them to reform, or to judge who are heretics and who are not, or to restrain false doctrine, or church disturbers. Christ is sufficient for this himself. How oft hath the devil preached thus, to tie the hands of those that might wound him.

Would you see any further how he hath played this successful game of overdoing? Why, he hath done as much by it in worship and discipline, as almost in any thing. When he cannot have discipline neglected, he is an over-zealous spirit in the breasts of the clergy; and he persuades them to appoint men penance, and pilgrimages, and to put the necks of princes under their feet. But if this tyranny must be abated, he cries down all discipline, and tells them it is all but tyranny and human inventions; and this confessing sin to ministers for relief of conscience, and this open confessing in the congregation for a due manifestation of repentance, and satisfaction to the church, that they may hold communion with them, it is all but popery and priestly domineering.

And in matter of worship, worst of all. When he could not persuade the world to persecute Christ, and to refuse him and his worship, the serpent will be the most zealous worshipper, and saith, as Herod, and with the same mind, "Come and tell me, that I may worship him." He persuades men to do and overdo. He sets them on laying out their revenues in sumptuous fabrics; in fighting to be masters of the holy land and sepulchre of Christ; on going pilgrimages; worshipping saints, angels, shrines, relics, adoring the very bread of the sacrament as God, excessive fastings, choice of meats, numbered prayers on beads, repetitions of words, so many Ave Marias, Pater Nosters, the name Jesus so oft repeated in a breath, so many holidays to saints, canonical hours, even at midnight to pray, and that in Latin for greater reverence, crossings, holy garments, variety of prescribed gestures, kneeling and worshipping before images, sacrificing Christ again to his Father in the mass; forswearing marriage; living retiredly, as separate from the world; multitudes of new, prescribed rules and orders of life; vowing poverty; begging without need; creeping to the cross, holy water, and holy bread, carrying palms, kneeling at altars, bearing candles, ashes; in baptism, crossing, conjuring out the devil, salting, spittle, oil; taking pardons, indulgences, and dispensations of the pope; praying for the dead, perambulations, serving God to merit heaven, or to ease souls in purgatory; doing works of supererogation, with multitudes the like. All these hath the devil added to God's worship; so zealous a worshipper of Christ is he, when he takes that way. Read Mr. Herbert's "Church Militant of Rome," p. 188—190. I could trace this deceiver yet further, and tell you wherein, when he could not hinder reformation in Luther's days, he would needs overdo in reforming! But oh how sad an example of it have we before our eyes in England! Never people on earth more hot upon reforming! Never any deeper engaged for it! The devil could not hinder it by fire and sword; when he sees that, he will needs turn reformer, as I said before, and he gets the word, and cries down antichrist, and cries

up reformation, till he hath done what we see! He hath made a Babel of our work, by confounding our languages; for though he will be for reformation too, yet his name is Legion, he is an enemy to the one God, one Mediator and Head, one faith and one baptism, one heart and lip, and one way; unity is the chief butt that he shoots at. Is baptism to be reformed? Christ is so moderate a Reformer, that he only bids, Down with the symbolical, mystical rite of man's vain addition. But the serpent is a more zealous reformer. He saith, Out with express covenanting; out with children; they are a corruption of the ordinance. And to others he says, Out with baptism itself. We might follow him thus through other ordinances. Indeed he so overdoes in his reforming, that he would not leave us a gospel, a ministry, a magistracy to be for Christ, no, nor a Christ (though yet he would seem to own a God, and the light of nature). All these with him are antichristian.

By this time I hope you see that this way of over-doing hath another author than many zealous people do imagine; and that it is the devil's common, successful trade; so that his agents in state-assemblies are taught his policy, When you have no other way of undoing, let it be by overdoing. And the same way he takes with the souls of particular persons. If he see them troubled for sin, and he cannot keep them from the knowledge of Christ and free grace, he puts the name of free grace and gospel preaching upon antinomian and libertine errors, which subvert the very gospel and free grace itself. If he see men convinced of this, and that it is neither common nor religious libertinism and sensuality that will bring men to heaven, then he will labour to make papists of them, and to set them on a task of external formalities, or macerating their bodies with hurtful fastings, watchings, and cold, as if self-murder were the highest pitch of religion, and God had pleasure to see his people torment themselves! I confess it is very few that ever I knew to have erred far in austere usage of their bodies. But some I have, and especially poor, melancholy christians, that are more easily drawn to deal rigorously with their flesh than others be. And such writings as lately have been published by some English popish formalists, I have known draw men into this snare. I would have all such remember, 1. That God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and such worshippers doth he seek. 2. That God will have mercy and not sacrifice; and that the vitals of religion are in a consumption, when the heat of zeal is drawn too much to the outside; and that placing most in externals, is the great character of hypocrisy, and is that pharisaical religion to which the doctrine and practice of the Lord Jesus was most opposite, as any that will read the gospel may soon see. 3. That God hath made our bodies to be his servants, and instruments of righteousness, (Rom. vi. 13.) and helpful and serviceable to our souls in well-doing. And therefore it is disobedience, it is injustice, it is cruelty to disable them, and causelessly to vex and torment them, much more to destroy them. You may see by sick men, by melancholy men, by madmen and children, how unfit that soul is to know, or love, or serve God, that hath not a fit body to work in and by. The serpent knows this well enough. If he can but get you by excessive fastings, watchings, labours, studies, or other austerities, especially sadness and perplexities of mind, to have a sick body, a crazed brain, or a short life, you will be able to do him but little hurt, and God but little service, besides the pleasure that he takes in your own vexation. Nay, he will hope to make a further advance.

tage of your weakness, and to keep many a soul in the snares of sensuality, by telling them of your miseries, and saying to them, Dost thou not see in such a man or woman, what it is to be so holy and precise? They will all run mad at last. If once thou grow so strict, and deny thyself thy pleasures, and take this precise course, thou wilt but make thy life a misery, and never have a merry day again. Such examples as yours the devil will make use of that he may terrify poor souls from godliness, and represent the word and ways of Christ to them in an odious, and unpleasing, and discouraging shape. Doubtless that God who himself is so merciful to your body, as well as to your soul, would have you to be so too. He that provided so plentifully for its refreshment, would not have you refuse his provision. He that saith the righteous man is merciful to his beast, no doubt would not have him to be unmerciful to his own body. You are commanded to love your neighbours but as yourself; and therefore by cruelty and unmerciful dealing with your own body, you will go about to justify the like dealing with others. You durst not deny to feed, to clothe, to comfort and refresh the poor, lest Christ should say, "You did it not to me." And how should you dare to deny the same to yourself? How will you answer God for the neglect of all that service which you should have done him, and might, if you had not disabled your bodies and mind? He requireth that you delight yourself in him. And how can you do that when you habituate both mind and body to a sad, dejected, mournful garb? The service that God requires is, "To serve him with cheerfulness in the abundance that we possess," Deut. xxviii. 47. If you think that I here contradict what I said in the former directions, for pinching the flesh, and denying its desires, you are mistaken. I only show you the danger of the contrary extreme. God's way lieth between both. The truth is, (if you would be resolved how far you may please or displease the flesh,) the flesh being ordained to be our servant and God's servant, must be used as a servant. You will give your servant food, and raiment, and wholesome lodging, and good usage, or else you are unjust, and he will be unfit to do your work. But so far as he would master you, or disobey you, you will correct him, or keep him under. You will feed your horse, or else he will not carry you; but if he grow unruly, you must tame him. It is a delusory formality of papists, to tie all the countries to one time and measure of fasting, as Lent, Fridays, &c. When men's states are so various that many (though not quite sick) have more need of a restoring diet; and those that need fasting, need it not all at once, nor in one measure, but at the time, and in the measure, as the taming of their flesh requireth it. As if a physician should proclaim that all his patients should take physic such forty days every year, whether their disease be plethoric or consuming, from fulness or from abstinence, and whether the disease take him at that time of the year, or another. And remember that you must not under pretences of saving the body, disable it to serve God. You will not lay any such correction on your child or servant as shall disable them from their work, but such as shall excite them to it. And understand that all your afflicting your body must be either preventive, as keeping the fire from the thatch, or medicinal and corrective, and not strictly vindictive; for that belongs to your Judge. Though in a subordination to the other ends, the smart or suffering for its fault, is one end, and so it is truly penal or vindictive, as all chastisement is. And so Paul saith, "Behold what revenge," &c. 2 Cor. vii. 11, but not as mere judicial revenge is. Re-

member therefore, though you must so far tame your body as to bring it into subjection, that you perish not by pampering; yet not so far as to bring it to weakness, and sickness, and unfitness for its duty. Nor yet must you dare to conceit that you please God, or satisfy him for your sin, by such a wronging and hurting your own body. Such popish religiousness shows, that men have very low and carnal conceits of God. Was it not a base wickedness in them that offered their children, in sacrifice, to think that God would be pleased with such cruelty? Yea, were it not to have directed us to Christ, he would not have accepted of the blood of bulls and goats; it is not sacrifice that he desires. He never was blood-thirsty, nor took any pleasure in the creature's suffering. How can you think then that he will take pleasure in your consuming and destroying your own bodies? It is as unreasonable as to imagine, that he delights to have men cut their own throats, or hang themselves; for pining and consuming oneself is self-murder as well as that. Yet I know no man should draw back from a painful or hazardous work, when God calls him to it, for fear of destroying the flesh; but do not make work or suffering for yourselves. God will lay as much affliction on you as you need, and be thankful if he will enable you to bear that; but you have no need to add more. If yourselves make the suffering, how can you, with any encouragement, beg strength of God to bear it? And if you have not strength, what will you do? Nay, how can you pray for deliverance from God's afflictions, when you make more of your own? And thus I have showed you the danger of overdoing, and what hindrance it is to a settled peace, both of church (state) and soul; though perhaps it may not condemn a particular soul so certainly (in most parts of it) as doing too little will.

5. The next part of my direction (first expressed) is, That you avoid causeless scruples about doctrines, duties, sins, or your own state.

These are also engines of the enemy, to batter the peace and comfort of your soul; he knows that it is cheerful obedience, with a confidence of Christ's merits and mercies, that God accepteth; and therefore if he cannot hinder a poor soul from setting upon duty, he will hinder him if he can, by these scruples, from a cheerful and prosperous progress. First, If he can, he will take in scruples about the truth of his religion; and showing him the many opinions that are in the world, he will labour to bring the poor christian to a loss. Or else he will assault him by the men of some particular sect, to draw him to that party, and so by corrupting his judgment, to break his peace; or at least to trouble his head, and divert his thoughts from God, by tedious disputes. The papists will tell him, that they are the only true catholic church, (as if they had got a monopoly or patent for religion, and had confined Christ to themselves,) who are such notorious abusers of him. And as if all the churches of Greece, Ethiopia, and the rest of the world, were unchurched by Christ, to humour master pope, though they be far more in number, and many of them sounder in doctrine, than the Romanists are. Those of other parties will do the like, each one to draw him to their own way. And the devil would make him believe that there are as many religions as there be odd opinions, when alas, the christian religion is one, and but one, consisting, for the doctrinals, in those fundamentals contained in our creed. And men's lesser erroneous opinions are but the scabs that adhere to their religion. Only the church of Rome is a very leper, whose infectious disease doth compel us to avoid her company. (As for any sort of men that deny the

fundamentals, I will not call them by the name of christians.) So also in duties of worship, Satan will be casting in scruples. If they should hear the word, he will cause them to be scrupling the calling of the minister, or something in his doctrine to discourage them. If they should dedicate their children to Christ in the baptismal covenant, he will be raising scruples about the lawfulness of baptizing infants. When they should solace their souls at the Lord's supper, or other communion of the church, he will be raising scruples about the fitness of every one that they are to join with, and whether it be lawful to join with such an ignorant man, or such a wicked man; or whether it be a true church, or rightly gathered, or governed, or the minister a true minister, and twenty the like. When they should join with the church in singing of God's praises, he will move one to scruple singing David's psalms; another to scruple singing among the ungodly; another singing psalms that agree not to every man's condition; another, because our translation is bad, or our metre defective, and we might have better. When men should spend the Lord's day in God's spiritual worship, he causeth one to scruple, whether the Lord's day be of divine institution. Another he drives into the other extreme, to scruple almost every thing that is not worship. Whether they may provide their meat on that day, (when yet it is a solemn day of thanksgiving, and they scruple not much more on other thanksgiving days,) or whether they may so much as move a stick out of the way. Others he moves to trouble themselves with scruples, at what hour the day begins and ends, and the like. Whereas, if they, 1. Understood that worldly rest is commanded but as a help to spiritual worship. 2. And that they must employ as much of that day in God's work as they do of other days in their callings, and rest in the night as at other times, and that God looks to time for the work's sake, and not at the work for the time's sake; this would cast out most of their scruples. The like course Satan takes with christians in reading, praying in secret, or in their families, teaching their families, reproof sinners, teaching the ignorant, meditation, and all other duties, too long to mention the particular scruples which he thrusts into men's heads, much more to resolve them, which would require a large volume alone.

Now I would entreat all such christians to consider, how little they please God, and how much they please Satan, and how much they break their own peace, and the peace of the churches. If you send a man on a journey, would you like him better that would stand questioning and scrupling every step he goes, whether he set the right foot before; or whether he should go in the foot-path or in the road? or him that would cheerfully go on, not thinking which foot goeth forward; and rather step a little beside the path, and in again, than to stand scrupling when he should be going? If you send reapers into your harvest, which would you like better, him that would stand scrupling how many straws he should cut down at once, and at what height; and with fears of cutting them too high or too low, too many at once, or too few, should do you but little work? or him that would do his work cheerfully as well as he can? Would you not be angry at such childish, unprofitable diligence or curiosity, as is a hindrance to your work? and is it not so with our Master? There was but one of those parties in the right that Paul spoke to, Rom. xiv. xv. And yet he not only persuades them to bear with one another, and not to judge one another, but to receive the weak in faith, and not to doubtful disputations; but he bids them, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." How?

Can he that erreth be fully persuaded in his error? Yes, he may go on boldly and confidently, not troubling himself with demurs in his duty, as long as he took the safer side in his doubt. Not that this should encourage any to venture on sin, or to neglect a due inquiry after God's mind. But I speak against tormenting scruples, which do no work, but hinder from it, and stay us from our duty.

The same I say against scruples about your sins: Satan will make you believe that every thing is a sin, that he may disquiet you, if he cannot get you to believe that nothing almost is sin, that he may destroy you. You shall not put a bit in your mouth, but he will prove a scruple, whether it were not too good, or too much. You shall not clothe yourself, but he will move you to scruple the lawfulness of it. You shall not come into any company, but he will afterward vex you about every word you spoke, lest you sinned.

The like I may say also about your condition, but more of that anon.

Direct. XXVII. When God hath once showed you a certainty, or but a strong probability, of your sincerity and his special love, labour to fix this so deep in your apprehension and memory, that it may serve for the time to come, and not only for the present. And leave not your soul too open to changes, upon every new apprehension, nor to question all that is past upon every jealousy; except when some notable declining to the world and the flesh, or a committing of gross sins, or a wilfulness or carelessness in other sins that you may avoid, do give you just cause of questioning your sincerity, and bringing your soul again to the bar, and your estate to a more exact review.

Some antinomian writers and preachers you shall meet with, who will persuade you, whatsoever sins you fall into, never more to question your justification or salvation. I have said enough before to prove their doctrine detestable. Their reason is, because God changeth not as we change, and justification is never lost. To which I answer, 1. God hated us while we were workers of iniquity, Psal. xi. 5; v. 5; and was angry with us when we were children of wrath, Eph. iii. 1—3. And afterward he laid by that hatred and wrath; and all this without change. If we cannot reach to apprehend how God's unchangeableness can stand with the fullest and frequentest expressions of him in Scripture, must we therefore deny what those expressions do contain? As Austin saith, Shall we deny that which is plain, because we cannot reach that which is obscure and difficult? 2. But if these men had well studied the Scriptures, they might have known that the same man that was yesterday hated as an enemy, may to-day be reconciled and loved as a son, and that without any change in God; even as it falls out within the reach of our knowledge: for God ruleth the world by his laws; they are his moral instruments, by them he condemneth; by them he justifieth, so far as he is said in this life, before the judgment-day, to do it (unless there be any other secret act of justification with him, which man is not able now to understand). The change is therefore in our relations, and in the moral actions of the laws. When we are unbelievers, and impenitent, we are related to God as enemies, rebels, unjustified, and unpardoned; being such as God's law condemneth and pronounceth enemies, and the law of grace doth not yet justify or pardon; and so God is, as it were, in some sense obliged, according to that law which we are under, to deal with us as enemies, by destroying us; and this is God's hating wrath, &c. When we repent, return, and believe, our relation is

changed; the same law that did condemn us, is relaxed and disabled, and the law of grace doth now acquit us; it pardoneth us, it justifieth us, and God by it: and so God is reconciled to us, when we are such as according to his own law of grace he is, as it were, obliged to forgive and to do good to, and to use as sons; is not all this apparently without any change in God? Cannot he make a law that shall change its moral action according to the change of the actions or inclinations of sinners? and this without any change in God? And so, if it should so be, that a justified man should fall from God, from Christ, from sincere faith or obedience, the law would condemn him again, and the law of grace would justify him no more, (in that state,) and all this without any change in God. 3. If this antinomian argument would prove any thing, it would prove justification before, and so without Christ's satisfaction, because there is no change in God. 4. The very point, That no justified man shall ever fall from Christ, is not so clear and fully revealed in Scripture, and past all doubt from the assault of objections, as that a poor soul in such a relapsed estate should venture his everlasting salvation wholly on this, supposing that he were certain that he was once sincere. For my own part, I am persuaded that no rooted believer, that is habitually and groundedly resolved for Christ, and hath crucified the flesh and the world, (as all have that are thoroughly Christ's,) do ever fall quite away from him afterwards. But I dare not lay my salvation on this. And if I were no surer of my salvation, than I am of the truth of this my judgment, to speak freely, my soul would be in a very sad condition. 5. But suppose it as certain and plain as any word in the gospel (that a justified man is never quite unjustified); yet as every new sin brings a new obligation to punishment, (or else they could not be pardoned, as needing no pardon,) so must every sin have its particular pardon, and consequently the sinner a particular justification from the guilt of that sin, besides his first general pardon (and justification): for to pardon sin before it is committed, is to pardon sin that is no sin, which is a contradiction, and impossibility. Now, though for daily, unavoidable infirmities, there be a pardon of course, upon the title of our habitual faith and repentance; yet whether in case of gross sin, or more notable defection, this will prove a sufficient title to particular pardon, without the addition of actual repentance; and what ease the sinner is in till that actual repentance and faith, as I told you before, are so difficult questions, (it being ordered by God's great wisdom that they should be so,) that it becoms no wise man to venture his salvation on his own opinion in these. Nay, it is certain, that if gross sinners, having opportunity and knowledge of their sins, repent not, they shall perish. And therefore I think, a justified man hath great reason upon such falls, to examine his particular repentance, (as well as his former state,) and not to promise himself or presume upon a pardon without it. 6. And besides all this, though both the continuance of faith, and non-intercession of justification, be never so certain, yet when a man's obedience is so far overthrown, his former evidences and persuasions of his justification will be uncertain to him. Though he have no reason to think that God is changeable, or justification will be lost, yet he hath reason enough to question whether ever he were a true believer, and so were ever justified. For faith worketh by love; and they that love Christ will keep his commandments. Libertines and carnal men may talk their pleasure; but when Satan maintains not their peace, sin will break it: and Dr.

Sibbs's words will be found true, "Soul's Conflict," p. 41, 42: "Though the main pillar of our comfort be the free forgiveness of our sins, yet if there be a neglect of growing in holiness, the soul will never be soundly quiet, because it will be prone to question the truth of justification; and it is as proper for sin to raise doubts and fears in the conscience, as for rotten flesh and wood to breed worms: where there is not a pure conscience, there is not a pacified conscience," &c. Read the rest.

Thus much I have been fain to promise, lest my words for consolation should occasion security and desolation. But now let me desire you to peruse the direction, and practise it. If when God hath given you assurance, or strong probabilities of your sincerity, you will make use of it but only for that present time, you will never then have a settled peace in your soul; besides the great wrong you do to God, by necessitating him to be so often renewing such discoveries, and repeating the same words to you so often over. If your child offend you, would you have him when he is pardoned, no longer to believe it than you are telling it him? Should he be still asking you over and over every day, Father, am I forgiven, or no? Should not one answer serve his turn? Will you not believe that your money is in your purse or chest any longer than you are looking on it? or that your corn is growing on your land, or your cattle in your grounds, any longer than you are looking on them? By this course a rich man should have no more content than a beggar, longer than he is looking on his money, or goods, or lands; and when he is looking on one, he should again lose the comfort of all the rest. What hath God given you a memory for, but to lay up former apprehensions, and discoveries, and experiences, and make use of them on all meet occasions afterwards? Let me therefore persuade you to this great and necessary work. When God hath once resolved your doubts, and showed you the truth of your faith, love, or obedience, write it down, if you can, in your book, (as I have advised you in my Treatise of Rest,) Such a day, upon serious perusal of my heart, I found it thus and thus with myself. Or at least, write it deep in your memory; and do not suffer any fancies, or fears, or light surmises to cause you to question this again, as long as you fall not from the obedience or faith which you then discovered. Alas! man's apprehension is a most mutable thing! If you leave your soul open to every new apprehension, you will never be settled: you may think two contrary things of yourself in an hour. You have not always the same opportunity for right discerning, nor the same clearness of apprehension, nor the same outward means to help you, nor the same inward assistance of the Holy Ghost. When you have these, therefore, make use of them, and fix your wavering soul, and take your question and doubt as resolved, and do not tempt God, by calling him to new answers again and again, as if he had given you no answer before. You will never want some occasion of jealousy and fears as long as you have corruption in your heart, and sin in your life, and a tempter to be troubling you; but if you will suffer any such wind to shake your peace and comforts, you will be always shaking and fluctuating, as a wave of the sea. And you must labour to apprehend not only the uncomfortableness, but the sinfulness also of this course. For though the questioning your own sincerity on every small occasion, be not near so great a sin as the questioning of God's merciful nature, or the truth of his promise, or his readiness to show mercy to the penitent soul, or the freeness and fullness of the covenant of grace; yet even this is no

contemptible sin. For, 1. You are doing Satan's work, in denying God's graces, and accusing yourself falsely, and so pleasing the devil in disquieting yourself. 2. You slander God's Spirit as well as your own soul, in saying he hath not renewed and sanctified you, when he hath. 3. This will necessitate you to further unthankfulness; for who can be thankful for a mercy, that thinks he never received it? 4. This will shut your mouth against all those praises of God, and that heavenly, joyful commemoration of his great, unspeakable love to your soul, which should be the blessed word of your life. 5. This will much abate your love to God, and your sense of the love of Christ in dying for you, and all the rest of your graces, while you are still questioning your interest in God's love. 6. It will lay such a discouragement on your soul, as will both destroy the sweetness of all duties to you, (which is a great evil,) and thereby make you backward to them, and heartless in them: you will have no mind of praying, meditation, or other duties, because all will seem dark to you, and you will think that every thing makes against you. 7. You rob all about you of that cheerful, encouraging example and persuasion which they should have from you, and by which you might win many souls to God. And contrarily you are a discouragement and hinderance to them. I could mention many more sinful aggravations of your denying God's graces in you on every small, insufficient occasion, which methinks should make you be very tender of it, if not to avoid unnecessary trouble to yourself, yet at least to avoid sin against God.

And what I have said of evidences and assurance, I would have you understand also of your experiences. You must not make use only at the present of your experiences, but lay them up for the time to come. Nor must you tempt God so far as to expect new experiences upon every new scruple or doubt of yours, as the Israelites expected new miracles in the wilderness, still forgetting the old. If a scholar should in his studies forget all that he hath read and learned, and all the resolutions of his doubts which in study he hath attained, and leave his understanding still as an unwritten paper, as a receptive of every mutation, and new apprehension, and contrary conceit, as if he had never studied the point before, he will make but a poor proficiency, and have but a fluctuated, unsettled brain. A scholar should make all the studies of his life to compose one entire image of truth in his soul, as a painter makes every line he draws to compose one entire picture of a man; and as a weaver makes every thread to compose one web, so should you make all former examinations, discoveries, evidences, and experiences, compose one full discovery of your condition, that so you may have a settled peace of soul: and see that you tie both ends together, and neither look on your present troubled state without your former, lest you be unthankful, and unjustly discouraged; nor on your former state without observance of your present frame of heart and life, lest you deceive yourself, or grow secure. Oh that you could well observe this direction! How much would it help you to escape extremes, and conduce to the settling of a well-grounded peace, and at once to the well ordering of your whole conversation!

Direct. XXVIII. Be very careful that you create not perplexities and terrors to your own soul, by rash misinterpretations of any passages either of Scripture, or God's providence, or of the sermons or private speeches of ministers: but resolve with patience, yea, with gladness, to suffer preachers to deal with their congregations in the most searching, serious, and awakening manner, lest your weakness

should be a wrong to the whole assembly, and possibly the undoing of many a sensual, drowsy, or obstinate soul, who will not be convinced and awakened by a comforting way of preaching, or by any smoother or gentler means.

Here are three dangerous enemies to your peace, which (for brevity) I warn you of together.

1. Rash misinterpretations and misapplications of Scripture. Some weak-headed, troubled christians can scarce read a chapter, or hear one read, but they will find something which they think doth condemn them. If they read of God's wrath and judgment, they think it is meant against them. If they read, "Our God is a consuming fire," they think presently it is themselves that must be the fuel: whereas justice and mercy have each their proper objects; the burning fire will not waste the gold, nor is water the fuel of it; but combustible matter it will presently consume. A humble soul that lies prostrate at Christ's feet, confessing its unworthiness, and bewailing its sinfulness, this is not the object of revenging justice: such a soul bringing Christ's merits, and pleading them with God, is so far from being the fuel of this consuming fire, that he bringeth that water which will undoubtedly quench it. Yet this Scripture expression of our God, may subdue carnal security even in the best, but not dismay them or discourage them in their hopes. Another reads in Psalm i. "I will set thy sins in order before thee," and he thinks, certainly God will deal thus by him, not considering that God chargeth only their sins upon them that charge them not by true repentance on themselves, and accept not of Christ who hath discharged them by his blood. It is the excusers, and mincers, and defenders of sin, that love not those that reprove them, and that will not avoid them, nor the occasions of them, that would not be reformed, and will not be persuaded, in whose souls iniquity hath dominion, and that delight in it it is these on whom God chargeth their sin: "For this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light; and come not to the light, lest their deeds should be reproofed," John iii. 20, 21. But for the soul that trembleth at God's word, and comes home to God with shame and sorrow, resolving to return no more to wickedness, God is so far from charging his sins upon him, that he never mentioneth them, as I told you is evident in the case of the prodigal. He makes not a poor sinner's burden more heavy by hitting him in the teeth with his sins, but makes it the office of his Son to ease him by disburdening him.

Many more texts might be named (and perhaps it would not be lost labour) which troubled souls do misunderstand and misapply; but it would make this writing tedious, which is already swelled so far beyond my first intention.

2. The second enemy of your peace here mentioned, is, Misunderstanding and misapplying passages of providence. Nothing more common with troubled souls, than upon every new cross and affliction that befalls them, presently to think, God takes them for hypocrites; and to question their sincerity! As if David and Job had not left them a full warning against this temptation. Do you lose your goods? So did Job. Do you lose your children? So did Job; and that in no very comfortable way. Do you lose your health? So did Job. What if your godly friends should come about you in this case, and bend all their wits and speeches to persuade you that you are but a hypocrite, as Job's friends did by him, would not that put you harder to it? Yet could Job resolve, "I will not let go mine integrity till I die." I know God's chastisements are all paternal punish-

ments; and that christians should search and try their hearts and ways at such times; but not conclude that they are graceless ever the more for being afflicted, seeing God chasteneth every son whom he receiveth, Heb. xii. 6, 7. And in searching after sin itself in your afflictions, be sure that you make the word, and not your sufferings, the rule to discover how far you have sinned; and let afflictions only quicken you to try by the word. How many a soul have I known that by misinterpreting providences, have, in a blind jealousy, been turned quite from truth and duty, supposing it had been error and sin; and all because of their afflictions. As a foolish man in his sickness accuseth the last meat that he eat before he fell sick, though it might be the wholesomest that ever he eat, and the disease may have many causes which he is ignorant of. One man being sick, a busy seducing papist comes to him (for it is their use to take such opportunities) and tells him, It is God's hand upon you for forsaking or straying from the Roman catholic church, and God hath sent this affliction to bring you home. All your ancestors lived and died in this church, and so must you if ever you will be saved. The poor, jealous, affrighted sinner hearing this, and through his ignorance being unable to answer him, thinks it is even true, and presently turns papist. In the same manner do most other sects. How many have the antinomians and anabaptists thus seduced! Finding a poor silly woman (for it is most common with them) to be under sad doubts and distress of soul, one tells her, It is God's hand on you to convince you of error, and to bring you to submit to the ordinance of baptism: and upon this many have been rebaptized, and put their foot into the snare which I have yet seen few escape and draw back from. Another comes and tells the troubled soul, It is legal preaching, and looking at something in yourself for peace and comfort, which hath brought you to this distress: as long as you follow these legal preachers, and read their books, and look at any thing in yourself, and seek assurance from marks within you, it will never be better with you. These preachers understand not the nature of free grace, nor ever tasted it themselves, and therefore they cannot preach it, but despise it. You must know that grace is so free that the covenant hath no condition: you must believe, and not look after the marks. And believing is but to be persuaded that God is reconciled to you, and hath forgiven you; for you are justified before you were born, if you are one of the elect, and can but believe it. It is not any thing of your own, by which you can be justified; not is it any sin of yours that can unjustify. It is the witness of the Spirit only persuading you of your justification and adoption, that can give you assurance; and fetching it from any thing in yourself, is but a resting on your own righteousness, and forsaking Christ. When the antinomian hath but sung this ignorant charm to a poor soul as ignorant as himself, and prepared by terrors to entertain the impression, presently it (oft) takes, and the sinner, without a wonder of mercy, is undone. This doctrine, which subverteth the very scope of the gospel, being entertained, subverteth his faith and obedience; and usually the libertinism of his opinion is seen in his liberty of conscience, and licentious practices; and his trouble of mind is cured, as a burning fever by opium, which give him such a sleep, that he never awaketh till he be in another world. Yet these errors are so gross, and so fully against the express texts of Scripture, that if ministers would condescendingly, lovingly, and familiarly deal with them and do their duty, I should hope many well-meaning

souls might be recovered. Thus you see the danger of rash interpreting, and so misinterpreting providences. As such interpretations of prosperity and success delude not only the Mahometan world, and the profane world, but many that seemed godly, so many such interpretations of adversity and crosses do; especially if the seducer be but kind and liberal to relieve them in their adversity, he may do with many poor souls almost what he please.

3. The third enemy to your peace here mentioned, is, Misinterpreting or misapplying the passages of preachers in their sermons, writings, or private speeches. A minister cannot deal thoroughly or seriously with any sort of sinners, but some fearful, troubled souls apply all to themselves. I must entreat you to avoid this fault, or else you will turn God's ordinances, and the daily food of your souls, into bitterness and wormwood, and all through your mistakes. I think there are few ministers so preach, but you might perceive whom they mean, and they so difference as to tell you who they speak to. I confess it is a better sign of an honest heart and self-judging conscience, to say, He speaks now to me, this is my case; than to say, He speaks now to such or such a one, this is their case. For it is the property of hypocrites to have their eye most abroad, and in every duty to be minding most the faults of others: and you may much discern such in their prayers, in that they will fill their confessions most with other men's sins, and you may feel them all the while in the bosom of their neighbours, when you may even feel a sincere man speaking his own heart, and most opening his own bosom to God. But though self-applying and self-searching be far the better sign, yet must not any wise christian do it mistakingly; for that may breed abundance of very sad effects. For besides the aforesaid imbiting of God's ordinances to you, and so discouraging you from them, do but consider what a grief and a snare you may prove to your minister. A grief it must needs be to him who knows he should not make sad the soul of the innocent, to think that he cannot avoid it, without avoiding his duty. When God hath put two several messages in our mouths; "Say to the righteous, it shall be well with him;" and "Say to the wicked, it shall be ill with him," Isaiah iii. 10, 11; "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned;" and we speak both; will you take that as spoken to you, which is spoken to the unbeliever and the wicked? Alas, how is it possible then for us to forbear troubling you? If you will put your head under every stroke that we give against sin and sinners, how can we help it if you smart? What a sad case are we in, by such misapplications! We have but two messages to deliver, and both are usually lost by misapplications. The wicked saith, I am the righteous, and therefore it shall go well with me. The righteous saith, I am the wicked, and therefore it shall go ill with me. The unbeliever saith, I am a believer, and therefore am justified. The believer saith, I am an unbeliever, and therefore am condemned. Nay, it is not only the loss of our preaching, but we oft do them much harm; for they are hardened that should be humbled; and they are wounded more that should be healed. A minister now must needs tell them who he means by the believer, and who by the unbeliever; who by the righteous, and who by the wicked: and yet when he hath done it as accurately and as cautiously as he can, misapplying souls will wrong themselves by it. So that because people cannot see the distinguishing line, it therefore comes to pass that few are comforted but when ministers preach nothing else but comfort;

and few humbled, but where ministers bend almost all their endeavours that way, that people can feel almost nothing else from him. But for him that equally would divide to each their portion, each one snatcheth up the part of another, and he oft misseth of profiting either; and yet this is the course that we must take.

And what a snare is this to us, as well as a grief! What if we should be so moved with compassion of your troubles, as to fit almost all our doctrine and application to you, what a fearful guilt should we draw upon our own souls!

Nay, what a snare may you thus prove to the greater part of the congregation! Alas, we have seldom past one, or two, or three troubled consciences in an auditory (and perhaps some of their troubles be the fruit of such wilful sinning, that they have more need of greater humbling yet); should we now neglect all the rest of these poor souls, to preach only to you? Oh how many an ignorant, hard-hearted sinner comes before God every day! Shall we let such go away as they came, without ever a blow to awaken them and stir their hearts, when, alas, all that ever we can do is too little? When we preach you into tears and trembling, we preach them asleep! Could we speak swords, it would scarce make them feel, when you through misapplication have gone home with anguish and fears. How few of all these have been pricked at the heat, and said, "What shall we do to be saved?" Have you no pity now on such stupid souls as these? I fear this one distemper of yours, that you cannot bear this rousing preaching, doth bewray another and greater sin; look to it, I beseech you, for I think I have spied out the cause of your trouble: are you not yourself too great a stranger to poor stupid sinners? and come not among them? or pity them not as you should? and do not your duty for the saving of their souls; but think it belongs not to you but to others? Do you use to deal with servants and neighbours about you, and tell them of sin and misery, and the remedy, and seek to draw their hearts to Christ, and bring them to duty? I doubt you do little in this; (and that is sad unmercifulness;) for if you did, truly you could not choose but find such miserable ignorance, such senselessness and blockishness, such hating reproof and unwillingness to be reformed, such love of this world and slavery to the flesh, and so little savour of Christ, grace, heaven, and the things of the Spirit, and especially such an unteachableness, untractableness, (as thorns and briers,) and so great a difficulty moving them an inch from what they are, that you would have been willing ever after to have ministers preach more rousingly than they do, and you would be glad for their sakes, when you heard that which might awake them and prick them to the heart. Yea, if you had tried how hard a work it is to bring worldly, formal hypocrites to see their hypocrisy, or to come over to Christ from the creature, and to be in good earnest in the business of their salvation, you would be glad to have preachers search them to the quick, and ransack their hearts, and help them against their affected and obstinate self-delusions.

Besides, you should consider that their case is far different from yours: your disease is pain and trouble, they are stark dead: you have God's favour and doubt of it, they are his enemies and never suspect it: you want comfort, and they want pardon and life: if your disease should never here be cured, it is but going more sadly to heaven; but if they be not recovered by regeneration, they must lie for ever in hell. And should we not then pity them more than you; and study more for them; and

preach more for them; and rather forget you in a sermon than them? Should you not wish us so to do? Should we more regard the comforting of one, than the saving of a hundred? Nay more, we should not only neglect them, but dangerously hurt them, if we should preach too much to the case of troubled souls; for you are not so apt to misapply passages of terror, and to take their portion, as they are apt to apply to themselves such passages for comfort, and take your portion to themselves.

I know some will say, that it is preaching Christ, and setting forth God's love, that will win them best, and terrors do but make unwilling, hypocritical professors. This makes me remember how I have heard some preachers of the times blame their brethren for not preaching Christ to their people, when they preached the danger of rejecting Christ, disobeying him, and resisting his Spirit. Do these men think that it is no preaching Christ, (when we have first many years told men the fulness of his satisfaction, the freeness and general extent of his covenant or promise, and the riches of his grace, and the incomprehensibleness of his glory, and the truth of all,) to tell them afterwards the danger of refusing, neglecting, and disobeying him; and of living after the flesh, and preferring the world before him; and serving mammon, and falling off in persecution, and avoiding the cross, and yielding in temptation, and quenching the Spirit, and declining from their first love, and not improving their talents, and not forgiving and loving their brethren, yea, and enemies? &c. Is none of this gospel? nor preaching Christ? Yea, is not repentance itself (except despairing repentance) proper to the gospel, seeing the law excludeth it, and all manner of hope? Blame me not, reader, if I be zealous against these men, that not only know no better what preaching Christ is, but in their ignorance reproach their brethren for not preaching Christ, and withal condemn Christ himself and all his apostles. Do they think that Christ himself knew not what it was to preach Christ? or that he set us a pattern too low for our imitation? I desire them soberly to read Matt. v. vi. vii. x. xxv; Rom. viii. iv. from the first verse to the fourteenth; Rom. ii; Heb. ii. iv. v. x.; and then tell me whether we preach as Christ and his apostles did. But to the objection; I answer first, We do set forth God's love, and the fulness of Christ, and the sufficiency of his death and satisfaction for all, and the freeness and extent of his offer and promise of mercy, and his readiness to welcome returning sinners; this we do first, (mixing with this the discovery of their natural misery by sin which must be first known,) and next we show them the danger of rejecting Christ and his offer. 2. When we find men settled under the preaching of free grace, in a base contempt or sleepy neglect of it, preferring the world and their carnal pleasures and ease, before all the glory of heaven, and riches of Christ and grace, is it not time for us to say, "How shall ye escape, if ye neglect so great salvation?" Heb. ii. 3. "And of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, that treads under foot the blood of the covenant!" Heb. x. 26. When men grow careless and unbelieving, must we not say, "Take heed lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it?" Heb. iv. 1, 3. Hath not Christ led us, commanded us, and taught us this way? "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish," was his doctrine, Luke xiii. 3, 5. "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" (what is that gospel?) "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16. "Those

mine enemies that would not I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me," Luke xix. 27. Doth any of the apostles speak more of hell-fire, and the worm that never dieth, and the fire that never is quenched, than Christ himself doth? And do not his apostles go the same way; even Paul, the greatest preacher of faith? 2 Thess. i. 7-9; ii. 12, &c. What more common? Alas, what work should we make, if we should stroke and smooth all men with antinomian language! It were the way to please all the sensual, profane multitude, but it is none of Christ's way to save their souls. I am ready to think that these men would have Christ preached as the papists would have him prayed to: to say, Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, nine times together, and this oft over, is their praying to him; and to have Christ's name oft in the preacher's mouth, some men think is the right preaching Christ.

Let me now desire you hereafter, to be glad to hear ministers awaken the profane and dead-hearted hearers, and search all to the quick, and misapply nothing to yourself; but if you think any passage doth nearly concern you, open your mind to the minister privately, when he may satisfy you more fully, and that without doing hurt to others. And consider what a strait ministers are in, that have so many of so different conditions, inclinations, and conversations to preach to.

Direct. XXIX. Be sure you forget not to distinguish between causes of doubting of your sincerity, and causes of mere humiliation, repentance, and amendment; and do not raise doubtings and fears, where God calleth you but to humiliation, amendment, and fresh recourse to Christ.

This rule is of so great moment to your peace, that you will have daily use for it, and can never maintain any true, settled peace without the practice of it. What more common than for poor christians to pour out a multitude of complaints of their weaknesses, and wants, and miscarriages; and never consider all the while that there may be cause of sorrow in these, when yet there is no cause of doubting of their sincerity. I have showed before, that in gross falls and great backslidings, doubtings will arise, and sometimes our fears and jealousies may not be without cause; but it is not ordinary infirmities, nor every sin which might have been avoided, that is just cause of doubting; nay, your very humiliation must no further be endeavoured than it tends to your recovery, and to the honouring of mercy: for it is possible that you may exceed in the measure of your griefs. You must therefore first be resolved, wherein the truth of saving grace doth consist, and then in all your failings and weaknesses first know, whether they contradict sincerity in itself, and are such as may give just cause to question your sincerity: if they be not, (as the ordinary infirmities of believers are not,) then you may and must be humbled for them, but you may not doubt of your salvation for them. I told you before by what marks you may discern your sincerity; that is, wherein the nature of saving faith and holiness doth consist: keep that in your eye, and as long as you find that sure and clear, let nothing make you doubt of your right to Christ and glory. But, alas! how people do contradict the will of God in this! When you have sinned, God would have you bewail your folly and unkind dealing, and fly to mercy through Christ, and this you will not do; but he would not have you torment yourselves with fears of damnation, and questioning his love, and yet this you will do. You may discern by this, that humiliation and reformation are sure of God, man's heart is so backward to it; and that vexations, doubts, and fears in true

christians that should be comfortable, are not of God, man's nature is so prone to them (though the ungodly that should fear and doubt, are as backward to it).

I think it will not be unseasonable here to lay down the particular doubts that usually trouble sincere believers, and see how far they may be just, and how far unjust and causeless; and most of them shall be from my own former experience, and such as I have been most troubled with myself; and the rest such as are incident to true christians, and too usual with them.

Doubt 1. I have oft heard and read in the best divines, that grace is not born with us, and therefore Satan hath always possession before Christ, and keeps that possession in peace, till Christ come and bind him and cast him out; and that this is so great a work that it cannot choose but be observed, and for ever remembered by the soul where it is wrought; yea, the several steps and passages of it may be all observed: first casting down, and then lifting up; first wounding and killing, and then healing and reviving. But I have not observed the distinct parts and passages of this change in me, nay, I know of no such sudden observable change at all: I cannot remember that ever I was first killed, and then revived: nor do I know by what minister, nor at what sermon, or other means, that work which is upon me was wrought; no, nor what day, or month, or year it was begun. I have slided insensibly into a profession of religion, I know not how; and therefore I fear that I am not sincere, and the work of true regeneration was never yet wrought upon my soul.

Answe. I will lay down the full answer to this, in these propositions. 1. It is true that grace is not natural to us, or conveyed by generation. 2. Yet it is as true that grace is given to our children as well as to us. That it may be so, and is so with some, all will grant who believe that infants may be and are saved; and that it is so with the infants of believers, I have fully proved in my Book of Baptism: but mark what grace I mean. The grace of remission of original sin, the children of all true believers have at least a high probability of, if not a full certainty; their parent accepting it for himself and them, and dedicating them to Christ, and engaging them in his covenant, so that he takes them for his people, and they take him for their Lord and Saviour. And for the grace of inward renewing of their natures or disposition, it is a secret to us, utterly unknown whether God use to do it in infants or no. 3. God's first ordained way for the working of inward holiness, is by parents' education of their children, and not by the public ministry of the word; of which more anon. 4. All godly parents do acquaint their children with the doctrine of Christ in their infancy, as soon as they are capable of receiving it, and do afterwards inculcate it on them more and more. 5. These instructions of parents are usually seconded by the workings of the Spirit, according to the capacity of the child, opening their understandings to receive it, and making an impression thereby upon the heart. 6. When these instructions and the inward workings of the Spirit are just past the preparatory part, and above the highest step of common grace, and have attained to special saving grace, is ordinarily undiscernible; and therefore, as I have showed already, in God's usual way of working grace, men cannot know the just day or time when they began to be in the state of grace. And though men that have long lived in profaneness, and are changed suddenly, may conjecture near at the time; yet those that God hath been working on early in their youth, yea, or afterwards by slow degrees, cannot know the time of their

first receiving the Spirit. 7. The memories of all men are so slippery, and one thought so suddenly thrust out by another, that many a thousand souls forget those particular workings which they have truly felt. 8. The memories of children are far weaker than of others; and therefore it is less probable that all the Spirit's workings should by them be remembered. 9. And the motions of grace are so various, sometimes stirring one affection, and sometimes another, sometimes beginning with smaller motions, and then moving more strongly and sensibly, that it is usual for later motions which are more deeply affecting, to make us overlook all the former, or take them for nothing. 10. God dealth very variously with his chosen in their conversion, as to the accidentals and circumstantialities of the work. Some he calleth not home till they have run a long race in the way of rebellion, in open drunkenness, swearing, worldliness, and derision of holiness: these he usually humbleth more deeply, and they can better observe the several steps of the Spirit in the work (and yet not always neither). Others he so restraineth in their youth, that though they have not saving grace, yet they are not guilty of any gross sins, but have a liking to the people and ways of God; and yet he doth not savingly convert them till long after. It is much harder for these to discern the time or manner of their conversion; yet usually some conjectures they may make; and usually their humiliation is not so deep. Others, as is said, have the saving workings of the Spirit in their very childhood, and these can least of all discern the certain time or order. The ordinary way of God's dealing with those that are children of godly parents, and have good education, is, by giving them some liking of godly persons and ways, some conscience of sin, some repentance and recourse by prayer to God in Christ for mercy; yet youthful lusts and folly, and ill company, do usually much stifle it, till at last, by some affliction, or sermon, or book, or good company, God setteth home the work, and maketh them more resolute and victorious christians. These persons now can remember that they had convictions and stirrings of conscience when they were young, and the other forementioned works; perhaps they can remember some more notable rousings and awakenings long after, and perhaps they have had many such fits and steps, and the work hath stood at this pass for a long time, even many years together. But at which of all these changes it was that the soul began to be savingly sincere, I think is next to an impossibility to discern. According to that experience which I have had of the state of christians, I am forced to judge that most of the children of the godly that ever are renewed, are renewed in their childhood, or much towards it then done; and that among forty christians there is not one that can certainly name the month in which his soul first began to be sincere; and among a thousand christians, I think not one can name the hour. The sermon which awakened them, they may name, but not the hour when they first arrived at a saving sincerity.

My advice therefore to all christians is this: Find Christ by his Spirit dwelling in your hearts, and then never trouble yourselves, though you know not the time or manner of his entrance. Do you value Christ above the world, and resolve to choose him before the world, and perform these resolutions? Then need you not doubt but the Spirit of Jesus is victorious in you.

Doubt 2. But I have oft read and heard, that a man cannot come to Christ till he feel the heavy burden of sin. It is the weary and heavy-laden that Christ calleth to him. He bindeth up only the broken-

hearted; he is a Physician only to those that feel themselves sick; he brings men to heaven by the gates of hell. They must be able to say, I am in a lost condition, and in a state of damnation, and if I should die this hour I must perish for ever, before Christ will deliver them. God will not throw away the blood of his Son, on those that feel not their absolute necessity of it, and that they are undone without it. But it was never thus with me to this day.

Ans. 1. You must distinguish carefully between repentance as it is in the mind and will, and as it shows itself in the passion of sorrow. All that have saving interest in Christ, have their judgments and wills so far changed, that they know they are great sinners, and that there is no way to the obtaining of pardon and salvation but by Christ, and the free mercy of God in him; and thereupon they are convinced that if they remain without the grace of Christ, they are undone for ever. Whereupon they understanding that Christ and mercy is offered to them in the gospel, do heartily and thankfully accept the offer, and would not be without Christ, or change their hopes of his grace, for all the world; and do resolve to wait upon him for the further discovery of his mercy, and the workings of his Spirit, in a constant and conscionable use of his means, and to be ruled by him, to their power. Is it not thus with you? If it be, here is the life and substance of repentance, which consisteth in this change of the mind and heart, and you have no cause to doubt of the truth of it, for want of more deep and passionate humiliation. 2. I have told you before, how uncertain and unconstant the passionate effects of grace are, and how unfit to judge by, and given you several reasons of it. Yet I doubt not but some work upon the affections there is, as well as on the will and understanding; but with so great diversity of manner and degrees, that it is not safe judging by it only or chiefly. Is there no degree of sorrow or trouble that hath touched your heart for your sin or misery? If your affections were no whit stirred, you would hardly be moved to action, to use means, or avoid iniquity, much less would you so oft complain as you do. 3. If God prevented those heinous sins in the time of your unregeneracy, which those usually are guilty of who are called to so deep a degree of sorrow, you should rather be thankful that your wound was not deeper, than troubled that the cure cost you no dearer. Look well whether the cure be wrought in the change of your heart and life from the world to God by Christ, and then you need not be troubled that it was wrought so easily. 4. Were you not acquainted with the evil of sin, and danger and misery of sinners, in your very childhood, and also of the necessity of a Saviour, and that Christ died to save all sinners that will believe and repent? And hath not this fastened on your heart, and been working in you by degrees ever since? If it be so, then you cannot expect that you should have such deep terrors as those that never hear of sin and Christ till the news come upon them suddenly in the ripeness of their sin. There is a great deal of difference betwixt the conversion of a Jew, or any other infidel, who is brought on the sudden to know the doctrine of sin, misery, and salvation by Christ; and the conversion of a professor of the christian religion, who hath known this doctrine in some sort from his childhood, and who hath a sound religion, though he be not sound in his religion, and so needs not a conversion to a sound faith, but only to a soundness in the faith. The suddenness of the news must needs make those violent commotions and changes in the one, which cannot ordinarily be expected in the other, who is acquainted so early with the truth,

and by such degrees. 5. But suppose you heard nothing of sin and misery, and a Redeemer, in your childhood, or at least understood it not, (which yet is unlikely,) yet let me ask you this: Did not that preacher, or that book, or whatever other means God used for your conversion, reveal to you misery and mercy both together? Did not you hear and believe that Christ died for sin, as soon as you understood your sin and misery? Sure I am that the Scripture reveals both together; and so doth every sound preacher, and every sound writer (notwithstanding that the slanderous antinomians do shamelessly proclaim that we preach not Christ, but the law). This being so, you must easily apprehend that it must needs abate very much of the terror, which would else have been unavoidable. If you had read or heard that you were a sinner, and the child of hell, and of God's wrath, and that there was no remedy (which is such a preaching of the law, as we must not use to any in the world, nor any, since the first promise to Adam must receive); yea, or if you had heard nothing of a Saviour for a year, or a day, or an hour after you had heard that you were an heir of hell, and so the remedy had been but concealed from you, though not denied (which ordinarily must not be done); then you might in all likelihood have found some more terrors of soul that hour. But when you heard that your sin was pardonable as soon as you heard that you were a sinner, and heard that your misery had a sufficient remedy provided, if you would accept it, or at least that it was not remediless, and this as soon as you heard of that misery, what wonder is it if this exceedingly abate your fears and troubles? Suppose two men go to visit two several neighbours that have the plague, and one of them saith, It is the plague that is on you; you are but a dead man. The other saith to the other sick person, It is the plague that you have; but here is our physician at the next door that hath a receipt that will cure it as infallibly and as easily as if it were but the prick of a pin, he hath cured thousands, and never failed one that took his receipt; but if you will not send to him, and trust him, and take his receipt, there is no hopes of you. Tell me now whether the first of these sick persons be not like to be more troubled than the other? And whether it will not remove almost all the fears and troubles of the latter, to hear of a certain remedy as soon as he heareth of the disease? Though some trouble he must needs have to think that he hath a disease in itself so desperate or loathsome. Nay, let me tell you, so the cure be but well done, the less terrors and despairing fears you were put upon, the more credit is it to your physician and his apothecary, Christ and the preacher, or instrument, that did the work; and therefore you should rather praise your physician, than question the cure.

Doubt 3. But it is common with all the world to consent to the religion that they are bred up in, and somewhat affected with it, and to make conscience of obeying the precepts of it. So do the Jews in theirs; the Mahometans in theirs. And I fear it is no other work on my soul but the mere force of education, that maketh me religious, and that I had never that great renewing work of the Spirit upon my soul; and so that all my religion is but mere opinion, or notions in my brain.

Ans. 1. All the religions in the world, besides the christian religion, have either much error and wickedness mixed with some truth of God, or they contain some lesser parcel of that truth alone (as the Jews); only the christian religion hath that whole truth which is saving. Now so much of God's truth as there is in any of these religions, so much it may

work good effects upon their souls; as the knowledge of the Godhead, and that God is holy, good, just, merciful, and that he sheweth them much undeserved mercy in his daily providences, &c. But mark these two things, 1. That all persons of false religions do more easily and greedily embrace the false part of their religion than the true; and that they are zealous for, and practise with all their might, because their natural corruption doth befriend it, and is as combustible fuel for the fire of hell to catch in; but that truth of God which is mixed with their error, if it be practical, they fight against it, and abhor it while they hold it, because it crosseth their lusts; insomuch that it is usually but some few of the more convinced and civil that God in providence maketh the main instruments of continuing those truths of his in that part of the wicked world. For we find that even among pagans, the profane and more sensual sort did deride the better sort, as our profane christians do the godly, whom they called puritans. 2. Note, That the truth of God which in these false religions is still acknowledged, is so small a part, and so oppressed by errors, that it is not sufficient to their salvation (that is, to give them any sound hope); nor is it sufficient to make such clear, and deep, and powerful impressions in their minds, as may make them holy or truly heavenly, or may overcome in them the interest of the world and the flesh.

This being so, you may see great reason why a Turk or a heathen may be zealous for his religion without God's Spirit, or any true sanctification, when yet you cannot be so truly zealous for yours without it. Indeed the speculative part of our religion, separated from the practical, or from the hard and self-denying part of the practical, many a wicked man may be zealous for; as to maintain the Godhead, or that God is merciful, &c. Or to maintain against the Jews that Jesus is the Christ; or against the Turks, that he is the only Redeemer and Teacher of the church; or against the papists, that all the christians in the world are Christ's church as well as the Romans; and against the Socinians and Arians, that Christ is God, &c. But this is but a small part of our religion; nor doth this, or any heathenish zeal, sanctify the heart, or truly mortify the flesh, or overcome the world. They may condemn life, and cast it away for their pride and vain-glory; but not for the hopes of a holy and blessed life with God. This is but the prevalency of one corruption against another, or rather of vice against nature. There is a common grace of God that goeth along with common truths, and according to the measure of their obedience to the truth, such was the change it wrought; which was done by common truths and common grace together, but not by their false mixtures at all. But God hath annexed his special grace only to the special truths of the gospel or christian religion. If therefore God do by common grace work a great change on a heathen, by the means of common truths, and do by his special grace work a greater and special change on you, by the means of the special truths of the gospel, have you any reason hereupon to suspect your condition? Or should you not rather both admire that providence and common grace which is manifested without the church, and humbly, rejoicingly, and thankfully embrace that special saving grace, which is manifested to yourself above them?

2. And for that which you speak of education, you have as much cause to doubt of your conversion, because it was wrought by public preaching, as because it was wrought by education. For, 1. Both are by the gospel; for it is the gospel that your pa-

rents taught you, as well as which the preacher teacheth you. 2. I have showed you, that if parents did not shamefully neglect their duties, the word publicly preached would not be the ordinary instrument of regeneration to the children of true christians, but would only build them up, and direct them in the faith, and in obedience. The proof is very plain: If we should speak nothing of the interest of our infants in the covenant grace, upon the conditional force of their parents' faith, nor of their baptism; yet, Deut. vi. Ephes. vi. and oft in the Proverbs, you may find, that it is God's strict command, that parents should teach God's word to their children, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; yea, with a prediction or half promise, that if we "train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he shall not depart from it," Prov. xxii. 6. Now it is certain that God will usually bless that which he appointeth to be the usual means, if it be rightly used. For he hath appointed no means to be used in vain.

I hope therefore by this time you see, that instead of being troubled that the work was done on your soul by the means of education, 1. You had more reason to be troubled if it had been done first by the public preaching of the word; for it should grieve you at the heart to think, 1. That you lived in an unregenerate state so long, and spent your childhood in vanity and sin, and thought not seriously on God and your salvation, for so many years together. 2. And that you or your parent's sin should provoke God so long to withdraw his Spirit and deny you his grace. 2. You may see also what unconceivable thanks you owe to God, who made education the means of your early change: 1. In that he prevented so many and grievous sins which else you would have been guilty of. (And you may read in David's and Manasseh's case, that even pardoned sins have oftentimes very sad effects left behind them.) 2. That you have enjoyed God's Spirit and love so much longer than else you would have done. 3. That iniquity took not so deep rooting in you, as by custom it would have done. 4. That the devil cannot glory of that service which you did him, as else he might; and that the church is not so much the worse, as else it might have been, by the mischief you would have done; and that you need not all your days look back with so much trouble, as else you must, upon the effects of your ill doing; nor with Paul, to think of one Stephen, yea, many saints, in whose blood you first imbrued your hands: and to cry out, I was born out of due time. I am not worthy to be called a christian, because I persecuted the church of God. I was mad against them, and persecuted them into several cities. I was sometime foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures. Would you rather that God had permitted you to do this? 5. And methinks it should be a comfort to you, that your own father was the instrument of your spiritual good; that he that was the means of your generation, was the means of your regeneration, both because it will be a double comfort to your parents, and because it will endear and engage you to them in a double bond. For my part, I know not what God did secretly in my heart, before I had the use of memory and reason; but the first good that ever I felt on my soul, was from the counsels and teachings of my own father in my childhood; and I take it now for a double mercy, being gladder that he was the instrument to do me good, than if it had been the best preacher in the world. How foul an oversight is it then, that you should be troubled at one of the choicest mercies of your life, yea, that your life was capable

of, and for which you owe to God such abundant thanks!

Doubt 4. But my great fear is, that the life of grace is not yet within me, because I am so void of spiritual sense and feeling. Methinks I am in spiritual things as dead as a block, and my heart as hard as a rock, or the nether mill-stone. Grace is a principle of new life, and life is a principle of sense and motion; it causeth vigour and activity. Such should I have in duty, if I had the life of grace. But I feel the great curse of a dead heart within me. God seems to withdraw his quickening Spirit, and to forsake me; and to give me up to the hardness of my heart. If I were in covenant with him, I should feel the blessing of the covenant within me; the hard heart would be taken out of my body, and a heart of flesh, a soft heart, would be given to me. But I cannot weep one tear for my sins. I can think on the blood of Christ, and of my bloody sins that caused it, and all will not wring one tear from mine eyes; and therefore, I fear, that my soul is yet destitute of the life of grace.

Ans. 1. A soft heart consisteth in two things. 1. That the will be persuadable, tractable, and yielding to God, and pliable to his will. 2. That the affections or passions be somewhat moved herewithal about spiritual things. Some degree more or less of the latter, doth concur with the former; but I have told you, that it is the former wherein the heart and life of grace doth lie, and that the latter is very various, and uncertain to try by. Many do much overlook the Scripture meaning of the word hard-heartedness. Mark it up and down concerning the Israelites, who are so oft charged by Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets, to be hard-hearted, or to harden their hearts, or stiffen their necks; and you will find that the most usual meaning of the Holy Ghost is this, They were an intractable, disobedient, obstinate people; or as the Greek word in the New Testament signifieth, which we often translate unbelieving, they were an unpersuadable people; no saying would serve them. They set light by God's commands, promises, and severest threatenings, and judgments themselves; nothing would move them to forsake their sins, and obey the voice of God. You shall find that hardness of heart is seldom put for want of tears, or a melting, weeping disposition; and never at all for the want of such tears, where the will is tractable and obedient. I pray you examine yourself then according to this rule. God offereth his love in Christ, and Christ with all his benefits, to you. Are you willing to accept them? He commandeth you to worship him, and use his ordinances, and love his people, and others, and to forsake your known iniquities, so far that they may not have dominion over you. Are you willing to this? He commandeth you to take him for your God, and Christ for your Redeemer, and stick to him for better and worse, and never forsake him. Are you willing to do this? If you have a stiff, rebellious heart, and will not accept of Christ and grace, and will rather let go Christ than the world, and will not be persuaded from your known iniquities, but are loth to leave them, and love not to be reformed, and will not set upon those duties as you are able, which God requireth, and you are fully convinced of, then are you hard-hearted in the Scripture sense. But if you are glad to have Christ with all your heart, upon the terms that he is offered to you in the gospel, and you do walk daily in the way of duty as you can, and are willing to pray, and willing to hear and wait on God in his ordinances, and willing to have all God's graces formed within you, and willing to let go your profitabest and

sweetest sins, and it is your daily desires, Oh that I could seek God, and do his will more faithfully, zealously, and pleasingly than I do! Oh that I were rid of this body of sin, these carnal, corrupt, and worldly inclinations, and that I were as holy as the best of God's saints on earth! And if when it comes to practice, whether you should obey or no, though some unwillingness to duty and willingness to sin be in you, you are offended at it, and the greater bent of your will is for God, and it is but the lesser which is towards sin, and therefore the world and flesh do not lead you captive, and you live not wilfully in avoidable sins, nor at all in gross sin; I say, if it be thus with you, then you have the blessing of a soft heart, a heart of flesh, a new heart; for it is a willing, obedient, tractable heart, opposed to obstinacy in sin, which Scripture calleth a soft heart. And then for the passionate part, which consisteth in lively feelings of sin, misery, mercy, &c. and in weeping for sin, I shall say but this: 1. Many an unsanctified person hath very much of it, which yet are desperately hard-hearted sinners. It dependeth far more on the temper of the body, than of the grace in the soul. Women usually can weep easily, (and yet not all,) and children, and old men. Some complexions incline to it, and others not. Many can weep at a passion-sermon, or any moving duty, and yet will not be persuaded to obedience; these are hard-hearted sinners for all their tears. 2. Many a tender, godly person cannot weep for sin, partly through the temper of their minds, which are more judicious and solid, and less passionate; but mostly from the temper of their bodies, which dispose them not that way. 3. Deepest sorrows seldom cause tears, but deep thoughts of heart; as greatest joys seldom cause laughter, but inward pleasure. I will tell you how you shall know whose heart is truly sorrowful for sin, and tender; he that would be at the greatest cost or pains to be rid of sin, or that he had not sinned. You cannot weep for sin, but you would give all that you have to be rid of sin; you could wish when you dishonoured God by sin, that you had spent that time in suffering rather; and if it were to do again on the same terms and inducements, you would not do it; nay, you would live a beggar contentedly, so you might fully please God, and never sin against him, and are content to pinch your flesh, and deny your worldly interest for the time to come, rather than wilfully disobey. This is a truly tender heart. On the other side, another can weep to think of his sin; and yet if you should ask him, What wouldst thou give, or what wouldst thou suffer, so thou hadst not sinned, or that thou mightest sin no more? Alas, very little. For the next time that he is put to it, he will rather venture on the sin, than venture on a little loss, or danger, or disgrace in the world, or deny his craving flesh its pleasures. This is a hard-hearted sinner. The more you would part with to be rid of sin, or the greatest cost you would be at for that end, the more repentance have you, and true tenderness of heart. Alas, if men should go to heaven according to their weeping, what abundance of children and women would be there for one man! I will speak truly my own case. This doubt lay heavy many a year on my own soul, when yet I would have given all that I had to be rid of sin, but I could not weep a tear for it. Nor could I weep for the death of my dearest friends, when yet I would have bought their lives, had it been God's will, at a dearer rate than many that could weep for them ten times as much. And now since my nature is decayed, and my body languished in consuming weakness, and my head more moistened, and my veins filled with phlegmatic,

watery blood, now I can weep; and yet I find never the more tender-heartedness in myself than before. And yet to this day so much remains of my old disposition, that I could wring all the money out of my purse, easier than one tear out of my eyes, to save a friend, or rescue them from evil: when I see divers that can weep for a dead friend, that would have been at no great cost to save their lives. 5. Besides, as Dr. Sibbs saith, There is oft sorrow for sin in us, when it doth not appear; it wanteth but some quickening word to set it a foot. It is the nature of grief to break out into tears most, when sorrow hath some vent, either when we use some expostulating, aggravating terms with ourselves, or when we are opening our hearts and ease to a friend; then sorrow will often show itself that did not before. 6. Yet do I not deny, but that our want of tears, and tender affections, and heart-meltings, are our sins. For my part, I see exceeding cause to bewail it greatly in myself, that my soul is not raised to a higher pitch of tender sensibility of all spiritual things than it is. I doubt not but it should be the matter of our daily confession and complaint to God, that our hearts are so dull and little affected with his sacred truths, and our own sins. But this is the scope of all my speech, Why do not you distinguish between matter of sorrow and matter of doubting? No question but you should lament your dullness and stupidity, and use all God's means for the quickening of your affections, and to get the most lively frame of soul; but must it cause you to doubt of your sincerity, when you cannot obtain this? Then will you never have a settled peace or assurance for many days together, for aught I know. I would ask you but this, Whether you are willing or unwilling of all that hardness, insensibleness, and dullness which you complain of? If you are willing of it, what makes you complain of it? If you are unwilling, it seems your will is so far sound; and it is the will that is the seat of the life of grace which we must try by. And was not Paul's case the same with yours, when he saith, "The good which I would do, I do not; and when I would do good, evil is present with me," Rom. vii. 19. I know Paul speaks not of gross sins, but ordinary infirmities. And I have told you before, that the liveliness and sensibility of the passions or affections, is a thing that the will, though sanctified, cannot fully command or excite at its pleasure. A sanctified man cannot grieve or weep for sin when he will, or so much as he will. He cannot love, joy, be zealous, &c. when he will. He may be truly willing, and not able. And is not this your case? And doth not Paul make it the case of all Christians? "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that we cannot do the things that we would," Gal. v. 17. Take my counsel therefore in this, if you love not self-deceiving and disquietness. Search whether you can say unfeignedly, I would with all my heart have Christ and his quickening and sanctifying Spirit, and his softening grace, to bring my hard heart to tenderness, and my dull and blockish soul to a lively frame! Oh that I could attain it! And if you can truly say thus, Bless God that hath given you saving sincerity; and then let all the rest of your dullness, and deadness, and hard-heartedness, be matter of daily sorrow to you, and spare not, so it be in moderation, but let it be no matter of doubting. Confess it, complain of it, pray against it, and strive against it; but do not deny God's grace in you for it.

And here let me mind you of one thing, That it is a very ill distemper of spirit, when a man can mourn for nothing, but what causeth him to doubt of his

salvation. It is a great corruption, if when your doubts are resolved, and you are persuaded of your salvation, if then you cease all your humiliation and sorrow for your sin; for you must sorrow that you have in you such a body of death, and that which is so displeasing to God, and are able to please and enjoy him no more, though you were never so certain of the pardon of sin, and of salvation.

7. Lastly, Let me ask you one question more; What is the reason that you are so troubled for want of tears for your sin? Take heed lest there lie some corruption in this trouble that you do not discern. If it be only because your deadness and dullness is your sin, and you would fain have your soul in that frame in which it may be fittest to please God and enjoy him; then I commend and encourage you in your trouble. But take heed lest you should have any conceit of a meritoriousness in your tears; for that would be a more dangerous sin than your want of tears. And if it be for want of a sign of grace, and because a dry eye is a sign of an unregenerate soul, I have told you, it is not so, except where it only seconds an impenitent heart, and comes from, or accompanieth, an unrenewed will, and a prevailing unwillingness to turn to God by Christ. Show me, if you can, where the Scripture saith, He that cannot weep for sin, shall not be saved, or hath no true grace. Is not your complaint in this the very same that the eminentest Christians have used in all times? That most blessed, holy man, Mr. Bradford, who sacrificed his life in the flames against Romish abominations, was wont to subscribe his spiritual letters (indited by the breath of the Spirit of God) thus: The most miserable, hard-hearted sinner, John Bradford.

Doubt 5. O but I am not willing to good, and therefore I fear that even my will itself is yet unchanged: I have such a backwardness and undisposedness to duty, especially secret prayer, meditation, and self-examination, and reproving and exhorting sinners, that I am fain to force myself to it against my will. It is no delight that I find in these duties that brings me to them, but only I use violence with myself, and am fain to pull myself down on my knees, because I know it is a duty, and I cannot be saved without it; but I am no sooner on my knees, but I have a motion to rise, or be short, and am weary of it, and find no great miss of duty when I do omit it.

Ans. 1. This shows that your soul is sick, when your meat goes so much against your stomach that you are fain to force it down: and sickness may well cause you to complain to God and man. But what is this to deadness? The dead cannot force down their meat, nor digest it at all. It seems by this, that you are sanctified but in a low degree, and your corruption remains in some strength; and let that be your sorrow, and the overcoming of it be your greatest care and business: but should you therefore say that you are unsanctified? It seems that you have still the flesh lustful against the Spirit, that you cannot do the good you would. When you would pray with delight and unweariedness, the flesh draws back, and the devil is hindering you. And is it not so in too great a measure with the best on earth? Remember what Christ said to his own apostles, when they should have done him one of their last services, as to the attendance of his body on earth, and should have comforted him in his agony, they are all asleep. Again and again he comes to them, and findeth them asleep: Christ is praying and sweating blood, and they are still sleeping, though he warned them to watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation. But what doth God

say to them for it? Why, he useth this same distinction between humiliation for sin, and doubting of sincerity and salvation, and he helps them to the former, and helps them against the latter. "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" saith he. There he convinceth them of the sin, that they may be humbled for it. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," saith he. There he utterly resisteth their doubtings, or preventeth them; showing them wherein sincere grace consisteth, even in the spirit's willingness; and telling them that they had that grace; and then telling them whence came their sin, even from the weakness of the flesh.

2. I have showed you that as every man's will is but partly sanctified, (as to the degree of holiness,) and so far as it is imperfect it will be unwilling; so that there is something in the duties of secret prayer, meditation, and reproof, which makes most men more backward to them than other duties. The last doth so cross our fleshly interests; and the two former are so spiritual, and require so pure and spiritual a soul, and set a man so immediately before the living God, as if we were speaking to him face to face, and have nothing of external pomp to draw us, that it is no wonder if, while there is flesh within us, we are backward to them! Especially while we are so unacquainted with God, and while strangeness and consciousness of sin doth make us draw back: besides that, the devil will more busily hinder us here than any where.

3. The question, therefore, is not, Whether you have an unwillingness and backwardness to good: for so have all. Nor, yet, Whether you have any cold ineffectual wishes: for so have the ungodly. But, Whether your willingness be not more than your unwillingness: and in that, I. It must not be in every single act of duty; for a godly man may be actually more unwilling to a duty at this particular time, than willing, and thereupon may omit it; but it must be about your habitual willingness, manifested in ordinary, actual willingness. 2. You must not exclude any of those motives which God hath given you to make you willing to duty. He hath commanded it, and his authority should move you. He hath threatened you, and therefore fear should move you; or else he would never have threatened. He hath made promises of reward, and therefore the hope of that should move you. And therefore you may perceive here, what a dangerous mistake it is to think that we have no grace, except our willingness to duty be without God's motives, from a mere love to the duty itself, or to its effect. Nay, it is a dangerous antinomian mistake to imagine, that it is our duty to be willing to good, without these motives of God; I say, to take it so much as for our duty, to exclude God's motives, though we should not judge of our grace by it. For it is but an accusation of Christ, (and his law,) who hath ordained these motives of punishment and reward, to be his instruments to move the soul to duty. Let me therefore put the right question to you, Whether all God's motives laid together and considered, the ordinary prevailing part of your will be not rather for duty than against it? This you will know by your practice. For if the prevailing part be against duty, you will not do it; if it be for duty, you will ordinarily perform it, though you cannot do it so well as you would. And then you may see that your backwardness and remaining unwillingness must still be matter of humiliation and resistance to you, but not matter of doubting. Nay, thank God that enableth you to pull down yourself on your knees when you are unwilling; for what is that but the prevailing of your willingness against your unwillingness? Should

your unwillingness once prevail, you would turn your back upon the most acknowledged duties.

Doubt 6. But I am afraid that it is only slavish fear of hell, and not the love of God, that causeth me to obey; and if it were not for this fear, I doubt whether I should not quite give over all. And perfect love casteth out fear.

Answe. I have answered this already. Love will not be perfect in this life. In the life to come it will cast out all fear of damnation; and all fear that drives the soul from God, and all fear of men (which is meant in Rev. xxi. 8, where the fearful and unbelievers are condemned; that is, those that fear men more than God). And that I John iv. 17, 18, speaketh of a tormenting fear, which is it that I am persuading you from, and consisteth in terrors of soul, upon an apprehension that God will condemn you. But it speaketh not of a filial fear, nor of a fear lest we should by forsaking God, or by yielding to temptation, lose the crown of life, and so perish; as long as this is not a tormenting fear, but a cautious, preserving, preventing fear. Besides the text plainly saith, "It is that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that love casteth out this fear;" and at that day of judgment, love will have more fully overcome it. It is a great mistake to think that filial fear is only the fear of temporal chastisement, and that all fear of hell is slavish. Even filial fear is a fear of hell; but with this difference. A son (if he know himself to be a son) hath such a persuasion of his father's love to him, that he knows he will not cast him off, except he should be so vile as to renounce his father; which he is moderately fearful or careful, lest by temptation he should be drawn to do, but not distrustfully fearful, as knowing the helps and mercies of his father. But a slavish fear is, when a man having no apprehensions of God's love, or willingness to show him mercy, doth look that God should deal with him as a slave, and destroy him whenever he doth amiss. It is this slavish tormenting fear which I spend all this writing against. But yet a great deal, even of this slavish fear, may be in those sons, that know not themselves to be sons.

But suppose you were out of all fear of damnation; do not belie your own heart, and tell me, Had you not rather be holy than unholy; pleasing to God than displeasing? And would not the hope of salvation draw you from sin to duty, without the fear of damnation in hell? But you will say, That is still mercenary, and as bad as slavish fears. I answer, Not so; this hope of salvation is the hope of enjoying God, and living in perfect pleasingness to him, and pleasure in him in glory; and the desire of this is a desire of love: it is love to God that makes you desire him, and hope to enjoy him.

Lastly, I say again, take heed of separating what God hath joined. If God, by putting in your nature the several passions of hope, fear, love, &c. and by putting a holiness into these passions, by sanctifying grace, and by putting both promises and dreadful threatenings into his word: I say, if God by all these means hath given you several motives to obedience, take heed of separating them. Do not once ask your heart such a question, Whether it would obey if there were no threatening, and so no fear? Nor on the other side, do not let fear do all, without love. Doubtless, the more love constraineth to duty, the better it is; and you should endeavour with all your might that you might feel more of the force of love in your duties: but do you not mark how you cherish that corruption that you complain of? Your doubts and tormenting fears are the things that love should cast out. Why then do you entertain them?

If you say, I cannot help it; why then do you cherish them, and own them, and plead and dispute for them? and say you do well to doubt, and you have cause? Will this ever cast out tormenting fears? Do you not know that the way to cast them out, is not to maintain them by distrustful thoughts or words; but to see their sinfulness, and abhor them, and to get more high thoughts of the loving-kindness of God, and the tender mercies of the Redeemer, and the unspeakable love that he hath manifested in his sufferings for you, and so the love of God may be more advanced and powerful in your soul, and may be able to cast out your tormenting fears? Why do you not do this instead of doubting? If tormenting fears and doubtings be a sin, why do you not make conscience of them, and bewail it that you have been so guilty of them? Will you therefore doubt because you have slavish fears? Why that is to doubt because you doubt; and to fear because you fear; and so to sin still because you have sinned. Consider well of the folly of this course.

Doubt 7. But I am not able to believe; and without faith there is no pleasing God, nor hope of salvation: I fear unbelief will be my ruin.

Ans. 1. I have answered this doubt fully before. It is grounded on a mistake of the nature of true faith. You think that faith is the believing that you are in God's favour, and that you are justified; but properly this is no faith at all, but only assurance, which is sometimes a fruit of faith, and sometimes never in this life obtained by a believer. Faith consisteth of two parts. 1. Assent to the truth of the word. 2. Acceptance of Christ as he is offered, which immediately produceth a trusting on Christ for salvation, and consent to be governed by him, and resolution to obey him; which in the fullest sense are also acts of faith. Now do not you believe the truth of the gospel? And do you not accept of Christ as he is offered therein? If you are truly willing to have Christ as he is offered, I dare say you are a true believer. If you be not willing, for shame never complain. Men use rather to speak against those that they are unwilling of, than complain of their absence, and that they cannot enjoy them.

2. However, seeing you complain of unbelief, in the name of God do not cherish it, and plead for it, and by your own cogitations fetch in daily matter to feed it; but do more in detestation of it, as well as complain.

Doubt 8. But I am a stranger to the witness of the Spirit, and the joy of the Holy Ghost, and communion with God; and therefore how can I be a true believer?

Ans. 1. Feeding your doubts and perplexities, and arguing for them, is not a means to get the testimony and joy of the Spirit, but rather studying with all saints to know the love of God which passeth knowledge, to comprehend the height, and breadth, and length, and depth of his love; and seeking to understand the things that are given you of God. Acknowledge God's general love to mankind, both in his gracious nature, and common providences, and redemption by Christ; and deny not his special mercies to yourself, but dwell in the study of the riches of grace, and that is the way to come to the joy of the Holy Ghost. 2. I have told you before what the witness of the Spirit is, and what is the ordinary mistake herein. If you have the graces and holy operations of the Spirit, you have the witness of the Spirit, whether you know it or not. 3. If by your own doubtings you have deprived yourself of the joy of the Holy Ghost, bewail it and do so no more; but do not therefore say you have not the Holy Ghost. For the Holy Ghost often works regeneration and holiness before he works any sensible joys. 4. You

have some hope of salvation by Christ left in you; you are not yet in utter despair: and is it no comfort to you to think that you have yet any hope? and are not quite past all remedy? It may be your sorrows may so cloud it that you take no notice of it; but I know you cannot have the least hope without some answerable comfort. And may not that comfort be truly the joy of the Holy Ghost? 5. And for communion with God, let me ask you, Have you no recourse to him by prayer in your straits? Do you not wait at his mouth for the law and direction of your life? Have you received no holy desires, or other graces, from him? Nay, are you sure that you are not a member of Christ, who is one with him? How can you then say, that you have no communion with him? Can there be communication of prayer and obedience from you; yea, your own self delivered up to Christ; and a communication of any life of grace from God, by Christ and the Spirit; and all this without communion? It cannot be. Many a soul hath most near communion with Christ that knows it not.

Doubt 9. I have not the spirit of prayer: when I should pour out my soul to God, I have neither bold access, nor matter of prayer, nor words.

Ans. Do you know what the spirit of prayer is? It containeth, 1. Desires of the soul after the things we want, especially Christ and his graces. 2. An addressing ourselves to God with these desires, that we may have help and relief from him. Have not you both these? Do you not desire Christ and grace, justification and sanctification? Do you not look to God as him who alone is able to supply your wants, and bids you ask that you may receive? Do you utterly despair of help, and so seek to none? Or do you make your addresses by prayer to any but God? But perhaps you look at words and matter to dilate upon, that you may be able to hold out in a long speech to God, and you think that it is the effect of the spirit of prayer. But where do you find that in God's word? I confess that in many, and most, the Spirit which helpeth to desires, doth also help to some kind of expressions; because if a man be of able natural parts, and have a tongue to express his own mind, the promoting of holy desires will help men to expressions. For a full soul is hardly hindered from venting itself: and experience teacheth us, that the Spirit's inflaming the heart with holy affections, doth very much furnish both the invention and expression. But this is but accidental and uncertain; for those that are either men of unready tongues, or that are so ill bred among the rude vulgar, that they want fit expressions of their own minds, or that are of over-bashful dispositions, or especially that are of small knowledge, and of little and short acquaintance with those that should teach them to pray by their example, or that have been but of short standing in the school of Christ; such a man may have the spirit of prayer many a year, and never be able, in full expressions of his own, to make known his wants to God; no, nor in good and tolerable sense and language, before others, to speak to God, from his own invention. A man may know all those articles of the faith that are of flat necessity to salvation, and yet not be able to find matter or words for the opening of his heart to God at length. I would advise such to frequent the company of those that can teach and help them in prayer, and neglect not to use the smallest parts they have, especially in secret, between God and their own souls, where they need not, so much as in public, to be regardful of expressions; and in the mean time to learn a prayer from some book, that may fittest express their necessities; or to use the book itself in prayer, if they distrust

their memories : not resolving to stick here, and make it a means of indulging their laziness and negligence, much less to reproach and deride those that express their desires to God from the present sense of their own wants (as some wickedly do deride such) ; but to use this lawful help till they are able to do better without it than with it, and then to lay it by, and not before. The Holy Ghost is said, (Rom. viii. 16,) to help our infirmities in prayer ; but how ? 1. By teaching us what to pray for ; not always what matter or words to enlarge ourselves by ; but what necessary graces to pray for. 2. By giving us sighs and groans unexpressed, which is far from giving copious expressions ; for groans and sighs be not words ; and if they be groans that we cannot express, it would rather seem to intimate a want of expression, than a constant abounding therein, where the Spirit doth assist ; though indeed the meaning is, that the groans are so deep, that they are past the expression of our words : all our speech cannot express that deep sense that is in our hearts. For the understanding hath the advantage of the affections herein ; all the thoughts of the mind may be expressed to others, but the feelings and fervent passions of the soul can be but very defectively expressed.

Lastly, All have not the spirit of prayer in like measure ; nor all that have it in a great measure at one time, can find it so at pleasure. Desires rise and fall, and these earnest groans be not in every prayer where the Holy Ghost doth assist. I believe there is never a prayer that ever a believer did put up to God for things lawful and useful, but it was put up by the help of the Spirit. For the weakest prayer hath some degree of good desire in it, and addresses to God with an endeavour to express them ; and these can come from none but only from the Spirit. Mere words, without desires, are no more prayer, than a suit of apparel hanged on a stake, is a man. You may have the spirit of prayer, and yet have it in a very weak degree.

Yet still I would encourage you to bewail your defect herein as your sin, and seek earnestly the supply of your wants ; but what is that to the questioning or denying your sincerity, or right to salvation ?

Doubt 10. I have no gifts to make me useful to myself or others. When I should profit by the word I cannot remember it : when I should reprove a sinner, or instruct the ignorant, I have not words : if I were called to give an account of my faith, I have not words to express that which is in my mind : and what grace can here be then ?

Ans. This needs no long answer. Lament and amend those sins by which you have been disabled. But know, that these gifts depend more on nature, art, industry, and common grace, than upon special saving grace. Many a bad man is excellent in all these, and many a one that is truly godly is defective. Where hath God laid our salvation upon the strength of our memories, the readiness of our tongues, or measure of the like gifts ? That were almost as if he should have made a law, that all shall be saved that have sound complexions, and healthful and youthful bodies ; and all be damned that are sickly, aged, weak, children, and most women.

Doubt 11. Oh but I have been a grievous sinner, before I came home, and have fallen foully since, and I am utterly unworthy of mercy ! Will the Lord ever save such an unworthy wretch as I ? Will he ever give his mercy, and the blood of his Son, to one that hath so abused it ?

Ans. 1. The question is not, with God, what you have been, but what you are ? God takes men as they then are, and not as they were. 2. It is a dan-

gerous thing to object the greatness of your guilt against God's mercy and Christ's merits. Do you think Christ's satisfaction is not sufficient ? or that he died for small sins and not for great ? Do you not know that he hath made satisfaction for all, and will pardon all, and hath given out the pardon of all in his covenant, and that to all men, on condition they will accept Christ to pardon and heal them in his own way ? Hath God made it his great design in the work of man's redemption, to make his love and mercy as honourable and wonderful, as he did his power in the work of creation ? And will you after all this oppose the greatness of your sins against the greatness of this mercy and satisfaction ? Why, you may as well think yourself to be such a one, that God could not or did not make you, as to think your sins so great, that Christ could not or did not satisfy for them, or will not pardon them, if you repent and believe in him. 3. And for worthiness, I pray you observe, there is a twofold worthiness and righteousness. There is a legal worthiness and righteousness, which consisteth in a perfect obedience, which is the performance of the conditions of the law of pure nature and works. This no man hath but Christ ; and if you look after this righteousness or worthiness in yourself, then do you depart from Christ, and make him to have died and satisfied in vain : you are a Jew, and not a christian, and are one of those that Paul so much disputeth against, that would be justified by the law. Nay, you must not so much as once imagine that all your own works can be any part of this legal righteousness or worthiness to you. Only Christ's satisfaction and merit is instead of this our legal righteousness and worthiness. God never gave Christ and mercy to any but the unworthy in this sense. If you know not yourself to be unworthy and unrighteous in the sense of the law of works, you cannot know what Christ's righteousness is. Did Christ come to save any but sinners, and such as were lost ? What need you a Saviour, if you were not condemned ? And how came you to be condemned, if you were not unrighteous and unworthy ? But then, 2. There is an evangelical personal worthiness and righteousness, which is the condition on which God bestows Christ's righteousness upon us ; and this all have that will be saved by Christ. But what is that ? Why, it hath two parts : 1. The condition and worthiness required to your union with Christ, and pardon of all your sins past, and your adoption and justification ; it is no more but your hearty and thankful acceptance of the gift that is freely given you of God by his covenant grant ; that is, Christ and life in him, 1 John v. 10—12. There is no worthiness required in you before faith, as a condition on which God will give you faith ; but only certain means you are appointed to use for the obtaining it : and faith itself is but the acceptance of a free gift. God requireth you not to bring any other worthiness or price in your hands, but that you consent unfeignedly to have Christ as he is offered, and to the ends and uses that he is offered ; that is, as one that hath satisfied for you by his blood and merits, to put away your sins ; and as one that must illuminate and teach you, sanctify, and guide, and govern you by his word and Spirit ; and as King and Judge, will fully and finally justify you at the day of judgment, and give you the crown of glory. Christ on his part, 1. Hath merited your pardon by his satisfaction, and not properly by his sanctifying you. 2. And sanctifieth you by his Spirit, and ruleth you by his laws, and not directly by his bloodshed. 3. And he will justify you at judgment as King and Judge, and not as Satisfier or Sanctifier. But the condition on your part, of ob-

taining interest in Christ and his benefits, is that one faith which accepteth him in all these respects (both as King, Priest, and Teacher) and to all these ends conjunctly. But then, 2. The condition and worthiness required to the continuation and consummation of your pardon, justification, and right to glory, is both the continuance of your faith, and your sincere obedience, even your keeping the baptismal covenant that you made with Christ by your parents, and the covenant which you in your own person made with him in your first true believing. These indeed are called worthiness and righteousness frequently in the gospel. But it is no worthiness consisting in any such works, which make the reward to be of debt, and not of grace (of which Paul speaks;) but only in faith, and such gospel-works as James speaks of, which make the reward to be wholly of grace and not debt.

Now if you say you are unworthy in this evangelical sense, then you must mean (if you know what you say) that you are an infidel or unbeliever, or an impenitent, obstinate rebel, that would not have Christ to reign over him; for the gospel calleth none unworthy, (as non-performers of its conditions,) but only these. But I hope you dare not charge yourself with such infidelity and wilful rebellion.

Doubt 12. Though God hath kept me from gross sins, yet I find such a seariness of conscience, and so little averseness from sin in my mind, that I fear I should commit it if I lay under temptations; and also that I should not hold out in trial if I were called to suffer death, or any grievous calamity. And that obedience which endureth merely for want of a temptation, is no true obedience.

Ans. 1. I have fully answered this before. If you can overcome the temptations of prosperity, you have no cause to doubt distrustfully, whether you shall overcome the temptation of adversity. And if God give you grace to avoid temptations to sin, and flee occasions as much as you can, and to overcome them where you cannot avoid them; you have little reason to distrust his preservation of you, and your steadfastness thereby, if you should be cast upon greater temptations. Indeed if you feel not such a belief of the evil and danger of sinning, as to possess you with some sensible hatred of it, you have need to look to your heart for the strengthening of that belief and hatred; and fear your heart with a godly, preserving jealousy, but not with tormenting, disquieting doubts. Whatever your passionate hatred be, if you have a settled, well-grounded resolution, to walk in obedience to the death, you may confidently and comfortably trust him for your preservation, who gave you those resolutions.

2. And the last sentence of this doubt had need of great caution, before you conclude it a certain truth. It is true that the obedience which by an ordinary temptation, such as men may expect, would be overthrown, is not well grounded and rooted before it is overthrown. But it is a great doubt whether there be no degrees of temptation possible, which would overcome the resolution and grace of the most holy, having such assistance as the Spirit usually giveth believers in temptation; and whether some temptations which overcome not a strong christian, would not overcome a weak one, who yet hath true grace. I conclude nothing of these doubts. But I would not have you trouble yourself upon confident conclusions, on so doubtful grounds. This I am certain of, 1. That the strongest christian should take heed of temptation, and not trust to the strength of his graces, nor presume on God's preservation, while he wilfully casteth himself in the mouth of dangers; nor to be encouraged hereunto upon any

persuasion of an impossibility of his falling away. Oh the falls, the fearful falls, that I have known (alas, how often!) the eminentest men for godliness that ever I knew, to be guilty of, by casting themselves upon temptations! I confess I will never be confident of that man's perseverance, were he the best that I know on earth, who casteth himself upon violent temptations, especially the temptations of sensuality, prosperity, and seducement. 2. I know God hath taught us daily to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation, and to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (I never understood the necessity of that petition feelingly, till I saw the examples of these seven or eight years last past.) This being so, you must look that your perseverance should be by being preserved from temptation; and must rather examine, whether you have that grace which will enable you to avoid temptations, than whether you have grace enough to overcome them, if you rush into them. But if God unavoidably cast you upon them, keep up your watch and prayer, and you have no cause to trouble yourself with distrustful fears.

Doubt 13. I am afraid lest I have committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, and then there is no hope of my salvation.

Ans. It seems you know not what the sin against the Holy Ghost is. It is this: When a man is convinced that Christ and his disciples did really work those glorious miracles which are recorded in the gospel, and yet will not believe that Christ is the Son of God, and his doctrine true, though sealed with all those miracles, and other holy and wonderful works of the Spirit, but do blasphemously maintain that they were done by the power of the devil. This is the sin against the Holy Ghost. And dare you say that you are guilty of this? If you be, then you do not believe that Christ is the Son of God, and the Messiah, and his gospel true. And then you will sure oppose him, and maintain that he was a deceiver, and that the devil was the author of all the miraculous and gracious workings of his Spirit. Then you will never fear his displeasure, nor call him seriously either Lord or Saviour; nor tender him any service, any more than you do to Mahomet. None but infidels do commit the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; nor but few of them. Unbelief is eminently called "sin" in the gospel; and that "unbelief" which is maintained by blaspheming the glorious works of the Holy Ghost, which Christ and his disciples through many years' time did perform for a testimony to his truth, that is called singularly, "The sin against the Holy Ghost!" You may meet with other descriptions of this sin, which may occasion your terror; but I am fully persuaded that this is the plain truth.

Doubt 14. But I greatly fear lest the time of grace be past, and lest I have out-sat the day of mercy, and now mercy hath wholly forsaken me. For I have oft heard ministers tell me from the word, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of your visitation: to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts, lest God swear in his wrath, that you shall not enter into his rest." But I have stood out long after, I have resisted and quenched the Spirit, and now it is, I fear, departed from me.

Ans. Here is sufficient matter for humiliation, but the doubting ariseth merely from ignorance. The day of grace may in two respects be said to be over: the first (and most properly so called) is, When God will not accept of a sinner, though he should repent and return. This is never in this life for certain. And he that imagineth any such thing as that it is too late, while his soul is in his body, to

repent and accept of Christ and mercy, is merely ignorant of the tenor and sense of the gospel! For the new law of grace doth limit no time on earth for God's accepting of a returning sinner. True faith and repentance do as surely save at the last hour of the day, as at the first. God hath said, that whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life. He hath no where excepted late believers or repenters. Show any such exception if you can.

2. The second sense in which it may be said that the day of grace is over, is this: when a man hath so long resisted the Spirit that God hath given him over to wilful, obstinate refusals of mercy, and of Christ's government, resolving that he will never give him the prevailing grace of his Spirit. Where note, 1. That this same man might still have grace as soon as any other, if he were but willing to accept Christ, and grace in him. 2. That no man can know of himself or any other, that God hath thus finally forsaken him; for God hath given us no sign to know it by (at least who sin not against the Holy Ghost). God hath not told us his secret intents concerning such. 3. Yet some men have far greater cause to fear it than others; especially those men, who under the most searching, lively sermons, do continue secure and wilful in known wickedness; either hating godliness and godly persons, and all that do reprove them, or at least being stupified, that they feel no more than a post, the force of God's terrors, or the sweetness of his promises; but make a jest of sinning, and think the life of godliness a needless thing. Especially if they grow old in this course, I confess such have great cause to fear, lest they are quite forsaken of God; for very few such are ever recovered. 4. And therefore it may well be said to all men, "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," &c. And "This is the acceptable time; this is the day of salvation;" both as this life is called, "The day of salvation;" and because no man is certain to live another day, that he may repent; nor yet to have grace to repent if he live. 5. But what is all this to you that do repent? Can you have cause to fear that your day of grace is over, that have received grace? Why, that is as foolish a thing, as if a man should come to the market and buy corn, and when he hath done, go home lamenting that the market was past before he came. Or as a man should come and hear a sermon, and when he hath done, lament that the sermon was done before he came. If your day of grace be past, tell me, (and do not wrong God,) Where had you the grace of repentance? How came you by that grace of holy desires? Who made you willing to have Christ for your Lord and Saviour? so that you had rather have him, and God's favour, and a holy heart and life, than all the glory of the world? How came you to desire that you were such a one as God would have you to be? And to desire that all your sins were dead, and might never live in you more? And that you were able to love God, and delight in him, and please him even in perfection? And that you are so troubled that you cannot do it? Are these signs that your day of grace is over? Doth God's Spirit breathe out groans after Christ and grace within you? and yet is the day of grace over? Nay, what if you had no grace? Do you not hear God daily offering you Christ and grace? Doth he not entreat and beseech you to be reconciled unto him? 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. And would he not compel you to come in? Matt. xxii. Do you not feel some uneasiness in your sinful condition? and some motions and strivings at your heart to get out of it? Certainly, (though you should be one that

hath yet no grace to salvation,) yet these continued offers of grace, and strivings of the Spirit of Christ with your heart, do show that God hath not quite forsaken you, and that your day of grace and visitation is not past.

Doubt 15. But I have sinned since my profession, and that even against my knowledge and conscience. I have had temptations to sin, and I have considered of the evil and danger, and yet in the very soberest deliberations I have resolved to sin. And how can such a one have any true grace, or be saved?

Ans. 1. If you had not true grace, God is still offering it, and ready to work it.

2. Where do you find in Scripture, that none who have true grace do sin knowingly or deliberately. Perhaps you will say in Heb. x. 24, "If we sin wilfully, after the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fire, which shall devour the adversaries." *Ans.* But you must know, that it is not every wilful sin which is there mentioned; but, as even now I told you, unbelief is peculiarly called sin in the New Testament. And the true meaning of the text is, If we utterly renounce Christ by infidelity, as not being the true Messiah, after we have known his truth, then, &c. Indeed none sin more against knowledge than the godly when they do sin; for they know more, for the most part, than others do. And passion and sensuality (the remnant of it which yet remaineth) will be working strongly in your very deliberations against sin, and either perverting the judgment to doubt whether it be a sin, or whether there be any such danger in it; or whether it be not a very little sin; or else blinding it, that it cannot see the arguments against the sin in their full vigour. Or at least, prepossessing the heart and delight, and so hindering our reasons against sin from going down to the heart, and working on the will, and so from commanding the actions of the body. This may befall a godly man. And moreover, God may withdraw his grace as he did from Peter and David in their sin. And then our considerations will work but faintly, and sensuality and sinful passion will work effectually. It is scarce possible, I think, that such a man as David could be so long about so horrid a sin, and after contrive the murder of Uriah, and all this without deliberation, or any reasonings in himself to the contrary.

3. The truth is, though this be no good cause for any repenting sinner to doubt of salvation, yet it is a very grievous aggravation of sin, to commit it against knowledge and conscience, and upon consideration. And therefore I advise all that love their peace or salvation, to take heed of it. For as they will find that no sin doth deeper wound the conscience, and plunge the sinner into fearful perplexities, which oftentimes hangs on him very long; so the oftener such sin is committed, the less evidence will such a one have of the sincerity of their faith and obedience; and therefore, in the name of God, beware. And let the troubled soul make this the matter of his moderate humiliation, and spare not. Bewail it before God. Take shame to yourself, and freely confess it, when you are called to it before men. Favour it not, and deal not gently with it, if you would have peace; but give glory to God, by taking the just dishonour to yourselves. Tender dealing is an ill sign, and hath sad effects. But yet for every sin against knowledge, to doubt of the truth of grace, is not right, much less to doubt of the pardon of that sin when we truly repent of it. Are you unfeignedly sorry for your sins against conscience, and resolve against them for the future, through the help of God's grace? If so, then that

sin is pardoned now, through the blood of Christ believed in, whether you had then grace or not.

Doubt 16. But I have such corruptions in my nature, that I cannot overcome. I have such a passionate nature, and such a vanity of mind, and such worldly desires, that though I pray and strive against them daily, yet do they prevail. And it is not striving without overcoming that will prove the truth of grace in any. Besides, I do not grow in grace as all God's people do.

Ans. 1. Do you think sin is not overcome as long as it dwelleth in us, and daily troubleth us, and is working in us? Paul saith, "The evil that I would not do, that I do;" and, "We cannot do the things that we would." And yet Paul was not overcome with these sins, nor had they dominion over him. You must consider of these sins as in the habit, or in the act. In the habit as they are in the passions they will be still strong; but as they are in the will they are weak and overcome. Had you not rather you were void of these passions than not, and that you might restrain them in the act? Are you not weary of them, and daily pray and strive against them? If so, it seems they have not your will. 2. And for the actual passion (as I may call it) itself, you must distinguish between, 1. Those which the will hath full power of, and which it hath but partial power over. 2. And between the several degrees of the passion. 3. And between the inward passion and the outward expressions.

Some degree of anger and of lust will oft stir in the heart, whether we will or not. But I hope you restrain it in the degree; and much more from breaking out into practices of lust, or cursed speeches, or railings, backbitings, slanderings, or revenge. For these your will, if sanctified, hath power to command. Even the acts of our corruptions, as well as the habits, will stick by us in this life; but if it be in gross sins, or avoidable infirmities carelessly or wilfully continued in, I can tell you a better way to assurance and comfort than your complaints are. Instead of being afraid lest you cannot have your sin and Christ together, do but more heartily oppose that sin, and deal roundly and conscionably against it, till you have overcome it, and then you may ease yourself of your complaints and troubles. If you say, Oh but it is not so easily done. I cannot overcome it. I have prayed and strove against it long. I answer, But are you heartily willing to be rid of it? If you will, it will be no impossible matter to be rid of the outward expressions, and the high degree of the passion, though not of every degree. Try this course awhile, and then judge. 1. Plainly confess your guiltiness. 2. Never more excuse it, or plead for it, to any that blameth you. 3. Desire those that live and deal with you, to tell you roundly of it as soon as they discern it, and engage yourself to them to take it well, as a friendly action which yourself requested of them. 4. When you feel the passion begin to stir, enter into serious consideration of the sinfulness, or go and tell some friend of your frail inclination, and presently beg their help against it. If it be godly persons that you are angry with, instead of giving them ill words, presently as soon as you feel the fire kindle, say to them, I have a very passionate nature, which already is kindled; I pray you reprehend me for it, and help me against it, and pray to God for my deliverance. Also go to God yourself, and complain to him of it, and beg his help. Lastly, be sure that you make not light of it, and see that you avoid the occasions as much as you can. If you are indeed willing to be rid of the sin, then do not call these directions too hard. But show your willingness in ready practising them. And

thus you may see that it is better to make your corruptions the matter of your humiliation and reformation, than of your torment.

And for the other part of the doubt that you grow not in grace, I answer: 1. The promises of growth are conditional, or else signify what God will usually do for his people; but it is certain that they be not absolute to all believers. For it is certain that all true christians do not always grow; nay, that many do too oft decline, and lose their first fervour of love, and fall into sin, and live more carelessly. Yea, it is certain that a true believer may die in such decays, or in a far lower state than formerly he hath been in. If I thought this needed proof, I could easily prove it; but he that openeth his eyes may soon see enough proof in England. 2. Many christians do much mistake themselves about the very nature of true grace; and then no wonder if they think that they thrive when they do not, and that they thrive not when they do. They think that more of the life and truth of grace doth lie in passionate feelings of sin, grace, duty, &c.; in sensible zeal, grief, joy, &c. And do not know that the chief part lieth in the understanding's estimation, and the will's firm choice and resolution. And then they think they decline in grace, because they cannot weep or joy so sensibly as before. Let me assure you of this as truth: 1. Young people have usually more vigour of affections than old; because they have more vigour of body, and hot blood, and agile, active spirits; when the freezing, decayed bodies and spirits of old men must needs make an abatement of their fervour in all duties. 2. The like may be said of most that are weak and sickly in comparison of the strong and healthful. 3. All things affect men most deeply when they are new, and time weareth off the vigour of that affection. The first hearing of such a fight, or such a victory, or such a great man, or friend dead, doth much affect us; but so it doth not still. When you first receive any benefit, it more delighteth you than long after. So married people, or any other in the first change of their condition, are more affected with it than afterward. And indeed man's nature cannot hold up in a constant elevation of affections. Children are more taken with every thing that they see and hear than old men, because all is new to them, and all seems old to the other. 4. I have told you before that some natures are more fiery, passionate, and fervent than others are; and in such a little grace will cause a great deal of earnestness, zeal, and passion. But let me tell you, that you may grow in these, and not grow in the body of your graces. Doubtless Satan himself may do so much to kindle your zeal, if he do but see it void of sound knowledge, as he did in James and John when they would have called for fire from heaven, but knew not what spirit they were of. For the doleful case of Christ's churches in this age hath put quite beyond dispute, that none do the devil's works more effectually, nor oppose the kingdom of Christ more desperately, than they that have the hottest zeal with the weakest judgments. And as fire is most excellent and necessary in the chimney, but in the thatch it is worse than the vilest dung; so is zeal most excellent when guided by sound judgment, but more destructive than profane sensuality when it is let loose and misguided.

On the other side, you may decay much in feeling and fervour of affections, and yet grow in grace, if you do but grow in the understanding and the will. And indeed this is the common growth which christians have in their age. Examine therefore whether you have this or no. Do you not understand the things of the Spirit better than you formerly did?

Do you not value God, Christ, glory, and grace at higher rates than formerly? Are you not more fully resolved to stick to Christ to the death than formerly you have been? I do not think but it would be a harder work for Satan to draw you from Christ to the flesh than heretofore. When the tree hath done growing in visible greatness, its growth in rootedness. The fruit grows first in bulk and quantity, and then in mellow sweetness. Are not you less censorious, and more peaceable, than heretofore? I tell you that is a more noble growth than a great deal of austere and bitter, youthful, censorious, dividing zeal of many will prove. Mark most aged, experienced christians, that walk uprightly, and you will find that they quite outstrip the younger, 1. In experience, knowledge, prudence, and soundness of judgment. 2. In well-settled resolutions for Christ, his truth, and cause. 3. In a love of peace, especially in the church, and a hatred of dissensions, perverse contentings, and divisions. If you can show this growth, say not that you do not grow.

3. But suppose you do not grow, should you therefore deny the sincerity of your grace? I would not persuade any soul that they grow, when they do not. But if you do not, be humbled for it, and endeavour it for the future. Make it your desire and daily business, and spare not still. Lie not complaining, but rouse up your soul, and see what is amiss, and set upon neglected duties, and remove those corruptions that hinder your growth. Converse with growing christians, and under quickening means; endeavour the good of other men's souls as well as your own; and then you will find that growth, which will silence this doubt, and do much more for you than that.

Doubt 17. I am troubled with such blasphemous thoughts and temptations to unbelief, even against God, and Christ, and Scripture, and the life to come, that I doubt I have no faith.

Ans. To be tempted is no sign of gracelessness, but to yield to the temptation; not every yielding neither, but to be overcome of the temptation. Most melancholy people, especially that have any knowledge in religion, are frequently haunted with blasphemous temptations. I have oft wondered that the devil should have such a power and advantage in the predominancy of that distemper. Scarce one person of ten, whoever was with me in deep melancholy, either for the cure of body or mind, but hath been haunted with these blasphemous thoughts; and that so impetuously and violently set on and followed, that it might appear to be from the devil; yea, even many that never seemed godly, or to mind any such thing before. I confess if hath been a strengthening to my own faith, to see the devil such an enemy to the christian faith; yea, to the God-head itself.

But perhaps you will say, It is not mere temptation from Satan that I complain of; but it takes too much with my sinful heart. I am ready to doubt oftentimes whether there be a God, or whether his providence determine of the things here below; or whether Scripture be true, or the soul immortal, &c.

Ans. This is a very great sin, and you ought to bewail and abhor it, and, in the name of God, make not light of it, but look to it betimes. But yet let me tell you, that some degree of this blasphemy and infidelity may remain with the truest saving faith. The best may say, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." But I will tell you my judgment, when your unbelief is such as to be a sign of a graceless soul in the state of damnation: if your doubtings of the truth of Scripture and the life to

come, be so great that you will not let go the pleasures and profits of sin, and part with all, if God call you to it, in hope of that glory promised, and to escape the judgment threatened, because you look upon the things of the life to come but as uncertain things; then is your belief no saving belief; but your unbelief is prevalent. But if for all your staggerings, you see so much probability of the truth of Scripture and the life to come, that you are resolved to venture (and part with, if called to it) all worldly hopes and happiness for the hope of that promised glory, and to make it the chiefest business of your life to attain it, and to deny yourself the pleasures of sin for that end; this is a true saving faith, as is evident by its victory; notwithstanding all the infidelity, atheism, and blasphemy that is mixed with it.

But again, let me advise you to take heed of this heinous sin, and bewail and detest the very least degree of it. It is dangerous when the devil strikes at the very root, and heart, and foundation of all your religion. There is more sinfulness and danger in this than in many other sins. And therefore let it never be motioned to your soul without abhorrence. Two ways the devil hath to move it. The one is by his immediate inward suggestions; these are bad enough. The other is by his accursed instruments; and this is a far more dangerous way, whether it be by books, or by the words of men. And yet if it be by notorious, wicked men, or fools, the temptation is the less; but when it is by men of cunning wit, and smooth tongues, and hypocritical lives, (for far be that wickedness from me, as to call them godly, or wise, or honest,) then it is the greatest snare that the devil hath to lay. O just and dreadful God! did I think one day that those that I was then praying with, and rejoicing with, and that went up with me to the house of God in familiarity, would this day be blasphemers of thy sacred name, and deny the Lord that bought them, and deride thy holy word as a fable, and give up themselves to the present pleasures of sin, because they believe not thy promised glory? O righteous and merciful God, thou hast preserved the humble from this condemnation, and hast permitted only the proud and sensual professors to fall into it, and hast given them over to hellish conversations according to the nature of their hellish opinions, that they might be rather a terror to others than a snare! I call their doctrine and practice hellish, from its original, because it comes from the father of lies, but not that there is any such opinion or practice in hell. He that tempts others to deny the Godhead, the christian faith, the Scripture, the life to come, doth no whit doubt of any one of them himself, but believes and trembles. O fearful blindness of the professors of religion, that will hear, if not receive these blasphemies from the mouth of an apostate professor, which they would abhor if it came immediately from the devil himself. With what sad complaints and trembling do poor sinners cry out, (and not without cause,) Oh I am haunted with such blasphemous temptations, that I am afraid lest God should suddenly destroy me, that ever such thoughts should come into my heart. But if an instrument of the devil come and plead against the Scripture, or the life to come, or Christ himself, they will hear him with less detestation. The devil knows that familiarity will cause us to take that from a man, which we would abhor from the devil himself immediately. I intend not to give you now a particular preservative against each of these temptations. Only let me tell you, that this is the direct way to infidelity, apostasy, and the sin against the Holy Ghost; and

if by any seducers the devil do overcome you herein, you are lost for ever, and there will be no more sacrifice for your sin, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and that fire which shall devour the adversaries of Christ.

Doubt 18. I have so great fear of death, and unwillingness to be with God, that I am afraid I have no grace : for if I had Paul's spirit, I should be able to say with him, "I desire to depart and to be with Christ," whereas now, no news would be to me more unwelcome.

Ans. There is a lothness to die that comes from a desire to do God more service; and another that comes from an apprehension of unreadiness, when we would fain have more assurance of salvation first, or would be fitter to meet our Lord. Blame not a man to be somewhat backward, that knows it must go with him for ever in heaven or hell, according as he is found at death. But these two be not so much a lothness to die, as a lothness to die now at this time. 3. There is also in all men living, good and bad, a natural abhorrence and fear of death. God hath put this into man's nature (even in innocency) to be his great means of governing the world. No man would live in order, or be kept in obedience, but for this. He that cares not for his own life, is master of another's. Grace doth not root out this abhorrence of death, no more than it unmanneth us; only it restrains it from excess, and so far overcometh the violence of the passion, by the apprehensions of a better life beyond death, that a believer may the more quietly and willingly submit to it. Paul himself desireth not death, but the life which followeth it. "He desireth to depart and to be with Christ;" that is, he had rather be in heaven than on earth, and therefore he is contented to submit to the penal sharp passage. God doth not command you to desire death itself, nor forbid you fearing it as an evil to nature, and a punishment of sin. Only he requireth you to desire the blessedness to be enjoyed after death, and that so earnestly as may make death itself the easier to you. Thank God, if the fear of death be somewhat abated in you, though it be not sweetened. Men may pretend what they please, but nature will abhor death as long as it is nature, and as long as a man is man; else temporal death had been no punishment to Adam, if his innocent nature had not abhorred it as it was an evil to it. Tell me but this, if death did not stand in your way to heaven, but that you could travel to heaven as easily as to London, would not you rather go thither and be with Christ, than stay in sin and vanity here on earth, so be it you were certain to be with Christ? If you can say yea to this, then it is apparent that your lothness to die is either from the uncertainty of your salvation, or from the natural averseness to a dissolution, or both; and not from an unwillingness to be with Christ, or a preferring the vanities of this world before the blessedness of that to come. Lastly, It may be God may lay that affliction on you, or use some other necessary means with you yet, before you die, that may make you willing than now you are.

Doubt 19. God layeth upon me such heavy afflictions, that I cannot believe he loves me. He writeth bitter things against me, and taketh me for his enemy. I am afflicted in my health, in my name, in my children, and nearest friends, and in my estate. I live in continual poverty, or pinching distress of one kind or other; yea, my very soul is filled with his terrors, and night and day is his hand heavy upon me.

Ans. I have said enough to this before, nor do I think it needful to say any more, when the Holy

Ghost hath said so much; but only to desire you to read what he hath written in Heb. xii. and Job throughout; and Psal. xxxvii. lxxiii. and divers others. The next doubt is contrary.

Doubt 20. I read in Scripture, that through many tribulations we must enter into heaven; and that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution; and that he that taketh not up his cross, and so followeth Christ, cannot be his disciple; and that if we are not corrected, we are bastards, and not sons. But I never had any affliction from God, but have lived in constant prosperity to this day. Christ saith, "Woe to you, when all men speak well of you!" But all men, for ought I know, speak well of me; and therefore I doubt of my sincerity.

Ans. I would not have mentioned this doubt, but that I was so foolish as to be troubled with it myself; and perhaps some others may be as foolish as I; though I think but few in these times. Our great friends have done so much to resolve them more effectually than words could have done. 1. Some of those texts speak only of man's duty of bearing persecution and tribulation, when God lays it on us, rather than of the event, that it shall certainly come. 2. Yet I think it ordinarily certain, and to be expected as to the event. Doubtless tribulation is God's common road to heaven. Every ignorant person is so well aware of this, that they delude themselves in their sufferings, saying, that God hath given them their punishment in this life, and therefore they hope he will not punish them in another. If any soul be so silly as to fear and doubt, for want of affliction; if none else will do the cure, let them but follow my counsel, and I dare warrant them for this; and I will advise them to nothing but what is honest, yea, and necessary, and what I have tried effectually upon myself; and I can assure you it cured me, and I can give it a *probatum est*. And first, see that you be faithful in your duty to all sinners within your reach, be they great or small, gentlemen or beggars; do your duty in reproving them meekly and lovingly, yet plainly and seriously, telling them of the danger of God's everlasting wrath; and when you find them obstinate, tell the church officers of them, that they may do their duty; and if yet they are unreformed, they may be excluded from the church's communion, and all christian familiarity. Try this course a while, and if you meet with no afflictions, and get no more fists about your ears than your own, nor more tongues against you than formerly, tell me I am mistaken. Men basely balk and shun almost all the displeasing, ungrateful work of christianity of purpose, lest they should have sufferings in the flesh, and then they doubt of their sincerity for want of sufferings. My second advice is, Do but stay awhile in patience, (but prepare your patience for a sharper encounter,) and do not tie God to your time. He hath not told you when your afflictions shall come. If he deal easier with you than with others, and give you a longer time to prepare for them, be not you offended at that, and do not quarrel with your mercies. It is about seventeen years since I was troubled with this doubt, thinking I was no son, because I was not afflicted; and I think I have had few days without pain for this sixteen years since together, nor but few hours, if any one, for this six or seven years. And thus my scruple is removed.

And if yet any be troubled with this doubt, if the church's and common trouble be any trouble to them, shall I be bold to tell them my thoughts? (Only understand, that I pretend not to prophecy, but to conjecture at effects by the position of their moral causes.) I think that the righteous King of

saints is even now, for our over-admiring, rash zeal, and sharp, high profession, making for England so heavy an affliction, and a sharp scourge, to be inflicted by seduced, proud, self-conceited professors, as neither we nor our fathers did ever yet bear. Except it should prove the merciful intent of our Father, only to suffer them to ripen for their own destruction, to be a standing monument for the effectual warning of all after-ages of the church, whither pride and heady zeal may bring professors of holiness. And when they are full ripe, to do by them as at Munster, and in New England, that they may go no further, but their folly may be known to all: Amen. I have told you of my thoughts of this long ago, in my Book of Baptism.

All these doubts I have here answered, that you may see how necessary it is, that in all your troubles you be sure to distinguish between matter of doubting and matter of humiliation. Alas, what soul is so holy on the earth, but must daily say, "Forgive us our trespasses?" and cry out with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But at the same time we may thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. If every sin should make us doubt, we should do nothing but doubt. I know you may easily tell a long and a sad story of your sins; how you are troubled with this and that, and many a distemper, and weak and wanting in every grace and duty, and have committed many sins. But doth it follow that therefore you have no true grace? Learn therefore to be humbled for every sin, but not to doubt of your sincerity and salvation for every sin.

Direct. XXX. Whatsoever new doubtings do arise in your soul, see that you carefully discern whether they are such as must be resolved from the consideration of general grace, or of special grace. And especially be sure of this, that when you want or lose your certainty of sincerity and salvation, you have presently recourse to the probability of it, and lose not the comforts of that. Or if you should lose the sight of a probability of special grace, yet see that you have recourse at the utmost to general grace, and never let go the comforts of that at the worst.

This rule is of unspeakable necessity and use for your peace and comfort. Here are three several degrees of the grounds of comfort. It is exceeding weakness for a man that is beaten from one of these holds, therefore to let go the other two. And because he cannot have the highest degree, therefore to conclude that he hath none at all.

I beseech you, in all your doubtings and complainings, still remember the two rules here laid down. 1. All doubts arise not from the same cause, and therefore must not have the same cure. Let the first thing which you do upon every doubt, be this: To consider, whether it come from the unbelieving or low apprehensions of the general grounds of comfort, or from the want of evidence of special grace. For that which is a fit remedy for one of these, will do little for the cure of the other. 2. If your doubting be only, Whether you be sincere in believing, loving, hoping, repenting, and obeying, then it will not answer this doubt, though you discern never so much of God's merciful nature, or Christ's gracious office, or the universal sufficiency of his death and satisfaction, or the freeness and extent of the promise of pardon. For I profess considerably, that I do not know in all the body of popery concerning merits, justification, human satisfactions, assurance, or any other point about grace, for which we unchurch them, that they err half so dangerously as Saltmarsh, and such antinomians, do in this one point, when they say, That Christ hath repented and be-

lieved for us; meaning it of that faith and repentance which he hath made the conditions of our salvation. And that we must no more question our own faith, than we must question Christ the object of it. It will be no saving plea at the day of judgment to say, Though I repented not, and believed not, yet Christ died for me, or God is merciful, or Christ repented and believed for me, or God made me a free promise and gift of salvation, if I would repent and believe. What comfort would such an answer give them? And therefore doubtless it will not serve now to quiet any knowing christian against those doubts that arise from the want of particular evidence of special grace, though in their own place, the general grounds of comfort are of absolute necessity thereto.

2. On the other side, if your doubts arise from any defect in your apprehensions of general grace, it is not your looking after marks in yourself that is the way to resolve them. I told you in the beginning, that the general grounds of comfort lie in four particulars (that square foundation which will bear up all the faith of the saints). First, God's merciful and unconceivably good and gracious nature, and his love to mankind. Secondly, The gracious nature of the Mediator God and Man, with his most gracious undertaken office of saving and reconciling. Thirdly, The sufficiency of Christ's death and satisfaction for all the world, to save them if they will accept him and his grace. I put it in terms beyond dispute, because I would not build up believer's comforts on points which godly divines do contradict (as little as may be). Yet I am past all doubt myself, that Christ did actually make satisfaction to God's justice for ALL, and that no man perisheth for want of an expiatory sacrifice, but for want of faith to believe and apply it, or for want of repentance and yielding to recovering grace. The fourth is, The universal grant of pardon, and right to salvation, on condition of faith and repentance. If your doubt arise from the ignorance or overlooking of any of these, to these must you have recourse for your cure.

Where note, That all those doubts which come from the greatness of your sin, as such, that you think will not therefore be forgiven, or that come from the sense of unworthiness, (in a legal sense,) or want of merit in yourself; and all your doubts, whether God be willing to accept and forgive you, though you should repent and believe; or, whether any sacrifice was offered by Christ for your sins; I say, all these come from your ignorance or unbelief of some or all of the four general grounds here mentioned; and from them must be cured.

Note also in a special manner, That there is a great difference between these four general grounds, and your particular evidences in point of certainty. For these four corner-stones are fast founded beyond all possibility of removal, so that they are always of as undoubted certainty as that the heaven is over your head; and they are immutable, still the same. These you are commanded strictly to believe with a divine faith, as being the clearly revealed truths of God; and if you should not believe them, yet they remain firm and true, and your unbelief should not make void the universal promise and grace of God. But your own evidences of special grace are not so certain, so clear, or so immutable; nor are you bound to believe them, but to search after them that you may know them. You are not bound by any word of God strictly to believe that you do believe, or repent, but to try and discern it. This then is the first part of this direction, That you always discover whether your troubles arise from low, unbelieving, or ignorant thoughts of God's mercifulness, Christ's

gracious nature and office, general satisfaction, or the universal promise. Or, whether they arise from want of evidence of sincerity in yourself. And accordingly in your thoughts apply the remedy.

The second part of the direction is, that you hold fast probabilities of special grace, when you lose your certainty; and that you hold fast your general grounds, when you lose both the former. Never forget this in any of your doubts.

You say, your faith and obedience have such breaches and sad defects in them, that you cannot be certain that they are sincere. Suppose it be so: do you see no great likelihood or hopes yet that they are sincere? If you do, (as I think many christians easily may, that yet receive not a proportionable comfort,) remember that this is no small mercy, but matter of great consolation.

But suppose the worst, that you see no grace in yourself, yet you cannot be sure you have none; for it may be there, and you not see it. Yea, suppose the worst, that you were sure that you had no true grace at all, yet remember that you have still abundant cause of comfort in God's general grace. Do you think you must needs despair, or give up all hope and comfort, or conclude yourself irrecoverably lost, because you are graceless? Why, be it known to you, there is that ground of consolation in general grace, that may make the hearts of the very wicked to leap for joy. Do I need to prove that to you? You know that the gospel is called, "Glad tidings of salvation," and the preachers of it are to tell those to whom they preach it, "Behold, we bring you tidings of great joy, and glad tidings to all people." And you know before the gospel comes to men they are miserable. If then it be glad tidings, and tidings of great joy to all the unconverted where it comes, why should it not be so to you? And where is your great joy? If you be graceless, is it nothing to know that God is exceeding merciful, "slow to anger, ready to forgive, pardoning iniquities, transgression, and sin," loving mankind? Is it nothing to know that the Lord hath brought infinite mercy and goodness down into human flesh? and hath taken on him the most blessed office of reconciling, and is become the Lamb of God? Is it nothing to you, that all your sins have a sufficient sacrifice paid for them, so that you are certain not to perish for want of a ransom? Is it nothing to you that God hath made such a universal grant of pardon and salvation to all that will believe? and that you are not on the terms of the mere law of works, to be judged for not obeying in perfection? Suppose you are never so certainly graceless, is it not a ground of unspeakable comfort, that you may be certain that nothing can condemn you, but a flat refusal or unwillingness to have Christ and his salvation? This is a certain truth, which may comfort a man as yet unsanctified, that sin merely as sin shall not condemn him, nor any thing in the world, but the final, obstinate refusal of the remedy, which thereby leaveth all other sin unpardoned.

Now I would ask you this question in your greatest fears that you are out of Christ: Are you willing to have Christ to pardon, sanctify, guide, and save you, or not? If you are, then you are a true believer, and did not know it. If you are not, if you will but wait on God's word in hearing and reading, and consider frequently and seriously of the necessity and excellency of Christ and glory, and the evil of sin, and the vanity of the world, and will but beg earnestly of God to make you willing, you shall find that God hath not appointed you this means in vain, and that this way will be more profitable to you than all your complainings. See therefore when you are

at the very lowest, that you forsake not the comforts of general grace.

And indeed those that deny any general grace or redemption, do leave poor christians in a very lamentable condition. For, alas! assurance of special grace (yea, or a high probability) is not so common a thing as mere disputers against doubting have imagined. And when a poor christian is beaten from his assurance, (which few have,) he hath nothing but probabilities; and when he hath no confident, probable persuasion of special grace, where is he then? And what hath he left to support his soul? I will not so far now meddle with that controversy, as to open further how this opinion tends to leave most christians in desperation, for all the pretences it hath found. And I had done more, but that general redemption or satisfaction is commonly taught in the maintaining of the general sufficiency of it, though men understand not how they contradict themselves.

But perhaps you will say, This is cold comfort; for I may as well argue thus, Christ will damn sinners; I am a sinner, therefore he will damn me; as to argue thus, Christ will save sinners; I am a sinner, therefore he will save me. I answer, There is no show of soundness in either of these arguments. It is not a certainty that Christ will save you, that can be gathered from general grace alone; that must be had from assurance of special grace superadded to the general. But a conditional certainty you may have from general grace only, and thus you may soundly and infallibly argue, God hath made a grant to every sinful man, of pardon and salvation through Christ's sacrifice, if they will but repent and believe in Christ; but I am a sinful man, therefore God hath made this grant of pardon and salvation to me.

Direct. XXXI. If God do bless you with an able, faithful, prudent, judicious pastor, take him for your guide under Christ in the way to salvation; and open to him your case, and desire his advice in all your extraordinary, pressing necessities, where you have found the advice of other godly friends to be insufficient; and this not once or twice only, but as often as such pressing necessities shall return. Or if your own pastor be more defective for such a work, make use of some other minister of Christ, who is more meet.

Here I have these several things to open to you.

1. That it is your duty to seek this direction from the guides of the church. 2. When and in what cases you should do this. 3. To what end, and how far. 4. What ministers they be that you should choose thereto. 5. In what manner you must open your case, that you may receive satisfaction.

1. The first hath two parts: (1.) That you must open your case. (2.) And that to your pastor.

1. The devil hath great advantage while you keep his counsel: two are better than one; for if one of them fall he hath another to help him. It is dangerous resisting such an enemy alone. A uniting of forces oft procureth victory. God giveth others knowledge, prudence, and other gifts for our good; that so every member of the body may have need of another, and each be useful to the other. An interdependency of christian upon christian, is most unchristian; much more of people on their guides. It ceaseth to be a member, which is separated from the body; and to make no use of the body or fellow-members, is next to separation from them. Sometimes bashfulness is the cause, sometimes self-confidence (a far worse cause); but whatever is the cause of christians smothering their doubts, the effects are oft sad. The disease is oft gone so far, that the cure is very difficult, before some bashful, or

proud, or tender patients will open their disease. The very opening of a man's grief to a faithful friend, doth oft ease the heart of itself. 2. And that this should be done to your pastor, I will show you further anon.

2. But you must understand well when this is your duty. 1. Not in every small infirmity, which accompanies christians in their daily most watchful conversation. Nor yet in every lesser doubt, which may be otherwise resolved. It is a folly and a wrong to physicians, to run to them for every cut finger or prick with a pin. Every neighbour can help you in this. 2. Nor except it be a weighty case indeed, go not first to a minister. But first study the case yourself, and seek God's direction : if that will not serve, open your case to your nearest bosom friend that is godly and judicious. And in these two cases always go to your pastor. 1. In case privater means can do you no good, then God calls you to seek further. If a cut finger so fester that ordinary means will not cure it, you must go to the physician. 2. If the case be weighty and dangerous ; for then none but the more prudent advice is to be trusted. If you be struck with a dangerous disease, I would not have you delay so long, nor wrong yourself so much, as to stay while you tamper with every woman's medicine, but go presently to the physician. So if you either fall into any grievous sin, or any terrible pangs of conscience, or any great straits and difficulties about matters of doctrine or practice, go presently to your pastor for advice. The devil, and pride, and bashfulness, will do their utmost to hinder you ; but see that they prevail not.

3. Next consider to what end you must do this. Not, 1. Either to expect that a minister can of himself create peace in you ; or that all your doubts should vanish as soon as ever you have opened your mind. Only the great Peace-maker, the Prince of peace, can create peace in you : ascribe not to any the office of the Holy Ghost, to be your effectual comforter. To expect more from man than belongs to man, is the way to receive nothing from him, but to cause God to blast to you the best endeavours. 2. Nor must you resolve to take all merely from the word of your pastor, as if he were infallible ; nor absolutely to judge of yourself as he judgeth. For he may be too rigorous, or more commonly too charitable in his opinion of you : there may be much of your disposition and conversation unknown to him, which may hinder his right judging. But, 1. You must use your pastor as the ordained instrument and messenger of the Lord Jesus and his Spirit, appointed to speak a word in season to the weary, and to show to man his righteousness, and to strengthen the weak hands and feeble knees ; yea, and more, to bind and loose on earth, as Christ doth bind and loose in heaven. As Christ and his Spirit do only save in the principal place, and yet ministers save souls in subordination to them as his instruments, Acts xxvi. 17, 18 ; 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16 ; James v. 20 ; so Christ and the Spirit are, as principal causes, the only comforters ; but his ministers are comforters under him. 2. And that which you must expect from them are these two things. 1. You must expect those fuller discoveries of God's will than you are able to make yourself, by which you may have assurance of your duty to God, and of the sense of Scripture, which expresseth how God will deal with you ; that so a clearer discovery of God's mind may resolve your doubts. 2. In the mean time, till you can come to a full resolution, you may and must somewhat stay yourself on the very judgment of your pastor : not as infallible, but as a discovery of the probability of your good or bad estate ; and so

of your duty also. Though you will not renounce your own understanding, and believe any man when you know he is deceived, or would deceive you, yet you will so far suspect your own reason, and value another's, as to have a special regard to every man's judgment in his own profession. If the physician tell you that your disease is not dangerous, or the lawyer that your cause is good, it will more comfort you than if another man should say as much. It may much stay your heart till you can reach to clear evidences and assurance, to have a pastor that is well acquainted with you, and is faithful and judicious, to tell you that he verily thinks that you are in a safe condition. 3. But the chief use of his advice is, not so much to tell you what he thinks of you, as to give you directions how you may judge of yourself, and come out of your trouble : besides the benefit of his prayers to God for you.

4. Next let me tell you what men you must choose to open your mind to : and they must be, 1. Men of judgment and knowledge, and not the ignorant, be they never so honest : else they may deceive you, not knowing what they do ; either for want of understanding the Scripture, and the nature of grace and sin ; or for want of skill to deal with both weak consciences, and deep, deceitful hearts. 2. They must be truly fearing God, and of experience in this great work. For a troubled soul is seldom well resolved and comforted merely out of a book, but from the book and experience both together. Carnal or formal men will but make a jest at the doubts of a troubled christian ; or at least will give you such formal remedies as will prove no cure : either they will persuade you, as the antinomians do, that you should trust God with your soul, and never question your faith ; or that you do ill to trouble yourself about such things : or they will direct you only to the comforts of general grace, and tell you only that God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners ; which are the necessary foundations of our peace ; but will not answer particular doubts of our own sincerity, and of our interest in Christ : or else they will make you believe that holiness of heart and life (which is the thing you look after) is it that troubleth you, and breeds all your scruples. Or else, with the papists, they will send you to your merits for comfort ; or to some vindictive penance in fastings, pilgrimages, or the like ; or to some saint departed, or angel, or to the pardons or indulgences of the pope ; or to a certain formal, carnal devotion, to make God amend. 3. They must be men of downright faithfulness, that will deal plainly and freely, though not cruelly ; and not like those tender surgeons that will leave the cure undone for fear of hurting ; meddle not with men-pleasers and daubers, that will presently speak comfort to you as confidently as if they had known you twenty years, when perhaps they know little of your heart or case. Deal not with such as resolve to humour you. 4. They must be men of fidelity, and well tried to be such, that you must trust them with those secrets which you are called to reveal. 5. They must be men of great staidness and wisdom, that they may neither rashly pass their judgment, nor set you upon unsound, unwarrantable, or dangerous courses. 6. It is suspicious if they be men that are so impudent as to draw out your secrets, and scrow themselves deeper into your privatest thoughts and ways than is meet : yet a compassionate minister, when he seeth that poor christians do endanger themselves by keeping secret their troubles, or else that they hazard themselves by hiding the greatest of their sins, like Achan, Saul, or Ananias and Sapphira, and so play the hypocrites ; in these cases he may and must urge them to deal openly. 7. Above

all be sure that those that you seek advice of, be sound in the faith, and free from the two desperate plagues of notorious false doctrine, and separating, dividing inclinations, that do but hunt about to make disciples to themselves. There are two of the former sort, and three of the latter, that I would charge you to take heed of (and yet all is but four). 1. Among those that err from the faith, (next to pagans, Jews, and infidels, whether ranters, seekers, or Socinians, which I think few sober, godly men are so much in danger of, because of their extreme vileness,) I would especially have you avoid the antinomians, being the greatest pretenders to the right comforting afflicted consciences in the world; but upon my certain knowledge I dare say, they are notorious subverters of the very nature of the gospel, and that free grace which they so much talk of, and the great dishonourers of the Lord Jesus, whom they seem so highly to extol. They are those mountebanks and quacksalvers, that delude the world by vain ostentation, and kill more than they will cure. 2. Next to them, take heed of the papists, who will go to Rome, to saints, to angels, to merits, to the most carnal, delusory means for comfort, when they should go to Scripture and to heaven for it.

And then take heed that you fall not into the hands of separating dividers of Christ's church. The most notorious and dangerous of them are of these three sorts. 1. The last mentioned, the papists: they are the most notorious schismatics and separatists that ever God's church did know on earth. For my part, I think their schism is more dangerous and wicked than the rest of their false doctrine. The unmerciful, proud, self-seeking wretches, would, like the donatists, make us believe that God hath no true church on earth but they; and that all the christians in Ethiopia, Asia, Germany, Hungary, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, Belgium, and the rest of the world, that acknowledge not their pope of Rome to be head of all the churches in the world, are none of Christ's churches, nor ever were. Thus do they separate from all the churches on earth, and confine all religion and salvation to themselves, who so notoriously depart from Christ's way of salvation. Indeed the extreme diligence that they use in visiting the sick, and soliciting all men to their church and way, is plainly to get themselves followers; and they are every where more industrious to enlarge the pope's kingdom than Christ's. So far are they from studying the unity of the catholic church, which they so much talk of, that they will admit none to be of that church, nor to be saved, but their own party, as if indeed the pope had the keys of heaven. Indeed they are the most impudent sectaries and schismatics on earth. 2. The next to them are the anabaptists, whose doctrine is not in itself so dangerous as their schism, and gathering disciples so zealously to themselves. And so strange a curse of God hath followed them hitherto, as may deter any sober christian from rash adventuring on their way. Even now when they are higher in the world than ever they were on earth, yet do the judicious see God's heavy judgment upon them, in their congregations and conversation. 3. Lastly, Meddle not with those commonly called separatists, for they will make a prey of you for the increase of their party. I do not mean that you should separate from these two last, as they do from us, and have nothing to do with them, nor acknowledge them christians: but seek not their advice, and make them not of your counsel. You will do as one that goes to a physician that hath the plague, to be cured of a cut finger, if you go for your comfort to any of these seducers. But if you have a pastor that is sound in the main doc-

trines of religion, and is studious of the unity and peace of the church, such a man you may use, though in many things mistaken; for he will not seek to make a prey of you by drawing you to his party; let him be Lutheran, Calvinist, Arminian, episcopal, independent, or presbyterian, so he be sound in the main, and free from division. Thus I have showed you the qualifications of these men, that you must seek advice of.

2. Let me next add this; Let them be rather pastors than private men, if it may be; and rather your own pastors than others, if they are fit. For the first, consider, 1. It is their office to be guides of Christ's disciples under him, and to be spiritual physicians for the curing of souls. And experience telleth us (and sadly of late) what a curse followeth those that step beyond the bounds of their calling by invading this office, and that God blesseth means to them that keep within his order, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 7, 17. Not but that private men may help you in this, as a private neighbour may give you a medicine to cure your disease; but you will not so soon trust them in any weighty case as you will the physician. 2. Besides, ministers have made it the study of their lives, and therefore are liker to understand it than others. As for those that think long study no more conducive to the knowledge of the Scriptures, than if men studied not at all, they may as well renounce reason, and dispute for pre-eminency of beasts above men, as renounce study, which is but the use of reason. But it appears how considerably these men speak themselves, and whence it comes, and how much credit a sober christian should give them! Let them read Psalm i. 2, 3; Heb. v. 11—14; 1 Tim. iv. 13—16; 2 Tim. ii. 15, and then let them return to their wits. Paul commands Timothy, though he was from his youth acquainted with the Scriptures, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." How much need have we to do so now! 3. Also ministers are usually most experienced in this work; and wisdom requires you no more to trust your soul, than you would do your body, with an unexperienced man.

2. And if it may be, (he being fit,) let it be rather your own pastor than another: 1. Because it belongeth to his peculiar place and charge, to direct the souls of his own congregation. 2. Because he is likelier to know you, and to fit his advice to your estate, as having better opportunity than others to be acquainted with your conversation.

5. Next consider, in what manner you must open your grief, if you would have cure. 1. Do it as truly as you can. Make the matter neither better nor worse than it is. Especially take heed of dealing like Ananias, pretending to open all (as he did to give all) when you do but open some common infirmities, and hide all the most disgraceful distempers of your heart, and sins of your life. The vomit of confession must work to the bottom, and fetch up that hidden sin, which is it that continueth your calamity. Read Mr. T. Hooker in his "Soul's Preparation," concerning this confession, who shows you the danger of not going to the bottom.

2. You must not go to a minister to be cured merely by good words, as wizards do by charms; and so think that all is well when he hath spoken comfortably to you. But you must go for directions for your own practice, that so the cure may be done by leisure when you come home. Truly most even of the godly that I have known, do go to a minister for comfort, as silly people go to a physician for physic. If the physician could stroke them whole, or give them a pennyworth of some pleasant stuff

that would cure all in an hour, then they would praise him. But alas, the cure will not be done, 1. Without cost. 2. Nor without time and patience. 3. Nor without taking down unpleasing medicines; and so they let all alone. So you come to a minister for advice and comfort, and you look that his words should comfort you before he leaves you, or at least, some short, small direction to take home with you. But he tells you, if you will be cured you must more resolve against that disquieting corruption and passion; you must more meekly submit to reproof; you must walk more watchfully and conscientiously with God and men; and then you must not give ear to the tempter, with many the like. He gives you, as I have done here, a bill of thirty several directions, and tells you, you must practise all these. Oh this seems a tedious course, you are never the nearer comfort for hearing these; it must be by long and diligent practising them. Is it not a foolish patient that will come home from the physician, and say, I have heard all that he said, but I am never the better? So you say, I have heard all that the minister said, and I have never the more comfort. But have you done all that he bid you, and taken all the medicines that he gave you? Alas, the cure is most to be done by yourself (under Christ) when you come home. The minister is but the physician to direct you what course to take for the cure. And then as silly people run from one physician to another, hearing what all can say, and desirous to know what every man thinks of them, but thoroughly follow the advice of none, but perhaps take one medicine from one man, and one from another, and let most even of those lie by them in the box, and so perish more certainly than if they never meddled with any at all; so do most troubled souls hear what one man saith, and what another saith, and seldom thoroughly follow the advice of any: but when one man's words do not cure them, they say, This is not the man that God hath appointed to cure me; and so another, and that is not the man: when they should rather say, This is not the way, than, This is not the man. This lazy complaining is not it that will do the work, but faithful practising the directions given you.

But I know some will say, That it is near to popish aricular confession, which I here persuade christians to; and it is to bring christians under the tyranny of the priests again, and make them acquainted with all men's secrets, and masters of their consciences.

Answe. 1. To the last I say to the railing devil of this age, no more but "The Lord rebuke thee." If any minister have wicked ends, let the God of heaven convert him, or root him out of his church, and cast him among the weeds and briers. But is it not the known voice of sensuality and hell, to cast reproaches upon the way and ordinances of God? Who knoweth not that it is the very office of the ministry, to be teachers and guides to men in matters of salvation, and overseers of them? and that they watch for their souls, as those that must give an account, and the people, therefore, bound to obey them? Heb. xiii. 7, 17. Should not the shepherd know his sheep, and their strays and diseases; how else shall he cure them? Should not the physician hear the patient open all his disease, yea, study to discover to the utmost every thing he knows; and all little enough to the cure? A disease unknown is unlike to be cured; and a disease well known is half cured. Mr. Thomas Hooker saith truly, It is with many people as with some over-modest patients, who having a disease in some secret place, they will not for shame reveal it to the physician till it be

past cure, and then they must lose their lives by their modesty: so do many by their secret and more disgraceful sins. Not that every man is bound to open all his sins to his pastor; but those that cannot well be otherwise cured, he must; either if the sense of the guilt cannot be removed, and true assurance of pardon obtained; or else, if power against the sin be not otherwise obtained, but that it still prevaileth: in both these cases we must go to those that God hath made our directors and guides. I am confident many a thousand souls do long strive against anger, lust, flesh-pleasing, worldliness, and trouble of conscience, to little purpose, who if they would but have taken God's way, and sought out for help, and opened all their case to their minister, they might have been delivered in a good measure long ago. 2. And for popish confession, I detest it. We would not persuade men that there is a necessity of confessing every sin to a minister, before it can be pardoned. Nor do we do it in a perplexed formality only at one time of the year; nor in order to popish pardons or satisfactions; but we would have men go for physic to their souls, as they do for their bodies, when they feel they have need. And let me advise all christian congregations to practise this excellent duty more. See that you knock oftener at your pastor's door, and ask his advice in all your pressing necessities; do not let him sit quietly in his study for you; make him know by experience, that the tenth part of a minister's labour is not in the pulpit. If your sins are strong, and you have wounded conscience deep, go for his advice for a safe cure: many a man's sore festers to damnation for want of this; and poor, ignorant, and scandalous sinners have more need to do this than troubled consciences. I am confident, if the people of my congregation did but do their duty for the good of their own souls in private, seeking advice of their ministers, and opening their cases to them, they would find work for ten ministers at least; and yet those two that they have, have more work than they are able to do already. Especially ministers in small country congregations, might do abundance of good this way; and their people are much to blame that they come not oftener to them for advice: this were the way to make christians indeed. The devil knows this, and therefore so envies it, that he never did more against a design in the world: he hath got the maintenance alienated that should have maintained them, that so they may have but one minister in a congregation, and then among the greater congregations this work is impossible for want of instruments; yea, he is about getting down the very churches and settled ministry, if God will suffer him. He setteth his instruments to rail at priests and discipline, and to call Christ's yoke tyranny; because while the garden is hedged in, he is fain, with envy, to look over the hedge. What if a man (like those of our times) should come to a town that hath an epidemical pleurisy, or fever, and say, Do not run like fools to these physicians, they do but cheat you, and rob your purses, and seek themselves, and seek to be lords of your lives. It is possible some do so; but if by these persuasions the silly people should lose their lives, how well had their new preacher befriended them! Such friends will those prove at last to your souls, that dissuade you from obeying the guidance and discipline of your overseers, and dare call the ordinances of the Lord of glory tyrannical, and reproach those that Christ hath set over them. England will not have Christ by his officers rule over them, and the several congregations will not obey him. But he will make them know, before many years are past, that they refused their own mercy,

and knew not the things that belong to their peace, and that he will be master at last in spite of their malice, and the proudest of his foes. If they get by this bargain of refusing Christ's government, and despising his ministers, and making the peace, unity, and prosperity of his church, and the souls of men, a prey to their proud, misguided fancies and passions, then let them boast of the bargain when they have tried it. Only I would entreat one thing of them, not to judge too confidently till they have seen the end.

And for all you tender-conscienced christians, whom by the ministry the Lord hath begotten or confirmed to himself, as ever you will show yourselves thankful for so great a mercy, as ever you will hold that you have got or grow to more perfection, and attain that blessed life to which Christ hath given you his ministers to conduct you; see that you stick close to a judicious, godly, faithful ministry, and make use of them while you have them. Have you strong lusts, or deep wounds in conscience, or a heavy burden of doubtings or distress? Seek their advice. God will have his own ordinance and officers have the chief instrumental hand in your cure. The same means oftentimes in another hand shall not do it. Yet I would have you make use of all able private christians' help also.

I will tell you the reason why our ministers have not urged this so much upon you, nor so plainly acquainted their congregations with the necessity of opening your case to your minister, and seeking his advice.

1. Some in opposition to popery have gone too far on the other extreme; perhaps sinning as deeply in neglect, as the papists do in formal excess. It is a good sign that an opinion is true, when it is near to error. For truth is the very next step to error. The small thread of truth runs between the close adjoining extremes of error.

2. Some ministers, knowing the exceeding greatness of the burden, are loth to put themselves upon it. This one work, of giving advice to all that ought to come and open their case to us, if our people did but what they ought to do for their own safety, would itself, in great congregations, be more than preaching every day in the week. What then is all the rest of the work? And how can one man, yea, or five, do this to five thousand souls? And then when it lieth undone, the malicious reproachers rail at the ministers, and accuse the people of unfitness to be church members; which howsoever there may be some cause of, yet not so much as they suggest; and that unfitness would best be cured by the diligence of more labourers, which they think to cure by removing the few that do remain.

3. Also some ministers, seeing that they have more than they can do already, think themselves incapable of more, and therefore that it is vain to put their people on it, to seek more.

4. Some ministers are over-modest, and think it to be unfit to desire people to open their secrets to them, in confessing their sins and corrupt inclinations, and opening their wants; and indeed any ingenuous man will be backward to pry into the secrets of others. But when God hath made it our office, under Christ, to be physicians to the souls of our people, it is but bloody cruelty to connive at their pride and carnal bashfulness, or hypocritical covering of their sins, and to let them die of their disease rather than we will urge them to disclose it.

5. Some ministers are loth to tell people of their duty in this, lest it should confirm the world in their malicious conceit, that we should be masters of

men's consciences, and would lord it over them. This is as much folly and cruelty, as if the master and pilot of the ship should let the mariners govern the ship by the major vote, and run all on shelves and drown themselves and him, and all for fear of being thought lordly and tyrannical, in taking the government of the ship upon himself, and telling the mariners that it is their duty to obey him.

6. Most godly ministers do tell people in general, of the necessity of such a dependence on their teachers, as learners in the school of Christ should have on them that are ushers under him the chief Master; and they do gladly give advice to those that do seek to them; but they do not so particularly and plainly acquaint people with their duty, in opening to them the particular sores of their souls.

It is also the policy of the devil, to make people believe that their ministers are too stout, and will not stoop to a compassionate hearing of their case; especially if ministers carry themselves strangely, at too great a distance from their people. I would earnestly entreat all ministers therefore to be as familiar, and as much with their people, as they can. Papists and other seducers will insinuate themselves into their familiarity, if we be strange. If you teach them not in their houses, these will creep into their houses, and lead them captive. I persuade others of my brethren to that which myself am disabled from performing; being by constant weakness (besides unavoidable business) confined to my chamber. But those that can perform it, will find this a most necessary and profitable work. And let not poor people believe the devil, who tells them that ministers are so proud, only to discourage them from seeking their advice. Go try them once before you believe it.

Lastly, Remember this, that it is not enough that you once opened your case to your pastor, but do it as often as necessity urgeth you to call for his advice; though not on every light occasion. Live in such a dependence on the advice and guidance of your pastor (under Christ) for your soul, as you do on the advice of the physician for your body. Read Mal. ii. 7. And let ministers read 6, 8, 9.

Direct. XXXII. As ever you would live in peace and comfort, and well-pleasing unto God, be sure that you understand and deeply consider wherein the height of a christian life, and the greatest part of our duty, doth consist; to wit, In a loving delight in God, and a thankful and cheerful obedience to his will; and then make this your constant aim, and be still aspiring after it, and let all other affections and endeavours be subservient unto this.

This one rule well practised, would do wonders on the souls of poor christians, in dispelling all their fears and troubles, and helping not only to a settled peace, but to live in the most comfortable state that can be expected upon earth. Write therefore these two or three words deep in your understandings and memory; that the life which God is best pleased with, and we should be always endeavouring, is, A loving delight in God through Christ, and a thankful and cheerful obedience to him. I do not say, that godly sorrows, and fears, and jealousies are no duties; but these are the great duties, to which the rest should all subserve. Misapprehending the state of duty, and the very nature of a christian life, must needs make sad distempers in men's hearts and conversations. Many christians look upon broken-heartedness, and much grieving, and weeping for sin, as if it were the great thing that God delighteth in, and requireth of them; and therefore they bend all their endeavours this way; and are still striving with their hearts to break them more, and wringing

their consciences to squeeze out some tears; and they think no sermon, no prayer, no meditation, speeds so well with them, as that which can help them to grieve or weep. I am far from persuading men against humiliation and godly sorrow, and tenderness of heart. But yet I must tell you, that this is a sore error that you lay so much upon it, and so much overlook that great and noble work and state to which it tendeth. Do you think that God hath any pleasure in your sorrows as such? Doth it do him good to see you dejected, afflicted, and tormented? Alas, it is only as your sorrows do kill your sins, and mortify your fleshly lusts, and prepare for your peace and joys, that God regards them. Because God doth speak comfortably to troubled, drooping spirits, and tells them that he delighteth in the contrite, and loveth the humble, and bindeth up the broken-hearted; therefore men misunderstanding him, do think they should do nothing but be still breaking their own hearts. Whereas God speaks it but partly to show his hatred to the proud, and partly to show his tender compassions to the humbled, that they might not be overwhelmed or despair. But, O christians, understand and consider, that all your sorrows are but preparatives to your joys; and that it is a higher and sweeter work that God calls you to, and would have you spend your time and strength in.

1. The first part of it is love. A work that is wages to itself. He that knows what it is to live in the love of God, doth know that christianity is no tormenting and discontented life.
2. The next part is, delight in God, and in the hopes and forethoughts of everlasting glory. Psal. xxxvii. 4, "Delight thyself in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart." This is it that you should be bending your studies and endeavours for, that your soul might be able to delight itself in God.
3. The third part is thankfulness and praise. Though I say not as some, that we should be moved by no fears or desires of the reward, (that is, of God,) but act only from thankfulness, (as though we had all that we expect already,) yet let me desire you to take special notice of this truth; that thankfulness must be the main principle of all gospel obedience. And this is not only true of the regenerate after faith, but even the wicked themselves, who are called to repent and believe, are called to do it in a glad and thankful sense of the mercy offered them in Christ. All the world being fallen under God's wrath and deserved condemnation, and the Lord Jesus having become a sacrifice and ransom for all, and so brought all from that legal necessity of perishing which they were under, the gospel which brings them the news of this, is glad tidings of great joy to them; and the very justifying act which they are called to, is, thankfully to accept Christ as one that hath already satisfied for their sins, and will save them, if they accept him, and will follow his saving counsel, and use his saving means; and the saving work which they must proceed in, is, thankfully to obey that Redeemer whom they believe in. So that as general redemption is the very foundation of the new world and its government, so thankfulness for this redemption is the very life of justifying faith and gospel obedience. And therefore the denial of this universal redemption (as to the price and satisfaction) doth both disable wicked men (if they receive it) from coming to Christ by true justifying faith (which is, the thankful acceptance of Christ as he is offered with his benefits); and this thankfulness must be for what he has done in dying for us, as well as for what he will do in pardoning and saving us; and it doth disable all true believers from gospel, grateful obedience, whenever they lose the sight of

their evidences of special grace (which, alas, how ordinary is it with them!) For when they cannot have special grace in their eye to be thankful for, according to this doctrine they must have none; because they can be no surer that Christ died for them, than they are that themselves are sincere believers and truly sanctified. And when thankfulness for Christ's death and redemption ceaseth, gospel obedience ceaseth, and legal and slavish terrors do take place. Though the same cannot be said of thankfulness for special renewing, pardoning grace.

4. The fourth part of the christian life is cheerful obedience. God loveth a cheerful giver, and so he doth in every part of obedience. "Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things, thou shalt serve thy enemies in hunger and thirst," &c. Deut. xxviii. 47.

Will you now lay all this together, and make it for the time to come your business, and try whether it will not be the truest way to comfort, and make your life a blessed life? Will you make it your end in hearing, reading, praying, and meditation, to raise your soul to delight in God? Will you strive as much to work it to this delight as ever you did to work it to sorrow? Certainly you have more reason; and certainly there is more matter of delight in the face and love of God, than in all the things in the world besides. Consider but the Scripture commands, and then lay to heart your duty: Phil. iv. 4, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice;" chap. iii. 1; Zech. x. 7; Joel ii. 23; Isa. xli. 16; Psal. xxxiii. 1, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright;" Psal. xcvi. 12; 1 Thess. v. 16, "Rejoice evermore;" 1 Pet. i. 6, 8; Rom. v. 2; John iv. 36; Psal. v. 11; xxxiii. 21; xxxv. 9; lxi. 6; lxviii. 3, 4; lxxi. 23; lxxxix. 16; cv. 3; cxlix. 2; xliii. 4; xxvii. 6; John xvi. 24; Rom. xv. 13; xiv. 17, "The kingdom of God is in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" Gal. v. 22; Psal. xxxii. 11, "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart;" Psal. cxxxii. 9, 16; v. 11; xxxv. 27; Heb. iii. 18: with a hundred more the like. Have you made conscience of this great duty according to its excellency and these pressing commands of God? Have you made conscience of the duties of praise, thanksgiving, and cheerful obedience, as much as for grieving for sin? Perhaps you will say, I cannot do it for want of assurance. If I knew that I were one of the righteous, and upright in heart, then I could be glad, and shout for joy. *Ans.* 1. I have before showed you how you may know that; when you discover it in yourself, see that you make more conscience of this duty.

2. You have had hopes and probabilities of your sincerity. Did you endeavour to answer those probabilities in your joys? 3. If you would but labour to get this delight in God, it would help you to assurance; for it would be one of your clearest evidences.

Oh how the subtle enemy disadvantage the gospel, by the misapprehensions and dejected spirits of believers! It is the very design of the ever blessed God, to glorify love and mercy as highly in the work of redemption, as ever he glorified omnipotency in the work of creation. And he hath purposely unhinged the sabbath which was appointed to commemorate that work of power in creation, to the first day of the week, that it might be spent as a weekly day of thanksgiving and praise for the now more glorious work of redemption; that love might not only be equally admired with power, but even go before it. So that he hath laid the foundation of the kingdom of grace in love and mercy; and in love

and mercy hath he framed the whole structure of the edifice; and love and mercy are written in legible, indelible characters upon every piece. And the whole frame of his work and temple-service, hath he so composed, that all might be the resounding echos of love, and the praise and glorious commemoration of love and mercy might be the great business of our solemn assemblies. And the new creation within us, and without us, is so ordered, that love, thankfulness, and delight, might be both the way and the end. And the serpent who most opposeth God where he seeketh most glory, especially the glory of his grace, doth labour so successfully to obscure this glory, that he hath brought multitudes of poor christians to have poor, low thoughts of the riches of his grace; and to set every sin of theirs against it, which should but advance it; and even to question the very foundation of the whole building, whether Christ hath redeemed the world by his sacrifice. Yea, he puts such a veil over the glory of the gospel, that men can hardly be brought to receive it as glad tidings, till they first have assurance of their own sanctification! And the very nature of God's kingdom is so unknown, that some men think it to be unrighteousness and libertinism, and others to be pensive dejections and tormenting scruples and fears; and but few know it to be righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And the very business of a christian's life and God's service, is rather taken to be scrupling, quarrelling, and vexing ourselves and the church of God, than to be love and gratitude, and a delighting our souls in God, and cheerfully obeying him. And thus when christianity seems a thralldom and torment, and the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil, seems the only freedom, and quiet, and delight, no wonder if the devil have more unfeigned servants than Christ; and if men tremble at the name of holiness, and fly away from religion as a mischief. What can be more contrary to its nature, and to God's design in forming it, than for the professors to live such dejected and dolorous lives? God calls men from vexation and vanity, to high delights and peace. And men come to God as from peace and pleasure to vexation. All our preaching will do little to win souls from sensuality to holiness, while they look upon the sad lives of the professors of holiness; as it will more deter a sick man from meddling with a physician, to see all that he hath had in hand to lie languishing in continual pains to their death, than all his words and promises will encourage them. Oh what blessed lives might God's people live, if they understood the love of God in the mystery of man's redemption, and did addict themselves to the consideration and improvement of it, and did believably eye the promised glory, and hereupon did make it the business of their lives to delight their souls in him that hath loved them! And what a wonderful success might we expect to our preaching, if the holy delights and cheerful obedience of the saints did preach as clearly to the eyes of the world, as we preach loudly to their ears.

But flesh will be flesh yet awhile! And unbelief will be unbelief! We are all to blame! The Lord forgive our overlooking his loving-kindness; and our dishonouring the glorious gospel of his Son; and our seconding Satan, in his contradicting of that design which hath contrived God's glory in so sweet a way.

And now, christian reader, let me entreat thee in the name and fear of God, hereafter better to understand and practise thy duty. Thy heart is better a thousand times in godly sorrow than in carnal mirth, and by such sorrow it is often made better, Eccles.

vii. 2-4; but never take it to be right till it be delighting itself in God. When you kneel down in prayer, labour so to conceive of God, and bespeak him, that he may be your delight; so do in hearing and reading; so do in all your meditations of God; so do in your feasting on the flesh and blood of Christ at his supper. Especially improve the happy opportunity of the Lord's day, wherein you may wholly devote yourselves to this work. And I advise ministers and all Christ's redeemed ones, that they spend more of those days in praise and thanksgiving, especially in commemoration of the whole work of redemption, (and not of Christ's resurrection alone,) or else they will not answer the institution of the Lord. And that they keep it as the most solemn day of thanksgiving, and be briefer on that day in their confessions and lamentations, and larger at other times! Oh that the congregations of Christ through the world were so well informed and animated, that the main business of their solemn assemblies on that day might be to sound forth the high praises of their Redeemer; and to begin here the praises of God and the Lamb, which they must perfect in heaven for ever! How sweet a foretaste of heaven would be then in these solemnities! And truly, let me tell you, my brethren of the ministry, you should by private teaching and week-day sermons, so further the knowledge of your people, that you might not need to spend so much of the Lord's day in sermons as the most godly use to do; but might bestow a greater part of it in psalms and solemn praises to our Redeemer. And I could wish that the ministers of England, to that end, would unanimously agree on some one translation of the English Psalms in metre, better than that in common use, and, if it may be, better than any yet extant, (not neglecting the poetical sweetness under pretence of exact translating,) or at least to agree on the best now extant; (the London ministers may do well to lead the way;) lest that blessed part of God's solemn worship should be blemished for want either of reformation or uniformity. And in my weak judgment, if hymns and psalms of praise were new invented, as fit for the state of the gospel church and worship, (to laud the Redeemer come in the flesh, as expressly as the work of grace is now express,) as David's Psalms were fitted to the former state and infancy of the church, and more obscure revelations of the Mediator and his grace, it would be no sinful, human invention or addition; nor any more want of warrant, than our inventing the form and words of every sermon that we preach, and every prayer that we may make, or any catechism or confession of faith. Nay, it may seem of so great usefulness, as to be next to a necessity. (Still provided that we force not any to the use of them that through ignorance may scruple it.) And if there be any convenient parcels of the ancient church that are fitted to this use, they should deservedly be preferred. I do not think I digress all this while from the scope of my discourse. For doubtless if God's usual solemn worship on the Lord's days were more fitted and directed to a pleasant, delightful, praising way, it would do very much to frame the spirits of christians to joyfulness, and thankfulness, and delight in God; than which there is no greater cure for their doubtful, pensive, self-tormenting frame. O try this, christians, at the request of one that is moved by God to importune you to it! God doth pity you in your sorrows; but he delighteth in you when you delight in him. See Isa. lviii. 14, compared with Zeph. iii. 17. And if sin interpose and hinder your delights, believe it, a cheerful amendment and obedience is that which will please

God better than your self-tormenting fears. Do not you like that servant better that will go cheerfully about your work, and do it as well as he can, accounting it a recreation, and will endeavour to mend where he hath done amiss, than him that will at every step fall a crying, Oh I am so weak, I can do nothing as I should? A humble sense of failings you will like; but not that your servant should sit still and complain when he should be working; nor that all your service should be performed with weeping, disquietness, and lamentations: you had rather have your servant humbly and modestly cheerful, and not always dejected, for fear of displeasing you. Oh how many poor souls are overseen in this! You might easily perceive it even by the devil's opposition and temptations. He will further you in your self-vexations, (when he cannot keep you in security and presumption,) but in amending he will hinder you with all his might. How oft have I known poor, passionate creatures, that would vex and rage in anger, and break out in unseemly language, to the disquieting of all about them; and others that would drop into other the like sins, and when they have done lament it, and condemn themselves; and yet would not set upon a resolute and cheerful reformation! Nay, if you do but reprove them for any sin, they will sooner say, If I be so bad, God will condemn me for a hypocrite, and so lie down in disquietness and distress; than they will say, I see my sin, and I resolve to resist it, and I pray you warn me of it, and help me to watch against sin. So that they would bring us to this pass, that either we must let them alone with their sins, for fear of tormenting them, or else we must cause them to lie down in terrors. Alas, poor mistaken souls! it is neither of these that God calls for. Will you do any thing save what you should do? Must you needs be esteemed either innocent, or hypocrites, or such as shall be damned? The thing that God would have is this; That you would be glad that you see your fault, and thank him that sheweth it you, and resolutely do your best to amend it, and this in faith and cheerful confidence in Christ, flying to his Spirit for help and victory. Will you please the devil so far, and so far contradict the gracious way of Christ, as that you will needs either sin still, or despair? Is there not a middle between these two? to wit, cheerful amendment? Remember that it is not your vexation or despair, but your obedience and peace, that God desireth. That life is most pleasing to him, which is most safe and sweet to you.

If you say still, you cannot delight in God, I say again, Do but acknowledge it the great work that God requireth of you, and make it your daily aim, and care, and business, and then you will more easily and certainly attain it. But while you know not your work, or so far mistake it, as to think it consisteth more in sorrows and fears; and never endeavour in your duties or meditations to raise your soul to a delight in God, but rather to cast down yourself with still poring on your miseries; no wonder then if you be a stranger to this life of holy delight.

By this time I find myself come up to the subject of my book of the "Saints' Rest;" wherein having said so much to direct and excite you, for the attainment of these spiritual and heavenly delights, I will refer you to it, for your help in that work; and add no more here, but to desire you, through the course of your life, to remember, That the true love of God in Christ, and delight in him, and thankful, cheerful obedience to him, is the great work of a christian, which God is best pleased with, and which the blessed angels and saints shall be exercised in for ever.

And O thou the blessed God of love, the Father of mercy, the Prince of peace, the Spirit of consolation, compose the disquieted spirits of thy people, and the tumultuous, disjointed state of thy churches; and pardon our rashness, contentions, and blood-guiltiness, and give us not up to the state of the wicked, who are like the raging sea, and to whom there is no peace! Lay thy command on our winds and waves, before thy shipwrecked vessel perish; and rebuke that evil spirit whose name is Legion, which hath possessed so great a part of thine inheritance. Send forth the Spirit of judgment and meekness into thy churches, and save us from our pride and ignorance with their effects; and bring our feet into the way of peace, which hitherto we have not known. O close all thy people speedily in loving consultations, and earnest inquiries after peace. Let them return from their corruptions, contentions, and divisions, and jointly seek thee, asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward; saying, Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. Blast all opposing policies and powers. Say to these dead and dry bones, Live. And out of these ruins do thou yet erect a city of righteousness, where thy people may dwell together in peaceable habitations; and in the midst thereof a temple to thy holiness: let the materials of it be verity and purity; let the Redeemer be its foundation; let love and peace cement it into unity; let thy laver and covenant be the doors; and holiness to the Lord be engraven thereon; that buyers and sellers may be cast out, and the common and unclean may know their place; and let no desolating abomination be there set up; but let thy people all in one name, in one faith, with one mind, and one soul, attend to thine instructions, and wait for thy laws, and submit unto thine order, and rejoice in thy salvation; that the troubled spirits may be there exhilarated, the dark enlightened, and all may offer thee the sacrifice of praise (without disaffections, discords, or divisions); that so thy people may be thy delight, and thou mayst be the chiefest delight of thy people; and they may please thee through him that hath perfectly pleased thee. Or if our expectation of this happiness on earth be too high, yet give us so much as may enlighten our eyes, and heal those corruptions which estrange us from thee, and may propagate thy truth, increase thy church, and honour thy holiness, and may quicken our desires, and strengthen us in our way, and be a foretaste to us of the everlasting rest.

GOD'S GOODNESS VINDICATED;

FOR THE

HELP OF SUCH (ESPECIALLY IN MELANCHOLY) AS ARE TEMPTED TO DENY IT, AND THINK HIM CRUEL, BECAUSE OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE MISERY OF MANKIND; WITH RESPECT TO THE DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION AND DAMNATION.

THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

How much the glory of God and the salvation of men is concerned in the right understanding of his goodness, in all his ways and counsels towards them, is evidently seen by all that have any true notion of the divine excellency and man's felicity. God's goodness is his most solemnly proclaimed name and glory. It is his goodness duly known, that leads sinners to repentance, and unites their hearts to fear his name, and excites, and for ever terminates that love which is our holiness and happiness to eternity. It is also too well known, how much this amiable divine goodness is denied or doubted of. What cavils are raised against it by men of corrupt minds! What secret prejudice lies against it, and how deeply rooted in our depraved nature! Yea, with how fearful suggestions and apprehensions are some godly christians (especially those that lie in the darkness of melancholy) sometimes perplexed about it! And even such as are grounded and settled in it, are liable to be assaulted, and may sometimes stagger and stumble at it. And indeed, though the kindness of God towards men hath appeared in the world, as visible as the sun in the firmament; yet man's darkened understanding, and his connate sensuality and selfishness, taking occasion from the more mysterious parts of providence, and those especially that most contradict the wisdom and interest of the flesh, hath caused disputes, and raised doubts, against the truth of that which is in itself as clear and sure as that there is a God, or a world, or any thing existent. Whereupon this author was earnestly desired by a friend, to collect some principles in a narrow compass, that might silence cavillers, succour the tempted, and confirm the sound mind. And for these ends they are, with his permission, by his friend made public. Hos. xiv. 9, "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein."

April 27, 1671.

To help all such persons out of the snare of this dangerous and troublesome temptation, as are described in the propounded case, we must have respect, I. To the special case of the melancholy, who are more liable than others to such disturbances. II. To the common cause of their trouble and perplexity, as it consisteth in such opinions as you describe.

I. With the melancholy, the greatest difficulty lieth in making them capable to receive plain truths: for it will work, not as it is, but as it is received. And melancholy doth breed and feed such kind of thoughts, as naturally as a dead carcass feedeth vermin. Of forty or fifty melancholy persons that I have to deal with, there are scarce four that are not hurried with suggestions to blasphemous thoughts against God and the sacred Scriptures; and scarce two that are not under dismal apprehensions that they are miserable, undone creatures (except only some that are all carried to conceits of prophecies,

revelations, and some rare, exalting communications of light unto themselves). This unhappy disease of melancholy is first seated in the organs of imagination and passion both; that is, in the spirits, and thereby in the very imagining faculty itself: though the natural parts being without pain or sickness, they will not believe that it is a disease at all. It inclineth them usually to solitariness, to musing, and to dismal thoughts, that they are undone, graceless, hopeless, &c. which because they passionately seem to feel, no words, which silence them, will satisfy them; or if you seem a little to satisfy them to-day, it is all gone to-morrow: for a melancholy man is like the eye that looketh on all things through a coloured glass, or in an ophthalmia, and seeth them according to the medium.

The disease, in some few, beginneth with overstretching thoughts and troubles about things spiritual; but in most that I have met with, (ten to one,) it beginneth with some worldly cross, loss, or trou-

ble, which grieveth them, and casteth them into troublesome anxieties and cares; and then when by these the spirits are diseased, it presently turneth upon conscience; first, against themselves, aggravating sin and misery, apprehending calamity from every thing which they see, hear, or think of; and next, against God and Scripture, perplexed in every thing that cometh before them, and quarrelling with all, and offended in all: and usually they are importuned, as if it were by something else within them, to say some blasphemous word against God, or do some mischief against themselves; no doubt through Satan's special instigation, who can work on men according to the advantage of their bodily and sensitive distempers, and can do that on a melancholy man, (though a godly man,) which he cannot do on another; as he can also work on the choleric, phlegmatic, &c. according to their temper.

1. The cure of this must be by these means: (1.) You must not suffer them to be much alone. (2.) You must divert them from all musing, and turn it to discourse. (3.) You must keep from them displeasing things and persons, and help them to suitable pleasing company and converse. (4.) You must change their air and company sometimes, that strange objects may change their imagination. (5.) Above all, if they have strength, you must not suffer them to be idle, to lie in bed longer than they sleep in the day, nor to sit musing; but must get them upon the work of a lawful calling, and drive them on to so much diligence, that body and mind may be closely employed. This will be more than all other ordinary means. (6.) In most, meet physic also will do very much, which must be ordered by an experienced physician that is with them, or well knoweth them. (7.) Lastly, Their false thoughts also must be confuted, and their minds have due satisfaction. And if you cannot have all or most of these done, you can hardly expect a cure, unless time wear it off, which is doubtful.

II. The falsehood and vexation of such men's thoughts, whether the melancholy or others, are brought to pass, 1. By a false method of reasoning. 2. By false opinions which they have before received.

1. It is a grossly deluding and subverting way of reasoning, to begin at dark and doubtful consequents, thence to argue against certain, clear, fundamental principles. As if from some doubts about the position and motion of the stars, or of the nature of light, heat, and motion, men should argue that there is no sun, or moon, or stars at all; or that they have no power of light, heat, or motion: or as if from the many difficulties in anatomy, about the circulation of the blood, the oleum nervosum, the lymphæ and its vessels, the passages and the succus of the pancreas and gall, the translocation through the intestines into the venæ lactæ, the chyly glandules, and such like, one should arise to a conclusion that there is no blood, no chyle, no veins, no glandules, no head, no body; or from the controversy, whether the heart be a mere muscle without any proper parenchyma, one should grow to conclude that there is no heart: so such persons, from points beyond man's reach, about God's decrees and intentions, and the mysteries of providence, conclude or doubt against God's goodness; that is, whether indeed there be a God. I have spoken so fully to this case, in my "Reasons of the Christian Religion," chapter iv. that I would desire you to peruse it. I shall now only give you twenty questions, which the tempted person may challenge all the subtlety and malice of hell to answer; for it is easy to justify the goodness of God.

Quest. 1. Is it not certain that there is a world, in

which is abundance of created goodness? The earth is but a point as to all the world. There is a sun, and moon, and multitudes of glorious stars, which are many of them manifold greater than the earth. There are angels, there are men, there are variety of creatures in this lower part of the creation, which have all their excellency; all the men on earth cannot by any contribution of their counsels, discern the ten thousandth part of the excellency of this little parcel of God's works. And as to the whole, it is next to nothing which we comprehend: every worm, every plant excelleth the highest human apprehension. Is there no physical goodness in all this unmeasurable, this harmonious, this glorious frame? Look about you, look upwards, and deny it if you can. And is there no moral goodness in holy men and angels? And is there no felicity and glorious goodness in all the heavens? What mind can be so black, as to deny all created goodness?

Quest. 2. Is not all the goodness of the whole creation communicated from God? Did it make itself? Or who else made it? Are not all effects from their causes? And is he not the first cause? See what I have said to prove this fully in the aforesaid treatise.

Quest. 3. Hath God made a world that is better than himself? Could he give more goodness than he had to give? Must not he needs be better than all his works?

Quest. 4. Is he fit to be quarrelled with for want of goodness, who hath infinitely more goodness than the whole world besides? more than sun and stars, heaven and earth, angels and men, all set together in all their single and their united, harmonious worth? If he be better than all, is he not most beyond accusation or exception?

Quest. 5. Must not God necessarily excel his works? Must he needs make every worm a god? Or must he make any god, or equal to himself? Is not that a contradiction? And is there not necessarily an imperfection in all that is not God? Nothing can be so great, so wise, so good, so holy, so immutable, so self-sufficient, so blessed, as God.

Quest. 6. Is not God's creation an harmonious universe, of which individuals are but the parts? Are not the parts for the whole, and their worth to be valued for the whole, or for the common ends? Must every pin in a watch, or every stitch in your garment, or every part of your house, or every member of your body, and every humour or excrement in it, have that excellency which may simply dignify itself in a compared or separated sense? Or rather, must it not have that excellency which belongeth to it as a part of the whole for the common end of all together? Is not that best, that is best to the order, beauty, and usefulness of the universal frame?

Quest. 7. Is it necessary to this end, or to prove God's goodness, that all individuals, or species of creatures, must be of the highest rank or excellency? Is God wanting in goodness, if every man be not an angel, or every angel made unchangeable, or every unlearned man a doctor, or every star a sun, or every cloud or clod a star, or every beast a man, or every worm an elephant, or every weed a rose, or every member a heart or head, or every excrement blood and spirits? Will you think that a man doth reason like a man who thus disputeth, He that doth not do that which is best when he can do it, is not perfectly good, and therefore is not God. But he that maketh toads and serpents, and maketh the guts the passage of filthy excrements, when he could have made them equal with the heart, doth not do that which is best, when he can do it. Therefore he is not perfectly good; therefore he is not God; therefore there is no

God; therefore there is no Creator; therefore the world hath no cause, or made itself, and preserveth itself: therefore I made myself, and must rule and preserve myself. Conclude next, Therefore I will never suffer, nor die, and thus prove the wisdom of such reasoning, if you can.

Quest. 8. If God made man and all things, did he not make them for himself, for the pleasure of his own will? Must he not needs in reason be the end of all, who is the beginning and cause of all? And is not that means the best which is aptest to the end? And doth not the proper goodness of a means consist in its aptitude to promote the end? And then is not that the goodness of all creatures (partly to be what the Creator efficiently maketh them, and partly) to fulfil his will; and what creature hath not this goodness, as to the absolute will of his decrees, which all fulfil?

Quest. 9. Are not now both these conclusions of infallible certainty, and therefore not at all contradictory? 1. That God is most good, because he is the cause of all the good in the whole creation? 2. And yet that there are toads, serpents, darkness, death, sickness, pains, &c. which therefore are no whit inconsistent with his goodness? Neither of them being capable of a denial, or of a sober doubt.

Quest. 10. Is not an angel and man, endued with reason and free-will, and left to choose or refuse his own rectitude and felicity, (or misery,) capable of knowing, loving, serving, and enjoying God, if he will; and instructed by a perfect holy law (with rewards and punishments) to choose aright; I say, is not such a creature as noble and as meet for God to make, as a stone, or a toad, or worm, or serpent? If God choose to please his own holy will, by making a world of such intellectual, free agents, whom he will (ordinarily) rule by the way of moral laws and motives, is this any disparagement to his wisdom and goodness? It is true, that such a mutable free-will is below a confirmed, immutable will. But it is as true, that a toad is below a man; and that Infinite wisdom thought not meet to make all his creatures of one rank or size, nor to make all faces alike, nor all the stones in the street alike, but in wonderful variety. It is not then unbecoming God, to make a world of rational free agents under such a moral government by laws.

Quest. 11. If all these free agents have abused their liberty and undone themselves, if he so far show mercy to them all, as that they may be all happy if they will, and none of them shall perish but for wilful and final refusing of the saving means and mercy which is offered to them; and if they will, they may live with God himself, and Christ and angels, in endless glory; and none shall lose this free-given felicity, but for final refusal and contempt, preferring certain vanity and dung before it: and if officers be commissioned, and means provided, to acquaint all, in several measures, with the reasons why they should choose heaven and holiness before the dirty pleasures of sin, and to importune them daily to such a choice; and if a life of mercies be granted to allure them, and afflictions to drive them, and examples to invite them to choose aright: I say, after all this, have any of these persons cause to complain, that God dealeth not mercifully with them? Shall they, that will not accept of life and mercy offered them, accuse him as cruel that importuneth them to accept it?

Quest. 12. Is the goodness of a king to be judged of by the interest of murderers in the gaol? When he restrained them by laws, when he warned them by legal penalties, when he encourageth and protecteth all the good; when the lives of the innocent

need this severity against the wicked; when the commonwealth would take him to be bad, that would not restrain thieves and murderers by penalties. Yea, though this king could, if he would, have set a constant guard on these men to have kept these men from murdering, but he thinketh meet only to govern them by laws; will you rather argue, that the gaol is a place of misery, therefore the king is cruel, than, the rest of the kingdom flourish in prosperity and peace, therefore the king is wise and gracious. And is not this little dirty spot of earth, the next door to hell, a place defiled by wilful sin, and unfit to be the index of God's benignity, from whence we should take an estimate of it?

Quest. 13. Do not all men in the world confess God's goodness first or last? Do not all true believers, that are themselves, acknowledge that he is infinitely good, and good to them, and that his mercy is over all his works, and endureth for ever? And do not the consciences of the damned grind and tear them for the contempt of goodness, and setting against mercy, even mercy to themselves? This is the fuel that feedeth hell, not by way of delusion, but experimental conviction. If the man that doubteth of God's goodness and mercy to him, do despair, or fear damnation, he foolishly contradicteth himself. For hell and damnation is a state of misery and torment, in the loss, and in the conscience and sense of refused and abused mercy. If therefore God be not merciful to you, then you need not fear being damned for sinning against and refusing mercy. For that which is not, cannot be sinned against, or abused. If God be merciful, you may be saved if you will accept this mercy; if he be not, you cannot in justice be damned for rejecting that mercy which was none. And if God be not merciful and just, he is not God. And if there be no God, there is none to damn you. But all confess, in heaven and hell, some with joy, and some with self-tormenting anguish, that God was unconceivably good and merciful.

Quest. 14. What if it were but one or two in a whole kingdom that were damned, and that only for obstinate, unpersuadable, final refusal of grace and salvation, and all the rest of the world should be saved; tell me, would you then still suspect God of cruelty, or deny his goodness? If not, I further ask you,

Quest. 15. Have you so good acquaintance with the extent of the universe, the superior world, the number of angels and blessed spirits, as that you are sure that it is proportionably more in the whole universe, that are miserable? Though some peevish men have wrangled at what I have said of this in my forecited books, I am so far from flattering their self-conceited wisdom that I will say it over again, That it is agreed on by philosophers, that the earth, as to the universe, is no bigger than a point or inch is to the whole earth. We see over our heads a wonderful sun, a multitude of fixed and unfixed stars, of wonderful magnitude, divers of them many times bigger than all the earth; besides the vast ethereal interspaces; we see in a tube or telescope a marvellous likeness of the moon to this earth, with shades, inequalities, &c. Multitudes of stars in the galaxy, and elsewhere, are discernible in the telescope, which without it no eye can see. Little know we how far the world extendeth itself beyond all these stars and sun which we can see; or whether there be millions of the like beyond our sight. The Scripture telleth us of innumerable angels, holy and glorious spirits, that attend Christ in the service of this lower world. No Scripture telleth us whether all the glorious or blessed spirits be thus employed as angels for mankind, or whether ten thousand thousandfold more be other-

wise employed. No Scripture or reason telleth us whether sun or moon, stars and intermediate æther, be inhabited or not? It is temerity to affirm that they are. And it is as great temerity to say that they are not. It is lawful to doubt, and it is lawful to conjecture, that it is most probable they are, considering, 1. That life is the excellency of the creation, and the deadest parts are the basest. 2. That the earth, and water, and air, are full of men, beasts, fishes, birds, worms, flies, &c. 3. That it is incredible to him that looketh upward, that sun, moon, stars, and æther, are baser regions than this dirty earth; and consequently that they are baser as to their use and inhabitants. These thoughts of an uncertain thing are lawful to him that will go no further than he hath evidence, and not make an uncertain thing seem certain. And certain it is, that spirits are innumerable. And though some of these are fallen to be devils, God hath not told us how many; nor can we know that it is one to a million of happier creatures. And can that man then, who is offended with God, not for damning a very few, but for the proportion of the damned in comparison of others, tell what he saith? Can he say, if God had cast off all this earth, that it had been more than one of a million of millions as to the whole creation? It is true I cannot tell the number; but it is as true that when our foundation is sure, that God is infinitely wise and good, it is madness to accuse him as unwise, or evil, or cruel, for that which we must confess we do not know; and to talk against him in the dark. Stay till you see who dwelleth in all the superior regions, and then take yourselves for fitter discerners of your Maker's ways.

Quest. 16. Are you well acquainted with the nature and degrees of the future miseries which tempt you to think that God is cruel? They are not all of one degree; what if much of them be still voluntary to the miserable souls? The devils who are now tormented in hell, are yet inhabitants of the air, and exercised in voluntary acts of malice. I take it to be no small degree of hell which the ungodly choose, and love, and possess among us here on earth, and will not be dissuaded from: they are without all holy communion with God, and they would be so; they are out of heaven, and they would be so; they are debased and confined to sensual pleasures and worldly vanities, and they will be so; they are the drudges of the devil, and the servants of the flesh, and the slaves of men, and they would be so; they are defiled with sin, and imprisoned in their own concupiscence, and they would be so; they are corrupted, and tantrized, and vexed, and tossed up and down by their irregular desires; in a word, they have the plague of sin, and have neither holiness nor true happiness, and so they will have it to be, and will not be cured. Now these tempted persons can see a misery in pain; but can see no such evil in sin, for which such pain should be inflicted; whereas sin itself, and that which they are willing of, is so great a part of their misery, as that in this life the rest is as nothing to it. And though, no doubt, much will be involuntary hereafter, we know not what the proportion will be between the voluntary and involuntary part.

And what makes these men that they do not pity a drunkard, a fornicator, a worldling, a sensual lord or gentleman, that hath no better than the shadows which he chooseth? Neither the tempted, nor they themselves, would call God cruel if he would let them so live in health for ever; even a healthful beggar would call God merciful if he might never die, nor be more miserable. But princes or lords would call him cruel, if he should put them into the beggar's or labourer's case. You accuse not God as

cruel for making toads and serpents, worms and vermin, because they are not troubled with their own condition; but if you could imagine them to have the knowledge how much happier man is, the case would alter. Or if God should change men into toads and serpents, you would call him unmerciful; when yet he is no more bound antecedently to man than unto them. Thus because these tempted persons have, as Adam when his eyes were opened, a disquieting knowledge, to know good and evil penalty; their own apprehension (as Adam's of his nakedness) maketh that seem cruelty, which seemed a fruit of goodness before.

The sum is, when you come into another world, and see what manner of punishment it is that God exerciseth on the damned, (as well as on how many,) you will then be perfectly satisfied, that there is nothing but that amiable justice, which is the fruit of holiness, goodness, and wisdom, in it all; and you shall see nothing in the punishment of the miserable which you shall either blame or wish were otherwise, if you come to heaven.

To which let me add, when you come to see the heavenly glory, and how the God of infinite goodness hath advanced such innumerable hosts (if not worlds) of men and angels into such wonderful felicity, and compare this with the sufferings of the devil and of his damned followers, instead then of quarrelling with the goodness of God, you will be wrapt up in the admirations and praises of it with full delights, to all eternity.

Quest. 17. And tell me, is he fit to entertain suspicions and quarrels with God, who knoweth God to be God, and knoweth himself to be but a man? I speak not only in respect of our inferiority, as the potsherd should not quarrel with the potter; but in respect of our great and certain ignorance. Are we not puzzled about the poorest worm and pile of grass, whose manifold mysteries no mortal can yet discover? Are we not grossly ignorant about every thing (even visible and palpable) which we see, and touch, and have to do with? Do we not know that we know but little, even of ourselves, or of any thing about us in the world? And shall the darkened soul, while it must operate in such a puzzle of brains and humours, be so madly proud, as to presume of a knowledge, which findeth out errors and badness in God, who is infinitely wise and good? Nothing is more sure than that God is most wise and good; and nothing should be easilier known to us, than that we are very blind and bad. And if such wretches then cannot reconcile their thoughts about God's works, should they not rather suspect themselves than him? Suspect, did I say; should they not take it as the surest verity, that it is God, that is not only justifiable, but infinitely amiable and laudable, and that it is worse than brutishness for such moles to be his accusers?

Quest. 18. Yea, is this accusing God a fit employment for that person, who liveth in a land of mercies? who hath been bred up in mercy, preserved by mercy, yea, differentiated by saving mercy from the ungodly; who hath been called from blindness, carnality, and profaneness, and entertained many a time in holy worship with God; who hath been washed in Christ's blood, and justified from so many and grievous sins, and made of an enemy an adopted child, and of an heir of hell an heir of heaven; and all this by the tender mercies of a provoked God, a gracious Redeemer, and a holy Sanctifier? Shall this person, I say, this, be one that instead of praising God with the raptures of continual joy, shall turn his accuser? Oh let the guilty that readeth this stop here, and fall down on his knees to God,

and melt into tears in the sense of such unkindness.

Quest. 19. But can a child of God be possibly guilty of so great a sin as this?

Ans. I speak not now of the malignant atheist; but of the melancholy, tempted person. Alas, it is the melancholy disease, and the devil, more than he. God pitieth his children's frowardness, especially when necessitated naturally by diseases; and he that pardoned peevish Jonas, that said, "I do well to be angry to the death;" and complaining Job; and excused his sleepy disciples with "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" will not condemn an upright soul, for the effect of a feverish delirium, or a melancholy that overcomes his natural power of resistance.

Quest. 20. Would you thus argue or quarrel against God's greatness and wisdom, as you do against his goodness? You suspect him to be unmerciful, because he cureth not man's sins, and preventeth not their damnation. And have you not the like occasion to argue against his other perfections? Do you think he reasoneth soberly that saith, He that maketh asses when he might have made them men, or maketh idiots, or maketh stones that know nothing; he that is the governor of such a foolish, distracted, confused world as mankind is, is foolish himself, or unskillful in government, or wanteth wisdom. But God doth thus. Is he not worse than a fool that will accuse his God of folly? Doth not the admirable harmony of all the world, and his wonderful work in every creature, prove his incomprehensible wisdom? And what would you say to him that should thus reason: He that maketh impotent worms, that suffereth the good to die, that suffereth the tyrants of the earth to persecute his church and cause, is impotent, and not almighty: but so doth God? Would you not say, I have the wonderful frame of heaven and earth, the sun and stars, the sea and land, to prove to me that he is almighty: this therefore is a proved foundation truth, to which all doubts must be reduced? And if you dare not be so impudent as to deny his omniscience or omnipotence, when you think there is error or impotency in his works, why will you any more deny his goodness, when you dream that there is badness in his works? Do you not know, that power, wisdom, and goodness are God's three essential principles of operation, virtues, or properties? and that they are none of them greater or less than other? and that his goodness (though not as to be measured by human interest) is equal to his wisdom and his greatness? And do you not know, that to deny any one of the three, yea, to deny the perfection of any one of them, is to deny that there is any God? And is he sober that will argue, There are frogs and toads, there are worms and asses, there are fools and miserable sinners, therefore there is no God? Whereas there could neither be any of these, nor any world or being, if there were no God.

Quest. 21. Lastly, now consider, whether evidently, the root of all this sin be not (besides melancholy and Satan) the power of selfishness, and sensual or fleshly interest. Alas! poor men, that were made for their God, to rejoice wholly in pleasing him, and to show forth the lustre of his glory, are fallen unto themselves and flesh; and now they that should wholly devote and refer themselves to God, do strive to make God a servant to themselves, and measure his goodness by the standard of their fleshly sense and interest; and God shall be with them no longer good, that is, no longer God, than he will give them their wills, and serve their flesh, and keep them from crosses, and losses, and pains, and govern the world

according to their fancies; and when they are committing this odious, self-exalting idolatry, and abasing God, even then will they judge themselves both wiser and more merciful than he. Yea, when a melancholy man despaireth in the sense of his own sin and badness, at that very time he thinketh himself more merciful than the God of infinite goodness, and accuseth his God for being crueller than he himself. O man, into what distraction and confusion art thou fallen, when thou departest from thy God, and sinkest into that blind and wretched self!

And tell me, what if but the wills of all the poor, the pained, the dying, &c. were but reconciled to their suffering state. Would that which pleaseth the will be matter of any complaint? You may see then that it is not God's providence, &c. but the wills and ways of sinners, that are the diseased causes of all their wranglings. And if our wills were cured, and reduced to God's will, we should find no fault with him. If I can but be truly willing of imprisonment, poverty, or death, how can I feel any thing in it to complain of; when even sinners, as aforesaid, do obstinately here take their misery for their happiness, and are contented with it so far as it is voluntary?

By that time these twenty questions are answered, the accusations of God as wanting goodness, will all turn to the accuser's shame.

2. I am next briefly to detect the false opinions which do ordinarily cause these persons' errors.

1. It is false doctrine to affirm that God condemneth the greater part of his intellectual creatures, (as I have showed,) though he condemn never so many of this ungodly world.

2. It is not true that God decreeth to condemn any man but for sin (for sin, I say, as the cause of his damnation).

3. God decreeth to condemn none at age (which I add but to exclude foolish cavils) for Adam's sin only; nor for any other sin only that is not conjoined with an obstinate, final impenitency, and rejecting offered mercy, and neglecting means appointed for their salvation.

4. God's decrees do cause no man's sin (nor his damnation any further than as supposing sin); for Dr. Twisse himself still professeth, 1. That reprobation is an immanent act, and *nihil ponit in objecto*, putteth nothing at all into the person. 2. And that reprobation inferreth no necessity of sin or misery, but that which is called *necessitas consequentie*, and not any *necessitas consequens*; and Arminius and all confess that God's bare foreknowledge causeth or inferreth a necessity *consequentie*, which truly is but a logical necessity in order of argumentation, when one thing is proved by another; and not by physical necessity in order of causation, as one thing is caused by another.

And whereas they say, Then man might have frustrated God's decree. I ask them, whether man can frustrate God's foreknowledge? Suppose God to foreknow sin without decreeing it, (of which more anon,) is not this a good argument, All that God foreknoweth will certainly come to pass. But God foreknoweth, e. g. Judas's sin, therefore it will certainly come to pass. And what of all this? It doth not come to pass because God foreknoweth it, any more than the sun will rise to-morrow, because you foreknow it.

And if you say, that no power can frustrate God's foreknowledge, I answer, they are delusory words of one that knoweth not what he saith. For it is one thing to have power to make God ignorant, and another thing to have power to do otherwise than that which he foreknoweth you will do. No man hath power to make God ignorant; but all sinners

may have power to do otherwise than that which God foreknoweth they will do. For God doth not foreknow that, e. g. Gehazi shall not have power to forbear a lie; but only that he will not forbear it. Yea, more, God's foreknowledge doth prove that sinners have power to do otherwise; for that which God foreknoweth will be. But God foreknoweth that men will abuse their power to sin, or will sin when they had power to do otherwise, therefore it will be so in the event.

Now if you will call their power to do otherwise, a power to frustrate God's foreknowledge, you will but speak foolishly. For the power itself is foreknown; and the object of knowledge in *esse cognito*, is not after the act of knowledge. And if the person will not actually sin, God could not foreknow that he will sin. So that foreknowledge is here (when it is not causal) but a medium in a syllogism, and infereth only the necessity of the consequence in arguing, and doth not cause the thing foreknown.

Now when Dr. Twisse saith, that all the school-men agree, that no necessity, *consequentis*, or of accusation, but only *consequentia*, doth follow the decree of reprobation, see how far he and Arminius are in this agreed (though I know some give another sense of *necessitas consequentiæ*). But I come closer to the matter yet.

4. God decreeth no man's sin; neither Adam's nor any other's. He may decree the effect, which sinners accomplish, (as the death of Christ,) and he may overrule men in their sin, and bring good out of it, &c. But sin is not a thing that he can will or cause, and so not decree, which signifieth a volition.

5. God cannot be proved to decree or will the permission of man's sin. For to permit is nothing. It is but not to hinder; which is no act: and to decree and will is a positive act. And if you fain God to have a positive volition or nolition of every nothing, or negative, then he must have positive decrees of every mere possible atom, sand, worm, name, word, thought of man, &c. That such and such a nothing shall never be; whereas, there needeth no more to keep any thing from being (in this case) than God's not causing it, not willing it, not decreeing it. The creature's active nature, disposition, objects, and circumstances, are here pre-supposed; and the impediment necessary, is by act or subtraction of these aforesaid, and God's *non-agere* needs no positive decree. I must tell the learned reader, that this room will not serve to answer his foreseen objections. But I hope I have done it sufficiently elsewhere.

6. God hath not only decreed to give, but actually given a great deal of mercy to them that perish, which had a natural tendency to their salvation. Christ hath so far died for all, as that none shall perish for want of a sufficiency in the satisfaction made: he hath purchased and given for all a grant or gift of himself, with pardon, justification, adoption, and right to glory, on condition of acceptance (where the gospel cometh); in a word, so that none of them shall perish, that do not finally refuse the grace and salvation offered them.

7. Men are not impenitent and unbelievers for want of that called natural faculty, or power to choose and refuse a right; but for want of a right disposition of their own wills; and by such a moral impotency, which is indeed their viciousness, and the wickedness of their wills, and doth not excuse but aggravate the sin. (See Mr. Truman of "Natural and Moral Impotency.")

8. To rectify men's wicked wills and dispositions, God giveth them a world of means; the whole creation, and documents of providence; all the precepts, promises, threats of Scripture; preaching,

example, mercies, judgments, patience, and inward motions of the Spirit; all which might do much to men's conversion and salvation, if they would but do what they could on their own part.

9. Adam could have stood, when he fell, without any more grace than that which he abused and neglected. God's grace, which was not effectual to him, was as much as was necessary to his standing, if he would have done his best: and it was left to his free-will, to have made that help effectual by improvement. He fell, not because he could not stand, but because he would not.

10. For aught any can prove, multitudes that believe not now, but perish, may have rejected a help as sufficient to their believing, as Adam's was to his standing.

11. All men have power to do more good, and avoid more evil, than they do; and he that will not do what he can do, justly suffereth.

12. Heathens and infidels are not left unredeemed under the remediless curse, and covenant of innocence, which we broke in Adam; but are all brought by the redemption wrought by Christ under a law or terms of grace. 1. God made a covenant of grace with all mankind in Adam, (Gen. iii. 15,) who was by tradition to acquaint his posterity with it, as he did to Cain and Abel, the ordinances of oblation and sacrifice. 2. This covenant was renewed with all mankind in Noah. 3. This covenant is not repealed, otherwise than by a perfecter edition to them that have the plenary gospel. 4. The full gospel-covenant is made for all, as to the tenor of it, and the command of preaching and offering it to all. 5. They that have not this edition, may yet be under the first edition. 6. The Jews, under the first edition, were saved without believing in this determinate person of Jesus, or that he should die for sin, and rise again, and send down the Spirit: for the apostles believed it not beforehand, (Luke xviii. 34; John xii. 16; Luke ix. 45; Mark ix. 34; Luke xxiv. 21, 25, 26; Acts i. 6—8,) yet were they then in a state of saving grace, as appeareth by John xiv. xv. xvi. xvii. throughout. 7. The rest of the world that had not the same supernatural revelation, were not then bound to believe so much as the Jews were, about the Messiah. 8. God himself told them all, that they were not under the unremedied cure of the covenant of innocence, by giving them a life full of those mercies which they had forfeited, which all did tend to lead them to repentance, and to seek after God, (Rom. ii. 4; Acts xvii. 27,) and "find him; yea, he left not himself without witness, for that which may be known of him and his invisible things are manifested and clearly seen in his works;" so that the wicked are without excuse, Rom. i. 19, 20; Acts xiv. 17. So that all heathens are bound "to believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6. And are all under the duty of using certain means, in order to their own recovery and salvation, and to believe that they are not commanded to do this in vain: so that God's own providence by a course of such mercies, which cannot stand with the execution of the unremedied, violated law of innocence, together with his obliging all men to repentance, and to the use of a certain course of means, in order to their salvation, is a promulgation of a law of grace, according to the first edition, and distinguisheth man from unredeemed devils.

And they that say that all the infidel world have all this mercy, duty, means, and hope, without any redemption or satisfaction of Christ as the procuring cause, are in the way to say next, That the church's mercies too might have been given without Christ.

9: "Of a truth, God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him," Acts x. 34, 35. For "God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and incorruptibility, eternal life," Rom. ii. 6, 7. "Glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," ver. 10. "For there is no respect of persons with God," ver. 11. "For when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another," ver. 14, 15. And they shall be judged according to that law which they were under, natural or mosaical, "even by Jesus Christ," ver. 12, 16. And it is the work of the Spirit promised to believers, to write the law of God in their hearts.

10. Though a special promise was made to Abraham, as an eminent believer, and the Jewish nation were the peculiar people of God, advanced to greater privileges than any others in the world; yet were they not the whole kingdom of God the Redeemer, nor the only people that were in a covenant of grace, or in a state of salvation. For Shem was alive after Abraham's death, who was not like to be less than a king, and to have a kingdom or people governed according to his fidelity. And Melchisedec was a king of righteousness and peace, not like to be Shem by the situation of his country. And a righteous king would govern in righteousness. Job and his friends are evidences of the same truth. And we have no proof or probability that all Abraham's seed by Ishmael, and Esau, and Keturah, were apostates, for they continued circumcision. And what all the rest of the world was we know not, save that in general most grew idolatrous, and the Canaanites in special. But that they all apostatized from the covenant of grace made with Adam and Noah, there is no proof. We have not the history of any of their countries fully, so as to determine of such cases. In Nineveh God ruled by that law of grace which called them to repent, and spared them upon their belief and repentance; "Because he was a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth of the evil," Jonah iv. 2.

And that God dealeth not with mankind now as the mere judge of the violated law of innocence, he declareth not only by the full testimony of his providence, or mercies given to the sinful world; but also by the very name, which he proclaimeth unto Moses, (which signifieth his nature, and his mind towards others, and not what he is to the Jews alone). Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." All which is inconsistent with the relation of God, as a Judge of a people, only under the curse of an unremedied, violated law, and unredeemed, though he add, "and that will by no means clear the guilty," &c. that is, will neither judge them innocent that are guilty of the crime, nor judge them to life that are guilty of death, according to the tenor of the law which they are under; *purificando non purificabit*, as the literal version; that is, will not judge unjustly, by acquitting him that is to be condemned, or as the Chaldee paraphrase hath it, not justifying those that are not converted.

It is enough for us therefore to know, that the visible church hath manifold privileges above all

others, Rom. iii. 1-3, &c.; and that salvation is more easy, sure, and plenteous, where the gospel cometh, than with any others; and that we have therefore great cause to rejoice with thankfulness for our lot, and that the poor world lieth in wickedness, and must be pitied, prayed for, and helped to our power; and that "God is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe; and that he is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works;" and that he will never damn one soul that loveth him as God. But what is in the hearts of all men in the world, and consequently how they shall be used at last, he only that searcheth the heart can tell; and it is neither our duty nor our interest, nor possible to us, to know it of all particulars, much less to conclude, that none among them have such love, who believe him to be infinitely good, and to be to them a merciful, pardoning God. And we know withal, that all they that know not Jesus Christ, as this determinate person that was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, buried, rose again, &c. do yet receive all the foresaid mercies by him, and not by any other name or mediation, nor yet without his purchasing mediation.

13. And if besides all the mercy that God sheweth to others, he do antecedently and positively elect certain persons, by an absolute decree, to overcome all their resistances of his Spirit, and to draw them to Christ, and by Christ to himself, by such a power and way as shall infallibly convert and save them, and not leave the success of his mercy, and his Son's preparations, to the bare uncertainty of the mutable will of depraved man, what is there in this that is injurious to any others? or that representeth God unmerciful to any but such whose eye is evil because he is good, and as a free benefactor, may give more mercy to some than others of equal demerits? If they that hold no grace but what is universal, and left, as to the success, to the will of man, as the determining cause, do think that this is well consistent with the mercifulness of God; surely they that hold as much universal grace as the former, and that indeed all have so much, as bringeth and leaveth the success to man's will, and deny to no man any thing which the other give, do make God no less merciful than they, but more, if they moreover assert a special decree and grace of God, which with a chosen number, shall antecedently infallibly secure his ends in their repentance, faith, perseverance, and salvation. Is this any detraction from, or diminution of, his universal grace? or rather a higher demonstration of his goodness; as it is no wrong to man, that God maketh angels more holy, immutable, and happy.

14. And what if men cannot here tell how to resolve the question, Whether any, or how many, are ever converted and saved, by that mere grace which we call sufficient, or rather necessary, and common to those that are not converted; and whether man will ever make a saving, determining improvement of it; must plain truth be denied, because difficulties cannot easily be solved? And yet in due place I doubt not but I have showed, that this question itself is formed upon false suppositions, and is capable of a satisfactory solution.

15. I conclude in general, that nothing is more sure, than that God is most powerful, wise, and good, and that all his works, to those that truly know them, do manifest all these in conjunction and perfect harmony; and that as to his decrees and providences, he is the cause of all good, and of no sin in act or habit, and that our sin and destruction is of ourselves, and of him is our holiness and salvation;

and that he attaineth all his ends as certainly as if man's will had no liberty, but were acted by physical necessitation: and yet that man's will hath as much natural liberty as if God had not gone before it with any decree of the event, and as much moral liberty as we have moral virtue or holiness.

And these principles I have laid down in a little room, that tempted persons may see, that it is our dark and puzzled brains, and our selfish, diseased hearts, that are the cause of our quarrelling with God, his decrees, and providences; and as soon as we come to ourselves and are cured, these odious apprehensions vanish, and God appeareth as the unclouded sun, in the lustre of his amiable goodness: and when we come to heaven, we shall see to our joy, and his glory, that heaven, earth, and hell, declare him to be all perfectly good, without any mixture of evil in himself, or in any of his word or works; and we shall find all our sinful suspicions and murmurings turned into a joyful consent to the angelical praises. Psal. cxxxvi. 1, 2, 26, &c. "O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy is for ever. O give thanks unto the God of heaven, for his mercy is for ever." Rev. iv. 8, 11, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.—Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Rev. vii. 12, "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, unto our God for ever and ever, Amen." "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy," Psal. cxlv. 8, 9. "The word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth: he loveth righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord," Psal. xxxiii. 4, 5. "O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men," Psal. xxxi. 19. "O therefore that men (instead of quarrelling with his unknown mysteries) would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men," Psal. cvii. 8, 15, 21, 31.

In the conclusion, I take it to be wholesome advice to those that are under this temptation:

1. That they will oft read over the Psalms of praise, and think when they read them, whether David and the ancient church were not liker to know what they said, than a self-conceited, or a melancholy, tempted sinner?

2. That they would consider, who it is that is the grand enemy of the glory of God's goodness, and they shall soon find that it is none other than the devil: none but he that is most evil, can most envy Infinite goodness his honour. And is the devil fit to be believed against God? And that after the warning of out first parents' ruin, which befell them for believing Satan, when he slandered both God's wisdom, truth, and goodness to them?

3. That they would bethink them to what end it

is, that the tempter, and the enemy of God, do thus deny his goodness. Is it not a plain act of malice against God and us? Is it not that he may disgrace God as evil, and rob him of his glory; and also that he may hinder man from loving him, and so destroy all piety, and virtue, and goodness in the world? Who can love him whom he believeth to be bad, and so unlovely? And what grace or happiness can there be without the love of God?

4. That they would think what horrid wickedness this sin containeth (where melancholy and involuntariness do not extenuate it). Is it any better than a denying that there is any God? As is said before, to be God, is to be perfectly powerful, wise, and good; and if there be none such, there can be no God. And then who made the world, and all that is good in it by derivated goodness? Yea, is it not to represent the most amiable blessed God in Satan's image, (who is most evil, and "a murderer from the beginning," John viii. 44), that so men may hate him, and fly from him as they do from devils? And can you tell how great a crime this is?

5. That they would consider, how this impious conceit is calculated for the licensing of all manner of villany in the world, and to root out all the relics of goodness from among mankind. For who can expect that any man should be better than his Maker, and that he should have any good, who denieth God to be good?

6. That they would labour hard to be better themselves; for he that hath a true created goodness, is thereby prepared to relish and admire God's primitive, uncreated goodness: whereas a wicked or a guilty sinner cannot much value that which he is so unsuitable to, and which he thinks will be to him a consuming fire. "Truly God is good to Israel, and to such as are of a clean heart," Psal. lxxiii. 1. But he that liveth in the love of sin, will be doubting of the love of God, and fearful of his wrath, and unfit to relish and delightfully perceive his goodness. "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him," Psal. xxxiv. 8.

7. Study God's love as manifested in Christ; then you shall see what man on earth may see. But think not falsely, narrowly, or basely of his office, his performance, or his covenant.

8. Dwell in the believing foresight of the celestial glory; the reflections of which may wrap up a believing soul on earth, into ecstasies of gratitude and delight.

9. Remember what goodness there is in the holiness of God, which is demonstrated in his severest justice; yea, what mercy it is to forewarn men of the punishment of sin, that they may want no necessary means to escape it.

10. Remember how unfit the selfish interest of obstinate despisers of grace and salvation is, to be the measure or index of the goodness of God; and how much more credible the concordant testimony of the heavenly host is, who live in the love of Love itself, and are everlastingly delighted in the praises of the infinite greatness, wisdom, and goodness of the most perfect, blessed, glorious God.

DIRECTIONS
FOR
WEAK, DISTEMPERED CHRISTIANS,

TO
GROW UP TO A CONFIRMED STATE OF GRACE.

WITH
MOTIVES

OPENING THE LAMENTABLE EFFECTS OF THEIR WEAKNESSES AND DISTEMPERS.

PUBLISHED ALSO TO FURTHER THAT REPENTANCE, WHICH WARS, AND PLAGUES, AND FLAMES, AND CHURCH-
CONVULSIONS HAVE SO LONG AND LOUDLY PREACHED TO ENGLAND.

TO MY DEARLY BELOVED, THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT KIDDERMINSTER IN
WORCESTERSHIRE.

I SUPPOSE you do not only remember, that ten years ago I preached these sermons to you ; but also what schisms, what revilings of the ministers of Christ, what heresies of ranters, seekers, and others ; what cruelties against one another, and what remorseless overturnings of government ; and worst of all, what bold appeals to God himself, as if he were the approver of all this, did give you and me extraordinary occasions of such thoughts and lamentations as are here expressed ! But though the great mercy of God did preserve yourselves from these transgressions, and made it your lot to behold them with daily complaints and sorrows, yet I must not so flatter you as to say, that the ordinary weaknesses of christians are not at all among you. The things which I especially loved in you, I will freely praise ; which were, A special measure of humility ; a plain simplicity in religion ; a freedom from the common errors ; a readiness to receive the truth ; a catholic temper, without addictedness to any sect ; a freedom from schism and separating ways, and a unity and unanimity in religion ; a hatred and disowning of the usurpations, and perturbations, and rebellions against the civil government, and an open bearing of your testimony in all these cases ; together with seriousness in religion, and sober, righteous, charitable, and godly conversations. But yet, with all this, which is truly amiable, I know you have your frailties and imperfections. The weaker sort of christians (either in knowledge or in holiness) are the greater in number in the best congregation that I ever yet knew. (To say nothing of the unsound.) And what may be your case these eight years since I have been separated from your presence, I cannot tell, though, through the mercy of God, I hear not of your declining. It is our sin which hath parted us asunder, let us lay the blame upon ourselves ; I have now done expecting my ancient comforts in labouring among you any more. For these six years' time, in which I thought my greater experience had made me more capable of serving my Master better than before, his wisdom and justice have caused me to spend in grievous silence. And now my decays and disability of body are so much increased, that if I had leave, I have not strength, nor can I reasonably expect it ; therefore once more I am glad to speak to you as I may, and shall be thankful if authority will permit these instructions to come to your view, that the weak may have some more counsel and assistance ; and if any shall miscarry, and disgrace religion, there may remain on record one more testimony, what doctrine it was that you were taught. The Lord be your teacher, and your strength, and save you from yourselves, and from this present evil world, and preserve you to his heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Your servant

Octob. 31, 1668.

R. B.

THE PREFACE.

READERS,

THAT you may neither misunderstand this book nor me, I owe you this pre-advertisement, That it was preached in a lecture at Kidderminster in Worcestershire, about seven or eight years ago, 1658. That the sad experience of the distempers of weak, well-meaning people (though not in that place) yet in those times, (especially of those who ran after the most gross deceivers, distracted the churches, reviled, afflicted, and busily attempted to pull down the pastors, and actually pulled down the higher powers whom God forbade them to resist,) was the chief occasion of the preaching of these sermons; and that the special reasons for my publishing them now, are these that follow. 1. Because I perceive not that yet people are sufficiently humbled for those miscarriages, or have yet well found out their sins, which by many and sore judgments have found them out. 2. Because I perceive that it is too ordinary to speak to weak christians only by way of comfort, and too rare to show them the evil of their distempers: and that the very terms are used as if they imported nothing but what is to be loved, or tenderly gainsayed. And most that hear themselves called weak christians, do take it for a word of honouring pity, and feel in it no humbling matter of reproof. As if the comfort of being a living man, did nullify the trouble and pain of infancy, of a lethargy, a leprosy, a fever, gout, or stone. The scandals which have dishonoured religion in this age, do tell us that it is not all a preacher's work to convince and convert the infidels and profane ones, but that much of it lieth in detecting hypocrisies, and humbling the weak, and healing their distempers, and saving and raising them from their falls. The thoughts of the case of such christians as these, did tempt Augustine once to doubt whether there were not a purgatory; it seemed so hard to him to believe, either that men who in the rest of their lives were godly and honest, should go to hell; or that men so guilty of particular crimes and scandals (of which their ignorance and error kept them from repenting) could go straight to heaven. And no doubt but it was the heinous sins and great distempers of men professing godliness, which caused human reason to invent and entertain this doctrine of purging-pains. But when God hath cast men into many purgatories, and yet they repent not, I fear it threateneth worse than purgatory. 3. Moreover, I remembered the request of that learned, pious, peaceable A. B. Usher, which I mentioned in the preface to my "Call to the Unconverted;" according to which I had before published, 1. That "Call." 2. "Directions against Miscarrying in the Work of Conversion." 3. And this I intended for the third part, when I began it; but was hindered from bringing it to the purposed perfection (the fourth part being "Directions for Peace of Conscience," being extant long before). 4. But that which since urged me to this publication was, that the last sermon which I preached publicly, was at Blackfriars, on this text, Col. ii. 6, 7, and presently after, there came forth a book called "Farewell Sermons," among which this of mine was one. Who did it, or to what end, I know not, nor doth it concern me to inquire. But I took it as an injury, both as it was done without my knowledge, and against my will, and to the offence of my superiors; and because it was taken by the notary so imperfectly, that much of it was nonsense; especially when some foreigners that lived in Poland, Hungary, and Helvetia, were earnest to buy this with the rest of my writings, I perceived how far the injury was like to go both against me, and many others of my brethren. Therefore, finding since, among the relics of my scattered papers, this imperfect piece which I had before written on that text, I was desirous to publish it, as for the benefit of weak christians, so to right myself and to cashier that farewell sermon.

If the reader will but peruse these directions impartially, and read them as he doth the prescripts of his physicians, which are not written merely to be read, but must be daily practised whatever it cost him, as he loveth his life; then I make no doubt, notwithstanding the weakness of the composure, but it may further the cure of his spiritual weaknesses and distempers, and of the consequent troubles and losses of others and himself. I hope I shall not meet with many, besides malignant hypocrites, who will be so impatient and peevish, as to fly in the face of the reprover and director, and say that I open the nakedness of many servants of Christ, to the reproach and dishonour of religion. I have told you from the word of God, that it is God's way, and must be ours, to lay the just dishonour upon the sinner, that it may not fall upon religion and on God. And that the defending or excusing odious sins, in tenderness of the persons who committed them, is the surest and worst way to bring dishonour (first or last) both upon religion and on them. A Noah, a Lot, a David, a Solomon, a Peter, &c. shall be dishonoured by God in holy record to all ages, that God may not be more dishonoured by them! And the truly penitent are willing that it should be so; and account their honour a very cheap sacrifice, to offer up to the honour of religion which they have wronged. And till you come to this, you come short of true repentance. He that defendeth his open sin (unless he could deny the fact) doth as bad as say, God liketh it; Christ bid me do it; the Scripture is for it, or not against it; religion taught it me, or doth not forbid it me; the godly allow it, and will do the like. And what can be said more blasphemously against God, or more injuriously against religion, the Scriptures, and the saints? But he that confesseth his sin, doth as good as say, Lay all the blame on me, who do deserve it; and not on God, on Christ, on Scripture, on religion, or on the servants of God; for I learned it not from any of them, nor was encouraged to it by them; none are greater enemies to it than they; if I had hearkened to them, I had done otherwise. It is one of the chief reasons why repentance is so necessary, because it justifieth God and godliness.

And alas, it is too late to talk of concealing those weaknesses and crimes of christians, which are so visible before all the world! which have had such public effects upon churches, kingdoms, and states; which have kept almost all the christian churches in a torn, and bleeding, woeful state, for so many hundred years, to this present day; which have separated the churches of the east and west, and defiled both; and have drawn so much blood in christian countries, and keep us yet like distracted persons, gazing strangely

at our nearest friends, and running away by peevish separation from our brethren, with whom we must live in heaven; and mistakingly using those as enemies, with whom (if we are christians as we profess) we are united in the same Head, and by the same Spirit, which is a Spirit of love. In a word, when our faults are so conspicuous as to harden the infidels, heathens, and ungodly, and to hinder the conversion of the world; and when they sound so loud in the mouths of our common reproaching enemies; and when they have contracted so much malignity as to refuse a cure by such wars, divisions, church desolations, plagues, and flames, as we have seen; it is then too late to say to the preachers of repentance, Be silent, lest you open the nakedness of christians, and disgrace religion and the church. We must not be silent, lest we disgrace religion and the church to save the credit of the sinners.

Whoever readeth the holy Scriptures, and ever understood the christian faith, must needs know that nothing in all the world is so much against every one of our errors and misdoings. It is only for want of more religion, that any professors of religion do miscarry. Nothing but the doctrine of christianity and godliness did at first destroy the reign of their sin; and nothing else can subdue the rest, and finish the cure. It is no disgrace to life that so many men's lives are burdensome with sickness, which the dead are not troubled with. Nor is it any disgrace to learning, that scholars, for want of more learning, have troubled the world with their contentious disputes. Nor is it any disgrace to reason, that men's different reasons, for want of more reason, doth set the world together by the ears. We can never magnify you enough as you are christians and godly, unless we should ascribe more to you than your bounteous Lord hath given you, who hath made you little lower than angels, and crowned you with glory and honour, Psal. viii. 5, 6. But your sins are so much the more odious, as they are brought so near the holy presence; and as they are aggravated by greater mercies and professions. And God is so far from being reconciled, or reconcilable to any one of them, that though he see not such iniquity in Jacob, as is in heathens and the ungodly, (because it is not in them to be seen,) yet he seeth more aggravated iniquity in such sins as you do commit, in many respects, than in the heathens. And (that which is our common trouble, is) that you hurt not yourselves alone by your iniquities; families are hurt by them; neighbours are hurt by them; churches are distracted by them; kingdoms are afflicted by them; and thousands of blind sinners are hardened and everlastingly undone by them. The ignorant husband saith, I will never follow sermons nor Scriptures, nor be so religious, while I see my wife, that maketh so much ado with religion, to be as peevish, and discontented, and foul-tongued, and unkind, and contemptuous, and disobedient as those that have no religion. The master that is profane saith, I like not your religion, when that servant which most professeth religion in my house, is as lazy and negligent, and as surly and saucy, and as ready to dishonour me, and answer again, and as proud of his little knowledge, as those that have no religion at all. The like I might say of all other relations. All the dishonour that this casteth upon grace is, that you have too little of it; and it is so weak in you, that its victory over your flesh and passions is lamentably imperfect. A servant hearing a high commendation of a gentleman, (that he was of extraordinary wisdom, and godliness, and bounty, and patience, and affability, and what not,) did think with himself, How happy a man were I, if I could but dwell in this man's house! which at last he procured, but ere long went away. His friend meeting him, asked him how he came so quickly to forsake his happiness? Did not his master prove as was reported? He answered, Yes, and better than report could make him, or I could ever have believed. But though my master was so good, my mistress was so unreasonable, and clamorous, and cruel, that she would beat us, and pull us by the hair, and throw scalding water upon us; and there was no living with her. So faith I hope is the master in your hearts; and that is as good as can be well believed: but the flesh is mistress, which should be but a servant; and that maketh such troublesome work with some of you, that some quiet-natured infidels are less vexatious companions than you. Nay, and I wonder if you can be very confident of your own sincerity, as long as such fleshly vices and headstrong passions do keep up the power of a mistress in you. I wonder if you do not fear, lest (as a woman said, I will call my husband Lord with Sarah, if I may have my will fulfilled, so) grace and faith should have no more than the regent titles, while your flesh hath so much of its will fulfilled. I know too many cheat themselves into comfort, with the false opinion, that because they have a party in that striveth against their sins, it is a certain sign that they have the Spirit and are sanctified, though the flesh even in the main doth get the victory. And I know that many have sincerity indeed, who yet have many a foil by boisterous passions and fleshly inclinations; but I am sure, till you know which party is predominant, and truly beareth the governing sway, you can never know whether you are sincere. As once a servant, when his master and mistress were fighting, answered one at the door, who desired to speak with the master of the house, You must stay till I see who gets the better before I can tell you who is master of the house. So truly I fear the conflict is so hard with many christians, between the Spirit and the flesh, and holdeth so long in a doubtful state; and sense, and passion, and unbelief, and pride, and worldliness, and selfishness prevail so much, that they may stay themselves a great while before they can be well resolved which is master. For (to prosecute my similitude) in innocent man, spiritual reason was absolutely master, and fleshly sense was an obsequious servant (though yet it had an appetite which needed government and restraint). In wicked men, the fleshly sense and appetite is master, and reason is a servant, though reason and the motions of the Spirit may make some resistance. In strong christians spiritual reason is master, and the fleshly sense and appetite is a servant, but a boisterous and rebellious servant, tamed according to the degrees of grace and spiritual victory; like a horse that is broken and well ridden, but oft needeth the spur, and oft the reins. So that a Paul may cry out, "O wretched man," &c. In a weak christian the Spirit is master, but the flesh is mistress, and is not kept in the servitude which it was made for, as it ought. And, therefore, his life is blemished with scandals, and his soul with many foul corruptions; he is a trouble to himself and others. The good which he doth, is done with much reluctance and weakness; and the evil which he forbearth, is oftentimes very hardly forborne. His flesh hath so much power left, that he is usually uncertain of his own sincerity; and yet too patient both with his sin and his uncertainty. And he is many times a greater troubler of the church, than many moderate unbelievers. The hypocrite, or almost-christian, hath the flesh for his master, as other wicked men, but reason and the commoner grace of the Spirit may be as mistress with him; and may have so much power and respect, above a state of utter servitude, as may delude him into a confident conceit, that grace hath the victory, and that he is truly spiritual; when yet the supremacy is exercised by the flesh. "He that

hath an ear to hear let him hear. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.—He shall not be hurt of the second death.—He shall eat of the hidden manna.—He shall have power over the nations.—I will give him the morning star.—I will confess him before my Father and the angels.—He shall be a pillar in the temple of God, and go out no more. I will grant to him to sit with me in my throne,” Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26, 28; iii. 5, 12, 21.

1665.

PART I.

COL. II. 6, 7. AS YE HAVE THEREFORE RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, SO WALK YE IN HIM: ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN HIM, AND STABLISHED IN THE FAITH, AS YE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, ABOUNDING THEREIN WITH THANKSGIVING.

As ministers are called in God's word the fathers of those that are converted by their ministry, 1 Cor. iv. 14, 15, so are they likened thus far to the mothers, that they travail as in birth of their people's souls, till Christ be formed in them, Gal. iv. 19. And as Christ saith, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world," John xvi. 21; so while we are seeking and hoping for your conversion, and are as in travail of you till you are born again; not only our labour, but much more our fears of you, and cares for you, and compassion of you in your danger and misery, doth make the time seem very long to us; and oh what happy men should we think ourselves, if all or the most of our people were converted! And when we see but now and then one come home, we remember no more the anguish of our fears and sorrows, nor think all our labour ill bestowed, for joy that a christian is new-born unto Christ. But yet for all the mother's joy, her work, and care, and sorrow, is not at an end as soon as she is delivered. Many a foul hand, and many a troublesome hour, and many a waking night, she must have with the child, whose birth she so rejoiced in; and after that, many a year of care and labour to bring it up, and provide for it in the world; and in her old age, when she expecteth from her children the love, and honour, and thanks, and comfort that was due to her as a mother, and for all her labour, and care, and pains, perhaps one child will prove kind, and of another she must take it well that he is not very unkind, and a third perhaps may break her heart; and yet she must still be a mother to them all. And so it befalls us; when we have greatly rejoiced at the real or seeming conversion of now and then one of our hearers, our work with them is not at an end, nor may we lay aside our care and labour for them. We have for some years (usually) the nurse's work to do; and many a troublesome day and night, the weakness, the uncleanness, the peevish, childish exceptions, the querulous and quarrelsome disposition of our beloved converts, will put us to. And after all that, when they begin to go on their own legs, and think themselves sufficient for themselves without our help, many a fall and hurt they may catch, and many fallings out may they have with one another, to the great trouble of themselves and us. And when they are grown up to strength of parts and gifts, some that seemed sincere may turn prodigals or apostates, and some fall a quarrelling about the inheritance, and make most woeful divisions in Christ's family; and some perhaps despise us that have thus spent our days and strength in studies, and prayers, and fears, and cares, and labours, for their salvation; yea,

perhaps be ready to spit in our faces, and reproach our persons, yea, and our very office and calling itself, as the experience of these times of ours, seconding the experience of all ages of the church before us, doth, alas! too evidently and openly testify. And yet some will be faithful, and constant, and thankful to Christ and us. And that all might be so, for Christ's sake and for their own, must still be our care, and desires, and endeavours. In these several cases, we find blessed Paul with his children in his Epistles, sometimes rejoicing with them in their steadfastness; sometimes defending himself and his ministry against their unkind and childish wranglings, as with the Corinthians you may find him; sometimes he is put (but seldom) to a severe correction of the obstinate, delivering them up to Satan, for a warning to the rest; sometimes he is fain to watch with them, as in their sickness, when they are infected with some dangerous error, or other disease; and is brought even to make great question of their lives, lest he hath laboured for them in vain, and themselves have run in vain, and lest they be fallen from grace, and Christ should profit them nothing; receiving himself no better requital of all his labours from them that once would have pulled out their eyes for him, than to be taken "for their enemy, because he tells them the truth; and the more he loveth them, the less to be loved of them;" as you may read in Gal. i. 6, 7; iii. 1, 3, 4; iv. 11, 14—16, 19, 20; v. 2, 4, 7. But with the most we find him, as one that is yet between hope and fear of them, directing and exhorting them to spiritual steadfastness, and growth, and perseverance to the end; and this is the work which we here find him upon with the Colossians in this text; which containeth, 1. A supposition of the work (the great work) already done; viz. "They have received Christ Jesus the Lord." 2. An inference of further duty, and exhortation thereto, which in sum is their confirmation and progress. The parts of this duty are expressed in several metaphors. The first is taken from a tree or other plant, and is called our "rooting in Christ." After the receiving of Christ, there is a further rootedness in him to be sought. The second is taken from a building, and is called, a "being built up in him," as a house is upon the foundation. All the work is not done when the chief corner-stone and foundation is laid. The third part is taken from those pillars and stronger parts of the building, which are firm upon the foundation, and it is called a being "established or confirmed in the faith." And having made mention of faith, lest they should hearken to innovations and the conceits of men under pretence of faith, he addeth, "as ye have been taught," to show them what faith or religion it is that they must be established in; even that which by the

apostles they had been taught. And lastly, he expresseth the measure that they should aim at, and one special way in which their faith should be exercised, "abounding therein with thanksgiving." The matter is not great, whether we take the relative to refer to Christ, and read it with the vulgar Latin, "abounding in him with thanksgiving;" or as the Ethiopie, "abound with thanksgiving to him;" or whether we take it as relating to thanksgiving itself, as the Arabic translator, and some Greek copies, have it, "abounding in thanksgiving;" or "abounding in such thanksgiving;" or as the ordinary Greek copies, and the Syriac translator, referring it to faith, "abounding in it (that is, in that faith) with thanksgiving." For in the upshot it comes to the same, "to abound in Christ," and, "to abound in faith in Christ," and, "to abound in a believing thanksgiving to Christ." And all this is comprehended in one foregoing general of "walking in Christ;" the whole life of a christian being divided into these two parts, receiving Christ, and walking in him. Here are these several terms therefore briefly to be opened. 1. What is meant by "receiving Christ Jesus the Lord." 2. What is meant by "walking in him." 3. What by "being rooted in him." 4. What by "being built up in him." 5. What by "being confirmed or stablished in the faith." 6. What by this directive limitation, "as ye have been taught." 7. What by "abounding therein with thanksgiving."

And for the first, you must observe the act and the object. The act is "receiving;" the object is "Christ Jesus the Lord." To receive Christ, is not only (as some annotators mistake it) to receive his doctrine, though it is certain that his doctrine must be received, and that the rest is implied in this. But when the understanding receiveth the gospel by assent, the will also accepteth or receiveth Christ as he is offered, by consent; and both these together are the receiving of Christ; that is, the true justifying faith of God's elect. It is not therefore a physical, passive reception, as wood receiveth the fire, and as our souls receive the graces of the Spirit; but it is a moral reception, or reputative, which is active and metaphorical. This will be better understood when the object is considered, which is, "Christ Jesus the Lord." To receive Christ as Christ, or the anointed Messias, and as the Saviour and our Lord, is to believe that he is such, and to consent that he be such to us, and to trust in him, and resign ourselves to him as such. The relation we do indeed receive by a proper passive reception; I mean our relation of being the redeemed members, subjects, disciples of this Christ. But the person of Christ we only receive by such an active, moral, reputative reception, as a servant by consent receives a master, a patient by consent receives a physician, a wife by consent receives a husband, and a scholar or pupil by consent receives a teacher or tutor, or the subjects by consent receive a sovereign. So that it is the same thing that is called, "receiving Jesus the Lord," and, "believing in him," as it is expounded, John i. 12. There are three great observable acts of faith essential to it: the first is, Assent to the truth of the gospel. The second is, Consent or acceptance of Christ and life, as the offered good. The third is, Affiance in Christ for the accomplishing of the ends of his office. Now the word faith doth most properly express the first act and the last, and the word receiving doth most properly express the middlemost; but whichever term is used, when it is justifying faith that is spoken of, all three are intended or included. By what hath been said, you may discern whether you have received Christ or not; for your faith may be

known by these acts which are its parts. 1. If you sincerely believe the gospel to be true; which must be with a belief so strong at least, as that you are resolved to venture your happiness upon this belief, and let go all for the hope that is set before you. 2. If an offered Christ, in his relation as a full and perfect Saviour, be heartily welcome to you. If you consent to the gospel offer, and are but truly willing to be his, and that he be yours in that relation. Faith is not only called a "receiving of Christ," but is oft expressed by this term of "willing" him; and therefore the promise is to "whosoever will," Rev. xxii. 17; and the wicked are denied a part in Christ, because "they will not have him reign over them," Luke xix. 27, or "will not come to him that they may have life," John vi. 40, even because they "would have none of him," Psalm lxxxii. 11, 12, which is, because they are not true believers or disciples of Christ. 3. If you thus by consent take Christ for your Saviour, Teacher, and Lord, it must needs follow that you fiducially rely upon him, or trust him to accomplish the ends of his relations; that you trust to him for deliverance from the guilt, and power, and punishment of sin, and for quickening, strengthening, and preserving grace, and for everlasting life; that you resign yourselves up to him as his disciples, to learn of him, with a confidence or trust that he will infallibly teach you the way to happiness; and that you also give up yourselves to him as his subjects, with a trust that he will govern you in truth and righteousness, in order to your salvation, and will defend you from destroying enemies. This much is of the very being of faith, or the "receiving Christ Jesus the Lord;" and these parts are inseparable; he that hath one in truth, hath all. Whenever we find in Scripture the promise of justification or salvation made to us, if we believe, it is this believing, and none but this, that is intended. It is not only believing in Christ as a Sacrifice or Priest, that is the faith which justifieth, and believing in him as a Teacher or Lord, that sanctifieth: the effects are not thus parcelled out to several essential parts of this same faith; but it is this one entire faith in all these essential parts, that is the undivided condition of all these benefits; and in that way of a condition of the free promise it doth procure them. So much for the meaning of the first words, "Receiving Christ Jesus the Lord." I will be briefer about the next. The second is, "walking in him," which is no more but the living as christians when once we are become christians, and using that Christ to the ends which we received him for, when once we have received him. Two things are necessary to such as we, that have lost our way: the first is, to get into the right way (and that is to get into Christ, who is the way); the other is, to travel on when we are in it; for it is not enough to bring us to our journey's end, that we have found out the right way. The next word to be explained is, "rooted;" which doth not intimate that any are really planted into Christ, without any rooting in him at all; but by "rooted," is meant, "deeply rooted;" for the roots increase under ground, as well as the tree above ground. Rooting hath two ends, and both are here implied: the first is for the firmness of the tree, that blustering winds may not overturn it. The second is for nutriment, that it may receive that nourishment from the earth, which may cause its preservation, growth, and fruitfulness. This is the rootedness of christians in Christ, that they may be confirmed in him against all assaults, and may draw from him that nutriment that is necessary to their growth and fruit. The next term is, "built up in him." No house consisteth of a bare foundation.

Five things are expressly contained in our being "built up in him." The first is, that we are united or conjoined to him, as the building is on the foundation. The second is, that we rest wholly on him as our support, as the building doth on the foundation. The third is, that we are also conjoined one unto another, and are become one spiritual building in the Lord. The fourth is, that the fabric doth increase in bigness, as the house doth by being built up; so that it importeth our increase in grace, and the increase of the church by us. The fifth is, the fitness of the building to its intended ends and use: till it be built up, it is not fit for habitation; and till christians are built up, God hath not that use of them to which he doth intend them. The next term is, "established or confirmed in the faith," which signifieth but that strengthening and fixing of us that may prevent our fall or shaking; and it compriseth these two things: first, that we be soundly bottomed on Christ, who is our foundation. And secondly, that we be cemented and firmly joined to each other. And this comprehendeth their stability in the doctrine of faith: and therefore he addeth, "as ye have been taught," to fortify them against heresies, which indeed are all but novelties; that so they may know how to try the doctrines that afterwards should be offered them, and stick fast to that which the apostles taught. He next requireth them to "abound therein," to let them know that as it is no small matters that they expect by Christ, so they should not rest in small degrees of grace or duty; but especially the duty of "thanksgiving," which is an evangelical and celestial duty, and so admirably becometh a people that have partaken of such admirable salvation, and is so suitable to our mercies, and our condition, and God's just expectation. As it is love and grace, whose eternal praise is designed by the gospel, and are magnified in the church by the Redeemer's great and blessed work; so it is returns of love, and praise, and joy, that should be the most abounding or overflowing part of all our christian affections and performances. After this explanation, you may see that the sense of the text lieth plain in this proposition.

Doct. Those that have savingly received Christ Jesus the Lord, must be so far from resting here as if all were done, that they must spend the rest of their days in walking in him, being rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith as the apostles taught it, and abounding in it, especially with joyful praises to our Redeemer.

And because that my design is only to direct young christians how they may come to be established and confirmed in Christ, I shall therefore pass over all other things that the full handling of this text requireth; and shall only give you, I. A short intimation here, what this confirmation and stability is, (which shall be fuller opened to you in the directions). II. And show you the need of seeking it. And, III. How you may attain it.

I. This confirmation is the habitual strength of grace, distinct from present actual confirmation by the influence of grace from God; for though God may in an instant confirm a weak person against some particular temptation, by his free assistance, yet that is not it which we have here to speak of, but habitual confirmation in a state of grace. And ordinarily we may expect, that God's co-operating, assisting grace should bear some proportion with our habitual grace. Even as in nature he concurrerth with the strongest men, to do greater works than he causeth the weak to do; and with the wisest men, to understand more than the foolish do: I say but that ordinarily it is thus.

A confirmed christian as contrary to a weak one, 1. Is not to be judged of by his freedom from all scruples, doubts, or fears. 2. Nor by his eminency in men's esteem or observation. 3. Nor by his strength of memory. 4. Or freedom of utterance in praying, preaching, or discourse. 5. Or by his seemingly deportment and courtesy towards others. 6. Nor by his sedate, calm, and lovely temper, and freedom from some haste and heats which other tempers are more prone to. 7. Nor by a man-pleasing or dissembling faculty to bridle the tongue, when it would open the corruption of the mind, and to suppress all words which would make others know how bad the heart is. There are many endowments laudable and desirable, which will not show so much as sincerity in grace; and much less a state of confirmation and stability.

But confirmation lieth in the great degree of all those graces which constitute a christian. And the great degree appeareth in the operations of them. As, 1. When holiness is as a new nature in us, and giveth us a promptitude to holy actions, and maketh us free and ready to them, and maketh them easy and familiar to us; whereas the weak go heavily, and can scarce drive on and force their minds. 2. When there is a constancy or frequency of holy actions; which sheweth the strength and stability of holy inclinations. 3. When they are powerful to bear down oppositions and temptations, and can get over the greatest impediments in the way, and make an advantage of all resistance, and despise the most splendid baits of sin. 4. When it is still getting ground, and drawing the soul upward, and nearer to God, its rest and end; and when the heart groweth more heavenly and divine, and stranger to earth and earthly things. 5. And when holy and heavenly things are more sweet and delectable to the soul, and are sought and used with more love and pleasure. All these do show, that the operations of grace are vigorous and strong, and consequently that the habits are so also.

And this confirmation should be found, 1. In the understanding. 2. In the will. 3. In the affections. 4. In the life.

1. When the mind of man hath a larger comprehension of the truths of God, and the order, and method, and usefulness of every truth; and a deeper apprehension of the certainty of them, and of the goodness of the matter expressed in them; when knowledge and faith come nearest unto sight or intention, and we have the fullest, the truest, and the firmest and most certain apprehension of things revealed and unseen; when the nature, and the reasons, and the ends and benefits of the christian religion are all most clearly, orderly, decently, constantly, and powerfully printed on the mind; then is that mind in a confirmed state.

2. When the will is guided by such a confirmed understanding, and is not brutishly resolved, he knoweth not for what or why: when light hath fixed it in such resolutions as are past all notable doubtings, deliberations, waverings, or unwilling backwardness; and a man is in seeking God and his salvation, and avoiding known sin, as a natural man is about the questions, Whether he should preserve his life, and make provision for it? and whether he should poison, or famish, or torment himself? When the inclination of the will to God, and heaven, and holiness, are likest to its natural inclination to good as good, and to its own felicity; and its action is so free as to have least indetermination, and to be likest to natural, necessary acts, as those are of blessed spirits in heaven: when the least intimation from God prevaleth, and the will doth answer him with

readiness and delight. And when it taketh pleasure to trample upon all opposition; and when all that can be offered to corrupt the heart, and draw it to sin, and loosen it from God, prevaileth but as so much filth and dung would do, Phil. iii. 7—9. This is a confirmed state of will.

3. When the affections do proceed from such a will, and are ready to assist, excite, and serve it, and to carry us on in necessary duties: when the lower affections of fear and sorrow do cleanse, and restrain, and prepare the way, and the higher affections of love and delight adhere to God, and desire and hope do make out after him, and set the soul on just endeavours: when fear and grief have less to do, and are delivering up the heart still more and more to the possession of holy delight and love: and when those affections which are rather profound than very sensible immediately towards God himself, are sensible towards his word, his servants, his graces, and his ways, and against all sin: then are the affections, and so the man, in a confirmed state.

4. When ourselves, our time, and all that we have, are taken to be God's and not our own, and are entirely and unreservedly resigned to him, and used for him: when we study our duty, and trust him for our reward: when we live as those that have much more to do for heaven than for earth, and with God than with man or any creature: when our consciences are absolutely subjected to the authority and laws of God, and bow not to competitors: when we are habitually disposed as his servants to be constantly employed in his works, and make it our calling and business in the world; as judging that we have nothing to do on earth, but with God, or for God: when we keep not up any secret desires and hopes of a worldly felicity, nor purvey for the pleasure of the flesh under the cloak of faith and piety, but subdue the flesh as our most dangerous enemy, and can easily deny its appetite and concupiscence: when we guard all our senses, and keep our passions, thoughts, and tongues, in obedience to the holy law: when we do not inordinately set up ourselves in our esteem or desire, above or against our neighbour and his welfare; but love him as ourselves, and seek his good, and resist his hurt, as heartily as our own; and love the godly with a love of complacency, and the ungodly with a love of benevolence, though they be our enemies: when we are faithful in all our relations, and have judgment to discern our duty, that we run not into extremes; and skill, and readiness, and pleasure in performing it, and patience under all our sufferings: this is the life of a confirmed christian (in various degrees, as their strength is various).

II. And now I shall proceed to persuade such to value and seek this confirmation, lest with dull, unprepared minds my following directions should be lost; and then I shall give you the directions themselves, which are the part that is principally intended. And first for the motives.

1. Consider that your first entrance into christianity is an engagement to proceed; your receiving Christ obligeth you to walk and grow up in him. A fourfold obligation your very christianity layeth upon you, to grow stronger, and to persevere. (1.) The first is from the very nature of it; even from the office of Christ, and the use and ends to which we do receive him. You receive Christ as a Physician of your diseased souls; and doth not this engage you to go on to use his medicines till you are cured? What do men choose a physician for, but to heal them? It were but a foolish patient that would say, Though my disease be deadly, yet now I have chosen the best physician, I have no more to do; I doubt not of recovery. You took Christ for a

Saviour, which engageth you to use his saving means, and submit to his saving works. You took him for your Teacher and Master, and gave up yourselves to be his disciples; and what sense was in all this, if you did not mean to proceed in learning of him? It is a silly conceit for any man to think that he is a good scholar, merely because he hath chosen a good master or tutor, without any further learning of him. When Christ sent out his apostles, it was for these two works; first, to disciple nations, and baptize them; and then to go on in teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he commandeth them, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Christ is the way to the Father; but to what purpose did you come into this way, if you meant not to travel on in it?

(2.) Moreover, when you became christians, you entered a solemn covenant with Christ; and bound yourselves by a vow, to be faithful to him to the death: and this vow is upon you. "It is better not to vow, than to vow and not perform," Eccl. v. 5. In taking him to be the Captain of your salvation, and listing yourselves under him, and taking this oath of fidelity to him, you did engage yourselves to fight as faithful soldiers under his conduct and command to your lives' end. And as it is a foolish soldier that thinks that he hath no more to do but list himself and take colours, and need not fight; so it is a foolish and ungodly covenantor that thinks he hath nothing to do but to promise, and may be excused from performance, because that promising was enough, when the promise was purposely to bind him to perform.

(3.) Moreover, when you became christians, you put yourselves under the laws of Christ; and these laws require you to go further till you are confirmed; so that you must go on, or renounce your obedience to Christ.

(4.) Lastly, when you became christians, you received such exceeding mercies, as do oblige you to go much higher in your affections, and much further in your obedience to God. A man that is newly snatched as from the jaws of hell, and hath received the free forgiveness of his sins, and is put into such a state of blessedness as we are, must needs feel abundance of obligations upon him, to proceed to stronger resolutions and affections, and not to stop in those low beginnings. So that if you lay these four things together, you will perceive that the very purpose of your receiving Christ was that you might walk in him, and be confirmed and built up.

2. Consider also, that conversion is not sound if you are not heartily desirous to increase. Grace is not true, if there be not a desire after more; yea, if you desire not perfection itself. An infant is not born to continue an infant, for that were to be a monster; but to grow up unto manhood. As the kingdom of Christ in the world is likened by him to a little leaven, and to a grain of mustard-seed, in the beginning, which afterward makes a wonderful increase; so his kingdom in the soul is of the same nature too. If you are contented with that measure of holiness that you have, you have none at all, but a shadow and conceit of it. Let those men think of this that stint themselves in holiness, and plead for a moderation in it, as if it were intemperance or fury to love God, or fear him, or seek him, or obey him, any more than they do; or as if we were in danger of excess in these. If ever these men had feelingly, and by experience, known what holiness is, they would never have been possessed with such conceits as these.

3. Consider what abundance of labour hath been lost, and what hopes have been frustrated, for want of proceeding to a rooted confirmation. I say not

that such were truly sanctified; but I say, they were in a very hopeful way, and went far, and by going further might have attained to salvation. The heart of many a minister hath been glad to see their hearers humbled, and bewailing sin, and changing their minds and lives, and becoming forward professors of godliness; when a few years' time hath turned all this joy into sorrow; and one of our hopeful, seeming converts doth grow cold, and lose his former forwardness; another falls to desperate sensuality, and turns drunkard, or fornicator, or gamester; another turns worldling, and drowneth all his seeming zeal in the love of riches, and the cares of this life; and another (if not many to one) is deluded by some deceiver, and infected with some deadly errors, and casts off duty, and sets himself, like a hired instrument of hell, to divide the church, oppose the gospel, and reproach, and slander, and rail at the ministers and professors of it, and to weaken the hands of the builders, and strengthen the ungodly, and serve the secret enemies of the truth. Those that once comforted our hearts in the hopes of their conversion, do break our hearts by their apostasy and subversion, and become greater hinderances to the work of Christ, and greater plagues to the church of God, than those that never professed to be religious. Those that were wont to join with us in holy worship, and went up with us to the house of God as our companions, do afterwards despise both worshippers and worship. Whereas if these men had been rooted and confirmed, you should never have seen them fall into this misery. Oh how many prayers, and confessions, and duties do these men lose! How many years have some of them seemed to be religious, and after all have proved apostate miscreants; and the world, and the flesh, and pride, and error swallow up all. See then what need you have to be rooted, confirmed, and built up in Christ.

4. Consider also, how much of the work of your salvation is yet to do, when you are converted. You have happily begun, but you have not finished. You have hit of the right way, but you have your journey yet to go. You have chosen the best Commander and fellow-soldiers, but you have many a battle yet to fight. If you are christians indeed, you know yourselves that you have many a corruption to resist and conquer, and many a temptation yet to overcome, and many a necessary work to do. And there is a necessity of these after-works as well as of the first. For these are the use and end of your conversion, that you may "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," Tit. ii. 11, 12. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10. And how can infants go through all these works? Which of you would desire an infant or cripple to be your servant? But though God be in this more merciful than man, yet he may well expect that you should not be still infants. What work are you like to make him, in this decrepit and weak condition! O pitiful blindness! that any man that knows that he hath a soul to save, should think an infant's strength proportionable to those works and difficulties that stand between him and everlasting life! In the matters of this life, you feel the need and worth of strength; you will not think an infant fit to plough or sow, or reap or mow, or travel, or play the soldier, and yet will you rest satisfied with an infant strength, to do those great and matchless works which your salvation lieth on?

5. Moreover, the weak, unconfirmed souls are

usually full of trouble, and live without that assurance of God's love, and that spiritual peace and comfort, which others do possess. One would think no other argument should be necessary to make men weary of their spiritual weaknesses and diseases, than the pain and trouble that always attendeth them. It is more pain to a sick man to travel a mile, than to a sound man to go ten. To the lame or feeble, every step hath pain, and all that they do is grievous to them; when far more would be a recreation to one that is in health. O therefore delight not in your own languishings! Choose not to live in pain and sorrow! But strive after confirmation and growth in grace, that overgrowing your infirmities you may overcome your sad complaints and groans, and may be acquainted with the comfortable life of the confirmed. Oh how roundly and cheerfully would you go through your work! How easy, and sweet, and profitable would it prove to you, if once you were strong, confirmed christians! Alas! the souls of those that are not confirmed, lie open to every temptation of the malicious enemy of their peace; and how small a matter will disquiet and unsettle them! Every passage in Scripture which they understand not, and which seems to make against them, will disturb them. A minister cannot preach so plainly or so cautiously, but somewhat which they understand not will be matter of their disquiet. Providences will trouble them, because they understand them not. Afflictions will be bitter to the mind as well as the body, and will immoderately perplex them, because they understand them not, or have not strength to bear them and improve them. The sweeter mercies of prosperity will much lose their sweetness, for want of holy wisdom and strength to digest them. And what man would choose such a weak and languishing state as this, before a confirmed, healthful state? Will you run up and down for physic when you are sick? and will you no more regard the health, and stability, and spiritual peace and vigour of your souls?

6. Moreover, it is the strong, confirmed christian that hath the true use and benefit of all God's ordinances. Meat is digested by the healthful stomach, and it is seen upon them; and we use to say, it is not lost; it is sweet to them, and doth them good, and they are strengthened more by it: and so is the confirmed christian by God's ordinances. But to the weak, unconfirmed soul, how much of the means of grace is even as lost! How little sweetness do they find in means, and how little good can they say they get by them! I deny not but some good they get, and that they must use them still; for though the sick have little relish of his meat, yet he cannot live long without it; and though it breed not strength or health, yet it maintaineth that languishing life; but this is all, or almost all. What a sad thing is this to yourselves and unto us, when ministers that are as the nurses of the church, or stewards of the household, to give them all their meat in due season, must see that all that ever they can do for you, will do no more than keep you alive! Yea, how often are you quarrelling with your food, and you do not like it; or you cannot get it down, something still ails it for matter or manner; or else if the minister displease you, your feeble stomachs do loathe the food, because you like not the cook that dresseth it, or because his hands are not so clean as you desire. "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb, but to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet," Prov. xxvii. 7. Or if you get it down, you can hardly keep it, but are ready to cast it up to our faces. And thus a great deal of our labour is lost with you, holy doctrine lost, and sacraments and other ordinances lost,

because you have not strength to digest them. Labour therefore to be established and built up.

7. I beseech you look upon the face of the world, and see whether it have not need of the strongest help. Whereas the weak and sick are burdensome to others, rather than fit to help the distressed. It is a multitude among us, and abroad in the world, that are ignorant and ungodly, and in the depth of misery; and if there be but a few to help them, those few should not be babes. Abundance of this multitude are obstinate in their sin, blind and wilful, captivated by the devil, and have sold themselves to do evil: and shall such miserable souls as these have none but children or sick folks to help them? I tell you, sirs, their diseases prove too hard for the skilfullest physicians; it will put the wisest man in England to it, to persuade one obstinate enemy of godliness to the hearty love of a holy life; or to cure one old superstitious person of his self-conceitdness, or one covetous person of his love of the world, or one old drunkard or glutton of his sensuality. How then will silly, ignorant christians be able to persuade them? I know it is not the ability of the instrument, but the will of God, that is the principal cause; but yet God useth to work by instruments according to their fitness for the work. What a case is that hospital in where all are sick, and no healthful persons among them to help them! Poor weak christians! you are not able much to help one another; how much less to help the dead ungodly world! Woe to the world if it had no better helpers! And woe to yourselves if you had not the help of stronger than yourselves (seeing it is God's way to work by means)! Alas, a child or sick person is so unfit to labour for the family, and to work for others, that they are the burdens of the family, and must be provided for by others; they are so unmeet to help others in their weakness, that they must be carried, or attended and waited on themselves. What a life is this, to be the burdens of the church, when you might be the pillars of the church; to be so blind and lame, when you might be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame!

I speak not this to extenuate God's mercies to you; nor to undervalue the great felicity of the saints, even the poorest and weakest of them. I know that Christ is tender of the weakest that are sincere, and will not forsake them. But though you are so far above the dead world, even in the bed of your groaning and languishing, yet, oh how far are you below the confirmed, healthful christian! You are happy in being alive, but you are unhappy in being so diseased and weak. You are happy in being of the family, and fellow-citizens with the saints; but you are unhappy in being so useless, and unprofitable, and burdensome; for, indeed you live but as the poor of the parish, not only on the alms of Christ, for so we do all, but on the alms of your brethren's assistance and support; and I know that in worldly matters you will rather labour with your hands, that you may have to give to them that need, than be troublesome to others, and live upon charity, Eph. iv. 28. I know that the time is not yet come, that there shall not be a beggar in Israel; I mean one that needs not our continual relief: "the poor we shall have always with us;" even the poor in grace to exercise our charity; and I know that the strong must bear with their infirmities, and exercise compassion on them. But yet you should remember the words of Christ, "It is more honourable to give than to receive;" and therefore be persuaded to bestir yourselves for spiritual health, and strength, and riches, that the multitudes of needy, miserable souls may have some help from you; and

that when they come to your doors, you may not turn them away with so cold an answer, Alas, we have nothing for ourselves. Were you but strong, confirmed christians, what blessings might you be to all about you; what a stay to the places where you live! "Your lips would feed many as a tree of life. The ear that heard you would bless you, and the eye that saw you would bear you witness," Job xxix. 11. You would be to poor souls, as bountiful rich men are to their bodies, the support and relief of many that are needy. You would "not eat your morsels alone, nor would you see any perish for lack of clothing, but the loins of the poor would bless you," Job xxxi. 17—20. O pity the poor world, that needeth more than children's help, and grow up unto confirmation. O pity the poor church, that abounds with weaklings, that is pestered with childish, self-conceited quarrellers, and needeth more than children's help; and grow up to a confirmation. O pity yourselves, and live not still in so childish, sickly, and beggarly a condition, when the way of riches and health is before you; but up and be doing till you have attained confirmation.

8. Yea, this is not all; you do not only deny the church your assistance, but most of the troubles and divisions of the church, are from such unsettled weaklings as you. In all ages almost these have made the church more work than the heathen persecutors did with fire and sword. These novices, as Paul calleth them, that is, young beginners in religion, are they that most commonly are "puffed up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil," 1 Tim. iii. 6. These are they that are easiest deceived by seducers, as being not able to make good the truth, nor to confute the plausible reasonings of the adversaries; and withal, they have not that rooted love to the truth and ways of God, which should hold them fast; and they quickly yield, like cowardly soldiers, that are able to make but small resistance. And as Paul speaks, they are "like children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," Eph. iv. 14. If you will still continue children, what better can we expect of you, but thus to be tossed and carried about. Thus you gratify Satan and seducers, when you little think on it: and thus you harden the ungodly in their way; and thus you grieve the hearts of the godly, and especially of the faithful guides of the flocks. Alas! that so many of the children of the church should become the scourges and troublers of the church; and should set their teeth so deep in the breasts that were drawn out for their nourishment! If you were never drawn to do any thing to the reproach of the church, yet what a grief must it be to us, to see so many of yourselves miscarry! Ah! thinks a poor minister, what hopes had I once of these professors; and are they come to this? O mark sirs, the apostle's warning, Heb. xiii. 9, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." And his way of prevention is, that the heart be established with grace.

9. Consider, also, that it is a dishonour to Christ, that so many of his family should be such weaklings; so mutable, and unsettled, and unprofitable as you are. I do not mean that it is any real dishonour to him; for if all the world should forsake him, they would dishonour themselves, and not him, with any competent judge; as it would dishonour the beholders more than the sun, if all the world should say that it is darkness. But you are guilty of dishonouring him in the eyes of the misguided world. Oh what a reproach it is to godliness, that

so many professors should be so ignorant and imprudent; and so many so giddy and unconstant; and so many that manifest so little of the glory of their holy profession! All the enemies of Christ without the church, are not capable of dishonouring him so much as you, that bear his name, and wear his livery! While your graces are weak, your corruptions will be strong; and all those corruptions will be the dishonour of your profession. Will it not break your hearts to hear the ungodly pointing at you as you pass by, to say, Yonder goes a covetous professor; or, Yonder goes a proud, or a tippling, or a contentious professor? If you have any love to God, and sense of his dishonour, methinks such sayings should touch you at the heart! While you are weak and unconfirmed, you will, like children, stumble at every stone, and catch many a fall; and yield to temptations, which the stronger easily resist: and then, being scandalous, all your faults by foolish men will be charged on your religion. If you do but speak an ill word of another, or rail, or deceive, or overreach in bargaining, or fall into any scandalous opinions or practice, your religion must bear all the blame with the world. Ever since I can remember, it hath been one of the principal hindrances of men's conversion, and strengtheners of the wicked in their way, that the godly were accounted a sort of peevish, unpeaceable, covetous, proud, self-seeking persons; which was a slander as to many, but too much occasioned by the scandalousness of some. And methinks you should be afraid of that woe from Christ, "Woe be to him by whom offence cometh!" If you be children, you may have the woe of sharp castigations; and if you be hypocrites, you shall have the woe of everlasting sufferings. The world can judge no further than they see. And when they see professors of holiness to be so like to common men, and in some things worse than many of them, what can you expect but that they despise religion, and judge of it by the professors of it, and say, If this be their religion, let them keep it to themselves, we are as well without it as they are with it. And thus will the holy ways of God be vilified through you. If you will not excel others in the beauty of your conversations, that in this glass the world may see the beauty of your religion, you must expect that they should take it but for a common thing, which bringeth forth but common fruits, to their discerning. You should be such that God may boast of, and the church may boast of, to the face of the accuser; then would you be an honour to the church, when God may say of you as he did of Job, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil," Job i. 8. If we could say so of you to the malignant enemies, See what men the godly are, there is none such among you; men of holiness, wisdom, uprightness, sobriety, meekness, patience, peaceable, and harmless, living wholly to God, as strangers on earth, and citizens of heaven, then you would be ornaments to your holy profession. Were you such christians as the old christians were, (Acts iv.) we might boast of you then to the reproaching adversaries.

10. Moreover, till you are confirmed and built up, you may too easily be made the instruments of Satan, to further his designs. The weakness of your understandings, and the strength of your passions, and especially the interest that carnal self hath remaining in you, may lay you open to temptations, and engage you in many a cause of Satan, to take his part against the truth. And how sad a case is this, to any that have felt the love of Christ!

Have you been warmed with his wondrous love, and washed with his blood, and saved by his matchless mercy? And may it not even break your hearts to think, that after all this, you should be drawn by Satan to wound your Lord, to abuse his honour, to resist his cause, to hurt his church, and to confirm his enemies, and gratify the devil? I tell you with shame and grief of heart, that abundance of weak, unsettled professors, that we hope have upright meanings in the main, have been more powerful instruments for Satan to do his work by, for the hindering of the gospel, the vilifying of the ministry, the dividing of the church, and the hindering of reformation, than most of the notoriously profane have been. What excellent hopes had we once in England, of the flourishing of piety and happy union among the churches and servants of Christ! And who hath not only frustrated these hopes, but almost broke them all to pieces? Have any had more to do in it, than weak, unstable professors of religiousness? What sad confusion are most parts of England in at this day, by reason of the breaking of churches into sects and shreds, and the contentions and reproaches of christians against christians, and the odious abuse of holy truth and ordinances! And who is it that doth this, so much as unstable professors of piety? What greater reproach almost could have befallen us, than for the adversary to stand by, and see men pulling at each others' throats; and hating, and persecuting, and reproaching one another; and that our own hands should pull down the house of God, and tear in pieces the miserable churches, while men are striving who shall be the master of the reformation? Oh what a sport is this to the devil, when he can set his professed enemies by the ears, and make them fall upon one another! when, if he have any notable work to do against the church and cause of Christ, he can call out unstable christians to do it! If he would have godliness be scandalized, who hath he to do it but professors of godliness? some of them to give the scandal, and others to aggravate and divulge it. Would he have a church divided? How quickly doth he find a bone of contention! And who should do it but the unstable members of it? Would he have the truth opposed, and error and darkness to be promoted? Who must do it but professors of the truth? Persuade some of them that truth is error, and error is truth, and the work will be done. They will furiously march out against their Master, and think they do him service while they are fighting against him, and scolding, and shaming, if not killing his servants. Would he have public divisions maintained among all the churches of the world? It is but possessing the weaker, unstable pastors and people, with a perverse zeal for mere words and notions, as if the life of the church did therein consist; and they will be the devil's instruments at a beck, and carry it perhaps by the major vote; and all that will not word it as they, shall be called heretics, and the church shall have new articles added to their faith, under pretence of preserving and expounding the old ones. And thus when Satan hath a work to do, if heathens and infidels cannot do it, it is no more but call out christians to do it. If drunkards and malignant enemies cannot do it, it is but calling out some unstable professors of godliness to do it, and possessing the more injudicious part of the pastors with some carnal ends, or blind, consuming zeal.

O christians! in the name of God, as you would avoid these devilish employments, labour for confirming, strengthening grace, and rest not in your childish weakness and instability. If you are delivered from Satan, and have truly renounced him, and tasted

the great salvation of Christ, methinks you should even tremble to consider what a thing it would be, if after all this, you should prove, through your weakness, so serviceable to the devil, and so injurious to your dearest Lord? What! must those abuse him whom he hath redeemed from damnation? Must those hands be employed to demolish his kingdom, that were washed by him, and should have built it up? As if you were like Judas, that even now hath his hand with his Master in the dish, and presently lifts it up against him!

11. Moreover, while you are weaklings and unconfirmed, you will exceedingly encourage the ungodly in their false hopes, by being so like them as you are. When they see that you excel them so little, and in many things are as bad or worse than they, it strongly persuadeth them that their state is as good as yours, and that they may be saved as well as others, seeing the difference seemeth to be so small. They know that heaven and hell are much unlike, and vastly distant; and, therefore, they will hardly believe that they must be thrust into hell when men that seem so little to differ from them must go to heaven. You would not believe how it hardeneth them in their sin, when they see professors do as bad! and how it settleth them in presumption and impenitence, to perceive your faults! When a minister hath laboured to make the sins of the ungodly odious to him, and to break his heart with the terrors of the Lord, O how it quieteth him, and healeth all again, to see the like sins, or others as bad, in the professors of religion! If these, saith he, may be saved, for all such and such sins, what cause have I to fear? O wretched, unprofitable, scandalous professors! when we have studied and preached for men's conversion many a year, you go and undo all that we have done, by the scandal, or levity, or imprudence of an hour! When we have almost persuaded men to be christians, you unpersuade them, and turn them back again, and do more harm by the weakness and scandal of your lives, than many of us can do good by life and doctrine! When we have brought sinners even to the door of life, you prove their enemies, and take them out of our hands again, and bring them back to their old captivity! Doth it not pierce your very hearts to think on it, that ever one soul, much more so many, should be shut out of glory, and burn in everlasting misery, and you should have a hand in it? Consider of this, and methinks you should desire confirming grace.

12. And methinks it should be very grievous to you, to be so like to the ungodly yourselves, and that Satan should still have so much interest in you. Holiness is God's image; and doth it not grieve you that you are so little like him? By his grace he keeps possession of you; and doth it not grieve you that God hath no more possession of you, but that Satan and sin should so defraud him of his own? Will he condescend to dwell in so low a worm, so oft defiled with the dung of his iniquities; and doth it not wound you to think, that even there he should be so straitened, and thrust into corners, by a hellish enemy, as if that simple habitation were too much for him, and that dirty dwelling were too good for him? and as if you grudged him so much of the leavings of Satan, that had taken up the beginning of your days in sin?

Your corruption is the very image of the devil; and doth it not affright you to think that you should be so like him? You are charged not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed or metamorphosed "by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, that acceptable, and

perfect will of God," Rom. xii. 2; and yet will you stop in a state so like to those that perish? He that hath the least measure of saving grace, is likeliest to the children of the devil of any man in the world, that is not one of them. Seek, therefore, to increase.

13. And I beseech you consider, that your excellency, and the glory and lustre of your graces, is one of God's appointed means for the honour of his Son, and gospel, and church, and for the conviction and conversion of the unbelieving world. And, therefore, if you use not these means, you rob God and the church of that which is their due, and deprive sinners of one of the means of their salvation. You are commanded to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," Matt. v. 16. Christians, be awakened in the name of God, to consider what you have to do with your graces! You have the living God to please and honour by them! As the excellency of the work doth honour the workman, so must your graces and lives honour God. You have the souls of the weak to confirm by your lives, and the souls of the ungodly to win by your lives. You should all be preachers, and even preach as you go up and down in the world, as a candle lighteth which way ever it goeth. As we are sent to save sinners, as ambassadors of Christ, by public proclamation of his will; so are you sent to save them as his servants and our helpers, and must preach by your lives and familiar exhortations, as we must do by authoritative instruction. A good life is a good sermon; yea, those may be won by your sermons, that will not come to ours, or will not obey the doctrine which they hear. Even to women, that must keep silence in the church, doth Peter command this way of preaching; "That if any of them have husbands that obey not the word, they may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives," 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2. Thousands can understand the meaning of a good life, that cannot understand the meaning of a good sermon! By this way you may preach to men of all languages, though your tongues had never learnt but one. For a holy, harmless, humble life, doth speak in all the languages of the world, to men that have eyes to read it. This is the universal character and language, in which all sorts may perceive you speak the wondrous works of the Holy Ghost. I charge you, therefore, christians, deprive not God of the honour you owe him, nor the church, or souls of wicked men, of this excellent, powerful help which you owe them, by continuing in your weakness, and unsettled minds, and spotted lives; but grow up to that measure that may be fit for such a work. As you durst not silence the preachers of the gospel, so do not dare to silence yourselves from preaching by your holy, exemplary lives. And alas, do you think that feeble, giddy, scandalous professors, are like to do any great matters by their lives? Would you wish the poor world to write after such a crooked and blotted copy? Will it win men's hearts to a love of holiness, to talk with a christian that can scarce speak a word of sense for his religion? or to see a professor as greedy for a little gain as the veriest worldling that hath no other hope? or to hear them rail, or lie, or slander? or to see them turn up and down like a weathercock, according as the wind of temptation sits? and to follow every new opinion that is but put off with a plausible fervency? Do you think that men are like to be won by such lives as these?

14. Do you consider what great things you must make account to suffer for Christ? You must "forsake all that you have," Luke xiv. 33. You must

not save your lives if he bid you lose them, Matt. xvi. 25. You "must suffer with him, if you will be glorified with him," Rom. viii. 17. You may be called to "confess Christ before the kings or judges" of the earth; and then, "if you deny him, he will deny you," and if you be "ashamed of him he will be ashamed of you," (unless you be brought to a better state,) Luke ix. 26; Mark viii. 38. You may be called to "the fiery trial," and "to suffer also the spoiling of your goods;" and in a word, the loss of all. And do you think that you shall not find use for the strongest graces then? Have you not need to be confirmed, rooted christians, that must expect such storms? Are infants meet for such encounters? Have you not seen how many that seemed strong, have been overthrown in a time of trial? and yet will you stop in a weak estate? Perhaps you will say, We cannot stand by our own strength, and, therefore, Christ may uphold the weakest, when the strongest may fall. To which I answer, It is true; but it is God's common way to work by means, and to imitate nature in his works of grace; and, therefore, he useth to root and strengthen those that he will have to stand and conquer; yea, and to arm them as well as strengthen them, and then to teach them to use their arms. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand," Eph. vi. 10—13. You must look "when you are illuminated, to endure a great fight of afflictions; to be made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions, and to be companions of them that are so used; and, therefore, you have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, you may receive the promise," Heb. x. 32, 33, 36. If you will endure in the time of persecution, the word must take deep root in your hearts, Matt. xiii. 5, 20, 21; and you must be founded on a rock, if you look to stand in time of storms, Matt. vii. 24, 25.

In the mean time, it is a fearful thing to see in what a wavering condition you seem to stand, like a tree that shakes, as if it were even falling, or like a cowardly army, that are ready to run before they fight; and like cowardly soldiers, you are still looking behind you, and a small matter troubleth, and perplexeth, and staggereth you, as if you were ready to repent of your repentings. And must God have such servants as these, that upon every rumour, or word, or trouble, are wavering and looking back, and ready to forsake him?

15. Consider also that the same reasons that moved you at first to be christians, should now move you to be confirmed, thriving christians. For they are of force as well for this as for that. You would not have missed your part in Christ for all the world, if indeed you have the least degree of grace. And if the beginning be good and necessary, the increase is neither bad or needless. If a little grace be desirable, sure more is more desirable. If it was then but a reasonable thing that you should forsake all for Christ and follow him, it is sure as reasonable that you should follow him to the end, till you reach that blessedness which was the end for which at first you followed him. What! christian, hast thou found God a hard master, a barren wilderness to thee? or his service an unprofitable thing? Say so, and I dare say thou art a bastard, (to use the apostle's

phrase, Heb. xii. 8,) and not a christian. Some trial thou hast made of him. What evil hast thou found in him? or what wrong hath he ever done thee, that thou shouldst now begin to make a stand, as if thou wert in doubt, whether it be best to go further? If ever Christ were needful, he is needful still. And if ever heaven and holiness were good, they are good still. And, therefore, go on till thou hast obtained more, and forget not the reasons that first persuaded with thee.

16. Nay, more than so, you have the addition of much experience, which should be an exceeding help to quicken your affections. When you first repented and came in to Christ, you had never had any experience in yourselves of his saving, special grace before; but you came in upon the bare hearing and believing of it. But now you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and you have received at his hands the pardon of sin, the Spirit of adoption, the hope of glory, which before you had not! You have had many a prayer answered, and many a deliverance granted; and will you make a stand when all these experiences do call you forward? Should not new motives and helps thus added to the old, be the means of adding to your zeal and holiness? Surely more wages and encouragement doth bespeak more work and diligence. And, therefore, see that you increase.

17. And most or many of you have cause to consider how long you have been already in the family and school of Christ. If you are but newly entered, I may well exhort you to increase, but I cannot reprove you for not increasing. But, alas! what a multitude of dwarfs hath Christ, that are like infants at twenty, or forty, or threescore years of age. What! be so many years in his school, and yet be in the lowest form? "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, that by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," Heb. v. 12—14. O poor, weak, diseased christian! hast thou been so many years beholding the face of God by faith, and yet art thou no more in love with him than at the first? Hast thou been so long making trial of his goodness, and dost thou see it and savour it no more than in the beginning? Hast thou been so long under his cure, and art thou no more healed than the first year or day? Hast thou been hearing and talking of heaven so long, and yet art thou no more heavenly nor ready for heaven? Hast thou heard and talked so much against the world and the flesh, and yet is the world as high in thee as at first, and the flesh as strong as in the beginning of thy profession? Oh what a sin and shame is this! and what a wrong to God and thee!

Yea, consider here, also, what means thou hast had, as well as what time! O who hath gone beyond thee for power, and plenty, and purity of ordinances! or at least how few! Surely few parts of all the earth are like to England, for the showers of heaven, and the riches of the precious ordinances of God. You have sermons till you can scarce desire more! And that so plain, that men can scarce tell how to speak plainer; and so earnest, as if the servants of Christ would take no nay; even almost as if they must perish if you perished. You have as frequent, as plain, and powerful books. You have the warnings and examples of the godly about you. And what yet would you have more? And should

a people thus fed be dwarfs continually? Is ignorance, and dulness, and earthliness, and selfishness excusable after all these means? Surely, sirs, it is but just that God should expect you all to be giants! even heavenly, grown, confirmed christians. Whatever others do, it should be so with you.

18. And methinks it should somewhat move you to consider how others have thriven in less time, and by smaller means by far than you have had; and how some of your neighbours can yet thrive by the same means that you so little thrive by. Job, that was so magnified by God himself, had not such means as you. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, had none of them all such means as you! "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them," Matt. xiii. 17. Though John the Baptist was greater than any of the prophets, yet the least of you that are in the gospel kingdom, are greater than he in respect of means. As the times of the gospel have far clearer light, and give out greater measures of grace, so the true genuine children of the gospel should (taking them one with another) be far more confirmed, strong, and heavenly, than those that were under the darker and scantier administrations of the promise.

And do you not see and hear how far you are outstripped by many of your poor neighbours, that are as low in natural parts, and as low in the world and the esteem of men as you? How many (in this place I dare boldly speak it) do shine before you in knowledge, and meekness, and patience, and a blameless, upright life; in fervent prayers, and a heavenly conversation! Men that have had as much need to look after the world as you, and no longer time to get these qualifications; and no other means but what you have had, or might have had, as well as they. And now they shine as stars in the church on earth, while you are like sparks, if not like clods. I know that God is the free disposer of his graces; but yet he so seldom faileth any (even in degrees) that be not wanting to themselves, that I may well ask you, why you might not have reached to some more eminency, as well as these about you, if you had but been as careful and industrious as they.

19. Consider, also, that your holiness is your personal perfection, and that of the same kind you must have in glory, though not of the same degree. And, therefore, if you be not desirous of its increase, it seems you are out of love with your souls, and with heaven itself. And when you cease to grow in holiness, you cease to go on any further to salvation. If you would, indeed, yourselves, be perfect and blessed, you must be perfected in this holiness, which must make you capable of the perfect fruition of the most holy God, and capable of his perfect love and praise. There is no heaven without a perfection in holiness. If, therefore, you let fall your desires of this, it seems you let fall your desires of salvation. Up then, and be doing, and grow as men that are growing up to glory; and if you believe that you are in your progress to heaven, being nearer your salvation than when you first believed, see then that you make a progress in heavenly-mindedness, and that you be riper for salvation than when you first believed. How ill doth it become men to make any stand in the way to heaven, especially when they have been in the way so long, that we might have expected before this they should have been, as it were, almost within sight of it!

20. Consider, also, that little grace, little glory; and the greater measure of holiness, the greater measure will you have of happiness. I know that

the glory of the lowest saint in heaven will be exceeding great; but doubtless the greatest measure is unspeakably most desirable. And as it will not stand with the truth of grace for a man to be satisfied with a low degree of grace, though he plead the happiness of the lowest christian, and his own unworthiness of the least degree; so, at least, it ill becometh an heir of glory to desire but the lowest degree of glory, though he plead the happiness of the lowest saint in heaven, and his own unworthiness of the lowest place. For he that will be so content with the smallest glory, as not to have hearty desires of more, is accordingly content to have in himself the smallest measure of the knowledge and love of God, and to be loved in the smallest measure by him; and to have the least enjoyment of him; and to bear the smallest part in his praises, and in pleasing and glorifying him for ever. For all these things are our happiness itself. And how well this agreeth with a gracious frame of mind, I need not any further tell you.

But because some make question of it, whether the degree of glory will be answerable to the degree of holiness, I shall prove it in a few words.

(1.) It is the very drift of the parable of the talents in Matt. xxv. He that had gotten most by improvement, was made ruler proportionably over most cities. Not he that had been at the greatest bodily labour in religion, nor every one that had passed the greatest sufferings; but he that had got most holiness to himself and honour to God by the improvement of his talents, and so had doubled them.

(2.) The degrees of holiness hereafter will be divers, as are the degrees of holiness here; for as men sow, they will reap; and there is no promise in Scripture, that men that die with the smallest holiness shall be made equal to them that died with the greatest holiness. And that the greatest holiness hereafter, must have the greatest happiness, is past denial. For, [1.] Holiness in heaven is an essential part of the felicity itself. It is the perfection of the soul. [2.] The use of it is for perfect fruition, and perfect exercise of love and praise; which are the other parts of glory. And God will not give men powers, capacities, and dispositions in heaven which shall be in vain: as he giveth hungering, and thirsting, and love, so will he give proportionable satisfaction, and not tantalize his servants in their blessedness, and leave a part of hell in heaven. [3.] And holiness is pleasing to God in its own nature; and, therefore, the greatest holiness will greatest please him; and he that most pleaseth God, hath the greatest glory. These things are plain.

(3.) Moreover, we have great reason to conceive of the state of the glorified, in some congruency with the rest of the workmanship of God. But in all the rest there is a difference or imparity; therefore we have reason to think it is so here. On earth there are princes and subjects in the commonwealth; and pastors and people in the churches, and several degrees among the people as to gifts and comforts. Among the devils there are degrees; and among the angels themselves there are principalities and powers, and thrones and dominions. And why then should we imagine that the heavenly Jerusalem shall not be so too?

(4.) And Christ plainly intimateth that there is a place "on his right hand, and on his left, to give," in that kingdom, though, as the Son of man, he had not the principal disposal of it. (And then the kingdom must be delivered to the Father, and God be all in all; and, therefore, the Mediator as such have somewhat less to do, than now.) And when Christ telleth us of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and of many

from the east and west sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he intimateth to us, that every place in heaven is not so high as Abraham's bosom, nor a sitting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So that I take it as a plain revealed truth, that divers degrees of holiness will have divers degrees of glory hereafter.

The chief argument to the contrary is fetched from the parable of the labourers, that coming in at several hours, received every one a penny. But this is misunderstood. For here is not a word in it contrary to our assertion. The parable only saith, that Glory shall not be proportioned to the time, but they that come later shall have never the less for that; which is nothing to our question about the degrees of holiness. For many that are first in time may be least and last in holiness; and many that are last in time, may in that little time come to be best and greatest in holiness, and consequently in glory. The parable in Matt. xxv. shows that God will give different degrees of glory, according to the difference in improvement of our talents. And the other parable shows that he will not give out his glory according to men's time and standing in the church, seeing a weaker christian may be of longer standing, and a stronger of a later coming in. And what show of discord is there between these? 2. And yet it is doubtful in the judgment of good expositors, whether the parable of the penny do speak of heaven at all or not; or whether it speak not only of the vocation of the gentiles, and taking them into the gospel church in equality with the believing Jews: though the Jews being God's ancient people, had been longer in the vineyard, and the gentiles were called but as at the eleventh hour, yet God will make the gentiles equal in the grace of vocation, because in this he hath not engaged himself, but may do with his own as he list. Whichever of these two is the thing intended in the text, or possibly both, it is certain that this general is the sum of the parable, That the first may be last, and the last first; that is, that God will not give men the greatest reward that were first called. But he never said that he would not reward them most, that had done him the truest service, and were highest in holiness.

Object. But the reason is, May I not do as I will with my own? True, but you must remember what it is a reason of; even of the cause in question, and may not by you be extended to other causes without a warrant. You never read that he equally pardoneth the believer and the unbeliever, or saveth the regenerate and the unregenerate, and then gives this reason of it, May I not do as I will with my own? For this can be no reason for any thing which he hath revealed that he will do. Prove first that he will not do it, and then bring your reasons why; but not before. So that it extendeth not to the case of different glory upon different degrees of holiness; for this he hath revealed that he will do.

So much (and perhaps too much) to satisfy the doubtful. Now I desire to return to the dull and languishing christian, and beseech him to remember what a difference there will be between one saint and another in glory! And O who would not aspire after the highest measure of holiness, in hope of a high degree of glory? Christian, hadst thou not infinitely rather love God with the greatest love than with a less, and be beloved again with the greatest of his love? I mean, by partaking of the greatest effects of it, and the fullest sense of his everlasting favour. Remember this, and sure it will persuade thee to gird up thy loins, and run as for the incorruptible crown, and press on to the mark for the prize of the high calling, and not to sit down with

weak beginnings; especially when the way is so sweet as well as the end; and the greatest holiness hath here also the greatest spiritual reward, and is attended with the greatest peace and joy (in the ordinary course of God's dispensations). And when all the knocks, and falls, and cries of christians in this life, proceed from the childish weakness of their spirits; and almost all the woes and calamities that attend us, our shames, our pains, our contentions and divisions, and the lamentable difficulty (that seems an impossibility) of healing them, or preventing more, all is from the corruptions that are the companions of our weakness. And could we but grow up to a manhood of understanding, humility, meekness, self-denial, and the love of God in Christ, and of one another, we might then have some hope of the cure of all. Alas! that men that are so sensible of the difference between a weak body and a strong, a sick and a sound, a child and a man, an idiot and a man of wisdom, though all of them have human nature, should yet be so little sensible of the great difference between a weak christian and a strong, a sick and a sound, (comparatively sound), a childish and a manly, wise, confirmed christian! Did you well know the difference, you would show us that you make a greater matter of it.

And now, christian reader, I entreat thee soberly to consider of these twenty motives, whether they do not show thee reason enough to move thee to look after higher things, and not to stay in an infancy of holiness. It is a blessed mercy, I confess, that God hath given thee a true conversion, and the smallest measure of the heavenly life. I do not move thee to undervalue it. Nay, I am blaming thee for undervaluing it. For if thou didst not undervalue it, thou wouldst earnestly desire more. Thou hast cause to bless God to all eternity, and to all eternity thou shalt bless him, for making thee a new creature, even a living member of his Son. And I know that thy condition is unspeakably better than the greatest prince's or emperor's upon earth, that is void of holiness. I know that thou hast still ground of exceeding consolation. I am not taking thy comforts from thee. I know God despiseth not the day of small things; and that Christ will not "quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed," nor cast off the poorest infants of his family, or lose any one of the lambs of his flock. But yet for all this I must tell thee, that there is a great deal of difference in excellency, and strength, and comfort, and happiness, between one sanctified person and another. And if thou be so apt to be over-covetous of worldly riches, where God forbideth it, and limiteth thy desires, and where there is no such necessity or excellency to entice thee, why shouldst thou not cherish that holy covetousness which God expressly commandeth thee? 1 Cor. xii. 31. "Covet earnestly the best gifts;" and which he hath promised a blessing to; "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," Matt. v. 6. This is not spoken of them that have no righteousness, but of them that have it, and fain would have more. For, 1. There is no such promise made to any that are short of saving faith. It is not any common grace that God makes this promise to, but a special grace. And, 2. It is evident that no man can thus hunger and thirst after righteousness without righteousness; for even this hungering and thirsting is a degree of true sanctification. You would not take up with a cottage or smoky cabin, if you could have a palace; nor with dry bread, if you could lawfully have plenty; nor with a torn or threadbare coat, if you could have better; nor with

a poor, laborious, toilsome life, in disgrace, and the reproach of men, if you could have honour, and ease, and abundance. And yet will you take up with so poor a stock of holiness, and so dark a mind, and small a measure of heavenly light, and so cold a love to God and glory, and so barren and common a kind of life? God hath commanded you, "That having food and raiment, you should therewith be content;" but he never commanded you that being once converted and made an infant in grace, you should therewith be content. So content you must be as not to murmur; but not so content as not to desire more.

You can see the difference, I doubt not, in others, between a little grace and more. Oh that you would but see this for yourselves! If you have a froward wife, or husband, or child, that hath a harsh and passionate nature, and hath so much grace only as to lament this when they are calmed, and to strive against it, but not to forbear the often exercise of it; though such a nature may be pardoned to the penitent, yet it may prove such a thorn in your own side, and such a smoke or continual dropping in your house, as will make you weary of it. I have oft known men that had wives of so much folly and passion, and unruliness of tongue, that yet they hoped had some saving grace, that made them even weary of their lives, and wish that they had met with a gentle nature. And methinks you should know that corruption in yourselves is much more dangerous and hurtful to you than any that can be in wife or husband; and should be much more offensive, and wearisome, and grievous to you. It is a desperate sign of a bad heart, that can bear with corruption in themselves, and cannot bear with it in wife or husband, or those that do them wrong by their corruptions. If weakness of grace do leave your nearest friends thus liable to wrong and abuse you, and this trouble you; consider that your own weakness leaves you liable to far greater and often offences against God, and this should trouble you much more.

Let me give you another instance: if you have a pastor that is truly godly, and yet is so weak that he can scarce speak with any understanding or life the message that he should deliver, and withal is undiscerning, and as scandalous as will stand with grace; what good is this man like to do for all his godliness? At least you will soon see a lamentable difference between such a one and a judicious, convincing, holy, heavenly, powerful, and unspotted man. Oh what a blessing is one to the place! and the other may be a grievous judgment, and you would be ready to run away from his ministry. Why, sirs, if there be so great a difference between pastor and pastor, where both have grace, methinks you should see what a difference there is also between people and people, even where all have grace. For truly poor ministers find this to their sorrow in their people, as well as you can find it in them. Some ministers have a staid, confirmed, judicious, humble, meek, self-denying, teachable, peaceable, and experienced people; and these walk comfortably, and guide them peaceably, and labour with them cheerfully; and oh what beauty and glory is upon such assemblies, and what order, and growth, and comfort is among them! But, alas! how many ministers have a flock (even of those that we hope are godly) that grieve them by their levity, or weary them by their unteachable ignorance or self-conceitedness, or hinder their labours by errors and quarrels, and perverse opposition to the truths which they do not understand! So that there is a great difference between people and people that are godly.

Brethren, it is far from the desire of my heart, to cast any unjust dishonour upon saints, much less to dishonour the graces of God in them. No, I take it rather for an honour to that immortal spark, that it can live among its enemies and not be conquered, and in the waters of corruption, and not be quenched. But yet I must take up a just complaint, that few of us answer the cost of our redemption and the provisions of God; or are near such a people as our receivings or professions require we should be. It is one of the most grievous thoughts that ever came to my heart, to observe how the lives of the greatest part of professors do tend to dishonour the power and worth of grace in the eyes of the world, and that the ungodly should see that grace doth make no greater a difference, and do no more upon us than it doth. Yea, it is a sore temptation oftentimes to believers, to see that grace doth no more in the most; but that so many are still a shame to their profession.

I must confess that I once thought more highly of professors as to the measure of their grace, than experience now will suffer me to think. Little did I think that they had been so unstable, so light, so ignorant, so giddy, as to follow almost any that do but whistle them. What a dreadful sight it is to see, how quickly the most odious heresies do infect and destroy even multitudes of them, and that in a moment, as soon as they appear! The grossest mists of the bottomless pit are presently admired as the light of God.

If a church divider do but arise, how quickly doth he get disciples!

If a papist have but opportunity, he will lightly catch some as oft as he doth cast his net. If he cannot prevail barefaced, it is but putting on the visor of some other sect.

Even the odious heresies of the quakers themselves, and their railings, which an honest pagan would abhor, do presently find entertainment with professors; and let the matter or manner be never so senseless, yet is it accepted if it be but zealously put off. Oh who would have thought that our people that seemed godly should be so greedy of the devil's baits as to catch at any thing, yea, and to devour the bare hooks? Oh who would have thought that so many that seemed lovers of God, would so readily believe every deceiver that speaks against him, if he can but do it with a pious pretence?

Yea, if seekers themselves do but cast in their objections, how many of our people are presently at a loss, and their faith is muddled, and they are to seek for a ministry, and to seek for a church, and to seek for ordinances, and to seek for a Scripture, even for the gospel itself; and therefore it is like they are to seek for a Christ, or to seek for a religion, if not to seek for God, and for a heaven.

O sad day! that ever these things should come to pass, and that we are forced to utter them, having no possibility of concealing them from the world. Were these men confirmed and established in the faith? Were these men rooted and built up in Christ? Alas, sirs, if any deceivers come among us, how few of our people are able to withstand them, and defend the truth of God against them! But they are caught up by the devil's falconer, as the poor chickens by the kite, except those that fly under the wings of a judicious, settled minister.

If an anabaptist assault their baptism, how few of them can defend it! And, silly souls, when they find themselves nonplussed, they suspect not their own unfurnished understandings, or unexperienced, unsettled hearts, but suspect the truth of God, and suspect their teachers, be they never so far beyond them in knowledge and holiness; as if their teachers had

mised them, whenever these unprofitable infants are thus stalled.

If a papist be to plead his cause with them, how few have we that can answer him!

If an infidel should oppose the Scripture, or Christ himself, how few among us are able to defend them, and solidly give proof either of the truth of Scripture, or of the faith that they do profess!

And this is not all, (though it is a heart-breaking case,) but even in their practice, alas! what remissness and what corruptions do appear! How few in secret do keep any constant watch upon their hearts, and fear and abhor the approach of an evil thought! Nay, how few are they that do not leave their fancy almost common, and ordinarily even feed on covetous, proud, malicious, or lustful thoughts, and make no great matter of it, but live in it from day to day! How few do keep up life and constancy in secret prayer or meditation! How few are the families where the cause, and worship, and government of Christ are kept up in life and honour, and where all is not dissolved into a little weary, disordered, heartless performance!

Look into our congregations, and judge but by their very looks, and carriage, and gestures, how many even of those that we think the best, do so much as seem to be earnest and serious in prayer and praise, when the church is upon that work! Though it be the highest and noblest part of worship, and should be done with all the heart and might, and with a participation of a kind of angelical reverence, devotion, and spirituality; and if it were so, we should see it by some of the signs of reverence and affection; yet, alas! when we think the best of them should be striving with God, or rapt up in his praises, they do but hear us pray as they hear us preach, and think they have done fair to give us the hearing. They sit on their seats in prayer, or use some crooked, leaning gesture, perhaps looking up and down about them, perhaps half asleep; but few of them with eyes, and hands, and hearts lifted up to heaven, do behave themselves as if they believed that they had so nearly to do with God. I know reverent gestures may easily be counterfeited; but that shows that they are good, when hypocrites think them a fit cover for hypocrisy, for they use not to borrow credit from evil, but from some good to be a cover to the evil: and it leaveth the neglects of the godly more unexcusable, when they will not go so far herein as hypocrites themselves, nor by their behaviour in a public ordinance, so much as seem to be seriously employed with God.

And if we try the graces or obedience of professors, alas, how small shall we find them in the most! How little are most acquainted with the life of faith! How little do they admire the Redeemer and his blessed work! How unacquainted are they with the daily use and high improvement of a Saviour, for access to God, and support and corroboration of the soul, and for conveyance of daily supplies of grace, and help against our spiritual enemies! How few are they that can rejoice in tribulation, persecution, and bodily distresses, because of the hopes laid up in heaven; and that can live upon a promise, and comfortably wait on God for the accomplishment! How few that live as men that are content with God alone, and can cheerfully leave their flesh, and credit, and worldly estate to his disposal, and be content to wait or suffer when he sees it good for them! What repinings and troubles possess our minds if the flesh be not provided for, and if God do but cross us in these worldly things; as if we had made our bargain with him for the flesh, and for this world, and had not taken him alone for

our portion! How few can use prosperity in riches, and health, and reputation, with a mortified, weaned, heavenly mind! Nay, how few are there that do not live much to the pleasure of the flesh, and pamper it as indulgently under the appearance of temperance and religion, as others do in grosser ways! Do but try the godly themselves by plain and faithful reproof of their corruptions, and see how many of them you will find, that will not excuse them and take part with the enemy, and be offended with you for your close reproof. If any of them be overtaken with a scandalous fault, and the pastors of the church shall call them to open confession, and expression of repentance, though you would little think a penitent man should once stick at this, and refuse to do any thing that he can do, to repair the honour of God and his profession, and to save the souls of others whom he hath endangered, yet how many will you find, that will add a wilful obstinacy to their scandal, and will deliberately refuse so great, and clear, and necessary a duty: so great is the interest of self and flesh in them, and consequently so little the interest of Christ, that they will live in impenitency in the eye of the church, and venture on the high displeasure of God, come on it what will, and resist the advice of their best, and wisest, and most impartial friends, rather than they will so far deny themselves as to make such a free and faithful confession. They are many of them so much for holy discipline, that they are ready to fall out with church and ministers, and to be gone to a purer society, because it is not exercised; but on whom? On others only, and not upon them. When they need discipline themselves, how impatient are they of it, and how do they abhor it, and what a stir do they make before they will submit! even more sometimes than a drunkard or a swearer; so small is their repentance and detestation of their sin: whereby they show that their zeal for discipline and reformation is much out of pride, that others may be brought to stoop, or be cast out from them; and not out of a sincere desire to have the refining and humbling benefit of it themselves.

And if any among them be either faulty or reported so to be, who is forwarder than many professors of godliness, to backbite them, and speak of their faults when they cannot hear, nor answer for themselves, nor receive any benefit by it; and if another that hates backbiting do but reprove them, they will slander him also for a defender of men's sin! But when they should go in Christ's way, and tell men of their faults, and draw them to repentance, and if they hear not, take two or three, and speak to them again, how hardly can you draw them to the performance of this duty, what shifts and frivolous excuses have they then! Nay, they will reproach the church or minister for not casting such out, or not keeping them from communion, before they have done, or will be persuaded to do, these duties that must go before.

Alas, how little hearty love is there to Christ in his members, even in them that are confident they love the brethren! How few will do or suffer much for them, or relieve them in their want, as suffering with them! How small a matter, a word, a seeming wrong or disrespect, will turn their love into estrangement or bitterness! If they be tried by an ill word, or a wrong, how touchy, and forward, and impatient do they appear; and it is well if they prove not downright malicious, or return not reviling for reviling!

Alas, how much pride prevaleth with many that seem to go far in the way of piety! How wise are they in their own conceits! How able to judge of controversies, and how much wiser than their teach-

ers, before they can give a good account of the catechism or fundamental truths! How well do they think of themselves and their own parts and performances! how ill do they bear disesteem or undervaluing! and they must needs be noted for somebody in the world.

How worldly, and closehanded, and eager of gain, are many that say they despise the world, and take it for their enemy! if any duty be cross to their profit or credit with men, how obstinate are they against it! and such interest hath the flesh in them, that they will hardly believe that it is their duty.

How censorious are they of others, especially that differ from them in lesser things; and how unapt to judge themselves! Oh how few are the christians that are eminent in humility, meekness, and self-denial; that are content to be accounted nothing, so that Christ may be all, and his honour may be secured; that live as men devoted to God, and honour him with their substance, and freely expend, yea, study for advantages, to improve all their riches and interest to his service! How few are they that live as in heaven upon earth, with the world under their feet, and their hearts above with God their happiness; that feel themselves to live in the workings and warmth of love to God, and make him their delight, and are content with his approbation whoever disapproveth them; that are still groaning, or reaching and seeking after him, and long to be with him, to be rid of sin, and see his blessed face, and live in his perfect love and praises; that love and long for the appearance of Jesus Christ, and can heartily say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" How few are they that stand in a day of trial! if they are tried but with a foul word; if tried but with any thing that toucheth their commodity; if tried but with the emptiest reasonings of deceivers; much more if they be tried with the honours and greatness of the world, how few of them stand in trial, and do not fall and forget themselves, as if they were not the men that they seemed to be before! What then would they prove if they were tried by the flames?

Mistake me not in all this sad complaint: as I intend not the dishonour of godliness by this, but of ungodliness (for it is not because men are godly that they have these faults, but because they are not godly more); so here is no encouragement to the unsanctified to think themselves as good as the more religious, because they are charged with so many faults. Nor do I affirm all these things to be consistent with true grace that I have here expressed; but only this, that professors that seem godly to others, are thus too many of them guilty; and those that have true grace may have any of these faults in a mortified degree, though not in a reigning, predominant measure.

But methinks, sirs, you should by this time be convinced and sensible, how much we dishonour God by our infirmities; and what a lamentable case it is that the church should consist of so many infants; and so many should be so little serviceable to God or the common good, but rather be troublers of all about them. Alas, that we should reach no higher, that yet no greater things should be attained! Oh what an honour would you be to your profession, and what a blessing to the church, if you did but answer the cost and pains of God and man, and answer the high things that you have been acquainted with and profess! Oh that we could but boast of you as God did of Job, and could say to Satan or any of his instruments, Here be christians rooted and established in the faith; try whether you can shake them or make them stagger, and do your worst. Here is a man eminent in meekness, and humility,

and patience, and self-denial; discompose and disturb his mind if you can; draw him to pride, or immoderate passion, or censoriousness, or uncharitableness if you can. Here are a people that are in unity, and knit together in faith and love; of one heart, and one soul, and one lip; do your worst to divide them, or break them into parties, or draw them into several minds and ways, or exasperate them against each other. Here are a people established in mortification, and that have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; do your worst to draw them to intemperance in eating, or drinking, or recreations, or any of the delights of the flesh; or to puff them up by greatness and prosperity, and make them forget themselves or God. Try them with riches, or beauty, or vain-glory, or other sensual delights; and see whether they will turn aside, and be ever the less in communion with God, and enticed to forget the joy that is set before them, or will not rather despise your baits, and run away from alluring objects at their greatest dangers. Daunt them if you can by threatenings; try them by persecution, by fire and sword, and see whether they are not past your shaking, even rooted, confirmed, and built up in Christ.

Oh what a glory would you be to your profession, if you could attain to this degree! could we but truly thus boast of you, we might say our people are christians of the right strain. But when we must come about you like men in a swoon, and can hardly perceive whether you are alive or dead, and can scarce discern whether you have any grace or none, what a grief is this to our hearts; what a perplexity to us in our administrations, not knowing whether comfort or terror be your due; and what a languishing, uncomfortable life is this to yourselves, in comparison of what you might attain to!

Rouse up yourselves, christians, and look after higher and greater things; and think it not enough that you are barely alive. It is an exceeding righteousness that you must have if you will be saved, even exceeding all that the unsanctified do attain; for, "Except your righteousness exceed even the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 20. But it is yet a more exceeding righteousness that you must have if you will be confirmed, built up, and abound, and would honour your profession, and cheerfully, successfully, and constantly go on in the journey, the race, the warfare that you have begun: you must then exceed yourselves, and exceed all the feeble, unstable, wavering, infant christians that are about you: and to persuade you yet further to look after this, I shall here annex a few motives more.

1. Consider, christian, that it is a God of exceeding, infinite greatness and goodness that thou hast to do with, and therefore it is not small and low matters that are suitable to his service. O if thou hadst but a glimpse of his glory, thou wouldst say that it is not common things that are meet for such a dreadful Majesty. Hadst thou but a fuller taste of his goodness, thy heart would say, this pittance of love and service is unworthy of him. You will not offer the barest things to a king, much less to the highest King of kings. "If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now to thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts," Mal. i. 8. "But ye have profaned it, (his great name,) in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye have said also, What a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the

Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen," verse 12—14. If you better knew the majesty of God, you would know that the best is too little for him, and trifling is not tolerable in his service. When Nadab and Abihu ventured with false fire to his altar, and he smote them dead, he silenced Aaron with this reason of his judgment, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified," Lev. x. 1—3. That is, I will have nothing common offered to me, but be served with my own holy, peculiar service. When the Bethshemites were smitten dead, fifty thousand threescore and ten men of them, they found that God would not be dallied with, and cried out, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" 1 Sam. vi. 20.

2. Consider, also, it was an exceeding great price that was paid for your redemption; for "you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. It was an exceeding great love that was manifested by God the Father, and by Christ, in this work of redemption; such as even poseth angels and men to study it and comprehend it, 1 Pet. i. 12; Eph. iii. 18, 19. And should all this be answered but with trifling from you? Should such a matchless miracle of love be answered with no greater love? Especially when you were purposely "redeemed from all iniquity, that you might be sanctified to Christ a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. It being therefore so great a price that you are bought with, remember that you are none of your own, but must glorify him that bought you, in body and Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

3. Consider, also, that it is not a small, but an exceeding glory that is promised you in the gospel, and which you live in hope to possess for ever; and therefore it should be an exceeding love that you should have to it, and an exceeding care that you should have of it. Make light of heaven, and make light of all. Truly it is an unsuitable, unreasonable thing, to have one low thought, or one careless word, or one cold prayer, or other performance, about such a matter as eternal glory. Shall such a thing as heaven be coldly or carelessly minded and sought after? Shall the endless fruition of God in glory be looked at with sleepy, heartless wishes? I tell you, sirs, if you will have such high hopes, you must have high and strong endeavours! A slow pace becomes not him that travelleth to such a home as this. If you are resolved for heaven, behave yourselves accordingly. A gracious, reverent, godly frame of Spirit, producing an acceptable service of God, is fit for them that look to receive the kingdom that cannot be moved, Heb. xii. 28. The believing thoughts of the end of all our labours, must needs convince us that we should be "stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58. O hearken, thou sleepy, slothful christian! doth not God call, and conscience call, Awake, and up and be doing, man, for it is for heaven! Hearken, thou negligent, lazy christian! do not God and conscience call out to thee, O man, make haste and mend thy pace, it is for heaven! Hearken, thou cowardly, faint-hearted christian! do not God and conscience call out to thee, Arm, man,

and see thou stand thy ground; do not give back, nor look behind thee, but fall on, and fight in the strength of Christ; for it is for the crown of endless glory. Oh what a heart hath that man, that will not be heartened with such calls as these! Methinks the very name of God and heaven should awaken you, and make you stir, if there be any stirring power within you. Remissness in worldly matters hath an excuse, for they are but trifles; but slackness in the matters of salvation, is made unexcusable by the greatness of those matters. O let the noble greatness of your hopes appear in the resolvedness, exactness, and diligence of your lives.

4. Consider, also, that it is not only low and smaller mercies that you receive from God, but mercies innumerable, and inestimable, and exceeding great. And, therefore, it is not cold affections, and dull endeavours, that you should return to God for all these mercies. Mercy brought you into the world; and mercy hath nourished you and bred you up; and mercy hath defended and maintained you, and plentifully provided for you. Your bodies live upon it: your souls were recovered by it: it gave you your being; it rescued you from misery: it saveth you from sin and Satan, and yourselves. All that you have at the present you hold by it; all that you can hope for the future must be from it. It is most sweet in quality. What is sweeter to miserable souls than mercy? It is exceeding great in quantity. "The mercy of the Lord is in the heavens, and his faithfulness reacheth to the clouds. His righteousness is like the great mountains; his judgments are a great deep," Psal. xxxvi. 5, 6. "Oh how great is his goodness which he hath laid up for them that fear him; which he hath wrought for them that trust in him before the sons of men," Psal. xxxi. 19. "His mercy is great unto the heavens, and his truth unto the clouds," Psal. lvii. 10. And oh what an insensible heart hath he that doth not understand the voice of all this wondrous mercy! Doubtless it speaketh the plainest language in the world; commanding great returns from us of love, and praise, and obedience to the bountiful bestower of them. With David we must say, "Blessed be the Lord, for he hath showed me marvellous kindness in a strong city: O love the Lord, all ye his saints, for the Lord preserveth all the faithful," Psal. xxxi. 21, 23. "Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth. Unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore, for great is thy mercy towards me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell," Psal. lxxxvi. 11—13. Unspeakable mercies must needs be felt in deep impressions, and be so savoury with the gracious soul, that methinks it should work us to the highest resolutions. Unthankfulness is a crime that heathens did detest: and it is exceeding great unthankfulness, if we have not exceeding great love and obedience, under such exceeding great and many mercies as we possess.

5. Consider, that they are exceeding great helps and means that you possess, to further your holiness and obedience to God; and, therefore, your holiness and obedience should also be exceeding great. You have all the book of nature to instruct you. Every creature may teach you God, and calls aloud upon you to persuade your hearts yet nearer to him. Every work of disposing providence is an instructor and persuader of you. Every leaf and line of Scripture is a guide or spur to you. You have ministers able and willing to help you: you have the help of the communion of saints; the help of the examples of the good; and the warnings of the judgments of God upon the wicked. The helps of sermons; the

helps of sacraments; the helps of prayer, and holy meditation, and conference; mercies to encourage you; afflictions to excite you. What more would you have? And yet will you be infants, and do no more with all your helps? But this I touched upon before.

6. It is an exceeding great necessity that it is upon you. And, therefore, your resolutions should be exceeding high, and your diligence exceeding great. For all you are converted, your salvation lieth yet upon your stability and perseverance. "Christ hath reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight; if you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard," Col. i. 22, 23. God will not be an acceptor of persons! You must stick to his terms if you will partake of his salvation. He will not make two words with you. He hath told you what he expecteth of you; and that he will have. Death will not be bribed, nor put by. Judgment is coming on. There is no shifting out of the hands of God. And under such pressing necessities as these, what christians should we be! how stable, and abundant in faith and righteousness!

7. It is a great account that you have to make, and, therefore, a great preparation that should be made. When you shall be brought before the living God, and all your times, and thoughts, and ways, must be called over, and you see what follows, and are waiting for the final doom, then there will be no dull thoughts in your hearts, all will be then lively, and quite above this careless frame. Then even the wicked will have strong desires, Oh that we had taken another course! that we had but prevented this dreadful doom, whatever it had cost us! And should not believers now be awakened to great and careful preparations, for such a day as this?

8. For trifles here are great endeavours used; to climb up into honour or riches in the world; to satisfy the flesh, to lay up a treasure on earth, and labour for the meat that perisheth. Oh what endeavours then should be used, for the heavenly, everlasting treasure!

9. Consider, also, how forward and diligent should those men be, that are sure they can never go too high, nor be too diligent, when they have done their best. Nay, that are certain, that the best do come so abundantly short, that they must after sit down and lament that they were no better. O there is not the holiest saint on earth, but will confess with lamentation, how little his love to God is in comparison of what it should be; how short all falls below our duty; below the glorious majesty of God; below the precious love of Christ; below the worth of precious souls; below the weight of endless glory; below the mercies that should warm our hearts; below the great necessity that is on us; and consequently below their own desires. Look, therefore, after greater things, while you may attain them.

10. Lastly, consider what abundance of great engagements are on you, that are sincere believers, more than upon others.

(1.) You are nearer related to Christ than any others are; and, therefore, you should be more tender of offending him, and more eminent in love and service to him. You are his household servants; and will you not labour for him and stick to him? You are his friends; and should a friend abuse him? should not a friend be faithful? You are his dear, adopted children, and his spouse; and should not you be faithful to him to the death? Should not all the love and service that you have be his? Isa. i. 2, 3; Mal. i. 10; Gal. v. 4.

(2.) You have bound yourselves to him by more serious, frequent vows and covenants than other men have done. How many persons, and places, and necessities of yours, can witness against you, if you be not firm and forward for the Lord. As Joshua said to Israel, "Behold this stone, it shall be a witness unto you, lest you deny your God," Josh. xxiv. 27. So I may say, the places where you have kneeled, and prayed, and promised, will be witnesses against you, if you be not firm to God. The churches that you have assembled in, the places you have walked in in your solitary meditations, the persons that have heard your promises and professions, the world about you that hath seen your forwardness, will all witness against you if you be not firm.

(3.) It is you that have the life and kernel of mercies; others have but the crumbs that fall from your tables. Others have common mercies, but you have the great and special mercies that accompany salvation. "All things are yours," and should not you be Christ's? 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. Of you it is that God is so exceeding tender, that he chargeth your enemies not to touch you, and tells them that touch you, that they "touch the apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 8. And should not you abound in love and holiness? and should you not be as tender of his favour, and his law, and honour, as of the apple of your eye? Should not he that toucheth the name, and law, and honour of God, by profaning them by sin, be as one that toucheth the apple of your eye?

(4.) You have a Spirit and heavenly life within you, which the rest of the world are unacquainted with. And can you think it is not something extraordinary, that God must needs expect from you? Will you not "walk in the Spirit," which is given you, and mortify the flesh by it? Gal. v. 16, 17, 24. Is there not more expected from the living than the dead? Surely he that hath made you new creatures, and made you partakers of the divine nature, doth expect somewhat divine in your affections and devotions, and that you be somewhat more than men.

(5.) Moreover, it is you, above others, for whom the word and messengers of God are sent. We must speak to all; but it is you that God's special eye is upon; it is your salvation that he intends to accomplish by us. There were many widows in the days of Elias, and many lepers in the days of Elisha, Luke iv. 26, 27; but it was but to one of them that the prophet was sent! We make the ungodly multitude even rage against us, and ministers are hated for magnifying the grace of God to you, and declaring his special love to you above others. When Christ himself had spoken the forecited words, it is said in the next verses, 28, 29, that "all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." This was the entertainment of Christ himself, when he did but declare how few it is that God will save, and for whose sakes he specially sends his messengers. And must we incur all this for magnifying you, and will you dishonour yourselves? Is all our study and labour for you, and our lives for you, and all things for you, and will not you be wholly, and to the utmost of your strength for God? Are you culled out of all the world for salvation, and will you not answer this admirable differing grace, by an admirable difference from those that must perish, and by an admirable excellency in meekness, humility, self-denial, and heavenliness, above other men?

(6.) Moreover, you know more, and have a greater experience to assist you, than others have; and, there-

fore, you should excel them accordingly. Others have but heard of the odiousness of sin, but you have seen and felt it. Others have heard of God's displeasure, but you have tasted it to the breaking or bruising of your hearts! You have been warned at the very quick, as if Christ had spoken to your very flesh and bones, "Go thy way, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." And as Ezra said, chap. ix. 13, "After all that is come upon us, should we again break thy commandments; wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hast consumed us?" So, if after all your spiritual experiences, after so many tastes of the bitterness of sin, and groans, and prayers, and cries against it, you shall yet live as like to the wicked as you dare, and be familiar with that which hath cost you so dear; how do you think that God must take this at your hands? You have tasted of the sweetness of the love of Christ, and wondered at the unspeakable riches of his grace! You have tasted the sweetness of the hopes of glory, and of the powers of the world to come! You have perceived the necessity and excellency of holiness, by inward experience! And if, after all this, you will draggle on the earth, and live below your own experiences, contenting yourselves with an infancy of love, and life, and fruitfulness, how much do you then transgress against the rules of reason and of equity!

(7.) Moreover, all the world expecteth much more from you, than from any others. God expecteth more from you, for he hath given you more, and meaneth to do more for you. Must you be in the eternal joys of heaven, when all your unsanctified neighbours are in torments, and yet will you not more endeavour to excel them? Is it not unreasonable to expect to be set eternally at so vast a distance from the ungodly world, even as far as heaven is from hell, and yet to be content to differ here but a little from them in holiness? The Lord knows that poor, forsaken, impenitent sinners will do no better, but rage, and be confident, till they are past remedy; he looks for no better from them than to neglect him, and slight his Son, and word, and ways; and to go on in worldliness and fleshly living; to be filthy still, and careless, and presumptuous, and self-conceited still. But it is higher matters that he expects from you; and good reason, he hath done more for you, and prepared you for better things! The ministers of Christ do look for little better from many of their poor, ignorant, ungodly neighbours, but even to rub out their days in security and self-deceit, and to be barren after all their labours, if not to hate us for seeking to have saved them. But it is you that their eyes are most upon, and you that their hearts are most upon. Their comfort, and the fruit of their lives, lies much in your hands: saith Paul, "Brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: for now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly, that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?" 1 Thess. iii. 7—10. You see here, that your pastors' lives are in your hands. If you stand fast, they live. For the end of life is more than life; and your salvation is the end of our lives. If the impenitent world reproach us, and abuse and persecute us, we suffer it joyfully, as long as our work goeth on with you. But when you are at a stand, when you are barren, and scandalous, and passionate, and dishonour your profession, and put us in fears, lest we have bestowed all our labour on you in vain; this breaks our hearts

above any worldly crosses whatsoever. O when the people that we should rejoice and glory in shall prove unruly, self-conceited, peevish, proud, every one running his own way, falling into divisions, contentions, or scandals, this is the killing of the comforts of your ministers. When the ungodly shall hit us in the teeth with your scandals or divisions, and say, These are the godly people that you boasted of, see now what is become of them, this is the smoke to our eyes, and the gall and vinegar that is given us by the adversary. And though still we know that our reward is with the Lord, yet can we not choose but be wounded for your sakes, and for the sake of the cause and name of God.

Yea, the world itself expecteth more from you than others. When men talk of great matters, and profess as every christian doth, to look for the greatest matters of eternity, and to live for no lower things than everlasting fellowship with God and angels, no wonder then if the world do look for extraordinary matters from you. If you tell them of reaching heaven, they will look to see you winged like angels, and not to creep on earth like worms. If you say that you are more than men, they look you should show it, by doing more than men can do; even by denying yourselves, and forgiving injuries, and loving your enemies, and blessing those that curse you, and contemning this world, and having your conversation in heaven. O sirs, believe it, it is not small or common things that will satisfy the expectations of God or men, of ministers, or of the world themselves, concerning you.

(8.) Yea, moreover God himself doth make his boast of you, and call out the world to observe your excellency; he sets you up as the light of the world, to be beheld by others. He calls you in his word "his peculiar treasure above all people," Exod. xix. 5; Deut. xiv. 3; Psal. cxxxv. 4. "A peculiar people, purified, and zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. He called you "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Ye are as lively stones, built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. You are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible," (1 Pet. i. 23), and "are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." God hath "delivered you from the power of darkness, and translated you into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom you have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins," Col. i. 12—14. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 16, 17. "All things shall work together for your good. He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things," ver. 28, 32. Nothing but the illuminated soul can discern "the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power," Eph. i. 18, 19. "When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Jesus Christ." He hath "brought us nigh that were far off," so that "by one Spirit we have access to the Father by Christ; and are now no more strangers and foreigners, but

fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God," Eph. ii. 5—7, 13, 17—19. "We are members of the body of Christ; we are come to mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," Heb. xii. 22—24.

Brethren, shall the Lord speak all this, and more than this, in the Scripture, of your glory, and will you not prove yourselves glorious, and study to make good this precious word? Doth he say, "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour," (Prov. xii. 26), and will you not study to show yourselves more excellent indeed? Shall all these high things be spoken of you, and will you live so far below them all? What a heinous wrong is this to God! He sticks not in boasting of you, to call you his jewels, (Mal. iii. 17), and tells the world he will make them one day discern the "difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not," ver. 18. He tells the world, that his coming in judgment will be "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in them that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10. It is openly professed by the apostle John, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness," 1 John v. 19. He challengeth any "to condemn you, or lay any thing to your charge, professing that it is he that justifieth you;" casting the saints into admiration by his love. "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. He challengeth tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, or nakedness, peril, or sword, to separate you, if they can, from the love of God. He challengeth death and life, angels, principalities, and powers, things present and things to come, height and depth, or any other creature, to separate you, if they are able, from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 35, 37—39. Shall the Lord of heaven thus make his boast of you to all the world, and will you not make good his boasting? Yea, I must tell you, he will see that it be made good to a word! And if you be not careful of it yourselves, and it be not made good in you, then you are not the people that God thus boasteth of. He tells the greatest persecutors to their faces, that the meek, the humble, little ones of his flock, "have their angels beholding the face of God in heaven," (Matt. xviii. 10), and that at the great and dreadful day of judgment, they shall be set at his right hand as his sheep, with a "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom," when others are set at his left hand as goats, with a "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," Matt. xxv. He tells the world, that he that receiveth a converted man, that is become as a little child, receiveth Christ himself; and that "who-soever shall offend one of these little ones, that believe in him, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea," Matt. xviii. 3—6; Mark ix. 42; Luke xvii. 2.

O sirs, must God be thus wonderfully tender of you, and will you not now be very tender of his interest and your duty? Shall he thus difference you from all the rest of the world, and will you not study to declare the difference? The ungodly even gnash the teeth at ministers, and Scriptures, and Christ himself, for making such a difference between them and you; and will you not let them see that it is not without cause? I entreat you, I require you, in the name of God, see that you answer these high com-

mendations, and show us that God hath not boasted of you beyond your worth!

(9.) Consider this as the highest motive of all; God doth not only magnify you and boast of you, but also he hath made you the living images of his blessed self, his Son Jesus Christ, his Spirit, and his holy word; and so he hath exposed himself, his Son, his Spirit, and his word, to be censured by the world, according to your lives.

The express image of the Father's person is the Son, Heb. i. 3. The Son is declared to the world by the Holy Ghost: the Holy Ghost hath indited the holy Scriptures, which therefore bear the image of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This holy word, both law and promise, is written in your hearts, and put into your inner parts, by the same Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 3; Heb. vii. 10; x. 16. So that as God hath imprinted his holy nature in the Scripture, so hath he made this word the seal, to imprint again his image on your hearts. And you know that common eyes can better discern the image in the wax, than on the seal: though I know that the hardness of the wax, or something lying between, or the imperfect application, may cause an imperfection in the image on the wax, when yet the image on the seal is perfect: and therefore the world hath no just cause to censure God, or Christ, or the Spirit, or the word to be imperfect, because that you are so; but yet they will do it, and their temptation is great. O sirs! how would your prince take it of you, or how would your poorest friend take it of you, if you should hang forth a deformed picture of them to the view of all that shall pass by; and should represent them as blind, or leprous, or lame, wanting a leg, or an arm, or an eye? Would they not say that you unworthily exposed them to scorn? So if you will take on you to be the living images of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, and the word; and yet will be blind, and worldly, and passionate, and proud, and unruly, and obstinate, or lazy, and negligent, and little differing from those that bear the image of the devil; what do you but proclaim that the image of God, and of Satan, and the world do little differ; and that God is thus unrighteous and unholiness as you are!

(10.) Lastly consider, That the faithful servants of Christ are few; and therefore if those few dishonour him, and prove not fast to him, what do you, but provoke him to forsake all the world, and make an end of all the sons of men? It is but a little flock to whom he will give the kingdom, Luke xii. 32. It is but a few from whom God expecteth any great matter; and shall those few prove deceitful to him? It must be you or none that must honour the gospel; you or none that must be exemplary to the world; and shall it be none at all? Shall all the workmanship of God abuse him? Shall he have no honour from any inferior creature? How can you then expect that he should preserve the world? For will he be at so much care to keep up a world to dishonour and abuse him? If the turning of men's hearts prevent it not, he would come and smite the earth with a curse, Mal. iv. 6. For the "land that beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned," Heb. vi. 7, 8. "If therefore Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah sin," Hosea iv. 15. If the vessels of wrath prepared to destruction will be blind, and sensual, and filthy still, yet let pollution be far from the sanctified. "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified," 1 Cor. vi. 11. O let the Lord be magnified in his saints: blot not out his image: receive not his impressions defectively and by the halves. Let the name of the most Holy One be written in your very foreheads,

Oh that you would be so tender of the honour of the Lord, and shine forth so brightly in holiness and righteousness, that he that runs might read whose servants you are, and know the image and superscription of God, upon the face of your conversations! That as clearly as light is seen in and from the sun, and the power, and wisdom, and goodness of God is seen in the frame of the creation, and of Scripture; so might the same shine forth in you, that you might be "holy as God is holy," 1 Pet. i. 16, and "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," Matt. v. 48; that they that would know God may see him in his saints, where his image is, or should be, so lively and discernible. And they that cannot read and understand the Scripture, or the works of creation, or disposing providence, may read and understand the holy and heavenly representations of your lives.

Men are apt to look after images of the Godhead, because they are carnal and far from God. O you that are appointed to bear his image, see that you so represent him to the eyes of the world, as may be to his glory, and not to his dishonour, and take not the name of God in vain.

It is so desirable for God, and for the church, and for your own peace and happiness, that christians should grow up to a ripeness in grace, and be rooted, built up, confirmed, and abound according to my text, that it hath drawn out from me all these words of exhortation thereunto; though one would think, that to men of such holy principles and experience, it should be more than needs; but if all will but serve to awaken the weak to a diligent progress, I shall be glad, and have my end. The great matter that I intended, when I began this discourse, is yet behind; and that is, the giving you such directions as may tend to your confirmation and perseverance; which I shall now proceed to: but I entreat every reader that hath any spark of grace in his soul, that he will resolve to put these directions in practice, and turn them not off with a bare perusal or approbation. Let me reap but thus much fruit of all my foregoing exhortations, and I shall not think my labour lost.

Twenty Directions for Confirmation in a State of Grace.

Direct. I. Be sure that the foundation be well laid, both in your heads and hearts; or else you can never attain to confirmation, nor be savingly built up.

To this end you must know what the foundation is, and how it must be soundly laid. The foundation hath two parts or respects, according to the faculties of the soul where it must be laid. The first is, the truth of the doctrine and matter, and the second is, the goodness of it. As true, the foundation is laid in our understandings; as good, it is laid in the will. Concerning both these, we must therefore first consider of the matter of the foundation, and then of the manner how that must be received or laid. And the foundation is that matter or object of our faith, and hope, and love, which is essential to a christian; that is, to the christian, saving faith, hope, and love. This hath been always contained in our baptism, because baptizing us is making us visible christians, or the solemn entrance into the state of christianity. As therefore we are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil; so the doing of this unfeignedly, without equivocation, according to the Scripture sense of the words, is the essence of christianity, or the right laying of the foundation. So that the foundation principle, or

fundamental matter, is, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The secondary foundation, or fundamental doctrine, is, those Scripture propositions that express our faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. When we name the three persons as the object of the christian faith, we express names of relation, which contain both the persons, nature, and offices or undertaken works; without either of which, God were not God, and Christ were not Christ, and the Holy Ghost were not in the sense of our articles of faith the Holy Ghost. As we must therefore believe that there is one only God; so we must believe that God the Father is the first in the Holy Trinity of Persons; that the whole Godhead is perfect and infinite in being, and power, and wisdom, and goodness (in which all his attributes are comprehended; but yet a distinct understanding of them all is not of absolute necessity to salvation). That this God is the Creator, Preserver, and Disposer of all things, and the Owner and Ruler of mankind, most just and merciful: that as he is the beginning of all, so he is the ultimate end, and the chief good of man, which before all things else must be loved and sought. This is to be believed concerning the Godhead, and the Father in person. Concerning the Son, we must moreover believe, that he is the same God with the Father, the second person in Trinity, incarnate and so become man, by a personal union of the Godhead and manhood; that he was without original or actual sin, having a sinless nature, and a sinless life; that he fulfilled all righteousness, and was put to death as a sacrifice for our sins, and gave himself a ransom for us; and being buried, he rose again from the dead, and afterwards ascended into heaven, where he is Lord of all, and intercedeth for believers; that he will come again and raise the dead, and judge the world, the righteous to everlasting life, and the wicked to everlasting punishment: that this is the only Redeemer, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life;" neither is there access to the Father but by him, nor salvation in any other. Concerning the Holy Ghost, we must believe that he is the same one God, the third person in Trinity, sent by the Father and the Son to inspire the prophets and apostles; and that the doctrine inspired and miraculously attested by him is true: that he is the Sanctifier of those that shall be saved, renewing them after the image of God, in holiness and righteousness, giving them true repentance, faith, hope, love, and sincere obedience; causing them to overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil; thus gathering a holy church on earth to Christ, who have by his blood the pardon of all their sins, and shall have everlasting blessedness with God.

This is the essence of the christian faith, as to the matter of it. As to the manner of receiving it by the understanding, 1. It must be received as certain truth of God's revelation, upon the credit of his word, by a lively, effectual belief; piercing so deep as is necessary for its prevalence with the will. 2. And it must be entirely received, and not only a part of it: though all men have not so exactly formed distinct apprehensions of every member of this belief, as some have, yet all true christians have a true apprehension of them. We feel by daily experience, that with the wisest some matters are truly understood by us, which yet are not so distinctly and clearly understood, as to be ready for an expression. I have oft, in matters that I am but studying, a light that gives me a general, imperfect, but true conception, which I cannot yet express; but when another hath helped me to form my conception, I can quickly and truly say, that was it that I had an unformed apprehension of before, and it that I meant, but could

not utter, not so much for want of words, as for want of a full and distinct conception.

2. The matter of our christianity to be received by the will, is as followeth : As we must consent to all the forementioned truths, by the belief of the understanding, so the pure Godhead must be received as the fountain, and our end. The Father as our Owner, Ruler, and Benefactor, on the title of creation and redemption, and as our everlasting happiness. The Son as our only Saviour by redemption, bringing us pardon, reconciliation, holiness, and glory, and delivering us from sin and Satan, and the wrath and curse of God, and from hell. The Holy Ghost as our Guide and Sanctifier. All which containeth our renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, and carnal self, that is the point of their unity and heart of the old man. This is the good that must be embraced or accepted by the will.

And secondly, as to the manner of receiving it, it must be done unfeignedly, resolvedly, unreservedly, or absolutely, and habitually, by an inward covenanting of the heart, as I have formerly explained it. And this is the essence of christianity ; this is true believing in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; this is the foundation, and this is the right laying of it.

And now the thing that I am persuading you to is, to see that this foundation be surely laid, in head and heart.

And, 1. That it may be surely laid in the head, you must labour, (1.) To understand these articles. And, (2.) To see the evidence of their verity, that you may firmly believe them. And, (3.) To consider of the worth and necessity of the matter revealed in them, that your judgments may most highly esteem it. This is the sure laying the foundation in the head.

To these ends you should first learn some catechism, and be well acquainted with the principles of religion ; and also be much in reading or hearing the holy Scripture, and inquiring of your teachers, and others that can help you ; and see that you take your work before you, and step not higher till this be done. And then all other following truths, and duties, and promised benefits, must all be so learned as to be built upon this foundation, and joined to it, as receiving their life and strength from hence, and never looked upon as separated from this, nor as more excellent and necessary.

For want of learning well and believing soundly these principles, essentials, or fundamentals of christianity, some of our people can go no further, but stand all their days in their ignorance, at a nonplus : some of them go on in a blind profession, deceiving themselves by building upon the sand, and hold true doctrine by a false, unsound belief of it ; and when the floods and storms do beat upon their building, it falls, and great is the fall thereof. With some of them it falls upon the first assault of any seducer that hath interest in them, or advantage on them ; and abundance swallow up errors, because they never well understood, or firmly believed, fundamental truths. With others of them, the building falls not until death, because they lived not under any shaking temptations. But it being but a perseverance in an unsound profession, will nevertheless be ineffectual to their salvation.

2. When you have thus laid the foundation in your understanding, be sure above all that it be firmly laid in your heart or will. Take heed lest you should prove false and unstedfast in the holy covenant ; and lest you should take in the word but into the surface of the soul, and not give it depth of earth and rooting ; and lest you should come to Christ but

as a servant upon trial, and make not an absolute resignation of yourselves to him ; of which I warned you in the former directions.

O this is it that makes our people fall so fast in a day of trial : some shrink in adversity ; and some are enticed away by prosperity. Greatness and honour deceiveth one, and riches run away with another, and fleshly pleasure poisons a third, and his conscience, religion, salvation, and all, he sacrificeth to his belly, and swalloweth it down his throat ; and all the love and goodness of God, the blood of Christ, the workings of the Spirit, the precepts, and promises, and threatenings of the word, and the joy and torments which once they seemed to believe, all are forgotten, or have lost their force. And all because the foundation was not laid well at the first. But because this was the very business of the former directions, I will dismiss it now.

Direct. II. Think not that all is done when once you are converted ; but remember that the work of your christianity then comes in, and must be as long as the time of your lives.

Of this also I shall say but little, because it is the drift of all the moving considerations before-going. I doubt it is the undoing of many to imagine, that if once they are sanctified, they are so sure in the hands of Christ, that they have no more care to take, nor no more danger to be afraid of, and at last think that they have no more to do, as of necessity to salvation ; and thus prove that indeed they were never sanctified. I confess, when a man is truly converted, the principal part of his danger is over ; he is safe in the love and care of Christ, and none can take him out of his hands. But this is but part of the truth ; the other part must be taken with it, or we deceive ourselves. There is still a great deal of work before us, and holiness is still the way to happiness ; and much care and diligence is required at our hands. And it is no more certain that we shall be saved by Christ, than it is that we shall be kept in faith, and love, and holy obedience by him. It is as true that none can separate us from the love of God, and from a care to please him, and from a holy diligence in the work of our salvation, as that none can take us out of his hands, and bring us into a state of condemnation. He that is resolved to bring us to glory, is as much resolved to bring us to it by perseverance in holiness and diligent obedience ; for he never decreeth one without the other ; and he will never save us by any other way.

Indeed, when we are converted we have escaped many grievous dangers ; but yet there are many more before us, which we must by care and diligence escape. We are translated from death to life, but not from earth to heaven. We have the life of grace, but yet we are short of the life of glory. And why have we the life of grace but to use it, and to live by it ? Why came we into the vineyard but to work ? And why came we into the army of Christ but to fight ? Why came we into the race but to run for the prize ? Or why turned we into the right way but to travel in it ? We never did God faithful service till the day of our conversion, and then it is that we begin. And shall we be so sottish as to think we have done, when we have but begun ? Now you begin to live that before were dead. Now you begin to awake that before were asleep. And, therefore, now you should begin to work that before did nothing, or rather a thousandfold worse than nothing. Work is the effect of life : it is the dead that lie still in darkness, and do nothing. If you had rather be alive than dead, you should rather delight in action than in idleness. It is now that you set to sea, and begin your voyage for the blessed

land: many a storm, and wave, and tempest must you yet expect; many a combat with temptations must you undergo; many a hearty prayer have you yet to pour forth; many and many a duty to perform to God and man. Think not to have done your care and work, till you have done your lives. Whether you come in at the first hour or at the last, you must work till night if you will receive your wages. And think not this a grievous doctrine. It is your privilege, it is your joy, your earthly happiness, that you may be so employed; that you that till now have lived like swine, or moles, or earthly vermin, may now take wing and fly to God, and walk in heaven, and talk with saints, and be guarded by angels: is this a life to be accounted grievous? Now you begin to come to yourselves; to understand what you have to do in the world; to live like men, that you may live like angels! And, therefore, now you should begin accordingly to bestir you. I would not have you retain the same measure of fears of God's displeasure, nor the same apprehensions of your misery, nor the doubts and perplexities of mind, which you were under at your first conversion; for these were occasioned by the passage in your change, and the weakness of your grace in that beginning, and your former folly made them necessary for a time. But I would have you retain your fear of sinning, and be much more in the love of God, and in his service, than you were at first. Temptations will haunt you to the last hour of your lives. If, therefore, you would not fall by these temptations, you must watch and pray to the last. Give not over watching, till Satan give over tempting and watching advantages against you. The promise is still but on condition that you persevere and abide in Christ, and continue rooted and stedfast in the faith, and overcome and be faithful to the death, as you may see in John xv. throughout; John viii. 31; Rev. ii. iii; Col. i. 22, 23. "Work out, therefore, your salvation with fear and trembling," Phil. ii. 12. If you have begun resolvedly, proceed resolvedly. It is the undoing of men's souls to think that all the danger is over, and lose their apprehensions of it, when they are yet but in the way: when their care and holy fears abate, their watch goes down; the soul is laid open as a common wilderness, and made a prey to every lust. And, therefore, still know, your work is not done till your life be done.

Direct. III. Be sure that you understand wherein your establishment and growth consisteth, that you may not miscarry by seeking somewhat else instead of it; nor think you have it when you have it not, or that you want it when you have it, and so be needlessly disquieted about it.

For your assistance in this, I shall further show you wherein your confirmation and growth consisteth in its several parts, both as it is subjected or exercised in your understandings, your wills and affections, and your conversations.

I. As holiness is in the understanding, it is commonly in Scripture called, light and knowledge, as comprehending the several parts. And the confirmation and growth of this must consist in these seven following parts.

1. It is ordinary with new-converted christians, to see the great essential truths of the christian profession, with a great imperfection as to the evidences that discover them. Either they see but some of the solid evidence, overlooking much more than they see; or more usually, they receive the truth itself upon some low, insufficient evidence at first, and then proceed to a kind of mixture, taking it upon some evidences that are valid and sufficient, and

joining some that are invalid with them. But you must grow beyond this infancy of understanding: when you see greater and sounder evidences for the truth than you did before; and when you see more of these solid evidences, and leave not out so many as you did; and when you lay smaller stress upon the smaller evidences, and none upon those that are invalid, and indeed no evidences; then are your understandings more confirmed in the truth, and this is a principal part of their growth. So we find the Samaritans of Sychar, "Many of them believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." (This was the first faith upon a weaker evidence.) "And many more believed, because of his own words, and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world," John iv. 39—42. Here is a notable confirmation and growth, by believing and knowing the same thing which they believed before; it was before believed on weaker evidence, and now upon stronger. Thus Nathanael, by Philip's persuasion, was drawn to Christ; but when he perceived his omniscience, that he knew the heart, and things that were distant, and out of the reach of common knowledge, he is confirmed, and saith, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." And yet Christ telleth him, that there were far greater evidences yet to be revealed, which might beget a more confirmed, stronger faith. "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," John i. 43, 49—51. There is not one christian of many thousands, that at first hath a full sight of the solid evidences of the christian doctrine; but must grow more and more in discerning those reasons for the truth which he believeth, which in the beginning he did not well discern. It is not the most confident belief that is always the strongest, confirmed belief; but there must be sound ground and evidence to support that confidence, or else the confidence may soon be shaken; and is not sound, even while it seems unshaken. And here young beginners must be forewarned of a most dangerous snare of the deceiver, because at first the truth itself is commonly received upon feeble and defective grounds or evidence. It is the custom of the devil and his deceiving instruments, to show the young christian the weakness of those grounds, and thence to conclude that his cause is naught. For it is too easy to persuade such that the cause hath no better grounds than they have seen. For having not seen any better, they can have no particular knowledge of them. And they are too apt to think over-highly of their knowledge, as if there were no more reasons for the truth than they themselves have reached to, and other men did see no more than they. And thus poor souls forsake the truth, which they should be built up and confirmed in; and take that for a reason against the truth, which is but a proof of their own infirmity. I meet with very few that turn to any heresy or sect, but this is the cause. They were at first of the right mind, but not upon sound and well-laid grounds; but held the truth upon insufficient reasons. And then comes some deceiver, and beats them out of their former grounds; and so having no better, they let go the truth, and conclude that they were all this while mistaken. Just as if, in my infancy, I should know my own father only by his clothes, and when I grow a little bigger, one should tell me that I was

deceived, this is not my father, and to convince me should put his clothes upon another, or tell me that another may have such clothes, and hereupon I should be so foolish as to yield that I was mistaken, and that this man is not my father; as if the thing were false, because my reasons were insufficient. Or as if you should ask the right way in your travel, and one should tell you, that by such and such marks you may know your way; and think you have found those marks a mile or two short of the place where they are; but when you understand that those are not the marks that you were told of, you turn back again before you come at them, and conclude that you have missed the way. So is it with these poor deluded souls, that think all discoveries of their own imperfections, and every confutation of their own silly arguments, to be a confutation of the truths of God, which they did hold; when, alas, a strong, well-grounded christian would make nothing of defending the cause which they give up against more strong and subtle enemies; or, at least, would hold it fast themselves. Well, this is the first part of your growth in knowledge, when you can see more or better evidences, for the great truths of christianity, than you saw before.

2. Moreover, you must grow to a clearer apprehension of the very same reasons and evidences of the truth, which you saw before. For when a weak christian hath the best arguments and grounds in the world, yet he hath so dim a sight of them, that makes them find the slighter entertainment in his affections. The best reason in the world can work but little on him that hath but a little understanding of it. There are various degrees of knowledge, not only of one and the same truth, because of the diversity of evidence, but of one and the same evidence and reason of that truth. I can well remember myself, that I have many a year had a common argument for some weighty truth, and I have made use of it, and thought it good, but yet had but little apprehension of the force of it: and many years after, a sudden light hath given me (in my studies) so clear an apprehension of the force of that same argument, which I knew so long, as that it hath exceedingly confirmed and satisfied me, more than ever I was before. I beseech you, christians, consider of this weighty truth: it is not the knowledge of the truth that will serve your turns, without a true and solid knowledge of that truth; nor is it the hearing or understanding of the best grounds and reasons, or proofs in the world, that will serve the turn, unless you have a deep and solid apprehension of those proofs and reasons. A man that hath the best arguments may forsake the truth, because he hath not a good understanding of those arguments; as a man that hath the best weapons in the world may be killed for want of strength and skill to use them. I tell you, if you knew every truth in the Bible, you may grow much in knowledge of the very same truths which you know.

3. Moreover, a young, ungrounded christian, when he seeth all the fundamental truths, and seeth good evidence and reasons of them, perhaps may be yet ignorant of the right order and place of every truth. It is a rare thing to have young professors to understand the necessary truths methodically. And this is a very great defect. For a great part of the usefulness and excellency of particular truths consisteth in the respect they have to one another. This, therefore, will be a considerable part of your confirmation and growth in your understandings, to see the body of christian doctrine, as it were, at one view, as the several parts of it are united in one perfect frame; and to know what aspect one point hath

upon another, and which are their due places. There is a great difference between the sight of the several parts of a clock or watch, as they are disjointed, and scattered about, and the seeing of them conjoined, and in use and motion. To see here a pin, and there a wheel, and not know how to set them all together, nor ever see them in their due places, will give but little satisfaction. It is the frame and design of holy doctrine that must be known, and every part should be discerned as it hath its particular use to that design, and as it is connected with the other parts. By this means only can the true nature of theology, together with the harmony and perfection of truth, be clearly understood.

And every single truth, also, will be much better perceived by him that seeth its place and order, than by any other. For one truth exceedingly illustrates and leads in another into our understanding. Nay, more than so, your own hearts and lives will not be well ordered, if the method or order of the truths received should be mistaken. For the truths of God are the very instruments of your sanctification, which is nothing but their effects upon your understandings and wills, as they are set home by the Holy Ghost. Truths are the seal, and your souls are the wax, and holiness is the impression made. If you receive but some truths, you will have but some part of the due impression. Nay, indeed, they are so coherent, and make up the sense by their necessary conjunction, that you cannot receive any one of them sincerely, without receiving every one that is of the essence of the christian belief. And if you receive them disorderly, the image of them on your souls will be as disorderly, as if your bodily members were monstrously displaced. Study, therefore, to grow in the more methodical knowledge of the same truths which you have received. And though you are not yet ripe enough to discern the whole body of theology in due method, yet see so much as you have attained to know, in the right order and placing of every part. As in anatomy, it is hard for the wisest physician to discern the course of every branch of veins and arteries, but yet they may easily discern the place and order of the principal parts and greater vessels; so it is in divinity, where no man hath a perfect view of the whole, till he come to the state of perfection with God; but every true christian hath the knowledge of all the essentials, and may know the order and places of them all.

4. Another part of your confirmation and growth in understanding, is, in discerning the same truths more practically than you did before, and perceiving the usefulness of every truth, for the doing of its work on your hearts and lives. It was never the will of God that bare speculation should be the end of his revelations, or of our belief. Divinity is an effective, practical science; therefore must truths be known and believed, that the good may be received, and a holy change may be made by them, on the heart and life. Even the doctrine of the Trinity itself is practical, and the fountain of that which is more easily discerned to be practical. There is not one article of our faith, but hath a special work to do upon our hearts and lives; and, therefore, a special fitness for that work. Now the understandings of young christians do discern many truths, when they see but little of the work to be done by them, and the special usefulness of those truths to those works. This, therefore, must be your daily inquiry, and in this you must grow. As if you come into a workman's shop, and see a hundred tools about you, it is a small matter to discern the shape and fashion of them, and what metal they are made of; but you will further ask, What is this tool to do, and what is

that to do? If ever you will learn the trade, you must know the use of every tool. So must you, if you will be skilful christians, be acquainted with the use of the truths which you have received; and know that this truth is to do this work, and that truth to do that work, upon the soul and life. A husbandman may know as many herbs, and flowers, and fruits as a physician, and be able to tell them all by name, and say, this is such a herb, and that is such a one; and to perceive the shape and beauty of them. But he knows little or nothing that they are good for, unless to feed his cattle. Whereas, the physician can tell you, that this herb is good against this disease, and that herb against another disease, and can make use of those same herbs to save men's lives, which other men tread under foot as useless. A countryman may see the names that are written on the apothecaries' boxes, but it is the physician that knows the medicinal use of the drugs. So, many men that are unsanctified, may know the outside of holy doctrine, that little know what use is to be made of it. And the weak christian knows less of this than the grown, confirmed christian doth. Learn, therefore, every day, more and more, to know what every truth is good for, that this is for the exercise and strengthening of such a grace, and this is good against such or such disease of the soul. Every leaf in the Bible hath a healing virtue in it. They are the leaves of the tree of life. Every sentence is good for something. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Not a word is without its usefulness.

5. Moreover, you must grow, not only in knowing the usefulness of truths, but also in knowing how to use them, that you may have the benefit of that worth that is in them. Many a man knows what use a workman's tools are for, that yet knows not how himself to use them. And many a one knows the use and virtue of herbs and drugs, that knows not how to make a medicine of them, and compound and apply them. There is much skill to be used in knowing the seasons of application, and the measure, and what is fit for one, and what for another, that we may make that necessary variation which diversity of conditions do require. As it is a work of skill in the pastors of the church, to "divide the word of God aright, and speak a word in season to the weary, and give the children their meat in due season," 2 Tim. ii. 15; Isa. i. 4; Matt. xxiv. 45; so is it also a work of skill, to do this for yourselves, to know what scripture it is that doth concern you; and when and in what measure to apply it, and in what order, and with what advantages or correctives to use it, as may be most for your own good. You may grow in this skill as long as you live; even in understanding how to use the same truths which you have long known. Oh what excellent christians should we be, if we had but this holy skill, and hearts to use it! We have the whole armour of God to put on and use, but all the matter is how to use it. The same sword of the Spirit in the hand of a strong and skilful christian, may do very much, which in the hand of a young, unskilful christian, will do very little, and next to nothing. A young, raw physician may know the same medicines as an able, experienced physician doth; but the great difference lieth in the skill to use them. This is it that must make you rich in grace, when you increase in the skilful use of truths.

6. Moreover, your understandings may be much advanced, by knowing the same truths more experimentally than you did before. I mean such truths

as are capable of experimental knowledge. Experience giveth us a far more satisfactory manner of knowledge, than others have that have no such experience. To know by hearsay, is like the knowing of a country in a map; and to know by experience, is like the knowing of the same country by sight. An experienced navigator, or soldier, or physician, or governor, hath another manner of knowledge than the most learned can have without experience; even a knowledge that confirmeth a man, and makes him confident. Thus may you daily increase in knowledge, about the same points that you knew long ago. When you have "tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious," (Psal. xxxiv. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 3,) you will know him more experimentally than you did before: when you have tasted the sweetness of the promise, and of pardon of sin, and peace with God, and the hopes of glory, you will have a more experimental knowledge of the riches of grace than you had before. And when you have lived awhile in communion with Christ and the saints, and walked awhile with God in a heavenly conversation, and maintained your integrity, and kept yourselves unspotted of the world, you will then know the nature and worth of holiness by a knowledge more experimental and satisfactory than before. And this is confirmation and growth in knowledge.

7. Moreover, you must labour to grow in higher estimation of the same truths which you knew before. And this will be a consequent of the fore-mentioned acts. A child that findeth a jewel may set by it, for the shining beauty; when yet he may value it many thousand pounds below its worth. You see so much wisdom and goodness in God, the first hour of your new life, as causeth you to prefer him before the world; and you see so much necessity of a Saviour, so much love and mercy in Jesus Christ, as draweth up your hearts to him; and you see so much certainty and glorious excellency of the life to come, that makes you value it even more than your lives. But yet there is in all these such an unsearchable treasure, that you can never value them near their worth. For all that thou hast seen of God, and Christ, and glory, there is a thousand times more excellency in them yet to be discerned. For all the beauty thou hast seen in holiness, it is a thousandfold more beautiful than ever thou didst apprehend it; for all the evil thou hast seen in sin, it is a thousandfold worse than ever thou didst perceive it to be. So that if you should live a thousand years, you might still be growing in your estimation of those things which you knew the first day of your true conversion. For the deeper you dig into this precious mine, the greater riches will still appear to you. There is an ocean of excellency in one article of your belief, and you will never find the banks or bottom, till you come to heaven, and then you will find that it had neither banks nor bottom.

And thus I have showed you what confirmation and growth is needful for your understandings, even about the very same truths which at first you knew. And now I shall add,

8. You must also labour to understand more truths for number than at the first you understood, and to reach to as much of the revealed will of God as you can, and not to stop in the mere essentials. For all divine revelations are precious, and of great use; and none must be neglected. And the knowledge of many other truths is of some necessity to our clear understanding of the essentials; and also to our holding them fast, and practising them. "Secret things belong to God, but things revealed, to us and to our children," Deut. xxix. 29.

But here I must give you this further advice: 1.

That you proceed in due order, from the fundamental points, to those that lie next them; and do not overpass the points of next necessity and weight, and go to higher and less needful matters, before you are ready for them. 2. And also see that you receive all following truths that are taught you, as flowing from the foundation, and conjoined with it. Disorderly proceedings have unspeakably wronged the souls of many thousands, when they are presently upon controversies, and smaller matters, before they understand abundance of more necessary things that must be first understood. This course doth make them lose their labour, and worse; it deceiveth the understanding instead of informing it; and thereupon it perverts the will itself, and turns men to an heretical, proud, or perverse frame of spirit; and then it must needs mislead their practices, and cause them, like deluded men, to be zealous in doing mischief, while they think they are doing good. In common matters you can see, that you must learn and do things in their due order, or else you will but make fools of yourselves. Will you go to the top of the stairs or ladder, without beginning at the lower steps? Will you sow your ground before you manure or plough it? or can you reap before you sow it? Will you ride your colt before you break him? Will you rear a house before you frame it? Or will you teach your children Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, before they learn English? or to read the hardest books before they learn the easiest? or can they read before they learn to spell, or know their letters? No more can you learn the difficult controversies in divinity, (as about the exposition of obscure prophecies, or doctrinal doubts,) till you have taken up before you those many, great, and necessary truths that lie between. It would make a wise man pity them, and be ashamed to hear them, when young, raw, self-conceited professors, will fall into confident expositions of Daniel, the Revelation, or the Canticles, or such like, or into disputes about free-will, or predestination, or about the many controversies of the times, when, alas, they are ignorant of a hundred truths (about the covenants, justification, and the like) which must be known before they can reach the rest!

By this much that I have said already, you may understand, that, though we should reach as far as we can in knowing all necessary, revealed truths, yet the principal part of your growth in knowledge, when once you are converted, consisteth not in knowing more than you knew before, as to the number of truths, but in knowing better the very same fundamental truths, which you knew at first. This is the principal thing that I would here teach you. Abundance are deluded, by not understanding this. You see here you have seven several things in which you must daily grow in knowledge about the same truths which you first received. 1. You must see better and sounder reasons and evidences for the fundamental truths than you saw at first; or more such evidences than you did then perceive. 2. You must grow to a clearer sight or apprehension of those same evidences. 3. You must see truths more methodically, all, as it were, at one view, and all in their due proportion and place, as the members of a well-composed body; and how they grow together, and what strength one truth affords to another. 4. You must see every truth more practically than before, and know what use it is of for your hearts and lives, and what you must do with it. 5. You must learn more skill in the using of these truths, when you know what they are good for; and must be better able to manage them on yourselves and others. 6. You must know more experimentally than you did at first. 7. You

must grow into a higher esteem of truths. All this you have to do besides your growing in the number of truths. And I must tell you, that as it was these essentials of christianity that were the instrumental causes of your first conversion, and were more needful and useful to you then, than ten thousand others; so it is the very same points that you must always live upon, and the confirmation and growth of your souls in these, will be more useful to you than the adding of ten thousand more truths, which yet you know not. And, therefore, take this advice, as you love your peace and growth; neglect not to know more, but bestow many and many hours in labouring to know better the great truths which you have received, for one hour that you bestow in seeking to know more truths which you know not: believe it, this is the safe and thriving way. You know already that God is all-sufficient, and infinitely wise, and good, and powerful. And you know not, perhaps, the nature of free-will, or of God's decrees of election and reprobation, or a hundred the like points. True knowledge of any of the revealed things of God, is very desirable; but yet, I must tell you, that you are forty times more defective here in your knowledge of that of God which you do know, than of the other which you know not; that is, the want of more degrees of this necessary knowledge, is more dangerous to your souls than the total want of the less necessary knowledge. And the addition of more degrees to the more needful parts of knowledge, will strengthen and enrich you more than the knowing of less necessary things, which you knew not before at all. You know Christ crucified already, but perhaps you know not certain controversies about church government, or the definitions and distinctions of many matters in divinity. It will be a greater growth now to your knowledge, to know a little more of Christ crucified, whom you know already, than to know these lesser matters, which you know not yet at all. If you had already a hundred pounds in gold, and not a penny of silver, it will more enrich you to have another purse full of gold, than a purse full of silver. Trading in the richest commodities is liker to raise men to greater estates, than trading for matters of a smaller rate. They that go to the Indies for gold and pearl, may be rich if they get but little in quantity; when he may be poor that brings home ships laden with the greatest store of poor commodity. That man that hath a double measure of the knowledge of God in Christ, and the clearest, and deepest, and most effectual apprehensions of the riches of grace and the glory to come, and yet never heard of most of the questions in Scotus, or Ockam, or Aquinas's sums, is far richer in knowledge, and a much wiser man, than he that hath those controversies at his fingers' ends, and yet hath but half his clearness and solidity of the knowledge of God and Christ, of grace and glory. There is enough in some one of the articles of your faith, in one of God's attributes, in one of Christ's benefits, in one of the Spirit's graces, to hold you study all your lives, and afford you still an increase of knowledge. To know God the Father, Son, and Spirit, and their relations to you, and operations for you, and your duties to them, and the way of communion with them, is that knowledge in which you must still be growing, till it be perfected by the celestial, beatifical vision. Those be not the wisest men that can answer most questions; but those that have the fullest intellectual reception of the infinite wisdom. You will confess that he is a wiser man, that hath wisdom to get and rule a kingdom, than he that hath wit enough to talk of a hundred trivial matters, which the other is ignorant of. That is the wisest

physician that can do most to save men's lives; and not he that can best read a lecture of anatomy, or is readiest in the terms of his art. Knowledge is to be esteemed according to the use of it, and the dignity of its object, and not according to the number and subtlety of notions. And, therefore, I beseech you all, that are young and weak in the faith, take much more pains to grow in the fuller acquaintance with that same faith which you have received, than to be acquainted with smaller controversial truths which you never knew. Men use to call these higher points, because they are more difficult; but certainly the articles of your faith are much higher in point of excellency, though they are lower in the due order of learning them; as the foundation is the lowest part of the building, and is first laid, but is that which must bear up all the rest.

And here you must observe, how gracelessly and unlike to christians those men speak, that say, They care not for reading such a book, or hearing such or such a minister, because he tells them no more than they know already. And on that account some of them stay from church, because they hear nothing but what they know already. It is a certain sign that they do not know already the blessed nature of God, and the riches of Christ, which they say they know. For if they did, they could not hear or think too much of them. They would long to know more, and, therefore, to hear more of the same things. It is a sign the minister takes the course that tends to your edification and enriching in knowledge, when he is most upon the great and most necessary truths. All saints do make it their study to comprehend the height, and breadth, and length, and depth, and know the love of God in Christ; but when they have done, they confess that it "passeth knowledge," Eph. iii. 17—19. It is a graceless, wicked soul, in a state of damnation, that conceits he knows so much of God and Jesus Christ, and the essentials of christianity, that he cares not for hearing these things any more, but had rather have novelties, and let these alone; and feeleth not need of knowing much more and more of the same truths; and of using and living upon these vital principles which he knows. You have eaten bread and drank beer a hundred times; but perhaps you never did eat of sturgeon or whale, of a bear or a leopard, of chesnuts or pig-nuts, or many strange and dangerous fruits, in all your life; and yet I hope you will not seek after these, because they are novelties, and give over eating bread because you have eaten of it already. Nor will you churlishly refuse to go to a feast, because there is no meat but what you have eaten of before. We have not a new God to preach to you, nor a new Christ, nor a new Spirit, nor a new gospel, nor a new church, nor a new faith, nor a new baptismal covenant, nor a new heaven, or hope, or happiness to propound, Gal. i. 9, 10; Eph. iv. 3—5. Your growth in methods, and definitions, and distinctions, and in additional points of knowledge, is principally to be valued as it cleareth your understandings in the foresaid great essential points, and brings you up to God himself. Some wretches think they have quickly learned past the essential articles of the faith, and ere long they are past the higher points; and shortly they are past the Scripture itself, and throw it by, as a scholar that hath learnt one book, and must be entered into another. They understand not, that the ministry and Spirit are but to teach them the word of the gospel; but they think they must outgrow the word and ministry, and the Spirit must teach them some other doctrine, or gospel, which the written word doth not contain. I pray mark the apostle's warning: "Be not carried about

with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace," Heb. xiii. 9. And, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness," Eph. iv. 14.

2. Having showed you wherein your growth consisteth in the understanding, I shall be short in the rest; and next I must tell you wherein it consisteth in the will.

And that is, 1. When upon good understanding and deep consideration, you are more fixedly, habitually, absolutely, and practically resolved for God and glory than before. So that you are grown more beyond all shaking doubtfulness, or wavering of mind, and beyond all unevenness, mutability, and unconstancy. When a man is thus satisfied, that none but God hath title to him, or can make him happy, and that none but Christ can reconcile him to God, and that it were a madness to make any other choice, and thereupon is settled and firm as mount Zion, and can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee," Psal. lxxiii. 25. When you are firmly resolved that, let God do with you what he will, and come of it what will, you will never choose another Master, or Saviour, or rule, or happiness, or way, or body, than you are in; and will never forsake the path of holiness; this is the fixed stability of the will, and the more of this, the more you grow.

2. And when you have the lowest esteem of the creatures, and greatest and most resolved averseness to all that would draw you from God, and can meet the greatest worldly or fleshly allurements with a holy contempt; this shows a settled, confirmed will.

3. And also, when you are speedy in holy resolutions, and see nothing in a temptation, how great soever, that can make you demur upon it, or make a stop in a christian course; but go on to duty, as if the tempter had said nothing to you, and the flesh and the world had no interest in you; and you do not so much as stand to think on it, whether you should yield to sin or not, as abhorring to call such a matter into question; this shows a confirmed, fixed will; and the more of this, the more of holiness.

3. The strength and growth of holy affections, consisteth principally in these particulars: 1. When the affections are lively, and not dull; so that we make out after God and heaven with vigour and alacrity. 2. When they are ready at hand, and not to seek, and need not a great deal ado to quicken them, or call them in. 3. When they are most pure and unmixed, having least of the creature and most of God in them. 4. But principally (and the surest point to try them by) when they contain in them, or accompany, the foresaid confirmation and resolvedness of the will; for it is more the willingness that is in or with our affections, than the heat of them, that we must judge them by. 5. And lastly, when they follow the best guidance of the understanding, when they are hottest about the greatest matters, and not about the smaller or more doubtful things; when they are obedient, and yielding to faith and holy reason, and not too ready to hearken to sense, and be moved about fleshly, sensible things. In these things lieth the growth of your affections.

4. And then lastly, for your conversations, your stability and growth consisteth, 1. In the readiness of your obedience. 2. In the fulness and universal exactness of it. 3. In the resolved conquest of all temptations that would pervert you. 4. In the diligent use of all those means, that may further confirm and strengthen you. 5. In the evenness of it, that it be constant, and not mixed with scandals, and

stops in the way, or stepping out into by-paths. 6. In your fruitfulness and profitableness to others, according to the proportion of your talents; that you study to do good, and do it with all the care, and wisdom, and diligence you can. 7. In the spirituality of it, that God be the principal and the end of all, and that all be animated from the believing consideration of his attributes, and the views of everlasting blessedness. So that you have such lively, fixed intentions of God, that you can perceive that you do all, even common things, of purpose for his pleasure, will, and glory; and that the love of God doth carry you about from duty to duty, and constrain you to it. 8. And lastly, in the measure of your present attainments of the end and fruits of your obedience. For a taste of these ends are here to be attained. When your inward graces are more confirmed and increased, and your talents are doubled, and when you bring God a great deal of honour in the world, so that by his graces shining in your works, your Father is glorified; and when yourselves are readier to go to God, and meet your Redeemer, and long more for his appearing: in all these consisteth the stability, growth, and excellency of your conversations.

And now, by all that I have said, you may see wherein your stability, strength, and growth doth not consist. 1. It doth not most or much consist in speculations, or less useful truths. 2. It doth not consist in the mere heat of affections; for zeal may be misguided, and do hurt, and may prove sometimes but a mere natural or distempered, sinful passion. 3. It consisteth not in mere fears, or purposes, that you are frightened into against your will. 4. Nor does it consist of the common gifts of grace or nature. 5. Nor yet in running into groundless singularities, and unusual strains. But in a word, it consisteth in holy love, kindled by effectual faith. When a firmly believing soul is fullest of love to God, and Christ, and holiness, this is the most confirmed state of the soul; and in this your chiefest growth consisteth.

My next advice to all young christians, for their confirmation and growth in grace, is this:

Direct. IV. Grow downwards in humility; be low and small in your own eyes, and affect not to be high or great in the eyes of others; and still keep a deep apprehension of the greatness and danger of the sin of pride; but especially of that called spiritual pride.

It is the tree that hath the shallowest, weakest rooting that most shaketh, and is soonest overthrown: the deeper roots, the higher growth, for the most part. The building that hath not a deep foundation, is soonest shaken and overthrown. Christ is our foundation; and humiliation digs deep and lets him into the heart. Pride is commonly thought to be the devil's first or chiefest sin. Sure I am, it is the proud that fall into his condemnation, 1 Tim. iii. 6. The pride of our first parents, affecting to be as gods in knowledge, was the inlet of all our sin and misery; and the tempter still followeth the way that he hath found to be so successful. It is pride that, like a storm or tempest, doth set all the world in the rage, and contention, and differences, and confusion, that we see them in. It is pride that hath filled the church with divisions; and it is pride that causeth the apostasy of most that fall away. And the more men have of it, the less do they usually discern it in themselves; I am sure the less do they hate it and lament it. And though one would think, that young beginners and weak christians that have little to be proud of should be out of the danger of this temptation, yet experience tells us, that it is they that fall

by it, more than the wiser and stronger christians that have more to glory in: for the more men increase in wisdom, the more do they know their own unworthiness, their emptiness, and ignorance, and manifold sins; and the more do they know of the holiness and jealousy of God; and the more do they know of the evil of sin, and see what abundance of knowledge and grace they yet want; so that the more holy wisdom and experience, the less pride. But folly is the parent and nurse of pride. Children will be proud of toys and things of no value. There are two or three things that make young christians in greater danger of spiritual pride than others. 1. Because they come so lately out of darkness, and so great a change is made upon their souls, that it makes them the more sensible of it; and therefore the readier to have high thoughts of themselves. Though one would think that the remembrance of former folly and late dejectedness should keep them low, yet with too many that is quickly gone, and they know not how to receive a comforting message, but they make it an occasion of lifting up. 2. The ignorance of these novices or young christians is such, that they little know what abundance of things they are yet ignorant of. Little do they know what knowledge they yet want; they think there is little more to be reached to than is in their sight, and therefore suppose themselves somebody in the school of Christ, because they have learned the first lesson. 3. And by reason of this ignorance, they know not how to value the higher attainments and understandings of others, but look on the wisest as little wiser than themselves, because they are unacquainted with the matter of their wisdom, and therefore overlook it as if it were none, and consequently think too highly of themselves. 4. And withal, they have not that experience of their own hearts, that should make them jealous of them, as ancient christians have.

The humble soul is still in an empty, craving temper; he hungereth and thirsteth after righteousness, and therefore shall be satisfied, Matt. v. 6. No man setteth so high a price on Christ and grace, and all the means of grace. Even the crumbs are welcome to him, which the proud despise. "The full soul loathes the honeycomb; but to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet," Prov. xxvii. 7. Therefore such beggars are welcomest to God: he hath respect to the humble, contrite soul, Isa. lvii. 15; lxxi. 2; Psal. li. 17. "The hungry he filleth with good, but the rich he sendeth empty away," Luke i. 53. "He giveth more grace to the humble, when the proud are abhorred by him," 1 Pet. v. 5. The church of Laodicea, that said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," was "miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," Rev. iii. 17. As many that are proud of their honour and birth, run out of all, by living above their estates, when meaner persons grow rich, because they are still gathering, and make much of every little; so proud professors of religion are in a consumption of the grace they have, while the humble increase, by making much of every little help, which is slighted and neglected by the proud, and by shunning all those spending courses, which the proud are plunged in. Be sure to keep mean thoughts of yourselves, of your knowledge, and parts, and grace, and duties, and be content to be mean in the esteem of others, if you would not be worse than mean in the esteem of God.

Direct. V. Exercise yourselves daily in a life of faith upon Jesus Christ, as your Saviour, your Teacher, your Mediator, and your King; as your example, your wisdom, your righteousness, and your hope.

All other studies and knowledge must be merely subservient to the study and knowledge of Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 2. That vain kind of philosophy which St. Paul so much cautioneth christians against, is so far yet from being accounted vain, that by many called christians, it is preferred before christianity itself; and to show that it is vain while they overvalue it, they can show no solid worth or virtue which they have got by it; but only a tumefied mind, and an idle tongue, like a tinkling cymbal, 1 Cor. xiii. 1; xii. 31; ii. 4, 14—16; i. 18—21, 23, 24, 27; Col. ii. 8, 9. We are complete in Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, ver. 10. No study in the world will so much lead you up to God, and acquaint you with him, especially in his love and goodness, as the study of Christ, his person, his office, his doctrine, his example, his kingdom, and his benefits. As the Deity is your ultimate end, to which all things else are but helps and means; so Christ is that great and principal means, by whom all other means are animated. Remember that you are in continual need of him, for direction, intercession, pardon, sanctification, for support and comfort, and for peace with God. Let no thoughts therefore be so sweet and frequent in your hearts, nor any discourse so ready in your mouths, (next to the excellences of the eternal Godhead,) as this of the design of man's redemption. Let Christ be to your souls, as the air, the earth, the sun, and your food are to your bodies, without which your life would presently fall. As you had never come home to the Father but by him, so without him you cannot a moment continue in the Father's love, nor be accepted in one duty, nor be protected from one danger, nor be supplied in any want; for it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, Col. i. 18, 19. "And by him it is, that being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 1, 2. "And it is in him the head, that we must grow up in all things, from whom the whole body doth receive its increase," Ephes. iv. 15, 16. You grow no more in grace, than you grow in the true knowledge and daily use of Jesus Christ. But of this I will say no more, because I have said so much in my "Directions for a Sound Conversion."

Direct. VI. Let the knowledge and love of God, and your obedience to him, be the works of your religion; and the everlasting fruition of him in heaven, be the continual end and ruling motive of your hearts and lives, that your very conversation may be with God in heaven.

You are so far HOLY as you are DIVINE and HEAVENLY. A christian indeed in casting up his accounts, being certain that this world doth make no man happy, hath been led up by Christ to seek a happiness with God above. If you live not for this everlasting happiness, if you trade not for this, if this be not your treasure, your hope, and home, the chief matter of your desires, love, and joy, and if all things be not pressed to serve it, and despised when they stand against it, you live not indeed a christian life. GOD and HEAVEN, or GOD in HEAVEN, is the life and soul, the beginning and the end, the sum, the all of true religion. And therefore it is that we are directed to lift up our heads and hearts, and begin our prayers with, "Our Father which art in heaven," and end them with ascribing to him, "the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever." It is not the creatures, but God the Creator, that is the Father, the Guide, and the Felicity of souls, and therefore the ultimate end and object of all religious actions and affections. Dwell still upon God, and

dwell in heaven, if you would understand the nature and design of christianity. Take God for all, that is, for God; study after the knowledge of him in all his works; study him in his word; study him in Christ; and never study him barely to know him, but to know him that you may love him. Take yourselves as dead, when you live not in the love of God: keep still upon your hearts a lively sense of the infinite difference between him and the creature. Look on all the world as a shadow, and on God as the substance: take the very worst that man can do, to be in comparison of the punishments of God, but as a flea-biting to the sorest death; and take all the dreaming pleasures of the world, to be less in comparison with the joys of heaven, than one lick of honey is to a thousand years' possession of all the felicities on earth. Think not all the pleasures, honours, or riches of the world, to be worthy to be named in comparison of heaven; nor the greatest of men to be worthy to be once thought on, in comparison of God. As one straw or feather won or lost, would neither much rejoice or trouble you, if all the city or land were yours; so live as men whose eyes are open, and who discern a greater disproportion between the portion of a worldling and a saint. Let God be your King, your Father, your Master, your Friend, your Wealth, your Joy, your All. Let not a day go over your heads, in which your hearts have no converse with God in heaven. When any trouble overtaken you on earth, look up to heaven, and remember, that it is there that rest and joy are prepared for believers. When you are under any want, or cross, or sorrow, fetch not your comfort from any hopes of deliverance here on earth, but from the place of your final, full deliverance. If you feel any strangeness and backwardness on your minds to heavenly contemplations, do not make light of them, but presently by faith get up to Christ, who must make your thoughts of heaven familiar, and seek remedy before your estrangement increase. The soul is in a sad condition, when it cannot fetch comfort and encouragement from heaven; for then it must have none, or worse than none. When the thoughts of heaven will not sweeten all your crosses, and relieve your minds against all the encumbrances of earth, your souls are not in a healthful state; it is time then to search out the cause, and seek a cure, before it come to worse.

There are three great causes of this dark and dangerous state of soul, which make the thoughts of heaven ineffectual and uncomfortable to us, which therefore must be overcome with the daily care and diligence of your whole lives. 1. Unbelief, which maketh you look towards the life to come with doubting and uncertainty; and this is the most common, radical, powerful, and pernicious impediment to a heavenly life. 2. The second is, the love of present things, which being the vanity of a poor, low, fleshly mind, the reviving of reason may do much to overcome it; but it is the sound belief of the life to come that must indeed prevail. 3. The third is, the inordinate fear of death, which hath so great advantage in the constitution of our nature, that it is commonly the last enemy which we overcome (as death itself is the last enemy which Christ overcometh for us). Bend all your strength, and spend your days, in striving against these three great impediments of a heavenly conversation; and remember, that so far as you suffer your hearts to retire from heaven, so far they retire from a life of christianity and peace.

Direct. VII. In the work of mortification, let SELF-DENIAL be the first and last of all your study, care, and diligence.

Understand how much of the fallen, depraved

state of man consisteth in the sin of SELFISHNESS: how he is sunk into himself, in his fall from the love of God, and of his neighbour; of the public or private good of others: and how this inordinate self-love is now the grand enemy of all true love to God or man; and the root and heart of covetousness, pride, voluptuousness, and all iniquity. Let it be your work, therefore, all your days, to mortify it, and watch against it. When you feel yourselves partial in your own cause, and apt to be drawing from others to yourselves, in point of reputation, precedence, or gain, and apt to make too great a matter of every word that is spoken against you, or every little wrong that is done you, observe then the pernicious root of selfishness, from whence all this mischief doth proceed. Read more of this in my "Treatise of Self-denial."

Direct. VII. Take your corrupted, fleshly desires, for the greatest enemy of your souls, and let it be every day your constant work to mortify the flesh, and to keep a watch upon your lusts and appetite, and every sense.

Remember that our senses were not made to govern themselves, but to be governed by right reason; and that God made them at the first to be the ordinary passage of his love and mercy to our hearts, by the means of the creatures which represent or manifest him unto us: but now in the depraved state of man, the senses have cast off the government of reason, and are become the ruling power, and so man is become like the beasts that perish. Remember then, that to be sensual, is to be brutish; and though grace doth not destroy the appetite and sense, yet it subjecteth it to God and reason. Therefore let your appetite be pleased in nothing, but by the allowance of right reason; and think not that you have reason to take any meats, or drink, or sport, merely because your flesh desireth it; but consider, whether it will do you good or hurt, and how it conduceth to your ultimate end. It is a base and sinful state to be in servitude to your appetite and sense; when by using to please it, you have so increased its desires, that now you know not how to deny it and to displease it; when you have taught it to be like a hungry dog or swine, that will never be quiet till his hunger be satisfied; whereas a well-governed appetite and sense is easily quieted with a rational denial, Rom. viii. 1, 6—8, 13; xiii. 13, 14; 1 Pet. ii. 11; 1 John ii. 16.

Direct. IX. Take heed lest you fall in love with the world, or any thing therein, and lest your thoughts of any place or condition which you either possess or hope for, do grow too sweet and pleasing to you.

For there is no one perisheth, but for loving some creature more than God; and complacency is the formal act of love. "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15. Value all earthly things as they conduce to your Master's service, or to your salvation; and not as they tend to the pleasing of your flesh. It is the commonest and most dangerous folly in the world, to be eager to have our houses, and lands, and provisions, and every thing about us in the most pleasing and amiable state; when as this is the acknowledged way to hell, and the only poison of the soul. Are you not in more danger of over-loving a pleasing and prosperous condition, than a bitter and vexatious state? and of over-loving riches, honour, and sensual fulness and delights, rather than poverty, reproach, and mortification? And do you not know that if ever you be damned, it will be for loving the world too much, and God too little? Is it for nothing

that Christ describeth a saint to you as a Lazarus in poverty and sores, and a damned wretch as one that was "clothed in purple and silk, and fared sumptuously every day?" Luke xvi. Did not Christ know what he did when he put the rich man upon this trial, to part with all his worldly riches, and follow Christ for a treasure in heaven? Luke xviii. 22, 23. All things must be esteemed as loss and dung for the knowledge of Christ, and the hopes of heaven, if ever you will be saved, Phil. iii. 6—8. You must so live by faith, and not by sight, as not to look at the temporal things which are seen, but at the things eternal which are unseen, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; v. 7, 8. And one that is running in a race for his life, would not so much as turn his head to look back on any one that called to him to stay, or to look aside to any one that would speak with him in his way; thus must we forget the things that are behind, as counting them not worthy a thought, or remembrance, or a look, Phil. iii. 13, 14. If you feel this poison seize upon your hearts, and your condition in the world (or at least your hopes) begin to grow too sweet and pleasing to you, presently make haste to Christ your Physician, and take his antidote, and cast up the poison as you love your souls. You must know no other pleasure in your outward mercies, but as God appeareth in and by them, and as they tend to profit you, and further you in God's service, or to promote your own or others' good; but not as they are provision for the flesh, Rom. xiii. 13, 14. See my book "Of Crucifying the World."

Direct. X. Cast not yourselves wilfully upon temptations, but avoid them as far as lawfully you can; and if you are cast upon them unwillingly, resist them resolutely, as knowing that they come to entice you into sin and hell, from God and your everlasting happiness; and therefore be well acquainted with the particular temptations of every company, calling, relation, business, time, place, and condition of life; and go always furnished with particular antidotes against them all.

Strong grace will do no more against strong temptations, than weak grace against weak ones. Temptation is the way to sin, and sin is the way to hell. If you saw the dangerousness of your station, when you cast yourself upon temptations, you would tremble, and fly as for your lives. I take that man as almost gone already, who chooseth temptations, or avoideth them not when he may. Especially be acquainted with the diseases and greatest dangers of your soul; and there keep up a constant watch. Are you liable to a gluttonous pleasing of your appetite? avoid the temptation; set not that before you which may be your snare; let a little, and that of the least tempting kind of food, be your ordinary provision. Sit not at the glutton's table (who fareth deliciously every day) if you would escape the glutton's sin and misery. Or if the provision be of other men's disposal, at least rise quickly and begone. Are you inclined to please your appetite in drinking? avoid such strong drink as may tempt your appetite; and avoid the place and company that draweth you to it. Are you inclined to fleshly lust? avoid the presence of such of the other sex as are a temptation to you; look not on them, and talk not of them; but above all, take heed of nearness, and familiarity, and privacy with them, and of all opportunity of sin. When the devil hath brought the bait to your hand, and telleth you, Now you may sin without any molestation or discovery, you are then in a very dangerous case. Some that think they would not be guilty of the sin, will yet tempt themselves, and delight to have it in their power, and to have the opportunity of sinning, and to come as near it as

they dare; and these are gone before they well perceive their danger. So if you are inclined to pride and ambition, avoid the society of those that tempt you to it: come not among superiors and gallants, or such as kindle your ambition. A retired life, in company of mean and humble persons, is fittest for one that hath your disease. "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate," Rom. xii. 16.

But if you cannot avoid the temptation, be sure yet to avoid the sin. Take it as if you saw and heard the devil himself persuading you to sin, and damn your souls. Abhor the motion, and give not the devil a patient hearing, when you know what he cometh about. Resolution escapeth many a danger, which those are ruined by who stand disputing and dallying with the tempter. Especially look about you, when the tempter employeth great men, or learned men, or godly men, or nearest friends to be his instruments. And if their subtlety puzzle you, go to the stronger and more experienced christians for advice and help. "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation," Matt. vi. 13; xxvi. 41. It is a dreadful thing to think what persons temptations have overthrown! Luke xviii. 13; Heb. vi. 6, 7. How wise, and learned, and excellent men have been over-witted by Satan, and sinned like fools, when they have let go their watch! If we be as resolved as Peter, temptations may quickly change our resolutions, if God leave us to ourselves, and we grow presumptuous or secure; and then our very reason will lose its power; and false representations will make things appear to us quite contrary to what indeed they are; and those reasonings will seem probable to us, which at another time we could easily see through as mere deceit. Temptation, as it prevail-eth, doth damp and cast asleep our graces, and charm and bewitch all the faculties of the soul, 1 Tim. vi. 9.

Direct. XI. If it be possible, make choice of such a pastor, for the help and guidance of your souls, as is judicious, experienced, humble, holy, heavenly, faithful, diligent, lively, and peaceable, that liveth not in separation from the generality of the sober godly ministers and christians where he liveth.

1. Think not of being sufficient for yourselves, without the help of those whom Christ hath appointed to be watchmen for your souls, Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24. As you cannot live without the teaching and the grace of Christ; so Christ doth vouchsafe you his teaching and his grace, by the ministry of his own officers, whom he hath appointed to that end and use. It is marvellous to observe, how Christ chose rather to convert men by the preaching and miracles of his apostles than by his own: and how he would not fully convert Paul without the ministry of Ananias, though he spoke to him from heaven himself, and reasoned the case with him against his persecution. And how he would not fully convert Cornelius and his household, without the ministry of Peter, though he sent an angel to direct him to a teacher. Nor would he convert the ethiopian eunuch without the ministry of Philip; nor the jailer without the ministry of Paul and Silas, though he wrought a miracle to prepare for his conversion, Acts xvi. x. And "Paul must plant, and Apollos must water, before God will give the increase," 1 Cor. iii. 6. And though all true christians are taught of God, and must call no man on earth the master of their faith but Christ, (1 Thess. iv. 9; John vi. 45; Matt. xxiii. 8, 9,) yet have they their teachers, fathers, and instructors under Christ, who are helpers of their joy, though they have not dominion over their faith; and are overseers, though not lords and owners of the

flock; and are ministers of Christ by whom he teach-eth, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and ambassadors by whom he beseecheth sinners to be reconciled to God, having committed to them the word of reconciliation, Eph. iv. 11—14; 1 Cor. iv. 1, 15; Acts xx. 28; 2 Cor. i. 24; 1 Pet. v. 1—4; 2 Cor. v. 18—20. These are labourers together with God upon his husbandry and building; some being master-builders, and others superstructors, 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10. Christ knew the necessity that the infants of his family had of such nurses, and he knew what numbers of such weak ones there would be in comparison of the strong; or else he had never appointed the strong to such an office; and having appointed it, he will keep up the honour of his officers, and will send you his alms, your food, your physic, your pardon, your privileges, by their hands. If you be drawn by seducers to forsake or neglect the ministry of Christ's officers, you forsake or neglect your helps and mercies, you refuse his grace, you are like infants that scorn their nurses' help, and like subjects who reject all the officers of the king, and like chickens that forsake the hen; you forsake the school and church of Christ, and may expect to be quickly caught up by the devil, as stragglers that have no defence or guide.

2. Yet is there great difference between one minister or pastor and another, as much as between physicians, lawyers, or men of any other function. And there being no case in the world that you are so much concerned to be careful in, as the instructing, and conduct, and safety of your souls, you have exceeding great reason to take heed whom you choose to commit the care and conduct of your souls to. It is not enough to say, that he is a true ordained minister, and that his administrations are not nullities, any more than to say of an ignorant physician or cowardly captain, that he hath a valid licence or commission, when for all that, if you trust him, it may cost you your lives. Nor is it a wise man's answer to say, That God giveth his grace by the worst as soon as by the best, and by the weakest as soon as by the strongest, and therefore I need not be so careful in my choice. For though God have not confined the working of his Spirit to the most excellent means, yet ordinarily he worketh according to the means he useth; and this both Scripture, reason, and daily experience fully prove. God worketh rationally on man as man; that is, as a rational free agent, by moral operation, and not by a mere physical injection of his grace. When we see the man that is made wise unto salvation by mere infusion of wisdom, without a teacher or the study of the word of God, or when we see God work by his word as by a charm, that a few words shall convert a man, though the speaker or hearer understood them not, then we may hearken to this conceit; and then we may think that a heretic may as well teach you the truth as the orthodox, or a schismatic teach you unity and peace as well as a catholic, peaceable pastor, or a man that is ignorant of the mysteries of regeneration and holy communion with God, may best teach you that which he knoweth not himself, and an enemy to piety and charity may teach you to be pious and charitable, as well as any other. But I need not say much more of this, for all parties would never so strive to have such ministers as they like, and to put out such as they dislike, if they thought not that the difference between ministers and ministers was very great.

See therefore that the guide whom you choose for your souls be, 1. Judicious; for an injudicious man may pervert the Scripture, and lead you into error, and heresy, and sin, before you are aware; as an un-

skilful coachman may soon overturn you, or an unskilful waterman may drown you. Yea, though he be a zealous, fervent preacher, yet if he be injudicious, he may ignorantly give you poison in your food, as the experience of this age hath lamentably proved.

2. See, if possible, that he be an experienced man, that knoweth by experience on himself, not only what it is to be regenerate, and sanctified, and made a new creature, but also how all the combat between the Spirit and the flesh is to be managed, and what are the methods and stratagems of the tempter, and what are the chief helps and defences of the soul, and how they are all to be used; for it is not harder to be a judicious physician, or lawyer, or soldier, without experience, than a judicious pastor; and therefore the Holy Ghost commandeth that he be not a novice, or raw, unexperienced christian, 1 Tim. iii. 6.

3. See that he be humble; for if he be puffed up with pride, he falleth into the condemnation of the devil, 1 Tim. iii. 6. And then he will either scorn the labour of the ministry as a drudgery (to preach in season and out of season, to beseech, and exhort, and stoop to the poorest of the flock); or else he will "speak perverse things to draw away disciples after him;" Acts xx. 30; or he will, as Diotrophes, reject the brethren, as loving himself to have the pre-eminence, 2 John 9, 10; and will oversee the church by constraint, for filthy lucre, as being a lord over God's heritage, 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. See Dr. Hammond on the text.

4. See that he be holy in his life; for though this be not essential to his office, yet the unholy are unexperienced, yea, and have a secret enmity in their hearts against that holiness which they should daily preach; and will usually be showing it in their close, disgracing, discouraging speeches, against that serious piety which they should promote: and they will neglect most of the personal care of their flock; and will unpreach by their lives the good which they preach by their tongues, and harden and imbolden the people in their sins, and make them believe that they believe not what they preach themselves. Choose not an enemy of holiness to lead you in the way of holiness, (a way that he never went himself,) nor an enemy of Christ to conduct you in the christian warfare, when he is a servant of the devil, the world, and flesh, against whom you fight.

5. See that he be of a heavenly mind, or else his doctrine will be unsavoury and dry, and he will be preaching some speculations or barren controversies, instead of heavenly, edifying truth.

6. See that he be faithful and diligent in his ministry, as one that knoweth the worth of souls, and will not sell them or betray them to the devil for filthy lucre or his fleshly ends; nor make merchandise of them, as desiring rather theirs than them, and preferring their fleece before the safety of the flock; but one that imitateth the pattern, Acts xx. and in "meekness instructeth those that are opposers," 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26; 2 Pet. ii. 3; 1 Cor. iv. 2; Rom. xvi. 17, 18; 1 Pet. v. 3, 4; 2 Cor. xii. 14.

7. See that he be a lively, serious preacher; for all will be little enough to keep up a lively seriousness in such dull and frozen hearts as ours: a cold preacher with cold hearts, is like to make cold work. He that speaks senselessly and sleepily about such matters as heaven and hell, doth by the manner of his speech contradict the matter. When hard-heartedness, and security, and deadness, and lethargic drowsiness is the common and dangerous disease of souls, let him that loveth his soul and would not perish by his disease, make use of a physician and remedy that is suited to the cure, and not of one to

rock him asleep, or give him an opiate to increase his malady.

8. See also that he be one that is of a truly catholic spirit, not addicted to a sect, nor to divisions in the church, nor one that liveth in a separation or distance from the generality of the godly, sober ministers; for you take him not for your guide, as separated from the catholic church, but as united to it, and a member of it; as valuing the judgment of all the church above the judgment of any one pastor, and knowing that you are yourselves to be kept in the unity of the church, and not seduced into a sect; and that the pastors are to be the bonds and ligaments of the body, that by their help it may grow up in love and unity, and not the dividers of the body, Eph. iv. 13—16. As captains and inferior officers in an army, that are to conduct each soldier in unity with the army, and not to separate, and make every troop or regiment an army by itself, that they may be the petty generals. In a word, read some good visitation sermons, which tell you what a minister must be, and choose, if possible, to live under such a minister; I say, if possible; for I know to many it is not possible. Wives, and children, and servants, (while they are bound,) cannot leave their husbands, parents, or masters; and strong christians who are called to do good to others, must prefer that before such advantages to themselves; and many other impediments may deny men such a blessing. But yet I say, undervalue not so great a mercy, and neglect it not, where lawfully it may be had, and prefer nothing before it (as a just impediment) which is not really more worth. And remember that divines do commonly resolve the case of the infidel nations of the world, that they are unexcusable in their infidelity, because when they hear that other nations profess to know the way to heaven, they do not in so great a case go over sea and land to inquire after the doctrine which we profess. And if the Tartarians, Indians, and other nations are bound to send to christian nations for preachers of the gospel, I only leave you proportionably to measure your case by theirs (allowing for the disproportion); and to consider how far you should deny your worldly profit in removing your habitations, for such helps as your own necessities require.

Direct. XII. Make choice of such christians for your familiar friends, and the companions of your lives, as are holy, humble, heavenly, serious, mortified, charitable, peaceable, judicious, experienced, and fixed in the ways of God; and not of ungodly persons, or proud, self-conceited, censorious, dividing, injudicious, unexperienced, sensual, worldly, opinionative, superficial, lukewarm, or unsettled professors.

The reasons of this direction you may perceive in what I said under the last. Your company is a matter of exceeding great concernment to you, as one of the greatest helps or hinderances, comforts or discomforts, of all your lives, especially those that you dwell with, and those that you choose for your familiars and bosom friends; and, therefore, (so far as God's providence doth not forbid you, and make it impossible,) choose such as are here described; or at least, one such for your bosom friend, if you can have acquaintance with no more. It is of unspeakable importance to your salvation, with whom you are associated for most familiar converse. A good companion will teach you what you know not, or remember you of that which you forget, or stir you up when you are dull, or warm you when you are cold, and watch over you and warn you of your danger, and save you from the poison of ill companions. Oh what a help and delight it is to have a holy, judicious, faithful friend to open your heart to, and to

walk with in the ways of life! And how exceeding hard it is to escape sin and hell, and get well to heaven, in company and familiarity of the servants of the devil, who are posting unto hell! Let not your companions be worse than yourselves, lest they make you worse; but as much wiser and better as you can procure. See Eccles. iv. 9, 12; Psal. xvi. 2; cxix. 63; Prov. xiii. 20.

Direct. XIII. Subdue your passions, and abhor all uncharitable principles and practices, and live in love; maintaining peace in your families, and with your neighbours, but especially in the church of God.

Love as you would be loved; yea, love if you would be loved; for there is no surer way to purchase love: and love because you are so freely loved by that God whose wrath you have so oft deserved; let the thankful feeling of his love in Christ, even turn you wholly into love to God and man: abhor every thought, and word, and deed, which is contrary to love, and tendeth to the hurt of others; and hate the backbitings and bitter words of any, which tend to make another odious, and to destroy your love to any that God commandeth you to love. Allow that moderate passion which is the fruit of love, and tendeth only to do good; but resist that which inclineth you to hatred or to do evil. The more men wrong you, remember that you are the more watchfully to maintain your love, knowing that these temptations are sent by the devil on purpose to destroy and quench it, and fill your heart with uncharitableness and wrath. Give place to the wrath of others, and stand not resisting it by words or deeds, Rom. xii. 18—20. "Recompense to no man evil for evil," in word or action, ver. 17. Especially be most tender of the union of true christians, and of the church's peace: when you hear the men of several sects representing one another as odious, understand that it is the language of the devil to draw you from love, into hatred and divisions; and when you must speak odiously of men's sin, speak charitably of their persons, and be as ready to speak of the good that is in them, as of the evil. Believe not that dividing, ungrounded doctrine, which telleth you that you cannot sufficiently disown the errors of any party in doctrine, and worship, and discipline, without a separation or withdrawing from their communion; and which telleth you that you are guilty of the ministerial faults of every pastor that you join with, or of the faults of all that worship which you are present at (which would first separate you from every worshipping society and person upon earth, and then lead you to give over the worshipping of God yourselves). You must love christians as christians, though they have errors and faults repugnant to their christianity. And you must join in worship with christians as christians, though their worship hath errors and faults repugnant to the right order and manner of worship; so be it you join not in that worship which is substantially evil, and such as God doth utterly disown; or that you commit no actual sin yourselves, or that you approve not of the errors and faults of the worshippers, and justify not their smallest sin; or that you prefer not defective, faulty worship before that which is more pure and agreeable to the will of God. For while all the worshippers are faulty and imperfect, all their worship will be so too: and if your actual sin when you pray or preach defectively yourselves, doth not signify that you approve your faultiness, much less will your presence prove that you allow of the faultiness of others. The business that you come upon is to join with a christian congregation in the use of those ordinances which God hath appointed, supposing that the ministers and worshippers will all be sin-

fully defective, in method, order, words, or circumstances: and to bear with that which God doth bear with, and not to refuse that which is God's for the adherent faults of men, no more than you will refuse every dish of meat which is unhand somely cooked, as long as there is no poison in it, and you prefer it not before better, 1 Cor. i. 10; iii. 1—3; xi. 17, 18, 21; Rom. xv. 1, 2.

Direct. XIV. Keep up a constant government over your thoughts and tongues, especially against those particular sins which you are strongest tempted to, and which you see other christians most overtaken with.

Keep your thoughts employed upon something that is good and profitable; either about some useful truths, or about some duty to God or man, of your general or particular calling; yea, about all these in their several seasons: learn how to watch your thoughts, and stop them at their first excursions; and how to quicken them, and make them serviceable to every grace and every duty. You can never improve your solitary hours, if you have not the government of your thoughts.

And as the thoughts must be governed, because they are the first and intimate actings of good or evil; so the tongue must be governed as the first expresser of the mind, and the first instrument of good or hurt to others. Especially take heed of those sins, which the faultiness of most professors of religion doth warn you to avoid. 1. An ordinary course of vain jesting, and unprofitable talk. 2. Provoking, passionate, inconsiderate words, that tend to kindle wrath in others. 3. Backbiting, censuring, and speaking evil of others without any just call, when it is either upon uncertain reports, or uncharitable suspicion, or tendeth more to hurt than good. 4. A forward venting of our own conceits, and a confident pleading for our uncertain, unproved opinions in religion, and a contentious wrangling for them, as if the kingdom of God lay in them. And a forwardness in all company to be the speakers rather than the hearers, and to talk in a magisterial, teaching way, as if we took ourselves to be the wisest, and others to have need to learn of us. But especially take heed of speaking evil of those that have wronged you, or of those that differ from you in some tolerable opinions in religion: and hate that devilish, uncharitable vice, which maketh many ready to believe any thing, or say any thing, be it never so false, of those that are against their sect; yea, of whole parties of men that differ from them, when there is not one of a thousand of all the party that ever they were acquainted with, or ever could prove the thing by, of which they are accused. By the means of these bold, uncharitable reports, the devil hath unspeakably gained against Christ; and the kingdom of malice hath won upon the kingdom of love: and most christians are easier known to be factious, by hating or slandering one another, than they can be known to be Christ's disciples, by loving one another. And while every sect, without remorse, doth speak reproachfully and hatefully of the rest, they learn hereby to hate one another, and harden the infidel and ungodly world, in hating and speaking evil of them all; so that a Turk or heathen need no other witness of the odiousness of all christians, than the venomous words which they speak against each other. And as foul words in quarrels prepare for blows, so these malicious invectives, upon differences in religion, prepare for the cruellest persecutions.

From my own observation, which with a grievous soul I have made in this generation, I hereby give warning to this and all succeeding ages, that if they have any regard to truth or charity, they take heed

how they believe any factious, partial historian or divine, in any evil that he saith of the party which he is against; for (though there be good and credible persons of most parties, yet) you shall find that passion and partiality prevaileth against conscience, truth, and charity, in most that are sick of this disease. And that the envious zeal which is described, James iii. doth make them think they do God service; first, in believing false reports, and then in venting them against those that their zeal or faction doth call the enemies of truth; so that there is little credit to be given to their reproaches, farther than some better evidence is brought to prove the thing. Nay, it would astonish a man to read the impudent lies which I have often read, obtruded upon the world with such confidence, that the reader will be tempted to think, Surely all this cannot be false. Yea, about public words or actions, where you would think that the multitude of witnesses would deter them from speaking it, if it were not true; and yet all as false as tongue can speak. Therefore believe not pride, or faction, or malice in any evil that it saith, unless you have better evidence of the truth.

Most christian is that advice of Dr. H. More, That all parties of christians would mark all the good which is in other parties, and be more forward to speak of that than of the evil. And this would promote the work of charity in the church, and the interest of christianity in the world: whereas the overlooking of all that is good, and aggravating all the evil, (and falsely feigning more than is true,) is the work of greatest service to the devil, and of greatest enmity to christianity and love, that I know commonly practised in the world. Keep your tongues from all such hellish work as this.

Direct. XV. Let every state of life and relation that you are in, be sanctified unto God, and conscientiously used. And to that end understand the advantages and duties of every condition and relation, and the sins, and hinderances, and dangers which you are most liable to.

The duties of our relations are a great part of the work of a christian's life. As magistrates and subjects, pastors and flocks, parents and children, husband and wife, masters and servants; as superiors in gifts or places, or inferiors or equals; as neighbours or companions; in our teaching and learning, ruling and obeying, buying and selling. Be conscionable in all these which are your own relations, if you will live as christians, and be acceptable unto God. An ungodly or oppressing magistrate; a murmuring, rebellious subject; an ungodly, negligent, or factious pastor; an unteachable, refractory, ungodly flock; a husband, parent, or master, without religion, love, or justice; a wife, a child, a servant, without love, and dutiful obedience, and faithful diligence; a proud, contemptuous superior; a malicious, censorious inferior; an unjust, uncharitable neighbour; a deceitful buyer or seller, borrower or lender, and a self-seeking friend, and seducing, unprofitable companion, are all as far from pleasing God by the rest of their works or profession of religion, as they are from being obedient to his will. They provoke him to abhor their prayers and profession, and to tell them that he will rather have obedience than sacrifice. If you are false to men, you are not true to God. It is he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, that is accepted of him. And the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Direct. XVI. Live as those that have all their powers, receivings, and opportunities to do good with in the world; and must be answerable how they have improved all. And as those that believe, that the more good they do, the more they do receive,

and the greater is the honour, the profit, and the pleasure of their lives.

To do no harm, is an honour which is common to a stone, or a clod of clay, with the most innocent man. If this were all the excellency that you aim at, it were better that you had never been born; for then you would certainly have done no harm. Remember, that to do good is the highest imitation of God, supposing that it proceeded from holy love, and be done to the pleasing and glorifying of God, that the principle and the end be suitable to the work. Remember who hath told you, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts xx. 35; and hath promised, that "he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward," (supposing that he have no better to give), Matt. x. 41, 42. "Give to every man that asketh of thee (according to thy ability). Give, and it shall be given to you," Luke vi. 30, 38; xii. 33. "Take that day or hour as lost, in which you do no good (directly or preparatorily). And take that part of your estate as lost, with which (directly or remotely) you do no good. Remember how the judgment must pass on you at last, according to the improvement of your several talents, Matt. xxv. When your time is past, and your estates are gone, or your understandings or your strength decayed, and your power and greatness is levelled with the poorest, it will be an unspeakable comfort to you, if you are able to say, We laid them out sincerely to our Master's use; and an unspeakable terror to you to say, They were lost and cast away on the service of the flesh. If, therefore, you are rulers, and are intrusted with power, study how to do all the good with your power that possibly you can. If you are ministers of Christ, lay out your time, and strength, and parts, in doing good to the souls of all about you; study how you may be most serviceable to the church and cause of Christ. If you are rich men, study how to do all the good with your riches that possibly you can do (not violating the order appointed you by God). In your neighbourhoods, and in all your families and relations, study to do the greatest good you can. Take it thankfully as a great mercy to yourselves, when opportunity to do good is offered you. And content not yourselves to do a little, while you are able to do more. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 7—10. "He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver," 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7. "To do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased," Heb. xiii. 16. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10. Let doing good be the business and employment of your lives; preferring still the public good before the private good of

any; and the good of men's souls before that of the body; but yet neglecting none, but doing the lesser in order to the greater.

Object. But I am a poor, obscure person, that have neither abilities of mind, or body, or estate; and what good can I do?

Ans. There is no rational person that is not intrusted with one talent at the least, (Matt. xxv.) and that is not in a capacity of doing good in the world, if they have but hearts, and be but willing. If you had neither money to give, nor tongues to speak for God, and to provoke others to do good, yet a holy, humble, heavenly, patient, blameless life, is a powerful means of doing good, by showing the excellency of grace, and convincing the ungodly, and stopping the mouths of the enemies of piety, and honouring the ways of God in the world. Such a holy, harmless, exemplary life, is a continual and a powerful sermon. And for giving, if there be first a "willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not," 2 Cor. viii. 12. If you are unfeignedly willing to give, if you had it, God taketh it as done. What you would have given, is set down on your account as given indeed. The widow's two mites were praised by Christ as a bountiful gift, and a cup of cold water is not unrewarded to the willing soul. No one, therefore, is excusable that liveth unprofitably in the world. But yet, men of power, and parts, and wealth, have the greatest reckoning to make. Their ten talents must have a proportionable improvement. It is a great deal of good that they must do. "For to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more," Luke xii. 48.

Direct. XVII. Redeem your time, and highly value every minute; and spare for no labour in the work of your salvation. Dream not of an easy, idle, sluggish life, as sufficient to your high and glorious ends; and rest not in a customary and outside way of duty, without regard to the life and the success.

If any thing in the world require all our power and time, it is that for which all our powers and time are given us; and which we are sure will a thousandfold recompense us for all. Oh what a sottish kind of stupidity is it, for a man to trifle in the way to eternity, that hath an endless life of joy or sorrow, depending on the preparations of so short a life! How little doth he know the worth of his soul, the joys of heaven, the terrors of hell, the malicious diligence of Satan, or the difficulty of salvation, that can idle and play away whole hours of time; and pray as if he prayed not, and seem to be religious when he is not in good earnest! And bestirreth not himself so much to escape hell-fire, and to obtain everlasting joys with Christ, as he would do to escape a temporal death or misery, or to obtain some dignity or riches in the world, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. O, therefore, as ever you care what becometh of your souls, and as ever you will have comfort in the review of your present life, make not a jest of heaven and hell; trifle not in your race and warfare; dally not with God and conscience; play not, and dream not away your time. Know the worth of an hour's time, for the sake of your work, and of your souls, as it is commonly known by dying men. But of this I have spoken already in my "Now or Never," and "A Saint or a Brute," and in the third part of the "Saints' Rest."

Direct. XVIII. Sit down and count what it may cost you to be christians indeed, and to be saved. Reckon not on prosperity, or a cheap religion, but resolve to take up the cross, and follow Christ in

suffering, and to be crucified to the world, and by many tribulations to enter into the kingdom of heaven, Luke xiv. 26—28, 30, 33; Gal. vi. 14; Acts xiv. 22; 1 Thess. iii. 4; 2 Thess. i. 6—8; Mal. v. 10—12; 2 Tim. iii. 12.

All that will live godly in Christ, shall suffer persecution. It is not all that are baptized and called christians, but all that will live godly in Christ Jesus. It is godliness, and not the bare name of christianity, which the serpent's seed have so great an enmity to. I have elsewhere cited an excellent saying of Dr. Thomas Jackson's, to prove that this is to be expected under christian, as well as heathen, governments, and that it is not through the goodness of the great ones of the world, but the cowardliness of our hearts, that the ministers of Christ are not ordinarily martyrs. Though God may possibly exempt you from any notable suffering for his cause, yet it is not wise or safe to expect such an exemption; for that will hinder your preparation for suffering. And a mind prepared to suffer is essential to true christianity. And no man that is not a martyr in resolution and disposition can be saved. If the fiery trial come upon you, let it not seem a strange, unexpected thing, 1 Pet. iv. 12—14, 17. When persecution ariseth because of the word, the unrooted, unsound, unsettled christian, is presently offended, and falls away, Matt. xiii. 21; Mark iv. 17. Then they will fall to distinguishing and carnal reasoning, and prove any thing lawful which is necessary to their peace. "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ," Gal. vi. 12. Shrink not for sufferings. "Fear not them that can but kill the body," Luke xii. 4. Never doth the Spirit of God and glory so much rest upon believers, as in their greatest "sufferings for righteousness sake," (1 Pet. iv. 14), and never have they cause of more "exceeding joy," Matt. v. 11, 12. Prosperity doth not so well agree with a life of faith, as sufferings and adversity. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the (temporal) things which are seen, but at the things (eternal) which are not seen," 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. Read Rom. viii. 33, to the end.

Direct. XIX. If you fall into any sin, rise speedily by a thorough repentance; and take heed both of delay, and of a palliative cure, Luke xiii. 3, 5; xxii. 32.

Take heed of trusting to a general repentance, or a converted state, instead of a particular repentance and conversion from any known sin, especially which is more than the ordinary unavoidable infirmities of a saint. For it is not general repentance indeed, which reacheth not to every known particular. If temptation have cast you down, take heed of lying there, but presently get up again. What the apostle saith of wrath, Eph. iv. 26, the same I may say of other falls, "Let not the sun go down upon them." But go out with Peter and weep with him, if you have sinned with him. If your bones be out of joint, or broken, get them set presently, before they settle in their dislocation; and let the cure be thorough, and spare not for a little pain at first. Let as open confession as the case requireth, and as full restitution, signify the sincerity of your repentance; for a gentle handling of yourselves may undo you; and palliation is the hypocrite's cure. O take heed, lest you presume to sleep one night in your unrepented sin; and take heed, lest delay encourage the tempter to offer you the bait again and again, and to say, Why not once more? why may you not

be as well pardoned for twice as for once; and for thrice as for twice? &c. It is dangerous playing or sleeping at the brink of hell. Away from the temptation and occasion of your sin; stand not disputing, but resolve and be gone; and "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you," John v. 14. Stick not, man, at the shame, or loss, or suffering, which confession, restitution, or reformation may bring; but remember that you can never escape damnation at too dear a rate. This is Christ's meaning, when he speaketh of cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye, if it offend, that is, in snare and tempt you unto sin, Matt. v. 29, 30. Not that you should do so indeed, for you have an easier way to avoid the sin; but that this is far the lesser of the two evils, to lose a hand or eye, than to lose the soul, and, therefore, to be chosen if there were no other remedy. If the thief had no other way to forbear stealing, than to cut off his hand; or the fornicator to cure his lust, than to put out his eyes; it were a cheap remedy. A cheap and easy superficial repentance, may skin over the sore and deceive a hypocrite; but he that would be sure of pardon, and free from fear, must go to the bottom.

Direct. XX. Live as with death continually in your eye, and spend every day in serious preparation for it, that when it cometh, you may find your work despatched; and may not then cry out in vain to God to try you once again.

Promise not yourselves long life: think not of death as at many years' distance, but as hard at hand. Think what will then be needful to your peace and comfort, and order all your life accordingly, and prepare that now which will be needful then. Live now while you have time, as you will resolve and promise God to live, when on your death-bed you are praying for a little time of trial more. It is a great work to die in a joyful assurance and hope of everlasting life, and with a longing desire to depart and be with Christ as best of all, Phil. i. 21, 23. Oh then what a burden and terror it will be, to have an unbelieving or a worldly heart, or a guilty conscience. Now therefore use all possible diligence to strengthen faith, to increase love, to be acquitted from guilt, to be above the world, to have the mind set free from the captivity of the flesh, to walk with God, and to obtain the deepest, most delectable apprehensions of his love in Christ, and of the heavenly blessedness which you expect. Do you feel any doubts of the state of immortality, or staggering at the promise of God through unbelief? Presently do all you can to conquer them, and get a clear resolution to your souls, and leave it not all to do at the time of sickness. Are the thoughts of God and heaven unpleasant or terrible to you? Presently search out the cause of all, and labour in the cure of it as for your lives. Is there any former or present sin, which is a burden or terror to your consciences? Presently seek out to Christ for a cure by faith and true repentance; and do that to disburden your consciences now, which you would do on a sick bed; and leave not so great and necessary a work, to so uncertain, and short, and unfit a time. Is there any thing in this world that is sweeter to your thoughts than God and heaven, and which you cannot willingly let go? Mortify it without delay, considering of its vanity; compare it with heaven; crucify it by the cross of Christ; cease not till you account it loss and dung, for the excellent knowledge of Christ and life eternal, Phil. iii. 7-9. Let not death surprise you as a thing that you never seriously expected. Can you do no more in preparation for it, than you do? If not, why do you wish at death to be tried once again? And why

are you troubled that you lived no better? But if you can, when think you should it be done? Is the time of uncertain, painful sickness better than this? Oh how doth sensuality beset the world! and inconsiderateness deprive them of the benefit of their reason! O sirs, if you know indeed that you must shortly die, live then as dying men should live: choose your condition in the world, and manage it as men should do that must shortly die. Use your power, and command, and honour, and use all your neighbours, and especially use the cause and servants of Christ, as men should do that must shortly die. Build and plant, and buy and sell, and use your riches, as those that must die, remembering that the fashion of all these things is passing away, I Cor. vii. 29, 30. Yea, pray and read, and hear and meditate, as those that must die. Seeing you are as sure of it as if it were this hour, in the name of God delay not your preparations. It is a terrible thing for an immortal soul to pass out of the body in a carnal, unregenerate, unprepared state, and to leave a world which they loved and were familiar with, and go to a world which they neither know nor love, and where they have neither heart nor treasure, Matt. vi. 19-21. The measure of faith which may help you to bear an easy cross, is not sufficient to fortify and encourage your souls to enter upon so great a change. So also bear all your wants and crosses as men that must shortly die: fear the cruelties of men, but as besemeth those that are ready to die. He that can die well, can do any thing, or suffer any thing; and he that is unready to die, is unfit for a fruitful and comfortable life. What can rationally rejoice that man, who is sure to die, and is unready to die, and is yet unfurnished of dying comforts? Let nothing be now sweet to you, which will be bitter to your dying thoughts. Let nothing be much desired now, which will be unprofitable and uncomfortable then. Let nothing seem very heavy or grievous now, which will be light and easy then. Let nothing now seem honourable, which will then seem despicable and vile. Consider of every thing as it will look at death, that when the day shall come which endeth all the joys of the ungodly, you may look up with joy, and say, Welcome heaven: this is the day which I so long expected, which all my days were spent in preparation for, which shall end my fears, and begin my felicity, and put me into possession of all that I desired, and prayed, and laboured for, when my soul shall see its glorified Lord: for he hath said, John xii. 26, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour." Even so, Lord Jesus, remember me now thou art in thy kingdom, and let me be with thee in paradise, Luke xxiii. 42, 43. O thou that spakest those words so full of unexpressible comfort to a sinful woman, in the first speech after thy blessed resurrection, John xx. 17, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Take up now this soul that is thine own, that it may see the glory given thee with the Father, (John xvii. 24.) and instead of this life of temptation, trouble, darkness, distance, and sinful imperfection, I may delightfully behold, and love, and praise, thy Father and my Father, and thy God and my God. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, Luke ii. 29; Acts vii. 59.

And now I have given you all these directions, I shall only request you in the close, that you will set your very hearts to the daily serious practice of them; for there is no other way for a ripe, con-

firmed state of grace: and as ever you regard the glory of God, the honour of your religion, the welfare of the church, and those about you, and the living and dying comforts of yourselves, O do not sluggishly rest in an infant state of grace! Did you but know how weak and strong faith differ, and how a weak and a sound, confirmed christian differ, as to the honour of God, and the good of others, and especially to themselves, both in life and death, it would quickly awaken you to a cheerful diligence, for so high and excellent an end. Did you but well understand the wrong that Christ and the gospel have sustained in the world, yea, in England, by weak, diseased, distempered

christians, your hearts would bleed, and with shame and grief it would be your secret and open lamentation. Stir up then the grace that is given you, and use Christ's means, and do your best, and you will find that Christ is not an insufficient Physician, nor an uneffectual Saviour, or an empty Fountain; but that he is filled with all the fulness of God, and hath spirit and life to communicate to his members, (Zech. xii. 8,) and that there is no want which he cannot supply, and no corruption or temptation which his grace is not sufficient to overcome, John iv. 14; 2 Cor. xii. 9; Rom. vi. 4, 6; Col. iii. 1, 3, 4.

THE CHARACTER
OF
A SOUND, CONFIRMED CHRISTIAN;
AS ALSO
OF A WEAK CHRISTIAN,
AND
OF A SEEMING CHRISTIAN.

WRITTEN TO IMPRINT UPON MEN'S MINDS THE TRUE IDEA OR CONCEPTION OF
GODLINESS AND CHRISTIANITY.

THE PREFACE TO THE SECOND PART,

DIRECTED TO MY WORTHY FRIEND, HENRY ASHURST, ESQ. CITIZEN OF LONDON.

DEAR AND FAITHFUL FRIEND,

WHEN this book was printed and passing into the world, without the ordinary ornament of a prefixed honoured name, my thoughts reduced me into the common way, though not upon the common reasons; assuring me that your name would be more than an accident or ceremony to such a discourse as this; even a part more substantial than a map is in a treatise of geography, or the well-cut figures in tractates of anatomy. Discourses of navigation, architecture, music, &c. may almost as hopefully instruct the learners, without any visible operations or effects, as the characters of well-tempered christians can duly inform the minds of ignorant, ungodly men, of so divine a thing as christianity and godliness, without acquaintance with some such persons, in whom these characters are manifestly exemplified. Wise and holy precepts, are to make wise and holy persons: it is such persons as well as such precepts which bear the image of God; which indeed is most perfect in exactness and integrity in the precepts; (for in them is no imperfection or error, as they are of God;) but it is of greater final excellency, in activity and usefulness, as it is in men. And therefore as God delighteth in his servants, and is glorified in and by them in the world, so Satan usually chooseth such persons, to reproach and make odious to the ignorant, rather than the holy precepts immediately, by which they are directed; both because their holiness is most exasperating by activity; and also most liable to calumny and contempt, through imperfection, and mixture of that which indeed is worthy of dislike. Till godliness and christianity be visible in full perfection, and elevated above the contradiction of folly, and the contempt of pride, the blind, distracted minds of hardened, forsaken sinners, will not acknowledge its divine, celestial nature and worth; but then it will be too late to become partakers of it: they must both know and possess it in its infancy and minority, who will ever enjoy it in its heavenly dignity and glory. If seasonable illumination and conversion confute not the deceits and slanders which pride and ignorance have entertained, the too late confutation of them by death and their following experience, will make them wish, that they had been wise at cheaper rates, when it will be in vain to cry, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are out," Matt. xxv. 8.

But while I offer your name to the malicious world, as an instance of the temper which I here describe, I intend it not as a singular though an eminent instance: for through the great mercy of God, there are thousands of examples of confirmed christians among us in this land, even before those eyes which will not see them. But it is not catalogues, but single names, which writers have used in this way. And why may I not take the advantage of custom, to leave to the world the testimony of my estimation and great respects, to so deserving a person of the primitive christian, catholic temper; and to let them know what sort of men were my most dear and faithful friends? And also thus to express my love, by telling you closely what you must be, as well as by telling the world for their example what you are? Upon these accounts, without your knowledge or consent, I presume thus to prefix your name to this treatise, written long ago, but now published by

Your faithful Friend,

RICHARD BAXTER.

*From my Lodging in New Prison,
June 14. 1669.*

TO THE READER.

READERS,

It is a matter of greater moment than I can express, what idea or image of the nature of godliness and christianity is imprinted upon men's minds: the description which is expressed in the sacred Scriptures, is true and full; the thing described is rational, pure, perfect, unblamable, and amiable. That which is expressed in the lives of the most, is nothing so; but is purblind, defiled, maimed, imperfect, culpable, and mixed with so much of the contrary quality, that to them that cannot distinguish the chaff from the wheat, the sickness from the life, it seemeth an unreasonable, fanciful, loathsome, and vexatious thing, and so far from being worthy to be preferred before all the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, that it seemeth worthy to be kept under as a troubler of kingdoms, societies, and souls. And doubtless this monstrous expression of it in men's lives, is because the perfect expression of it in God's word hath not made a true impression upon the mind, and consequently upon the heart. For as it is sound doctrine which must make sound christians, so doctrine worketh on the will and affections, not as it is in itself, and as delivered, but as it is understood, believed, remembered, considered; even as it is imprinted on the mind, and used by it. And as interposed matter, or defective application, may cause the image on the wax to be imperfect, though made by the most perfect seal; so is it in this case, when one man doth defectively understand the Scripture description of a godly man, or christian; and another by misunderstanding mixeth false conceptions of his own; and another by a corrupt, depraved will doth hinder the understanding from believing, or remembering, or considering and using what it partly apprehendeth; what wonder if the godliness and christianity in their hearts be unlike the godliness and christianity in the Scriptures? When the law of God, in nature and Scripture, is pure and uncorrupt, and the law of God written imperfectly on the heart, is there mixed with the carnal law in their members, no marvel if it be expressed accordingly in their lives.

I have therefore much endeavoured in all my writings, and especially in this, to draw out the full portraiture of a christian or godly man indeed, and to describe God's image on the soul of man, in such a manner as tendeth to the just information of the reader's mind, and the filling up of the wants, and rectifying the errors, which may be found in his former conceptions of it. And I do purposely inculcate the same things oft, in several writings, (as when I preached I did in all my sermons,) that the reader may find that I bring him not undigested, needless novelties, and that the frequent repetition of them may help to make the deeper and fuller impression: for my work is to subserve the Holy Ghost, in putting God's law into men's hearts, and writing it out truly, clearly, and fully upon their inward parts; that they may be made such themselves, by understanding thoroughly what they must be, and what a solid christian is; and that thus they may be born again by the incorruptible, immortal seed, the word of God, which will live and abide for ever; and may purify their souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, 1 Pet. i. 22, 23, 25. He is the best lawyer, physician, soldier, &c. who hath his doctrine in his brain, and not only in his books, and hath digested his reading into an intellectual system and habit of knowledge. If ministers had a hundred times over repeated the integral portraiture or character of a sound christian, till it had been as familiar to the minds and memories of their hearers, as is the description of a magistrate, a physician, a schoolmaster, a husbandman, a shepherd, and such things as they are well acquainted with, it would have been a powerful means to make sound christians. But when men's minds conceive of a christian, as a man that differeth from heathens and infidels, in nothing but holding the christian opinions, and using different words and ceremonies of worship, and such like, no wonder if such be but opinionative, lifeless christians: and if their religion make them no better than a Seneca or Plutarch, I shall never believe that they are any surer to be saved than they. And such a sort of men there are, that suppose christianity to consist but of these three parts. 1. The christian doctrine acknowledged (which they call faith). 2. The orders and ordinances of the christian church and worship, submitted to, and decently used (which they call godliness). And, 3. The heart and life of a Cato, Cicero, or Socrates adjoined. But all that goeth beyond this, (which is the life of christianity and godliness, a lively faith, and hope, and love; a heavenly and holy mind and life, from the renewing, indwelling Spirit of God, which is described in this treatise,) they are strangers to it, and take it to be but fancy and hypocrisy. These no-christians do much to reduce the church to infidelity; that there may be indeed no christians in the world. For my part I must confess, if there were no better christians in the world than these, I think I should be no christian myself: and if Christ made men no better than the religion of Socrates, Cato, or Seneca, and did no more to the reparation and perfecting of men's hearts and lives, I should think no better of the christian religion than of theirs; for the means is to be estimated by the end and use; and that is the best physician that hath the remedies which are fittest to work the cure. If God had not acquainted me with a sort of men that have really more holiness, mortification, spirituality, love to God, and to one another, and even to enemies, and more heavenly desires, expectations, and delights, than these men before described have, it would have been a very great hindrance to my faith.

The same may I say of those that place godliness and christianity only in holding strict opinions, and in affected, needless singularities, and in the fluent oratory and length of prayer, and avoiding other men's forms and modes of worship, and in any thing short of a renewed, holy, heavenly heart and life.

And undoubtedly, if a true, full character of godliness had been imprinted in their minds, we should never have seen the professors of it so blotted with sensuality, selfishness, pride, ambition, worldliness, distrust of God, self-conceitedness, heresy, schism, rebellions, unquietness, impatience, unmercifulness, and cruelty to men's souls and bodies, as we have seen them in this age; and all this justified as consistent with religion.

And I fear, that because this treatise will speak to few that are not some way guilty, every face which hath a spot or blemish will be offended with the glass; and lest the faulty will say, that I particularly intended to disgrace them: but I must here tell the reader, to prevent his misunderstanding, that if he

shall imagine that I have my eyes upon particular parties, and, as a discontented person, do intend to blame those that differ from myself, or to grieve inferiors, or dishonour and asperse superiors, they will mistake me, and wrong themselves, and me, who professedly intend but the true description of sound christians, diseased christians, and seeming christians.

And for the manner of this writing, I am conscious it hath but little to commend it. The matter is that for which it is published. The Lord Verulam, in his *Essays*, truly saith, that "much reading makes one full, much discourse doth make one ready, and much writing doth make a man exact." Though I have had my part of all these means, yet being parted five years from my books, and three years from my preaching, the effects may decay; and you must expect neither quotations or oratory testimonies, or ornament of style: but having not yet wholly ceased from writing, I may own so much of the exactness, as will allow me to entreat the reader, not to use me as many have done, who by overlooking some one word, have made the sense another thing, and have made it a crime to be exact in writing, because they cannot or will not be exact in reading, or charitable or humane in interpreting.

PART II.

OF THE DIRECTIONS FOR WEAK CHRISTIANS.

IN the explication of the text, which I made the ground of the foregoing discourse, I have showed you that there is a degree of grace to be expected and sought after by all true christians, which putteth the soul into a sound, confirmed, radiated state, in comparison of that weak, diseased, tottering condition, which most christians now continue in. And I have showed you how desirable a state that is, and what calamities follow the languishing, unhealthful state, even of such as may be saved. And indeed did we but rightly understand how deeply the errors and sins of many well-meaning christians have wounded the interest of religion in this age; and how heinously they have dishonoured God, and caused the enemies of holiness to blaspheme, and hardened thousands in popery and ungodliness, in probability to their perdition; had we well observed when God's judgments have begun, and understood what sins have caused our wars, and plagues, and flames, and worse than all these, our great heart-divisions, and church-distractions and convulsions; we should ere this have given over the flattering of ourselves and one another, in such a heaven-provoking state; and the ostentation of that little goodness, which hath been eclipsed by such lamentable evils. And instead of these, we should have betaken ourselves to the exercise of such a serious, deep repentance as the quality of our sins, and the greatness of God's chastisements, do require. It is a doleful case, to see how light many make of all the rest of their distempers, when once they think that they have so much grace and mortification, as is absolutely necessary to save their souls; and expect that preachers should say little to weak christians, but words of comfort, setting forth their happiness. And yet if one of them, when he hath the gout, or stone, or cholic, or dropsy, doth send for a physician, he would think himself derided or abused, if his physician, instead of curing his disease, should only comfort him, by telling him that he is not dead. What excellent disputations have Cicero and Seneca, the Platonists and Stoics, to prove that virtue is of itself sufficient to make man happy! And yet many christians live as if holiness were but the way and means to their felicity, or at best but a small part of their felicity itself; or as if felicity itself grew burdensome, or were not desirable in this life; or a small degree of it were as good as a greater.

And too many mistake the will of God, and the nature of sanctification, and place their religion in the hot persecution of those mistakes. They make

a composition of error and passion, and an unyielding stiffness in them, and siding with the church or party which maintaineth them, and an uncharitable censoring those that are against them, and an unpeaceable contending for them; and this composition they take for godliness, especially if there be but a few drachms of godliness and truth in the composition, though corrupted and overpowered by the rest.

For these miscarriages of many well-meaning, zealous persons, the land mourneth, the churches groan; kingdoms are disturbed by them; families are disquieted by them; godliness is hindered and much dishonoured by them; the wicked are hardened by them, and encouraged to hate, and blaspheme, and oppose religion; the glory of the christian faith is obscured by them; and the infidel, Mahometan, and heathen world, are kept from faith in Jesus Christ, and many millions of souls destroyed by them. I mean by the miscarriages of the weaker sort of christians, and by the wicked lives of those carnal hypocrites, who for custom or worldly interest, do profess that christianity which was never received by their hearts.

And all this is much promoted by their indiscretion, who are so intent upon the consolatory opening of the safety and happiness of believers, that they omit the due explication of their description, their dangers, and their duties.

One part of this too much neglected work I have endeavoured to perform in the foregoing treatise: another I shall attempt in this second part. There are five degrees or ranks of true christians observable. 1. The weakest christians, who have only the essentials of christianity, or very little more: as infants that are alive, but of little strength or use to others. 2. Those that are lapsed into some wounding sin, though not into a state of damnation; like men at age, who have lost the use of some one member for the present, though they are strong in other parts. 3. Those that having the integral parts of christianity in a considerable measure, are in a sound and healthful state, though neither perfect, nor of the highest form or rank of christians in this life, nor without such infirmities, as are the matter of their daily watchfulness and humiliation. 4. Those that are so strong as to attain extraordinary degrees of grace, who are therefore comparatively called perfect, as Matt. v. 45. 5. Those that have an absolute perfection without sin; that is, the heavenly inhabitants.

Among all these, it is the third sort or degree which I have here characterized, and upon the bye, the first sort, and the hypocrite. I meddle not now with the lapsed christian as such, nor with those giants in holiness of extraordinary strength; nor with the perfect, blessed souls in heaven. But it is the christian who hath attained that confirmation in grace, and composed, quiet, fruitful state, which we might ordinarily expect, if we were industrious, whose image and character I shall now present you with. I call him oftentimes a christian indeed, in allusion to Christ's description of Nathaneel, John i. 47, and as we commonly use that word, for one that answereth his own profession without any notable dishonour or defect; as we say, Such a man is a scholar indeed; and not as signifying his mere sincerity. I mean one whose heart and life are so conformed to the principles, the rule, and the hopes of christianity, that to the honour of Christ, the true nature of our religion is discernible in his conversation, Matt. v. 16. In whom an impartial infidel might perceive the true nature of the christian faith and godliness. If the world were fuller of such living images of Christ, who, like true regenerate children, represent their heavenly Father, christianity would not have met with so much prejudice, nor had so many enemies in the world, nor would so many millions have been kept in the darkness of heathenism and infidelity, by flying from christians, as a sort of people that are common and unclean.

Among christians, there are babes, that must be fed with milk, and not with strong meat, that are "unskilful in the word of righteousness," 1 John ii. 2, 12-14; Heb. v. 12-14, and novices, who are unsettled, and in danger of an overthrow, 1 Tim. iii. 6; John xv. 3, 5, &c. In these the nature and excellency of christianity, is little more apparent than reason in a little child. And there are strong, confirmed christians, who, by "reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," Heb. v. 13, 14; and who show forth the glory of him that hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light; of whom God himself may say to Satan and their malicious enemies, as once of Job, "Hast thou not seen my servant Job?" &c. This christian indeed I shall now describe to you, both to confute the infidel's slanders of christianity, and to teach men those false descriptions which have caused the presumption of the profane, and the irregularities of erroneous sectaries; and to tell you what manner of persons they be, that God is honoured by; and what you must be, if you will understand your own religion. Be christians indeed, and you will have the comforts indeed of christianity; and will find that its fruits and joys are not dreams, and shadows, and imaginations, if you content not yourselves with an imagination, dream, and shadow of christianity, or with some clouded spark, or buried seed.

The Characters.

I. 1. A christian indeed, (by which I still mean, a sound, confirmed christian,) is one that contenteth not himself to have a seed or habit of faith, but he liveth by faith, as the sensualist by sight or sense. Not putting out the eye of sense, nor living as if he had no body, or lived not in a world of sensible objects; but as he is a reasonable creature, which exalseth him above the sensitive nature, so faith is the true information of his reason, about those high and excellent things, which must take him up above things sensible. He hath so firm a belief of the life to come, as procured by Christ, and promised in the gospel, as that it serveth him for the government of his soul, as his bodily sight doth for the conduct of

his body. I say not, that he is assaulted with no temptations, nor that his faith is perfect in degree, nor that believing moveth him as passionately as sight or sense would do: but it doth effectually move him through the course and tenour of his life, to do those things for the life to come, which he would do if he saw the glory of heaven: and to shun those things for the avoiding of damnation, which he would shun if he saw the flames of hell. Whether he do these things so fervently or not, his belief is powerful, effectual, and victorious. Let sight and sense invite him to their objects, and entice him to sin, and forsake his God, the objects of faith shall prevail against them, in the bent of an even, a constant, and resolved life. It is things unseen which he taketh for his treasure, and which have his heart and hope, and chiefest labours. All things else which he hath to do, are but subservient to his faith and heavenly interest, as his sensitive faculties are ruled by his reason. His faith is not only his opinion, which teacheth him to choose what church or party he will be of; but it is his intellectual light, by which he liveth, and in the confidence and comfort of which he dieth. "For we walk by faith, not by sight. We groan to be clothed upon with our heavenly house. Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him," 2 Cor. v. 7-9. "Now the just shall live by faith," Heb. x. 3. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. Most of the examples in Heb. xi. do show you this truth, that true christians live and govern their actions, by the firm belief of the promise of God, and of another life when this is ended. "By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith," ver. 7. "Abraham looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God," ver. 10. "Moses feared not the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible," ver. 27. So the three witnesses, Dan. iii. and Daniel himself, chap. vi. and all believers, have lived this life, as Abraham the father of the faithful did; who, as it is said of him, "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God," Rom. iv. 20. The faith of a christian is truly divine; and he knoweth that God's truth is as certain as sight itself can be; however sight be apter to move the passions. Therefore, if you can judge but what a rational man would be, if he saw heaven and hell, and all that God had appointed us to believe, then you may conjecture what a confirmed christian is; though sense do cause more sensible apprehensions.

2. The weak christian, also, hath a faith that is divine, as caused by God, and resting on his word and truth. And he so far liveth by this faith, as that it commandeth and guideth the scope and drift of his heart and life. But he believeth with a great deal of staggering and unbelief; and therefore his hopes are interrupted by his troublesome doubts and fears; and the dimness and languor of his faith is seen in the faintness of his desires, and the many blemishes of his heart and life. And sight and sensual objects are so much the more powerful with him, by how much the light and life of faith is dark and weak.

3. The hypocrite, or best of the unregenerate, believeth but either with a human faith, which resteth but on the word of man, or else with a dead, opinionative faith, which is overpowered by infidelity, or is like the dreaming thoughts of a man asleep, which stir him not to action. He liveth by sight, and not by

faith; for he hath not a faith that will overpower sense and sensual objects, James ii. 14; Matt. xiii. 22.

II. 1. A christian indeed not only knoweth why he is a christian, but seeth those reasons for his religion, which disgrace all that the cunningest atheist or infidel can say against it; and so far satisfy, confirm, and establish him, that emergent difficulties, temptations, and objections, do not at all stagger him, or raise any deliberate doubts in him of the truth of the word of God. He seeth first the natural evidence of those foundation-truths which nature itself maketh known; as that there is a God of infinite being, power, wisdom, and goodness, the Creator, the Owner, the Ruler, and the Father, felicity, and end of man; that we owe him all our love and service; that none of our fidelity shall be in vain, or unrewarded, and none shall be finally a loser by his duty; that man who is naturally governed by the hopes and fears of another life, is made and liveth for that other life, where his soul shall be sentenced by God his Judge, to happiness or misery, &c. And then he discerneth the attestation of God to those supernatural, superadded revelations of the gospel, containing the doctrine of man's redemption. And he seeth how wonderfully these are built upon the former, and how excellently the Creator's and Redeemer's doctrine and laws agree; and how much countenance supernatural truths receive from the presupposed naturals: so that he doth not adhere to Christ and religion by the mere engagement of education, friends, or worldly advantages; nor by a blind resolution, which wanteth nothing but a strong temptation (from a deceiver or a worldly interest) to shake or overthrow it. But he is built upon the rock, which will stand in the assault of Satan's storms, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Matt. xvi. 18; xiii. 23; vii. 25; John vi. 68, 69.

2. But a weak christian hath but a dim and general kind of knowledge of the reasons of his religion; or, at least, but a weak apprehension of them, though he have the best and most unanswerable reasons. And either he is confident in the dark upon grounds which he cannot make good, and which want but a strong assault to shake them; or else he is troubled and ready to stagger at every difficulty which occurreth. Every hard saying in the Scripture doth offend him; and every seeming contradiction shaketh him. And the depth of mysteries, which pass his understanding, do make him say as Nicodemus of regeneration, "How can these things be?" And if he meet with the objections of a cunning infidel, he is unable so to defend the truth, and clear his way through them, as to come off unwounded, and unshaken, and to be the more confirmed in the truth of his belief, by discerning the vanity of all that is said against it, Heb. v. 12, 13; Matt. xv. 16; 1 Cor. xiv. 20; John xii. 16.

3. The seeming christian either hath no solid reasons at all for his religion, or else if he have the best, he hath no sound apprehension of them; but though he be never so learned and orthodox, and can preach and defend the faith, it is not so rooted in him as to endure the trial; but if a strong temptation from subtlety or carnal interest assault him, you shall see that he was built upon the sand, and that there was in him a secret root of bitterness, and an evil heart of unbelief, which causeth him to depart from the living God, Heb. iii. 12; Matt. xiii. 20—22; vii. 26, 27; Heb. xii. 15; John vi. 60, 64, 66; 1 Tim. v. 10, 11.

III. 1. A christian indeed, is not only confirmed in the essentials of christianity, but he hath a clear, delightful sight of those useful truths, which are the integrals of christianity, and are built upon the fun-

damentals, and are the branches of the master-points of faith. Though he see not all the lesser truths, (which are branched out at last into innumerable particles,) yet he seeth the main body of sacred verities, delivered by Christ for man's sanctification; and seeth them methodically in their proper places; and seeth how one supports another, and in how beautiful an order and contexture they are placed. And as he sticketh not in the bare principles, so he receiveth all these additions of knowledge, not notionally only, but practically, as the food on which his soul must live, Heb. v. 13, 14; vi. 1, 2, &c.; Matt. xiii. 11; Eph. i. 18; iii. 18, 19; John xiii. 17.

2. A weak christian, (in knowledge,) besides the principles or essentials of religion, doth know but a few disordered, scattered truths; which are also but half known, because while he hath some knowledge of those points, he is ignorant of many others, which are needful to the supporting, and clearing, and improving of them; and because he knoweth them not in their places, and order, and relation, and aspect upon other truths. And, therefore, if temptations be strong, and come with advantage, the weak christian, in such points, is easily drawn into many errors; and thence into great confidence and conceitedness in those errors; and thence into sinful, dangerous courses in the prosecution and practice of those errors. Such are like "children tossed up and down, and carried to and fro by every wind of doctrine, through the cunning sleight and subtlety of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," Eph. iv. 14; 2 Cor. xi. 3; Col. ii. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 7.

3. The seeming christian having no saving, practical knowledge of the essentials of christianity themselves, doth therefore either neglect to know the rest, or knoweth them but notionally, as common sciences, and subjecteth them all to his worldly interest. And, therefore, is still of that side or party in religion, which, upon the account of safety, honour, or preferment, his flesh commandeth him to follow. Either he is still on the greater, rising side, and of the ruler's religion, be it what it will; or if he dissent, it is in pursuit of another game, which pride or fleshly ends have started, 2 Pet. ii. 14; Gal. iii. 3; John ix. 22; xii. 42, 43; Matt. xiii. 21, 22.

IV. 1. The christian indeed, hath not only reason for his religion, but also hath an inward, continual principle, even the Spirit of Christ, which is as a new nature, inclining and enlivening him to a holy life; whereby he mindeth and savoureth the things of the Spirit. Not that his nature doth work blindly, as nature doth in the irrational creatures; but at least it much imitateth nature as it is found in rational creatures, where the inclination is necessary, but the operations free, and subject to reason. It is a spiritual appetite in the rational appetite, even the will, and a spiritual, visive disposition in the understanding. Not a faculty in a faculty; but the right disposition of the faculties to their highest objects, to which they are by corruption made unsuitable. So that it is neither a proper power in the natural sense, nor a mere act, but nearest to the nature of a seminal disposition or habit. It is the health and rectitude of the faculties of the soul. Even as nature hath made the understanding disposed to truth in general, and the will disposed or inclined to good in general, and to self-preservation and felicity in particular; so the Spirit of Christ doth dispose the understanding to spiritual truth, to know God and the matters of salvation, and doth incline the will to God and holiness, not blindly, as they are unknown, but to love and serve a known God. So that whether this be properly or only analogically called a nature, or rather should be called a habit, I determine not;

but certainly it is a fixed disposition and inclination, which Scripture calleth the "divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 4, and "the seed of God abiding in us," 1 John iii. 9. But most usually it is called the Spirit of God, or of Christ, in us. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body," 1 Cor. xii. 13. Therefore, we are said "to be in the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit, and by the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body," Rom. viii. 1, 9, 13. And it is called, "the Spirit of the Son, and the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;" or are inclined to God, as children to their father; and the "Spirit of grace and supplication," Rom. viii. 15, 23, 26; Gal. iv. 6; v. 17, 18; Eph. ii. 18, 22; iv. 3, 4; Phil. i. 27; ii. 1; Zech. xii. 10. From this Spirit, and the fruits of it, we are called new creatures, and quickened, and made alive to God, 2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 15; Rom. vi. 11, 13. It is a great controversy, whether this holy disposition and inclination was natural to Adam or not, and consequently, whether it be a restored nature in us, or not. It was so natural to him as health is natural to the body, but not so natural as to be a necessitating principle, nor so as to be inseparable and unlosable.

2. This same Spirit and holy inclination is in the weakest christian also, but in a small degree, and remissly operating, so as that the fleshly inclination oft seemeth to be the stronger, when he judgeth by its passionate strugglings within him. Though, indeed, the Spirit of life doth not only strive, but conquer in the main, even in the weakest christians, Rom. viii. 9; Gal. v. 17—21.

3. The seeming christian hath only the uneffectual motions of the Spirit to a holy life, and effectual motions and inward dispositions to some common duties of religion. And from these, with the natural principles of self-love and common honesty, with the outward persuasions of company and advantages, his religion is maintained, without the regeneration of the Spirit, John iii. 6.

V. From hence it followeth, 1. That a christian indeed doth not serve God for fear only, but for love; even for love both of himself, and of his holy work and service. Yea, the strong christian's love to God and holiness, is not only greater than his love to creatures, but greater than his fear of wrath and punishment. The love of God constraineth him to duty, 2 Cor. v. 14. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," Rom. xiii. 10, therefore, the gospel cannot be obeyed without it. He saith not, Oh that this were no duty, and Oh that this forbidden thing were lawful; though his flesh say so, the Spirit, which is the predominant part, doth not. But he saith, "Oh how I love thy law! Oh that my ways were so directed that I might keep thy statutes!" Psal. cxix. 5. For the Spirit is willing, even when the flesh is weak. He serveth not God against his will; but his will is to serve him more and better than he doth. He longeth to be perfect, and perfectly to do the will of God, and taketh the remnant of his sinful infirmities to be a kind of bondage to him, which he groaneth to be delivered from. To will even perfection is present with him, though not perfectly; and though he do not all that he willett. And this is the true meaning of Paul's complaints, Rom. vii. Because the flesh warreth against the Spirit, he cannot do the good that he would; that is, he cannot be perfect, for so he would be, Gal. v. 17. His love and will excel his practice.

2. The weak christian also hath more love to God and holiness than to the world and fleshly pleasure. But yet his fear of punishment is greater than his love to God and holiness. To have no love to God,

is inconsistent with a state of grace; and so it is to have less love to God than to the world, and less love to holiness than to sin. But to have more fear than love is consistent with sincerity of grace. Yea, the weak christian's love to God and holiness is joined with so much backwardness and averseness, and interrupted with weariness, and with the carnal allurements and diversions of the creature, that he cannot certainly perceive whether his love and willingness be sincere or not. He goeth on in a course of duty, but so heavily, that he scarce knoweth whether his love or loathing of it be the greater. He goeth to it as a sick man to his meat, or labour. All that he doth is with so much pain or undisposeness, that to his feeling, his averseness seemeth greater than his willingness, were it not that necessity maketh him willing. For the habitual love and complacency which he hath towards God and duty, is so oppressed by fear, and by averseness, that it is not so much felt in act as they.

3. A seeming christian hath no true love of God and holiness at all, but some uneffectual liking and wishes, which are overborne by a greater backwardness, and by a greater love to earthly things; so that fear alone, without any true, effectual love, is the spring and principle of his religion and obedience. God hath not his heart, when he draweth near him with his lips; he doth more than he would do, if he were not forced by necessity and fear; and had rather be excused, and lead another kind of life, Matt. xv. 8; Isa. xxix. 13. Though necessity and fear are very helpful to the most sincere, yet fear alone, without love or willingness, is a graceless state.

VI. 1. A christian indeed doth love God in these three gradations: he loveth him much for his mercy to himself, and for that goodness which consisteth in benignity to himself; but he loveth him more for his mercy to the church, and for that goodness which consisteth in his benignity to the church; but he loveth him most of all for his infinite perfections and essential excellences, his infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, simply in himself considered. For he knoweth that love to himself obligeth him to returns of love; especially differencing, saving grace: and he knoweth that the souls of millions are more worth incomparably than his own, and that God may be much more honoured by them, than by him alone; and therefore he knoweth that the mercy to many is greater mercy, and a greater demonstration of the goodness of God, and therefore doth render him more amiable to man, Rom. ix. 3. And yet he knoweth that essential perfection and goodness of God, as simply in himself and for himself, is much more amiable than his benignity to the creature; and that he that is the first efficient, must needs be the ultimate, final cause of all things; and that God is not finally for the creature, but the creature for God (for all that he needeth it not); "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things," Rom. xi. 36. And as he is infinitely better than ourselves, so he is to be better loved than ourselves. As I love a wise and virtuous person, though he be one I never expect to receive any thing from, and therefore love him for his own sake, and not for his benignity or usefulness to me; so must I love God most for his essential perfections, though his benignity also doth represent him amiable. As he is blindly selfish that would not rather himself be annihilated or perish, than whole kingdoms should all perish, or the sun be taken out of the world; (because that which is best must be loved as best, and therefore be best loved;) so is he more blind, who in his estimative, complacential love, preferreth not

infinite, eternal goodness, before such an imperfect, silly creature as himself (or all the world). We are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves, when God is to be loved with all the heart, and soul, and might, which therefore signifieth more than to love him as ourselves (or else he were to be loved no more than our neighbour). So that the strong christian loveth God so much above himself, as that he accounteth himself and all his interests as nothing in comparison of God, yea, and loveth himself more for God than for himself: though his own salvation be loved and desired by him, and God must be loved for his mercy and benignity; yet that salvation itself which he desireth, is nothing else but the love of God; wherein his love is the final, felicitating act, and God is the final, felicitating object; and the felicity of loving is not first desired, but the attractive object doth draw out our love, and thereby make us consequently happy in the enjoying exercise thereof. Thus God is all and in all to the soul, Psal. lxxiii. 25; Rom. xi. 36; 1 Cor. x. 31; Deut. vi. 5; Matt. xxiii. 37; xix. 17.

2. A weak christian also loveth God as one that is infinitely better than himself and all things (or else he did not love him at all as God). But in the exercise he is so much in the minding of himself, and so seldom and weak in the contemplation of God's perfections, that he feeleth more of his love to himself, than unto God; and feeleth more of his love to God, as for the benefits which he receiveth in and by himself, than as for his own perfections; yea, and often feeleth the love of himself to work more strongly than his love to the church, and all else in the world. The care of his own salvation is the highest principle which he ordinarily perceiveth in any great strength in him; and he is very little and weakly carried out to the love of the whole church, and to the love of God above himself, Phil. ii. 20—22; 1 Cor. x. 24; Jer. xlv. 5.

3. A seeming christian hath a common love of God as he is good, both in himself, and unto the world, and unto him. But this is not for his holiness; and it is but a general, uneffectual approbation and praise of God, which followeth a dead, uneffectual unbelief: but his chiefest, predominant love is always to his carnal self, and the love both of his soul, and of God, is subjected to his fleshly self-love. His chiefest love to God is for prospering him in the world, and such as is subservient to his sensuality, pride, covetousness, presumption, and false hopes, Luke xviii. 21, 22; 1 John ii. 15; 2 Tim. iii. 2, 4; John xii. 43; v. 42.

VII. 1. A christian indeed doth practically take this love of God, and the holy expressions of it, to be the very life and top of his religion, and the very life, and beauty, and pleasure of his soul: he makes it his work in the world, and loveth himself (complacentially) but so far as he findeth in himself the love of God; and so far as he findeth himself without it, he loatheth himself as an unlovely carcass: and so far as his prayers and obedience are without it, he looks on them but as unacceptable, loathsome things; and therefore he is taken up in the study of redemption, because he can no where so clearly see the love and loveliness of God, as in the face of a Redeemer, even in the wonders of love revealed in Christ. And he studieth them, that love may kindle love; and therefore he delighteth in the contemplating of God's attributes and infinite perfections; and in the beholding of him in the frame of the creation, and reading his name in the book of his works, that his soul may, by such steps, be raised in love and admiration of his Maker. And as it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun or

light, so is it to the mind of the christian indeed, to be frequently and seriously contemplating the nature and glory of God; and the exercise of love in such contemplations is most of his daily walk with God. And therefore it is also, that he is more taken up in the exercises of thanksgiving, and the praises of the Almighty, than in the lower parts of godliness; so that though he neglect not confession of sin and humiliation, yet doth he use them but in subserviency to the love and praise of God: he doth but rid out the filth that is undecent in a heart that is to entertain its God. He placeth not the chief part of his religion in any outward duties, nor in any lower, preparatory acts; nor doth he stop in any of these, however he neglect them not. But he useth them all to advance his soul in the love of God; and useth them the more diligently, because the love of God, to which they conduce, as to their proper end, is so high and excellent a work. Therefore in David's psalms you find a heart delighting itself in the praises of God, and in love with his word and works, in order to his praises, Psal. cxvi. 1, &c.; cvi. ciii. cxlv. cxlvi. &c. Rom. viii. 37.

2. The weak christian is taken up but very little with the lively exercises of love and praise, nor with any studies higher than his own distempered heart: the care of his poor soul, and the complaining of his manifold infirmities and corruptions, is the most of his religion: and if he set himself to the praising of God, or to thanksgiving, he is as dull and short in it as if it were not his proper work, Psal. lxxvii.; Mark ix. 24; xvi. 14.

3. The seeming christian liveth to the flesh; and carnal self-love is the active principle of his life; and he is neither exercised in humiliation or in praise sincerely, being unacquainted both with holy joy and sorrow; but knowing that he is in the hands of God, to prosper or destroy him, he will humble himself to him to escape his judgments, and praise him with some gladness for the sunshine of prosperity; and he will seem to be piously thanking God, when he is but rejoicing in the accommodations of his flesh, or strengthening his presumption and false hopes of heaven, Luke xviii. 11; xii. 19; Isa. lviii. 2.

VIII. 1. A christian indeed is one that is so apprehensive of his lost condition, unworthiness, and utter insufficiency for himself, and of the office, perfection, and sufficiency of Christ, that he hath absolutely put his soul, and all his hopes, into the hands of Christ, and now liveth in him and upon him; as having no life but what he hath from Christ, nor any other way of access to God, or acceptance of his person, or his service, but by him. In him he beholdeth and delightfully admireth the love and goodness of the Father; in him he hath access with boldness unto God; through him the most terrible, avenging judge is become a reconciled God, and he that we could not remember but with trembling, is become the most desirable object of our thoughts. He is delightfully employed in prying into the unsearchable mystery; and Christ doth even dwell in his heart by faith; "and being rooted and grounded in love, he apprehendeth with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and knoweth the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," Eph. iii. 17—19. He perceiveth that he is daily beholden to Christ that he is not in hell, that sin doth not make him like to devils, and that he is not utterly forsaken of God: he feeleth that he is beholden to Christ for every hour's time, and every mercy to his soul or body, and for all his hope of mercy in this life, or in the life to come. He perceiveth that he is dead in himself, and that his "life is hid with Christ in God." And therefore he

is as "buried and risen again with Christ;" even "dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ," Rom. vi. 3, 4, 11; Col. iv. 4. He saith with Paul, Gal. ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Thus doth he live as truly and constantly by the second Adam, who is a quickening Spirit, as he doth by the first Adam, who was a living soul, 1 Cor. xv. 45. This is a confirmed christian's life.

2. But the weak christian, though he be also united unto Christ, and live by faith, yet how languid are the operations of that faith! How dark and dull are his thoughts of Christ! How little is his sense of the wonders of God's love revealed to the world, in the mystery of redemption! How little use doth he make of Christ! And how little life receives he from him! And how little comfort findeth he in believing, in comparison of that which the confirmed find! He is to Christ as a sick person to his food: he only picketh here and there a little of the crumbs of the bread of life, to keep him from dying; but is woefully unacquainted with the powerfulest works of faith. He is such a believer as is next to an unbeliever, and such a member of Christ as is next to a mere stranger.

3. And for the seeming christian, he may understand the letter of the gospel, and number himself with Christ's disciples, and be baptized with water, and have such a faith as is a dead opinion; but he hath not an effectual, living faith, nor is baptized with the Holy Ghost; nor is his soul engaged absolutely and entirely in the covenant of christianity to his Redeemer: he may have a handsome, well-made image of christianity, but it is the flesh and sense, and not Christ and faith, by which his life is actuated and ordered, John iii. 6; Rom. ii. 28.

IX. 1. A christian indeed doth firmly believe that Christ is a "Teacher sent from God," (John iii. 2,) and that he came from heaven to reveal his Father's will, and to bring "life and immortality" more fully "to light by his gospel;" and that if an angel had been sent to tell us of the life to come, and the way thereto, he had not been so credible and venerable a messenger as the Son of God; and therefore he taketh him alone for his chief Teacher, and knoweth no master on earth but him, and such as he appointeth under him: his study in the world is to know a crucified and glorified Christ, and God by him, and he regardeth no other knowledge, nor useth any other studies but this, and such as are subservient to this. Even when he studieth the works of nature, it is as by the conduct of the Restorer of nature, and as one help appointed him by Christ, to lead him up to the knowledge of God. And therefore he perceiveth that Christ is made of God unto us, wisdom as well as righteousness; and that christianity is the true philosophy; and that the wisdom of the world, which is only about worldly things, from worldly principles, to a worldly end, is foolishness with God: he taketh nothing for wisdom which tendeth not to acquaint him more with God, or lead him up to everlasting happiness. Christ is his Teacher, (either by natural or supernatural revelation,) and God is his ultimate end in all his studies, and all that he desireth to know in the world. He valueth knowledge according to its usefulness; and he knoweth that its chief use is to lead us to the love of God, Matt. xxiii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 30; ii. 2, &c.; John i. 18; Col. ii. 3; Eph. iv. 13.

2. Though the weak christian hath the same

Master, yet alas, how little doth he learn! And how oft is he hearkening to the teaching of the flesh! And how carnal and common is much of his knowledge! How little doth he depend on Christ in his inquiries after the things of nature! And how apt is he to think almost as highly of the teaching of Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, or at least of some excellent preacher, as of Christ's! And to forget that these are but his messengers and instruments, to convey unto us several parcels of that truth, which is his, and not theirs, and which (naturally or supernaturally) they received from him; and all these candles were lighted by him, who is the sun! And how little doth this weak christian refer his common knowledge to God; or use it for him; or to the furtherance of his own and others' happiness! 1 Tim. ii. 4.

3. And the seeming christian, though materially he may be eminent for knowledge, yet is so far from resigning himself to the teachings of Christ, that he maketh even his knowledge of christian verities to be to him but a common, carnal thing, while he knoweth it but in a common manner, and useth it to the service of the flesh, and never yet learned so much as to be a new creature, nor to love God as God above the world, 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

X. 1. A christian indeed is one whose repentance hath been deep, and serious, and universal, and unchangeable: it hath gone to the very roots of sin, and to the bottom of the sore, and hath not left behind it any reigning, unmortified sin, nor any prevalent love to fleshly pleasures. His repentance did not only disgrace his sin, and cast some reproachful words against it, and use confessions to excuse him from mortification, and to save its life, and hide it from the mortal blow; nor doth he only repent of his open sins, and those that are most censured by the beholders of his life; but he specially perceives the dangerous poison of pride, and unbelief, and worldliness, and the want of the love of God; and all his outward and smaller sins do serve to show him the greater malignity of these, and these are the matter of his greatest lamentations. He taketh not up a profession of religion with strong corruptions, secretly covered in his heart; but his religion consisteth in the death of his corruptions, and the purifying of his heart: he doth not secretly cherish any sin as too sweet or too profitable to be utterly forsaken, nor overlook it as a small, inconsiderable matter. But he feeleth sin to be his enemy and his disease, and as he desireth not one enemy, one sickness, one wound, one broken bone, one serpent in his bed, so he desireth not any one sin to be spared in his soul; but saith with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," Psal. cxxxix. 23. He liveth in no gross or scandalous sin; and his infirmities are comparatively few and small; so that if he were not a sharper accuser of himself, than the most observant spectators are, (that are just,) there would little be known by him that is culpable and matter of reproof. He "walketh in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless," (as to any notable miscarriage,) Luke i. 6. He is "blameless and harmless, as the son of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; among whom he shineth as a light in the world," Phil. ii. 15. The fear, and love, and obedience of God, is the work and tenor of his life.

2. But the weak christian, though he hath no sin but what he is a hater of, and fain would be delivered from, yet, alas! how imperfect is his deliverance!

And how weak is the hatred of his sin, and mixed with so much proneness to it, that his life is much blemished with the spots of his offences. Though his unbelief, and pride, and worldliness are not predominant in him, yet are they (or some of them) still so strong, and fight so much against his faith, humility, and heavenliness, that he can scarcely tell which hath the upper hand; nor can others that see the failings of his life, discern whether the good or the evil be most prevalent. Though it be heaven which he most seeketh, yet earth is so much regarded by him, that his heavenly-mindedness is greatly damped and suppressed by it. And though it be the way of godliness and obedience which he walketh in, yet is it with so many stumblings and falls, if not deviations also, that maketh him oft a burden to himself, a shame to his profession, and a snare or trouble to those about him. His heart is like an ill-swept house, that hath many a sluttish corner in it. And his life is like a moth-eaten garment, which hath many a hole, which you may see if you bring it into the light, 1 Cor. iii. 1—3; vi. 6—8; xi. 18, 21, 22, &c.

3. And for the seeming christian, his repentance doth but crop the branches, it goeth not to the root and heart of his sin: it leaveth his fleshly mind and interest in the dominion: it polisheth his life, but maketh him not a new creature: it casteth away those sins which the flesh can spare, and which bring more shame, or loss, or trouble with them, than worldly honour, gain, or pleasure; but still he is a very worldling at the heart; and the sins which his fleshly pleasures and felicity consist in, he will hide by confessions and seeming oppositions, but never mortify and forsake. As Judas, that while he followed Christ was yet a thief, and a covetous hypocrite, John xii. 6; 1 Tim. vi. 10, 11.

XI. 1. Hence it followeth that a christian indeed doth heartily love the searching light, that it may fully acquaint him with his sins: he is truly desirous to know the worst of himself; and therefore useth the word of God, as a candle, to show him what is in his heart; and bringeth himself willingly into the light: he loveth the most searching books and preachers; not only because they disclose the faults of other men, but his own: he is not one that so loveth his pleasant and profitable sins, as to fly the light, lest he should be forced to know them, and so to forsake them; but because he hateth them, and is resolved to forsake them, therefore he would know them, John iii. 19—21. Therefore he is not only patient under reproofs, but loveth them, and is thankful to a charitable reproof, and maketh a good use even of malicious and passionate reproofs, Psal. cxli. 5; 2 Sam. xvi. 11. He saith, as in Job xxxiv. 32, "That which I see not, teach thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do no more." His hatred of the sin, and desire to be reformed, suffer not his heart by pride to rise up against the remedy, and reject reproof. Though he will not falsely confess his duty to be his sin, nor take the judgment of every selfish, passionate, or ignorant reproof to be infallible, nor to be his rule; yet if a judicious, impartial person do but suspect him of a fault, he is ready to suspect himself of it, unless he be certain that he is clear. He loveth him better that would save him from his sin, than him that would entice him to it; and taketh him for his best friend who dealth freely with him, and is the greatest enemy to his faults: and a flatterer he taketh but for the most dangerous, insinuating kind of foe.

2. But the weak christian, though he hate his sin, and love reformation, and loveth the most searching books and preachers, and loveth a gentle kind of

reproof, yet hath so much pride and selfishness remaining, that any reproof that seemeth disgraceful to him, goeth very hardly down with him; like a bitter medicine to a queasy stomach: if you reprove him before others, or if your reproof be not very carefully sugared and minced, so that it rather extenuate than aggravate his fault, he will be ready to cast it up into your face, and with retortions to tell you of some faults of your own, or some way show you how little he loveth it, and how little thanks he giveth you for it. If you will not let him alone with his infirmities, he will distaste you, if not fall out with you, and let you know, by his smart and impatience, that you have touched him in the sore and galled place. He must be a man of very great skill in managing a reproof, that shall not somewhat provoke him to distaste.

3. And for the seeming christian, this is "his condemnation, that light is come into the world, and he loveth darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil." He cometh not to the light, lest his deeds should be discovered and reproof, John iii. 19—21. He liketh a searching preacher for others, and loveth to hear their sins laid open, if it no way reflect upon himself. But for himself he liketh best a general or a smoothing preacher; and he flieth from a quick and searching ministry, lest he should be proved and convinced to be in a state of sin and misery. Guilt maketh him fear or hate a lively, searching preacher, even as the guilty prisoner hateth the judge. He loveth no company so well as that which thinketh highly of him, and applaudeth and commendeth him, and neither by their reproofs nor stricter lives, will trouble his conscience with the remembrance of his sin, or the knowledge of his misery. He will take you for his enemy for telling him the truth, if you go about to convince him of his undone condition, and tell him of his beloved sin. Sin is taken to be as himself; it is he that doth evil, and not only sin that dwelleth in him; and therefore all that you say against his sin, he taketh it as spoken against himself; and he will defend his sin as he would defend himself: he will hear you till you come to touch himself, as the Jews did by Stephen, Acts vii. 51, 54, when they heard him call them, stiff-necked resisters of God, and persecutors, then they were cut to the heart, and did grind their teeth at him. And as they did by Paul, Acts xxii. 22, "They gave audience to this word, and then lift up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live;" Gal. iv. 16. John ix. 40; Matt. xxi. 45, the priests and Pharisees would have laid hands on Christ, when they perceived that he spake of them. And Ahab hated Micah, because he did not prophesy good of him, but evil, 1 Kings xxii. 8. Deservedly do they perish in their sin and misery, that hate him that would deliver them, and refuse the remedy. "Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge, but he that hateth reproof is brutish," Prov. xii. 1. "He that being often reproofed, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy," Prov. xxix. 1.

XII. 1. A christian indeed, is one that unfeignedly desireth to attain to the highest degree of holiness, and to be perfectly freed from every thing that is sin. He desireth perfection, though not with a perfect desire. He sitteth not down contentedly in any low degree of grace. He looketh on the holiest (how poor soever) with much more reverence and esteem than on the most rich and honourable in the world; and he had far rather be one of the most holy, than one of the most prosperous and great;

he had rather be a Paul or Timothy, than a Cæsar or an Alexander. He complaineth of nothing with so much sorrow, as that he can know and love his God no more. How happy an exchange would he count it, if he had more of the knowledge and love of God, though he lost all his wealth and honour in the world ! His smallest sins are a greater burden to him, than his greatest corporal wants and sufferings : as Paul, who because he could not perfectly fulfil God's law, and be as good as he would, he crieth out as in bondage, " O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? " Rom. vii. 24.

2. And for the weak christian, though he is habitually and resolutely of the same mind, yet, alas ! his desires after perfection are much more languid in him ; and he hath too much patience and reconciledness to some of his sins, and sometimes taketh them to be sweet ; so that his enmity to his pride, or covetousness, or passion, is much abated, and suffereth his sin to waste his grace, and wound his conscience, and hinder much of his communion with God. He seeth not the odiousness of sin, nor the beauty of holiness, with so clear a sight as the confirmed christian doth : he hateth sin more for the ill effects of it, than for its malignant, hateful nature : he seeth not clearly the intrinsic evil that is in sin, which maketh it deserve the pains of hell : nor doth he discern the difference between a holy and unholy soul, so clearly as the stronger christian doth, 1 Cor. iii. 2, 3 ; Heb. xii. 1.

3. And as for the seeming christian, though he may approve of perfect holiness in another, and may wish for it himself, when he thinketh of it but in the general, and not as it is exclusive and destructive of his beloved sin ; yet when it cometh to particulars, he cannot away with it ; he is so far from desiring it, that he will not endure it. The name of holiness he liketh ; and that preservation from hell which is the consequent of it ; but when he understandeth what it is, he hath no mind of it. That holiness which should cure his ambition and pride, and make him contented with a low condition, he doth not like : he loveth not that holiness, which would deprive him of his covetousness, his intemperance in pleasant meats and drinks, his fleshly lusts, and inordinate pleasures. Nor doth he desire that holiness should employ his soul in the love of God, and in daily prayer, and meditating on his word, and raise him to a heavenly life on earth.

XIII. 1. A christian indeed is one that maketh God and heaven the end, reward, and motive of his life ; and liveth not in the world for any thing in the world, but for that endless happiness which the next world only can afford. The reasons which actuate his thoughts, and choice, and all his life, are fetched from heaven. The interest of God and his soul as to eternity, is the ruling interest in him. As a traveller goeth all the way, and beareth all the difficulties of it, for the sake of the end or place that he is going to (however he may talk of many other matters by the way) ; so is it with a christian ; he knoweth nothing worthy of his life and labours, but that which he hopeth for hereafter. This world is too sinful and too vile and short to be his felicity. His very trade and work in the world is to lay up a treasure in heaven, Matt. vi. 20, " and to lay up a good foundation against the time to come, and to lay hold on eternal life," 1 Tim. vi. 19 ; and therefore his very heart is there, Matt. vi. 21 ; and he is employed in seeking and setting his affections on the things above, Col. iii. 1—3 ; and his conversation and traffic are in heaven, Phil. iii. 20, 21 : " he looketh not at the things which are seen, which are tem-

poral, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 18 ; he is a stranger upon earth, and heaven is to him as his home.

2. The weak christian also hath the same end, and hope, and motive ; and preferreth his hopes of the life to come, before all the wealth and pleasures of this life : but yet his thoughts of heaven are much more strange and dull ; he hath so much doubting and fear yet mixed with his faith and hope, that he looketh before him to his everlasting state, with backwardness and trouble, and with small desire and delight. He hath so much hope of heaven, as to abate his fears of hell, and make him think of eternity with more quietness than he could do, if he found himself unregenerate ; but not so much as to make his thoughts of heaven so free, and sweet, and frequent, nor his desires after it so strong, as the confirmed christian's are : and therefore his duties, and his speech of heaven, and his endeavours to obtain it, are all more languid and unconstant ; and he is much proner to fall in love with earth, and to entertain the motions of reconciliation to the world, and to have his heart too much set upon some place, or person, or thing below, and to be either delighted too much in the possession of it, or afflicted and troubled too much with the loss of it : earthly things are too much the motives of his life, and the reasons of his joys and griefs : though he hath the true belief of a life to come, and it prevaileth in the main against the world, yet it is but little that he useth to the commanding, and raising, and comforting his soul, in comparison of what a strong believer doth, Matt. xvi. 22, 23.

3. But the seeming christian would serve God and mammon, and placeth his chief and certainest happiness practically upon earth : though speculatively he know and say that heaven is better, yet doth he not practically judge it to be so to him ; and therefore he loveth the world above it, and he doth most carefully lay up a treasure on earth, Matt. vi. 19 ; and is resolved first to seek and secure his portion here below : and yet he taketh heaven for a reserve, as knowing that the world will cast him off at last, and die he must, there is no remedy ; and therefore he taketh heaven as next unto the best, as his second hope, as better than hell, and will go in religion as far as he can, without the loss of his prosperity here : so that earth and flesh do govern and command the design and tenor of his life ; but heaven and his soul shall have all that they can spare ; which may be enough to make him pass with men for eminently religious, 1 John ii. 15 ; Matt. xiii. 22 ; Luke xviii. 22, 23 ; xiv. 24, 33 ; Psal. xvii. 14 ; Phil. iii. 18—20.

XIV. 1. A christian indeed is one that having taken heaven for his felicity, doth account no labour or cost too great for the obtaining of it : he hath nothing so dear to him in this world, which he cannot spare and part with for God and the world to come : he doth not only notionally know that nothing should seem too dear or hard for the securing of our salvation ; but he knoweth this practically, and is resolved accordingly. Though difficulties may hinder him in particular acts, and his executions come not up to the height of his desires, Rom. vii. 16, 17, &c. yet he is resolved that he will never break on terms with Christ. There is no duty so hard which he is not willing and resolved to perform ; and no sin so sweet or gainful which he is not willing to forsake : he knoweth how unprofitable a bargain he makes, who winneth the world, and loseth his own soul ; and that no gain can ransom his soul, or recompense him for the loss of his salvation, Mark viii. 36. He knoweth that it is impossible to be a loser by

God, or to purchase heaven at too dear a rate; he knoweth that whatsoever it cost him, heaven will fully pay for all; and that it is the worldling's labour, and not the saint's, that is repented of at last. He marvelleth more at distracted sinners, for making such a stir for wealth, and honours, and command, than they marvel at him for making so much ado for heaven. He knoweth that this world may be too dear bought, but so cannot his salvation; yea, he knoweth that even our duty itself is not our smallest privilege and mercy; and that the more we do for God, the more we receive, and the greater is our gain and honour; and that the sufferings of believers for righteousness' sake, do not only prognosticate their joys in heaven, but occasion here the greatest joys that any short of heaven partake of, Matt. v. 11, 12; Rom. v. 1—3, &c. He is not one that desireth the end without the means, and would be saved so it may be on cheap and easy terms; but he absolutely yieldeth to the terms of Christ, and saith with Austin, *Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis*; Cause me to do what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt. Though Pelagius contradicted the first sentence, and the flesh the second, yet Augustine owned both, and so doth every true believer: he greatly complaineth of his backwardness to obey, but never complaineth of the strictness of the command. He loveth the holiness, justness, and goodness of the laws, when he bewaileth the unholiness and badness of his heart: he desireth not God to command him less, but desireth grace and ability to do more. He is so far from the mind of the ungodly world, who cry out against too much holiness, and making so much ado for heaven, that he desireth even to reach to the degree of angels, and would fain have "God's will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven;" and therefore the more desireth to be in heaven, that he may do it better, Psal. cxix. 5; Rom. vii. 24.

2. The weak christian hath the same estimation and resolution; but when it comes to practice, as his will is less confirmed, and more corrupted and divided, so little impediments and difficulties are great temptations to him, and stop him more in the way of his obedience. All his duty is much more tedious to him, and all his sufferings are much more burdensome to him, than to confirmed christians; and therefore he is easier tempted into omissions and impatience, and walketh not so evenly or comfortably with God. When the spirit is willing, it yieldeth oft to the weakness of the flesh, because it is willing in too remiss a degree, Matt. xxvi. 41; Gal. ii. 14.

3. But the seeming christian (though notionally and generally he may approve of strictness, yet) secretly at the heart hath always this reserve, that he will not serve God at too dear a rate. His worldly felicity he cannot part with, for all the hopes of the life to come; and yet he will not, he dare not renounce and give up those hopes; and therefore he maketh himself a religion of the easiest and cheapest parts of christianity (among which sometimes the strictest opinions may fall out to be one part, so be it they be separated from the strictest practice): and this easy, cheap religion he will needs believe to be true christianity and godliness; and so will hope to be saved upon these terms: and though he cannot but know that it is the certain character of a hypocrite, to have any thing nearer and dearer to his heart than God, yet he hopeth that it is not so with him, because his convinced judgment can say, that God is best, and the world is vanity, while yet his heart and affections so much contradict his opinion, as almost to say, "There is no God;" for his heart knoweth and loveth no God as God, that

is, above his worldly happiness. He is resolved to do so much in religion as he findeth necessary to delude his conscience, and make himself believe that he is godly, and shall be saved; but when he cometh to forsake all, and take up the cross, and practise the costliest parts of duty, then you shall see that mammon was better loved than God, and he will go away sorrowful, and hope to be saved upon easier terms, Luke xviii. 23, for he was never resigned absolutely to God.

XV. 1. A confirmed christian is one that taketh self-denial for the one half of his religion; and therefore hath bestowed one half of his endeavours to attain and exercise it. He knoweth that the fall of man was a turning to himself from God; and that selfishness and want of love to God, are the sum of all corruption and ungodliness; and that the love of God and self-denial are the sum of all religion; and that conversion is nothing but the turning of the heart from carnal self to God by Christ: and therefore on this hath his care and labour been so successfully laid out, that he hath truly and practically found out something that is much better than himself, and to be loved and preferred before himself, and which is to be his chiefest ultimate end. He maketh not a god of himself any more, but useth himself for God, to fulfil his will, as a creature of his own, that hath no other end and use. He no more preferreth himself above all the world, but esteemeth himself a poor and despicable part of the world; and higherlieth the honour of God, and the welfare of the church, and the good of many, than any interest of his own. Though God in nature hath taught him to regard his own felicity and to love himself, and not to seek the glory of God, and the good of many souls, in opposition to his own, yet he hath taught him to prefer them (though in conjunction) much before his own: for reason telleth him that man is nothing in comparison of God, and that we are made by him and for him, and that the welfare of the church or public societies, is better (in order to the highest ends) than the welfare of some one. Selfishness in the unregenerate, is like an inflammation or imposthume, which draweth the humours from other parts of the body to itself: the interest of God and man are all swallowed up in the regard that men have to self-interest; and the love of God and our neighbour is turned into self-love. But self is as annihilated in the confirmed christian, so that it ruleth not his judgment, his affections, or his choice: and he that lived in and to himself, as if God and all the world were but for him, doth now live to God, as one that is good for nothing else, and findeth himself in seeking him that is infinitely above himself, Luke xiv. 31—33; Phil. ii. 4, 21.

2. And the weak christian hath attained to so much self-denial, that self is not predominant in him against the love of God and his neighbour; but yet above all other sins, too great a measure of selfishness still remaineth in him. These words, own, and mine, and self, are too significant with him; every thing of his own is regarded inordinately, with partiality, and too much selfishness. A word against himself, or an injury to himself, is more to him than worse against his brother: he is too little mindful of the glory of God, and of the public good, and the souls of others; and even when he is mindful of his own soul, he is too regardless of the souls of many, that by prayer, or exhortation, or other means, he ought to help: as a small candle lighteth but a little way, and a small fire heateth not far off, so is his love so much confined, that it reacheth not far from him: he valueth his friends too much upon their respect to please himself, and loveth men too much

as they are partial for him, and too little upon the pure account of grace, and their love to Christ and serviceableness to the church. He easily overvalueth his own abilities, and is too confident of his own understanding, and apt to have too high conceits of any opinions that are his own; he is too apt to be tempted unto uncharitableness against those that cross him in his interest or way. He is apt to be too negligent in the work of God, when any self-interest doth stand against it; and too much to seek himself, his own esteem, or his own commodity, when he should devote himself to the good of souls, and give up himself to the work of God: though he is not like the hypocrite, that preferreth himself before the will of God and the common good, yet selfishness greatly stoppeth, interrupteth, and hindereth him in God's work; and any great danger, or loss, or shame, or other concernment of his own, doth seem a greater matter to him, and oftener turn him out of the way, than it will with a confirmed christian. They were not all hypocrites that Paul speaketh of in that sad complaint, "For I have no man like-minded (to Timothy) who will naturally care for your state; for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," Phil. ii. 20, 21; that is, they too much seek their own, and not entirely enough the things that are Christ's; which Timothy did naturally, as if he had been born to it; and grace had made the love of Christ, and the souls of men, and the good of others, as natural to him, as the love of himself. Alas! how loudly do their own distempers, and soul-miscarriages, and the divisions and calamities of the church, proclaim, that the weaker sort of christians have yet too much selfishness, and that self-denial is lamentably imperfect in them.

3. But in the seeming christian, selfishness is still the predominant principle; he loveth God but for himself; and he never had any higher end than self; all his religion, his opinions, his practice is animated by self-love, and governed by it, even by the love of carnal self. Self-esteem, self-conceitedness, self-love, self-willedness, self-seeking, and self-saving are the constitution of his heart and life. He will be of that opinion, and way, and party in religion, which selfishness directeth him to choose. He will go no further in religion than self-interest and safety will allow him to go. He can change his friend, and turn his love into hatred, and his praises into reproach, whenever self-interest shall require it. He can make himself believe, and labour to make others believe, that the wisest and holiest servants of God are erroneous, humorous, hypocrites, and unsufferable, if they do but stand cross to his opinions and interest: for he judgeth of them, and loveth or hateth them, principally, as they conform to his will and interest, or as they are against it. As the godly measure all persons and things by the will and interest of God, so do all ungodly men esteem them as they stand in reference to themselves. When their factious interest required it, the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, could make themselves and others believe, that the Son of God himself was a breaker of the law, and an enemy to Caesar, and a blasphemer, and unworthy to live on the earth; and that Paul was a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among the people, and a ringleader of a sect, and a profaner of the temple, Acts xxiv. 5, 6; and which of the prophets and apostles did they not persecute? Because Christ's doctrine doth cross the interest of selfish men, therefore the world doth so generally rise up against it with indignation, even as a country will rise against an invading enemy: for he cometh to take away that which is dearest to them; as it is said

of Luther, that he meddled with the pope's crown, and the friars' bellies; and therefore no wonder if they swarmed all about his ears. Selfishness is so general and deeply rooted, that (except with a few self-denying saints) self-love and self-interest rule the world. And if you would know how to please a graceless man, serve but his carnal interest, and you have done it: be of his opinion, (or take on you to be so,) applaud him, admire him, flatter him, obey him, promote his preferment, honour, and wealth, be against his enemies; in a word, make him your god, and sell your soul to gain his favour, and so it is possible you may gain it.

XVI. 1. A christian indeed hath so far mortified the flesh, and brought all his senses and appetites into subjection to sanctified reason, as that there is no great rebellion or perturbation in his mind: but a little matter, a holy thought, or a word from God, doth presently rebuke and quiet his inordinate desires. The flesh is as a well-broken and well-ridden horse, that goeth on his journey obediently and quietly, and not with striving, and chafing, and vexatious resisting: though still flesh will be flesh, and will be weak, and will fight against the Spirit, so that we cannot do all the good we would, (Isa. v. 17; Rom. vii. 16, 17, &c.) yet in the confirmed christian it is so far tamed and subdued, that its rebellion is much less, and its resistance weaker, and more easily overcome; it causeth not any notable unevenness in his obedience, nor blemishes in his life; it is no other than consisteth with a readiness to obey the will of God. Gal. v. 24, 25; 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof. They run not as uncertainly; they fight not as one that beateth the air; but they keep under their bodies, and bring them into subjection, lest by any means they should be castaways. They put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof," Rom. xiii. 13, 14. As we see to a temperate man, how sweet and easy temperance is, when to a glutton, or drunkard, or riotous liver, it is exceeding hard; so it is in all other points with a confirmed christian. He hath so far crucified the flesh, that it is as dead to its former lusts; and so far mastered it, that it doth easily and quickly yield. And this maketh the life of such a christian, not only pure, but very easy to him, in comparison of other men's: nay, more than this, he can use his sense (as he can use the world, the objects of sense) in subserviency to faith and his salvation. His eye doth but open a window to his mind, to hold and admire the Creator in his work. His taste of the sweetness of the creatures is but a means, by which the sweeter love of God doth pass directly to his heart. His sense of pleasure is but the passage of spiritual, holy pleasure to his mind. His sense of bitterness and pain is but the messenger to tell his heart of the bitterness and vexatiousness of sin. As God in the creation of us, made our senses but as the inlet and passage for himself into our minds, (even as he made all the creatures to represent him to us by this passage,) so grace doth restore our very senses (with the creature) to this their holy, original use; that the goodness of God, through the goodness of the creature, may pass to our hearts, and be the effect and end of all.

2. But for the weak christian, though he have mortified the deeds of the body by the Spirit, and live not after the flesh, but be freed from its captivity or reign, (Gal. v. 24; Rom. viii. 1, 7—13,) yet hath he such remnants of concupiscence and sensuality, as make it a far harder matter to him to live in temperance, and deny his appetite, and govern his senses,

and restrain them from rebellion and excess: he is like a weak man upon an ill-ridden, headstrong horse, who hath much ado to keep his saddle and keep his way. He is stronger inclined to fleshly lusts, or excess in meat, or drink, or sleep, or sports, or some fleshly pleasure, than the mortified, temperate person is, and therefore is often guilty of some excess; so that his life is a very tiresome conflict, and very uneasy to himself, because the less the flesh is mortified, the more able it is to raise perturbations, and to put faith and reason to a continual fight. And most of the scandals and blemishes of his life arise from hence, even the successes of the flesh against the Spirit; so that (though he live not in any gross or wilful sins, yet) in lesser measures of excess he is too frequently overtaken: how few be there that in meat and sleep do not usually exceed their measure! And they are easily tempted to libertine opinions, which indulge the flesh, having a weaker preservative against them than stronger christians have, Matt. vi. 22, 23; Gal. v. 13; i. 16; ii. 12—14; Col. ii. 11.

3. But the seeming christian is really carnal. The flesh is the predominant part with him; and the interest of the flesh is the ruling interest. He washeth away the outward filth, and in hope of salvation, will be as religious as the flesh will give him leave; and will deny it in some smaller matters, and will serve it in a religious way, and not in so gross and impudent a manner as the atheists and openly profane. But for all that he never conquered the flesh indeed; but seeketh its prosperity more than the pleasing of God and his salvation: and among prayers, and sermons, and holy conference, and books, yea, and formal fastings too, he is serving the flesh with so much the more dangerous impetuosity, by how much the more his cloak of formality hindereth him from the discerning of his sin: many a one that is of unblemished reputation in religion, doth constantly serve his appetite in meat and drink, (though without any notable excess,) and his fleshly mind in the pleasure of his dwelling, wealth, and accommodations, as much as some profane ones do, if not much more. And whenever it cometh to a parting trial, they will show that the flesh was the ruling part, and will venture their souls to secure its interest, Luke xviii. 23; xiv. 33; Rom. viii. 5—7, 9, 13; Matt. xiii. 21, 22; Jude 19.

XVII. 1. Hence it followeth that a christian indeed preferreth the means of his spiritual benefit and salvation incomparably before all corporal commodities and pleasures. He had rather dwell under the teaching and guidance of an able, experienced pastor, though it be cross to his prosperity and worldly gain, than to live under an ignorant or dead-hearted preacher, when it furthereth his trading or more accommodateth his flesh (though yet he must not remove when God layeth any restraint upon him, by his duty to his family, or others). He had rather, if he be a servant, dwell in a family where he may do or receive most spiritual good, than in a carnal family, where he may have more ease, and better fare, and greater wages. If he be to marry, he had rather have one that hath wisdom and piety without wealth, than one that hath riches without wisdom and piety. He is gladder of an opportunity (in public or private) for the profit of his soul, than of a feast, or a good bargain, or an opportunity for some gain in worldly things, Matt. vi. 20, 33.

2. And the weak christian is of the same mind in the main. He valueth mercies and helps for his soul, above those for his body: but it is with less zeal, and more indifferency; and therefore is more easily and oftener drawn to the omitting of spiritual

duties, and neglect of spiritual helps and mercies; and goeth to them with more averseness, and as driven by necessity, and is much less sensible of his loss, when he miseth of any such spiritual helps, Luke x. 41, 42; Heb. x. 25; Acts ii. 42; iv. 32.

3. But the seeming christian, being a real worldling, doth serve God and mammon; and mammon with the first and best. He had rather miss a sermon, than a good bargain or commodity: he had rather dwell where he may thrive best, or have most ease and pleasure, than where he may find the greatest helps for heaven: he will be religious, but it must be with an easy, and a pleasant, and a merry religion, which may not be too niggardly with his flesh, nor use it too strictly; unless when one day's austerity may procure him an indulgence for his liberty all the week following. He will make his bargain with Christ so, as to be sure that he may not lose by him; and he will not believe that God is pleased with that which is much displeasing to his flesh, Rom. viii. 5—8, 13; Matt. xiii. 21, 22.

XVIII. 1. The christian indeed is one that is crucified to the world, and the world is as a crucified thing to him, Gal. vi. 14. He hath overcome the world by faith, and followeth Christ in the pursuit of it, to a perfect conquest, 1 John v. 4, 5; John xvi. 33. He has seen through all its glossing vanity, and foreseen what it will prove at last. He hath found that it cannot quiet conscience, nor reconcile the guilty soul to God, nor save it from his consuming wrath; nor serve instead of God or heaven, of Christ or grace; but will cast off its servants in their last extremity, naked and desolate, into remediless despair. And, therefore, he is resolutely at a point with all things under the sun. Let them take the world for their portion and felicity that will; for his part, he accounteth all things in it dung and dross, in comparison of Christ and things eternal, Phil. iii. 7, 8, 19, 20. All the preferments, and honours, and command, and wealth, and greatness of the world, do not seem to him a bait considerable, to make a wise man once question whether he should persevere in faithfulness to God, or to tempt him to commit one wilful sin. He would not speak or own a lie, or approve the sin of another, for all that worldlings enjoy in their greatest prosperity while they live. He accounteth his peace with God and conscience, and his communion with Christ in the greatest poverty, to be incomparably better than all the pleasures and commodities of sin; yea, the very reproach of Christ is better to him than all the treasures of court or country, Heb. xi. 25, 26. Grace hath mortified and annihilated the world to him. And that which is dead and nothing, can do nothing with him against God and his soul. He looketh on it as a carrion, which dogs may love and fight for, but is unfit to be the food of man. He is going to the land of promise, and therefore will not contend for an inheritance in this howling wilderness. Whether he be high or low, rich or poor, are so small a part of his concerns, that he is almost indifferent to them, farther than as the interest of God and souls may accidentally be concerned in them. The world set against God, and heaven, and holiness, doth weigh no more in his estimation, than a feather that is put in the balance against a mountain, or all the world. He feeleth no great force in such temptations, as would draw him to win the world, and lose his soul. His eye and heart are where his God and treasure are, above; and worldly wealth and greatness are below him, even under his feet. He thinketh not things temporal worth the looking at, in comparison of things eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

He thinketh that their money and riches do deservedly perish with them, who think all the money in the world to be a thing comparable with grace, Acts viii. 20.

2. And the weak christian is of the same judgment and resolution in the main; but yet the world retaineth a greater interest in his heart; it grieveth him more to lose it; it is a stronger temptation to him. To deny all the preferments, and honours, and riches of it, seemeth a greater matter to him; and he doth it with more striving, and less ease; and sometimes the respect of worldly things prevaileth with him in lesser matters, to wound his conscience, and maketh work for repentance; and such are so entangled in worldly cares, and prosperity tasteth so sweet with them, that grace even languisheth and falleth into a consumption, and almost into a swoon. So much do some such let out their hearts to the world, which they renounced, and scrape for it with so much care and eagerness, and contend with others about their commodities and rights, that they seem to the standers-by to be as worldly as worldlings themselves are; and become a shame to their profession, and make ungodly persons say, Your godly professors are as covetous as any, 2 Tim. iv. 10.

3. But seeming christians are the servants of the world; when they have learnt to speak hardest of it, it hath their hearts. Heaven, as I said before, is valued but as a reserve, when they know they can keep the world no longer. They have more sweet and pleasing thoughts and speeches of the world, than they have of God and the world to come. It hath most of their hearts when God is most preferred by their tongues. There it is that they are daily laying up their treasure, and there they must leave it at the parting hour, when they go naked out as they came naked in. The love of deceitful riches choketh the word of God, and it withereth in them, and becometh unfruitful, Matt. xiii. 22. They go away sorrowful because of their beloved riches, when they should part with all for the hopes of heaven, Luke xviii. 23; yea, though they are beggars, that never have a day's prosperity in the world, for all that, they love it better than heaven, and desire that which they cannot get, because they have not an eye of faith, to see that better world which they neglect, and therefore take it for an uncertain thing. Nor are their carnal natures suitable to it, and therefore they mind it not, Rom. viii. 7. When a hypocrite is at the best, he is but a religious worldling, the world is nearer to his heart than God is; but "pure religion keepeth a man unspoiled from the world," James i. 27.

XIX. 1. A confirmed christian is one that still seeth the end in all that he doth, and that is before him in his way; and looketh not at things as at the present they seem or relish to the flesh, or to short-sighted men, but as they will appear and be judged of at last. The first letter maketh not the word, nor the first word the sentence, without the last. Present time is quickly past, and therefore he less regardeth what things seem at present, than what they will prove to all eternity. When temptations offer him a bait to sin, with the present profit, or pleasure, or honour, he seeth at once the final shame; he seeth all worldly things as they are seen by a dying man, and as after the general conflagration they will be. He seeth the godly in his adversity and patience, as entering into his Master's joys; he seeth the derided, vilified saint, as ready to stand justified by Christ at his right hand; and the liars of the malicious world as ready to cover themselves with shame. He seeth the wicked in the height of their

prosperity, as ready to be cut down and withered, and their pampered flesh to turn to dirt; and their filthy and malicious souls to stand condemned by Christ at his left hand; and to hear, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv.; 1 Pet. i. 24; James i. 10, 11; Psal. lxxiii.; xxxvii. Therefore it is that he valueth grace, because he knoweth what it will be; and therefore it is that he flieth from sin, because he "knoweth the terrors of the Lord," and what it will prove to the sinner in the end; and how sinners themselves will curse the day that ever they did commit it; and wish when it is too late, that they had chosen the holiness and patience of the saints. And therefore it is that he pitieth rather than envieveth the prosperous enemies of the church, because he foreseeth what the "end will be of them that obey not the gospel of Christ. And if the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18; 2 Thess. i. 8-10. If the wicked unbelievers saw but the ending of all things as he doth, they would be all then of his mind and way. This putteth so much life into his prayers, his obedience, and patience, because he seeth the end in all, Deut. xxxii. 29; Prov. xix. 20; Isa. xlvi. 7.

2. And the weakest christian doth the same in the main, so far as to turn his heart from things temporal to things eternal; and to resolve him in his main choice, and to conduct the course of his life towards heaven. But yet in particular actions he is often stopped in present things, and forgetfully loseth the sight of the end, and so is deluded and enticed into sin, for want of seeing that which should have preserved him. He is like one that travelleth over hills and valleys, who when he is upon the hills doth see the place that he is going to; but when he cometh into the valleys it is out of his sight. Too oft doth the weak christian think of things as they appear at the present, with little sense of the change that is near. When he seeth the baits of sin, whether riches, or beauty, or meat and drink, or any thing that is pleasing to the senses, the remembrance of the end doth not so quickly and powerfully work, to prevent his deceived imaginations, as it ought. And when poverty, or shame, or sufferings, or sickness are presented to him, the foresight of the end is not so speedy and powerful in clearing his judgment, and settling his resolution, and preventing his misapprehension and trouble, as it ought. And hence comes his oft mistakes and falls; and herein consisteth much of that foolishness, which he confesseth when repentance bringeth him to himself, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10; 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

3. But the seeming christian hath so dim and doubtful a foresight of the end, and it is so frequently out of his mind, that things present do carry away his heart, and have the greatest power and interest with him; and are most regarded and sought after in this life. For he is purblind, not seeing afar off, as it is said, 2 Pet. i. 9. He wanteth that faith which is the "substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things unseen," Heb. xi. 1. Things promised in another world seem to him too uncertain, or too far off, to be preferred before all the happiness of this world: he is resolved to make his best of that which he hath in hand, and to prefer possession before such hopes. Little doth his heart perceive what a change is near, and how the face of all things will be altered! How sin will look, and how the minds of sinners will be changed, and what all the riches, and pleasures, and honours of the world will appear at the latter end! He foreseeth not the day when the slothful, and the worldly, and the fleshly, and the

proud, and the enemies of godliness, shall all wish in vain, Oh that we had laid up our treasure in heaven, and laboured for the food that perisheth not, and had set less by all the vanities of the world, and had imitated the holiest and most mortified believers! Though the hypocrite can himself foretell all this, and talk of it to others, yet his belief of it is so dead, and his sensuality so strong, that he liveth by sense, and not by that belief; and present things are practically preferred by him, and bear the sway; so that he heedeth those warnings of God as well as the profane, "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, and that they would consider their latter end," Deut. xxxii. 29. And he is one of the foolish ones, Matt. xxv. 8, 11, who are seeking oil for their lamps when it is too late, and are crying out, "Lord, Lord, open to us," when the door is shut; and will not know the time of their visitation, nor know effectually in this their day, the things which belong to their everlasting peace.

XX. 1. The christian indeed is one that liveth upon God alone: his faith is divine; his love, and obedience, and confidence are divine; his chiefest converse is divine; his hopes and comforts are divine. As it is God that he dependeth on, and trusteth to, and studieth to please above all the world, so it is God's approbation that he taketh up with for his justification and reward. He took him for his absolute Governor and Judge, and full felicity, in the day when he took him for his God. He can live in peace without man's approbation. If men are never acquainted with his sincerity, or virtues, or good deeds, it doth not discourage him, nor hinder him from his holy course; he is, therefore, the same in secret as in public, because no place is secret from God. If men turn his greatest virtues or duties to his reproach, and slander him, and make him odious to men, and represent him as they did Paul, a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition, and the ringleader of a sect, and make him as the filth of the world, and the obscuring of all things, this changeth him not, for it changeth not his felicity, nor doth he miss of his reward, 1 Cor. iv. 9—14. Read the words in the text. Though he hath so much suspicion of his own understanding, and reverence for wiser men's, that he will be glad to learn, and will hear reason from any one; yet praise and dispraise are matters of very small regard with him: and as to himself, he accounteth it but a small thing to be judged of men, whether they justify or condemn him; because they are fallible, and have not the power of determining any thing to his great commodity or detriment; nor is it their judgment to which he stands or falls, 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. He hath a more dreadful or comfortable judgment to prepare for. Man is of small account with him in comparison of God, Rom. viii. 33—36.

2. And though with the weakest true christian it is so also as to the predominancy of God's esteem and interest in him, yet is his weakness daily visible in the culpable effects. Though God have the chiefest place in his esteem, yet man hath much more than his due. The thoughts and words of men seem to such of far greater importance than they should. Praise and dispraise, favours and injuries, are things which affect their hearts too much; they bear not the contempts and wrongs of men with so quiet and satisfied a mind, as becometh those that live upon God. They have so small experience of the comforts of God in Christ, that they are tasting the deeper of other delights, and spare them not so easily as they ought to do. God, without friends, or house, or land, or maintenance, or esteem in the world, doth not fully quiet them; but there is a deal

of peevish impatience left in their minds, though it doth not drive them away from God.

3. But the seeming christian can better take up with the world alone than with God alone; God is not so much missed by him as the world: he always breaks with Christ, when it cometh to forsaking all: he is godly notionally and professedly, and therefore may easily say that God is his portion, and enough for those that put their trust in him; but his heart never consented truly to reduce these words to practice. When it comes to the trial, the praise or dispraise of man, and the prosperity or matters of the world, do signify more with him than the favour or displeasure of God, and can do more with him. Christ, and riches, and esteem, he could be content with; but he cannot away with a naked Christ alone. Therefore he is indeed a practical atheist, even when he seemeth most religious: for if he had ever taken God for his God indeed, he had certainly taken him as his portion, felicity, and all; and therefore as enough for him without the creature, Luke xviii. 23.

XXI. 1. For all this it followeth, that a christian indeed hath with himself devoted all that he hath to God, and so all that he hath is sanctified: he is only in doubt oftentimes in particular cases, what God would have him do with himself and his estate; but never in doubt whether they are to be wholly employed for God, in obedience to his will, so far as he can know it; and therefore doth estimate every creature and condition, purely as it relateth unto God and life eternal. "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" is written upon all that he hath and doth: he taketh it as sent from God, and useth it as his Master's goods and talents; not chiefly for himself, but for his Master's ends and will. God appeareth to him in the creature, and is the life, and sweetness, and glory of the creature to him. His first question in every business he undertaketh, or every place or condition that he chooseth, is, how it conduceth to the pleasing of God, and to his spiritual ends, "whether he eateth or drinketh, or whatever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x. 31. The posy engraven on his heart is the name of GOD, with "OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND TO HIM ARE ALL THINGS, TO HIM BE GLORY FOR EVER, AMEN," Rom. xi. 36. He liveth as a steward that useth not his own, though yet he have a sufficient reward for his fidelity; and he keepeth accounts both of his receivings and layings out, and reckoneth all to be worse than lost, which he findeth not expended on his Lord's account. For himself he asketh not that which is sweetest to the flesh, but that which is fittest to his end and work; and therefore desireth not riches (for himself) but his daily bread, and food convenient for him; and having food and raiment is therewith content, having taken godliness for his gain. He asketh not for superfluity, nor for any thing to consume it on his lusts, nor to become provision for his flesh, to satisfy the wills thereof. But as a runner in his race desireth not any provisions which may hinder him; and therefore "forgetting the things which are behind, (the world, which he hath turned his back upon,) he reacheth forth to the things which are before, (the crown of glory,) and presseth toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" not turning an eye to any thing that would stop him in his course. Thus while he is employed about things below, his mind and conversation are heavenly and divine, while all things are estimated and used purely for God and heaven, Luke xvi. 1, 2; 1 Pet. iv. 10; Tit. i. 15; Prov. xxx. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 6, 8; James iv. 3; Rom. xiii. 14; Phil. iii. 13—15.

2. But the weak christian, though he have all this in desire, and be thus affected and resolved in the main, and liveth to God in the scope and course of his life, yet is too often looking aside, and valuing the creature carnally for itself; and oftentimes useth it for the pleasing of the flesh, and almost like a common man: his house, and land, and friends, and pleasures, are relished too carnally, as his own accommodations; and though he walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, yet he hath too much of the fleshly taste, and is greatly out in his accounts with God; and turneth many a thing from his Master's use, to the service of the flesh; and though he be not as the slothful, wicked servant, yet is it but little improvement that he maketh of his talent, Matt. xxv. 17, 26—28.

3. But the seeming christian being carnal and selfish, while his notions and professions are spiritual and divine, and his selfish and fleshly interest being predominant, it must needs follow that he estimateth all things principally as they respect his fleshly interest, and useth them principally for his carnal self, even when in the manner he seemeth to use them most religiously (as I have said before); and so to the defiled nothing is pure, Rom. viii. 5—8, 13; Tit. i. 15.

XXII. 1. A christian indeed hath a promptitude to obey, and a ready compliance of his will to the will of God. He hath not any great averseness and withdrawing, and doth not the good which he doth with much backwardness and striving against it: but as in a well-ordered watch or clock, the spring or poise doth easily set all the wheels a going, and the first wheel easily moveth the rest; so is the will of a confirmed christian presently moved, as soon as he knoweth the will of God. He stayeth not for other moving reasons; God's will is his reason. This is the habit of subjection and obedience, which makes him say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" and "Lord, what wouldst thou have me do?" and, "Teach me to do thy will, O God," Psal. cxliii. 10; 1 Sam. iii. 10; Acts ix. 6. "I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart," Psal. xl. 8. The "law written in our heart," is nothing else but the knowledge of God's laws, with this habit or promptitude to obey them; the special fruit of the Spirit of grace.

2. But a weak christian, though he love God's will and way, and be sincerely obedient to him, yet in many particulars, where his corruption contradiceth, hath a great deal of backwardness and striving of the flesh against the Spirit; and there needs many words, and many considerations and vehement persuasions, yea, and sharp afflictions, sometimes, to bring him to obey. And he is fain to drive on his backward heart, and hath frequent use for the rod and spur, and therefore is more slow and uneven in his obedience, Gal. v. 17.

3. The seeming christian is forward in those easy, cheaper parts of duty, which serve to delude his carnal heart, and quiet him in a worldly life; but he is so backward to thorough, sincere obedience in the most flesh-displeasing parts of duty, that he is never brought to it at all; but either he will fit his opinions in religion to his will, and will not believe them to be duties, or else he will do something like them in a superficial, formal way; but the thing itself he will not do. For he is more obedient to his carnal mind and lusts than he is to God, Rom. viii. 6, 7, and forwarder much to sacrifice than obedience, Eccles. v. 1.

XXIII. 1. A christian indeed doth daily delight himself in God, and findeth more solid content and pleasure in his commands and promises, than in all

this world; his duties are sweet to him, and his hopes are sweeter. Religion is not a tiresome task to him; the yoke of Christ is easy to him, and his burden light, and his commandments are not grievous, Psal. xxxvii. 4; i. 2; xl. 8; xciv. 19; cxix. 16, 35, 47, 70; Matt. xi. 28, 29; John v. 3. That which others take as physic, for mere necessity, against their wills, he goeth to as a feast, with appetite and delight: he prayeth because he loveth to pray; and he thinks and speaks of holy things, because he loveth to do it. And hence it is that he is so much in holy duty, and so unwearied, because he loveth it, and taketh pleasure in it. As voluptuous persons are oft and long at their sports, or merry company, because they love them, and take pleasure in them; so are such christians oft and long in holy exercises, because their hearts are set upon them as their recreation, and the way and means of their felicity. If it be a delight to a studious man to read those books which most clearly open the abstrusest mysteries of the sciences, or to converse with the most wise and learned men; and if it be a delight to men to converse with their dearest friends, or to hear from them and read their letters; no marvel if it be a delight to a christian indeed, to read the gospel mysteries of love, and to find there the promises of everlasting happiness, and to see in the face of Jesus Christ the clearest image of the Eternal Deity, and foresee the joys which he shall have for ever. He sticketh not in superficial formality, but breaking the shell doth feed upon the kernel. It is not bare external duty which he is taken up with, nor any mere creature that is his content; but it is God in creatures and ordinances that he seeketh and liveth upon; and therefore it is that religion is so pleasant to him. He would not change his heavenly delights which he findeth in the exercise of faith, and hope, and love to God, for all the carnal pleasures of this world; he had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents or palaces of wickedness. A day in God's court is better to him than a thousand in the court of the greatest prince on earth. He is not a stranger to "the joy in the Holy Ghost," in which the kingdom of God doth in part consist, Rom. xiv. 17; Psal. lxxxiv. 10, 2; lxxv. 4. "In the multitude of his thoughts within him, the comforts of God do delight his soul," Psal. xciv. 19. "His meditation of God is sweet, and he is glad in the Lord," Psal. civ. 34. The freest and sweetest of his thoughts and words run out upon God and the matters of salvation. The word of God is sweeter to him than honey, and better than thousands of gold and silver, Psal. xix. 10; cxix. 72, 103; Prov. xvi. 24. And because "his delight is in the law of the Lord, therefore doth he meditate in it day and night," Psal. i. 2. He seeth great reason for all those commands: "Rejoice evermore," 1 Thess. v. 16. "Let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice," Psal. lxxviii. 3, 4; lxxiv. 10; xxxi. 1; xxxii. 11, "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all that are upright in heart." He is sorry for the poor, unhappy world, that have no better things than meat, and drink, and clothes, and house, and land, and money, and lust, and play, and domineering over others, to rejoice in: and heartily he wisheth that they had but a taste of the saint's delights, that it might make them spit out their luscious, unclean, unwholesome pleasures. One look to Christ, one promise of the gospel, one serious thought of the life which he must live with God for ever, doth afford his soul more solid comfort than all the kingdoms on earth can afford. And though he live not continually in these high delights, yet

peace with God, and peace of conscience, and some delight in God and godliness, is the ordinary temperature of his soul, and higher degrees are given him in season for his cordials and his feasts.

2. But the weak christian hath little of these spiritual delights: his ordinary temper is to apprehend that God and his ways are indeed most delectable; his very heart acknowledgeth that they are worthiest and fittest to be the matter of his delights; and if he could attain assurance of his especial interest in the love of God, and his part in Christ and life eternal, he would then rejoice in them indeed, and would be more glad than if he were Lord of all the world; but in the mean time, either his fears and doubts are damping his delights; or else (which is much worse) his appetite is dull, and God and holiness relish not with him half so sweetly, as they do with the confirmed christian; and he is too busy in tasting of fleshly and forbidden pleasures, which yet more deprave his appetite, and dull his desires to the things of God; so that though in his estimation, choice, resolution, and endeavour, he much preferreth God before the world; yet as to any delightful sweetness in him, it is but little that he tasteth. He loveth God with a desiring love, and with a seeking love, but with very little of a delighting love. The remnant of corrupt and alien affections do weaken his affections to the things above; and his infant measure of spiritual life, conjunct with many troublesome diseases, allow him very little of the joy of the Holy Ghost. Nay, perhaps he hath more grief, and fear, and doubts, and trouble, and perplexity of mind, than ever he had before he turned unto God; and perhaps he hath yet less pleasure in God, than he had before in sin and sensuality: because he had his sin in a state of fruition, but he hath God only in a seeking, hoping state; he had the best of sin, and all that ever it will afford him, but he hath yet none of the full felicity which he expecteth in God; the fruition of him is yet but in the prospect of hope. His sensual, sinful life was in its maturity, and the object present in its most alluring state; but his spiritual life of faith and love is but yet in its weak beginnings, and the object absent from our sight: he is so busy at first in blowing up his little spark, not knowing whether the fire will kindle or go out, that he hath little of the use or pleasure, either of its light or warmth. Infants come crying into the world, and afterwards oftener cry than laugh; their senses and reason are not yet perfected, or exercised to partake of the pleasures of life: and when they do come to know what a laughter is, they will laugh and cry almost in a breath. And those weak christians that do come to taste of joy and pleasure in their religious state, it is commonly but as a flash of lightning, which leaveth them as dark as they were before. Sometimes in the beginning, upon their first apprehensions of the love of God in Christ, and of the pardon of their sins, and the privileges of their new condition, and the hopes of everlasting joy, their hearts are transported with unspeakable delight; which is partly from the newness of the thing, and partly because God will let them have some encouraging taste, to draw them further, and to convince them of the difference between the pleasures of sin and the comforts of believing; but these first rejoicings soon abate, and turn into a life of doubts, and fears, and griefs, and care, till they are grown to greater understanding, experience, and settledness in the things of God: the root must grow greater and deeper, before it will bear a greater top. Those christians that in the weakness of grace have frequent joys, are usually persons whose weak and passionate nature doth occasion it: some women

especially, that have strong fancies and passions, are always passionately affected with whatsoever they apprehend. And these are like a ship that is tossed in the tempest; that is one while lifted up as to the clouds, and presently cast down into an infernal gulf: there one day in great joy, and quickly after in as great perplexity and sorrow, because their comforts or sorrows do follow their present feeling or mutable apprehensions. But when they come to be confirmed christians, they will keep a more constant judgment of themselves, and their own condition, and constantly see their grounds of comfort; and when they cannot raise their souls to any high and passionate joys, they yet walk in a settled peace of soul, and in such competent comforts, as make their lives to be easy and delightful; being well pleased and contented with the happy condition that Christ hath brought them to, and thankful that he left them not in those foolish, vain, pernicious pleasures, which were the way to endless sorrows.

3. But the seeming christian seeketh and taketh up his chief contentment in some carnal thing: if he be so poor and miserable as to have nothing in possession that can much delight him, he will hope for better days hereafter, and that hope shall be his chief delight; or if he have no such hope he will be without delight, and show his love to the world and flesh, by mourning for that which he cannot have, as others do in rejoicing in what they do possess; and he will, in such a desperate case of misery, be such to the world as the weak christian is to God, who hath a mourning and desiring love, when he cannot reach to an enjoying and delighting love. His carnal mind most savoureth the things of the flesh, and therefore in them he findeth or seeketh his chief delights. Though yet he may have also a delight in his superficial kind of religion, his hearing, and reading, and praying, and in his ill-grounded hopes of life eternal; but all this is but subordinate to his chiefest earthly pleasure: "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching unto God," Isa. lviii. 2. And yet all this was subjected to a covetous, oppressing mind. "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while, for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended," Matt. xiii. 20. Whereby it appeareth that his love to the word was subjected to his love to the world.

Object. But there are two sorts of people that seem to have no fleshly delights at all, and yet are not in the way to salvation, viz. the quakers and Behmenists, that live in great austerity, and some of the religious orders of the papists, who afflict their flesh.

Ans. Some of them undergo their fastings and penance for a day, that they may sin the more quietly all the week after; and some of them proudly comfort themselves with the fancies and conceit of being and appearing more excellent in austerity than others; and all these take up with a carnal sort of pleasure. As proud persons are pleased with their own or others' conceits of their beauty, or wit, or worldly greatness; so prouder persons are pleased with their own and others' conceits of their holiness. And "verily they have their reward," Matt. vi. 2. But those of them that place their chiefest happiness in the love of God, and the eternal fruition of him in heaven, and seek this sincerely according to their helps and power, though they are misled into some superstitious errors, I hope I may number with those

that are sincere; for all their errors and the ill effects of them.

XXIV. 1. A confirmed christian doth ordinarily discern the sincerity of his own heart, and consequently hath some well-grounded assurance of the pardon of his sins, and of the favour of God, and of his everlasting happiness; and therefore no wonder if he live a peaceable and joyful life. For his grace is not so small as to be undiscernible, nor is it as a sleepy, buried seed or principle; but it is almost of continual act; and they that have a great degree of grace, and also keep it in lively exercise, do seldom doubt of it. Besides that they blot not their evidence by so many infirmities and falls. They are more in the light, and have more acquaintance with themselves, and more sense of the abundant love of God, and of his exceeding mercies, than weak christians have; and therefore must needs have more assurance. They have boldness of access to the throne of grace, without unreverent contempt, Eph. iii. 12; ii. 18. They have more of the spirit of adoption, and therefore more childlike confidence in God, and can call him Father with greater freedom and comfort than any others can, Rom. viii. 15, 16; Gal. iv. 6; Eph. i. 6. 1 John v. 19, 20, "And we know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness," &c.

2. But the weak christian hath so small a degree of grace, and so much corruption, and his grace is so little in act, and his sin so much, that he seldom if ever attaineth to any well-grounded assurance, till he attain to a greater measure of grace. He differeth so little from the seeming christian, that neither himself nor others do certainly discern the difference. When he searcheth after the truth of his faith, and love, and heavenly-mindedness, he findeth so much unbelief and averseness from God, and earthly-mindedness, that he cannot be certain which of them is predominant; and whether the interest of this world or that to come, do bear the sway. So that he is often in perplexities and fears, and more often in a dull uncertainty. And if he seem at any time to have assurance, it is usually but an ill-grounded persuasion of the truth: though it be true which he apprehendeth, when he taketh himself to be the child of God, yet it is upon unsound reasons that he judgeth so, or else upon sound reasons weakly and uncertainly discerned; so that there is commonly much of security, presumption, fancy, or mistake, in his greatest comforts. He is not yet in a condition fit for full assurance, till his love and obedience be more full.

3. But the seeming christian cannot possibly in that estate, have either certainty or good probability that he is a child of God, because it is not true: his seeming certainty is merely self-deceit, and his greatest confidence is but presumption, because the Spirit of Christ is not within him, and therefore he is certainly none of his, Rom. viii. 9.

XXV. 1. The assurance of a confirmed christian doth increase his alacrity and diligence in duty, and is always seen in his more obedient, holy, fruitful life. The sense of the love and mercy of God, is as the rain upon the tender grass: he is never so fruitful, so thankful, so heavenly, as when he hath the greatest certainty that he shall be saved. The love of God is then shed abroad upon his heart by the Holy Ghost, which maketh him abound in love to God, Rom. v. 1—4. He is the more steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, when he is most certain that his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

2. But the weak christian is unfit yet to manage assurance well, and therefore it is that it is not given

him; graces must grow proportionably together. If he be but confidently persuaded that he is justified and shall be saved, he is very apt to gather some consequence from it, that tendeth to security and to the remitting of his watchfulness and care. He is ready to be the bolder with sin, and stretch his conscience, and omit some duties, and take more fleshly liberty and ease, and think, Now I am a child of God, I am out of danger, I am sure I cannot totally fall away. And though his judgment conclude not, Therefore I may venture further upon worldly, fleshly pleasures, and need not be so strict and diligent as I was, yet his heart and practice thus conclude. And he is most obedient when he is most in fear of hell; and he is worst in his heart and life, when he is most confident that all his danger is past, Heb. iv. 1, 2; iii. 14—16.

3. But the seeming christian, though he have no assurance, is hardened in his carnal state by his presumption. Had he but assurance to be saved without a holy life, he would cast off that very image of godliness which he yet retaineth. The conceit of his own sincerity and salvation, is that which deludeth and undoeth him. What sin would not gain, or pleasure draw him to commit, if he were but sure to be forgiven? It is fear of hell that causeth that seeming religion which he hath; and therefore if that fear be gone all is gone; and all his piety, and diligence, and righteousness, is come to nought, Gal. vi. 3; John viii. 39, 42, 44.

XXVI. 1. For all his assurance, a confirmed christian is so well acquainted with his manifold imperfections, and daily failings, and great unworthiness, that he is very low and vile in his own eyes; and, therefore, can easily endure to be low and vile in the eyes of others. He hath a constant sense of the burden of his remaining sin; especially he doth even abhor himself, when he findeth the averseness of his heart to God, and how little he knoweth of him, and how little he loveth him, in comparison of what he ought; and how little of heaven is upon his heart, and how strange and backward his thoughts are to the life to come. These are as fetters upon his soul. He daily groaneth under them as a captive, that he should be yet so carnal, and unable to shake off the remnant of his infirmities, as if he were sold under sin; that is, in bondage to it, Rom. vii. 14. He hateth himself more for the imperfections of his love and obedience to God, than hypocrites do for their reigning sin. And oh how he longeth for the day of his deliverance! Rom. vii. 24. He thinketh it no great injury for another to judge of him as he judgeth of himself, even to be less than the least of all God's mercies. He is more troubled for being overpraised and overvalued, than for being dispraised and vilified; as thinking those that praise him are more mistaken, and lay the more dangerous snare for his soul. For he hath a special antipathy to pride; and wondereth that any rational man can be so blind as not to see enough to humble him. For his own part, (in the midst of all God's graces,) he seeth in himself so much darkness, imperfection, corruption, and want of further grace, that he is loathsome and burdensome continually to himself. If you see him sad, or troubled, and ask him the cause, it is ten to one but it is himself that he complaineth of. The froward wife, the most undutiful child, the most disobedient servant, the most injurious neighbour, the most malicious enemy, is not half so great a trouble to him as he is to himself. He prayeth abundantly more against his own corruption, than against any of these. O could he but know and love God more, and be more in heaven, and willing to die, and freer from his own

distempers, how easily could he bear all crosses, or injuries from others. He came to Christ's school as a little child, Matt. xviii. 3, and still he is little in his own esteem; and, therefore, disesteem and contempt from others is no great matter with him. He thinks it can be no great wrong that is done against so poor a worm, and so unworthy a sinner, as himself (except as God or the souls of men may be interested in the cause). He heartily approveth of the justice of God, in abhorring the proud; and hath learned that, Rom. xii. 10, "In honour preferring one another;" and Gal. v. 26, "Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

2. But the remnant of pride is usually the most notable sin of the weak christian; though it reigneth not, it foully blemisheth him: he would fain be taken for somebody in the church; he is ready to step up into a higher room, and to think himself wiser and better than he is. If he can but speak confidently of the principles of religion, and some few controversies which he hath made himself sick with, he is ready to think himself fit to be a preacher. He looketh through a magnifying-glass upon all his own performances and gifts; he loveth to be valued and praised; he can hardly bear to be slighted and dispraised, but is ready to think hardly of those that do it, if not to hate them in some degree: he loveth not to be found fault with, though it be necessary to his amendment. And though all this vice of pride be not so predominant in him, as to conquer his humility, yet doth it much obscure and interrupt it. And though he hate this pride, and strive against it, and lamenteth it before God, yet still it is the sorest ulcer in his soul. And should it prevail and overcome him, he would be abhorred of God, and it would be his ruin, 2 Chron. xvi. 10, 12; Luke xxii. 24—26.

3. But in the hypocrite pride is the reigning sin. The praise of men is the air which he liveth in. He was never well acquainted with himself; and never felt aright the burden of his sins and wants; and, therefore, cannot bear contempt from others. Indeed, if his corrupt disposition turn most to the way of covetousness, tyranny, or lust, he can the easier bear contempt from others, as long as he hath his will at home; and he can spare their love, if he can be feared and domineer. But still his pride is predominant; and when it affecteth not much the reputation of goodness, it affecteth the name of being rich or great. Sin may make him sordid, but grace doth not make him humble. Pride is the vital spirit of the corrupted state of man.

XXVII. I. A confirmed christian is acquainted with the deceitfulness of man's heart, and the particular corrupt inclinations that are in it; and especially with his own; and he is acquainted with the wiles and methods of the tempter, and what are the materials which he maketh his baits of, and what is the manner in which he spreadeth his nets. He seeth always some snares before him; and what company soever he is in, or what business soever he is about, he walketh as among snares which are visible to his sight; and it is part of his business continually to avoid them. He liveth in a continual watch and warfare. He can resist much stronger and more subtle temptations than the weak can do. He is always armed, and knoweth what are the special remedies against each particular snare and sin, Eph. vi. ; 2 Cor. ii. 11; Prov. i. 17. And he carrieth always his antidotes about him, as one that liveth in an infectious world, and in the midst of a froward and perverse generation, from which he is charged to save himself, Phil. ii. 15; Acts ii. 40.

2. And the weak christian is a soldier in the army of Christ, and is engaged in striving against sin, Heb. xii. 4; and really taketh the flesh and world, as well as the devil, to be his enemies, and doth not only strive, but conquer in the main: but yet, alas, how poorly is he armed! how unskillfully doth he manage his christian armour! how often is he foiled and wounded! how many a temptation is he much unacquainted with! and how many a snare doth lie before him which he never did observe! And oft he is overcome in particular temptations, when he never perceiveth it, but thinks that he hath conquered.

3. But the hypocrite is fast insnared when he glorifieth most of his integrity, and is deceived by his own heart, and thinketh he is something when he is nothing, Gal. vi. 3; Luke xviii. 20—23. When he is thanking God that he is not as other men, he is rejoicing in his dreams, and sacrificing for the victory which he never obtained, ver. 11. He is led by Satan captive at his will, when he is boasting of his uprightness; and hath a beam of covetousness, or pride, or cruelty in his own eye, while he is reviling, or censuring another for the mote of some difference about a ceremony or tolerable opinion. And usually such grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, Matt. vii. 3—5; 2 Tim. iii. 13.

XXVIII. I. A christian indeed, is one that hath deliberately counted what it may cost him to follow Christ, and to save his soul; and knowing that suffering with Christ is the way to our reigning with him, he hath fully consented to the terms of Christ. He hath read Luke xiv. 26, 27, 33, and findeth that bearing the cross and forsaking all, is necessary to those that will be Christ's disciples. And accordingly in resolution he hath forsaken all; and looketh not for a smooth and easy way to heaven. He considereth that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution," and that "through many tribulations we must enter into heaven." And, therefore, he taketh it not for a strange or unexpected thing, if the fiery trial come upon him. He doth not wonder at the unrighteousness of the world, as if he expected reason or honesty, justice, or truth, or mercy in the enemies of Christ and the instruments of Satan: he will not bring his action against the devil, for unjust afflicting him: he will rather turn the other cheek to him that smiteth him, than he will hinder the good of any soul by seeking right; much less will he exercise unjust revenge. Though where government is exercised for truth and righteousness, he will not refuse to make use of the justice of it to punish iniquity, and discourage evil-doers, yet this is for God and the common good, and for the suppression of sin, much more than for himself. Suffering doth not surprise him as a thing unlooked for: he hath been long preparing for it, and it findeth him garrisoned in the love of Christ. Yea, though his flesh will be as the flesh of others, sensible of the smart, and his mind is not senseless of the sufferings of his body; yet it is some pleasure and satisfaction to his soul, to find himself in the common way to heaven, and to see the predictions of Christ fulfilled, and to feel himself so far conform to Jesus Christ his Head, and to trace the footsteps of a humbled Redeemer in the way before him. As "Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, so doth the christian arm himself with the same mind," 1 Pet. iv. 1. "He rejoiceth that he is made partaker of the sufferings of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, he may also be partaker of the exceeding joy," ver. 12, 13. Yea, he taketh the reproach of Christ for a treasure, yea, a greater treasure than riches or men's favours can afford, Heb. xi. 25, 26. For he knoweth if he be reproached for the name or

sake of Christ he is happy. For thereby he glorieth that God whom the enemy doth blaspheme, and so the Spirit of God and of glory resteth on him, 1 Pet. iv. 14. He liveth and suffereth as one that from his heart believeth, that "they are blessed that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for great is their reward in heaven. And they are blessed when men shall revile them and persecute them, and say all manner of evil against them falsely for Christ's sake." In this they "rejoice and are exceeding glad," as knowing that herein they are "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise," Matt. v. 10—12; Heb. vi. 12. If he be "offered upon the sacrifice and service of the faith of God's elect, he can rejoice in it as having greater good than evil," Phil. ii. 17. He can suffer the loss of all things, and account them dung, that he may "win Christ, and be found in him, and know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death," Phil. iii. 8—10. Not out of surliness and pride doth he rejoice in sufferings, as some do, that they may carry the reputation of holy and undaunted men, and seem to be far better and constanter than others. When pride maketh men suffer, they are partly the devil's martyrs, though the cause be never so good. Though it is much more ordinary for pride to make men suffer rejoicingly in an ill cause than in a good; the devil having more power on his own ground than on Christ's. But it is the love of Christ, and the belief of the reward, and the humble neglect of the mortified flesh, and the contempt of the conquered world, that maketh the christian suffer with so much joy; for he seeth that the Judge is at the door, and what torments the wicked are preparing for themselves; and that as certainly as there is a God that governeth the world, and that in righteousness, so certainly are his eyes upon the righteous, and his face is set against them that do evil, 1 Pet. iii. 12; and though "sinners do evil a hundred times," and escape unpunished till their days be prolonged, yet vengeance will overtake them in due time, and it shall be well with them that fear the Lord; and that he keepeth all the tears of his servants till the reckoning day. And if "judgment begin at the house of God, and the righteous be saved through so much suffering and labour, what then shall be their end, that obey not the gospel? and where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18; Eccles. viii. 12; Prov. xi. 31; xiii. 6; Psal. lvi. 8; Deut. xxxii. 35; James v. 9.

2. And the weak christian is one that will forsake all for the sake of Christ, and suffer with him that he may be glorified with him; and will take his treasure in heaven for all, Luke xiv. 26, 33; xviii. 22. But he doth it not with that easiness, and alacrity, and joy, as the confirmed christian doth. He hearkens more to the flesh, which saith, Favour thyself. Suffering is much more grievous to him; and sometimes he is wavering before he can bring himself fully to resolve, and let go all, Matt. xvi. 22.

3. But the seeming christian looketh not for much suffering: he reads of it in the gospel, but he saw no probability of it, and never believed that he should be called to it in any notable degree: he thought it probable that he might well escape it, and therefore, though he agreed verbally to take Christ for better and worse, and to follow him through sufferings, he thought he would never put him to it. And indeed his heart is secretly resolved that he will never be undone in the world for Christ. Some reparable loss he may undergo, but he will not let go life and all. He will still be religious and hope for heaven; but he will make himself believe (and others if he

can) that the truth lieth on the safer side, and not on the suffering side; and that it is but for their own conceits, and scrupulosity, that other men suffer who go beyond him; and that many good men are of his opinion, and therefore he may be good also in the same opinion (though he would never have been of that opinion, if it had not been necessary to his escaping of sufferings): what flourish soever he maketh for a time, "when persecution ariseth he is offended and withereth," Matt. xiii. 21, 26. Unless he be so deeply engaged among the suffering party, that he cannot come off without perpetual reproach; and then perhaps pride will make him suffer more than the belief of heaven or the love of Christ could do. And all this is, because his very belief is unrooted, and unsound, and he hath secretly at the heart a fear, that if he should suffer death for Christ, he should be a loser by him, and he would not reward him according to his promise, with everlasting life, Heb. iii. 12.

XXIX. 1. A christian indeed is one that followeth not Christ for company, nor holdeth his belief in trust upon the credit of any in the world; and therefore he would stick to Christ, if all that he knoweth or converseth with should forsake him. If the rulers of the earth should change their religion, and turn against Christ, he would not forsake him. If the multitude of the people turn against him, nay, if the professors of godliness should fall off, yet would he stand his ground and be still the same. If the learnedest men, and the pastors of the church, should turn from Christ, he would not forsake him. Yea, if his nearest relations and friends, or even that minister that was the means of his conversion, should change their minds, and forsake the truth, and turn from Christ, or a holy life, he would yet be constant, and be still the same. And what Peter resolved on, he would truly practise: "Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet would not I be offended. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee," Matt. xxvi. 33, 35. And if he thought himself, as Elias did, left alone, yet would he not bow the knee to Baal, Rom. xi. 3. If he hear that this eminent minister falleth off one day, and the other another day, till all be gone, yet still the foundation of God standeth sure; he falleth not because he is built upon the rock, Matt. vii. 22, 23. His heart saith, Alas, whither shall I go, if I go from Christ? Is there any other that hath the word and Spirit of eternal life? Can I be a gainer if I lose my soul? John vi. 67, 68; Matt. xvi. 26. He useth his teachers to bring him that light and evidence of truth, which dwelleth in him when they are gone: and, therefore, though they fall away, he falleth not with them.

2. And the weakest christian believeth with a divine faith of his own, and dependeth more on God than man: but yet if he should be put to so great a trial, as to see all the pastors and christians that he knoweth, change their minds, I know not what he would do: for though God will uphold all his own, whom he will save, yet he doth it by means and outward helps, together with his internal grace; and keepeth them from temptations, when he will deliver them from the evil; and therefore it is a doubt, whether there be not degrees of grace so weak, as would fail, in case the strongest temptations were permitted to assault them. A strong man can stand and go of himself, but an infant must be carried; and the lame and sick must have others to support them. The weak christian falleth, if his teacher or most esteemed company fall: if they run into an error, sect, or schism, he keeps them company. He groweth cold, if he have not warming company: he for-

getteth himself, and letteth loose his sense and passion, if he have not some to watch over him and warn him. No man should refuse the help of others, that can have it; and the best have need of all God's means: but the weak christian needeth them much more than the strong, and is much less able to stand without them, Luke xxii. 32; Gal. ii. 11—14.

3. But the seeming christian is built upon the sand, and therefore cannot stand a storm: he is a christian more for company, or the credit of man, or the interest that others have in him, or the encouragement of the times, than from a firm belief and love of Christ, and therefore falleth when his props are gone, Matt. vii. 24.

XXX. 1. A strong christian can digest the hardest truths, and the hardest works of providence: he seeth more of the reason and evidence of truths than others; and he hath usually a more comprehensive knowledge, and can reconcile those truths which short-sighted persons suspect to be inconsistent and contradictory, and when he cannot reconcile them, he knoweth they are reconcilable: for he hath laid his foundation well, and then he reduceth other truths to that, and buildeth them on it: and so he doth by the hardest providences: whoever is high or low, whoever prospereth or is afflicted, however human affairs are carried, and all things seem to go against the church and cause of Christ, he knoweth yet that God is good to Israel, Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2, and that he is the "righteous Judge of all the earth;" and that the "righteous shall have dominion in the morning," and "it shall go well with them that fear the Lord;" for he goeth into the sanctuary, and foreseeth the end, Eccles. viii. 11—13; Psal. lxxiii. 17; exv. 11, 13; xxxi. 19.

2. But the weak christian is very hard put to it, when he meeteth with difficult passages of Scripture, and when he seeth it "go with the righteous according to the work of the wicked, and with the wicked according to the work of the righteous," Eccles. viii. 14. Though he is not overturned by such difficulties, yet his foot is ready to slip, and he digesteth them with much perplexity and trouble.

3. But the seeming, unsettled christian is often overcome by them, and turneth away from Christ, and saith, These are hard sayings, or hard providences, who can bear them, John vi. 60, 66. And thus unbelief thence gathereth matter for its increase.

XXXI. 1. A christian indeed is one that can exercise all God's graces in conjunction, and in their proper places and proportion, without setting one against another, or neglecting one while he is exercising another. He can be humbled without hindering his thankfulness and joy; and he can be thankful and joyful without hindering his due humility: his knowledge doth not destroy, but quicken his zeal: his wisdom hindereth not, but furthereth his innocency: his faith is a help to his repentance, and his repentance to his faith: his love to himself doth not hinder, but help his love to others; and his love to God is the end of both. He can mourn for the sins of the times, and the calamities of the church, yea, for his own sins and imperfections, and yet rejoice for the mercies which he hath in possession or in hope. He findeth that piety and charity are necessarily conjunct; and every grace and duty is a help to all the rest. Yea, he can exercise his graces methodically, which is the comeliness and beauty of his heart and life, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 16—21; 1 Pet. ii. 17.

2. But the weak christian, though he have every grace, and his obedience is universal, yet can he hardly set himself to any duty, but it hindereth him

from some other duty, through the narrowness and weakness of his mind. When he is humbling himself in confession of sin, he can scarce be lively in thankfulness for mercy: when he rejoiceth, it hindereth his humiliation: he can hardly do one duty without omitting or hindering another; he is either all for joy or all for sorrow; all for love or all for fear; and cannot well do many things at once, but is apt to separate the truths and duties which God hath inseparably conjoined.

3. And for the seeming christian, he exerciseth no grace in sincerity, nor is he universal in his obedience to God; though he may have the image of every grace and duty.

XXXII. 1. A christian indeed is more in getting and using his graces, than in inquiring whether he have them: he is very desirous to be assured that he is sincere, but he is more desirous to be so: and he knoweth that even assurance is got more by the exercise and increase of grace, than by bare inquiry whether we have it already: not that he is a neglecter of self-examination, but he oftener asketh, What shall I do to be saved? than, How shall I know that I shall be saved?

2. But the weak christian hath more of self and less of God in his solicitousness: and though he be willing to obey the whole law of Christ, yet he is much more solicitous to know that he is out of danger, and shall be saved, than to be fully pleasing unto God; and therefore, proportionably, he is more in inquiring by what marks he may know that he shall be saved, than by what means he may attain more holiness, and what diligence is necessary to his salvation.

3. But the seeming christian is most careful how to prosper in the world, or please his flesh; and next, how he may be sure to escape damnation when he hath done; and least of all, how he may conform to Christ in holiness.

XXXIII. 1. A christian indeed doth study duty more than events; and is more careful what he shall be towards God, than what he shall have from God in this life. He looketh to his own part more than unto God's, as knowing that it is he that is like to fail; but God will never fail of his part: he is much more suspicious of himself than of God; and when any thing goeth amiss, he blameth himself, and not God's providence: he knoweth that the hairs of his head are numbered, and that his Father knoweth what he needeth; and that God is infinitely wiser, and fitter to dispose of him, than he is to choose for himself, and that God loveth him better than he can love himself; and therefore he thankfully accepteth that easy, indulgent command, "Cast all your care on him, for he careth for you. Take no thought what you shall eat or drink, or where-with you shall be clothed," Heb. xii. 15; xiii. 5; Job i. 21, 22; Matt. x. 30; vi. 25, 31, 32; 1 Pet. v. 7.

2. But alas! how guilty is the weak christian of meddling with God's part of the work! How sinfully careful what will become of him, and of his family and affairs, and of the church, as if he were afraid lest God would prove forgetful, unfaithful, or insufficient for his work! So imperfect is his trust in God.

3. And the seeming christian really trusteth him not at all, for any thing that he can trust himself or the creature for: he will have two strings to his bow if he can; but it is in man that he placeth his greatest trust for any thing that man can do. Indeed to save his soul he knoweth none but God is to be trusted, and therefore his life is still preferred before his soul; and consequently man whom he trusteth most with his life and prosperity, is really trusted be-

fore God, however God may have the name, Jer. xvii. 5, 7; Psal. xxxiv. 8; xx. 7; xxxiv. 22; xxxvii. 3.

XXXIV. 1. A christian indeed is much more studious of his own duty towards others, than of theirs to him; he is much more fearful of doing wrong, than of receiving wrong: he is more troubled if he say ill of others, than if others speak ill of him: he had far rather be slandered himself, than slander others; or be censured himself, than censure others; or be unjustly hurt himself, than unjustly hurt another; or to be put out of his own possessions or right, than to put another out of his; he is oftener and sharper in judging and reproving himself than others; he falleth out with himself more frequently than with others; and is more troubled with himself than with all the world besides; he taketh himself for his greatest enemy, and knoweth that his danger is most at home; and that if he can escape but from himself, no one in earth or hell can undo him: he is more careful of his duty to his prince, his parents, his pastor, or his master, than of theirs to him; he is much more unwilling to be disobedient to them in any lawful thing, or to dishonour them, than to be oppressed, or unjustly afflicted, or abused by them. And all this is, because he knoweth that sin is worse than present suffering; and that he is not to answer for other men's sins, but for his own; nor shall he be condemned for the sins of any but himself; and that many millions are condemned for wronging others, but no one for being wronged by others, 1 Pet. iv. 12—16; Matt. v. 10—12; 1 Pet. ii. 13, 15—17.

2. And the weak christian is of the same mind in the main; but with so much imperfection, that he is much more frequent in censuring others, and complaining of their wrongs, and finding fault with them, and aggravating all that is said or done against himself; when he is hardly made so sensible of as great miscarriages in himself, as having much more uncharitableness, partiality, and selfishness, than a confirmed christian hath. There are few things which weakness of grace doth more ordinarily appear in, than this partiality and selfishness, in judging of the faults or duties of others, and of his own. How apt are (not only hypocrites, but) weak christians, to aggravate all that is done against them; and to extenuate or justify all that they do against another! Oh what a noise they make of it, if they think that any one hath wronged them, defamed them, disparaged them, or encroached on their right. If God himself be blasphemed or abused, they can more patiently bear it, and make not so great a matter of it. Who heareth of such angry complaints on God's behalf, as on men's own? of such passionate invectives, such sharp prosecutions, against those that wrong both God and men's souls, as against those that wrong a selfish person? (And usually every man seemeth to wrong him, who keepeth from him any thing which he would have, or saith any thing of him which is displeasing to him.) Go to the assizes and courts of justice, look into the prisons, and inquire whether it be zeal for God, or for men's selves, which is the plaintiff and prosecutor? and whether it be for wronging God or them, that all the stir is made? Men are ready to say, God is sufficient to right himself. As if he were not the Original and the End of laws and government, and magistrates were not his officers, to promote obedience to him in the world.

At this time how universal is men's complaint against their governors! how common are the cries of the poor and sufferers, of the greatness of their burdens, miseries, and wants! But how few lament the sins against government, which this land hath

been sadly guilty of! The pastors complain of the people's contempt: the people complain of the pastor's insufficiency and lives. The master complaineth how hard it is to get good servants, that will mind their business and profit as if it were their own: servants complaining of their masters for overlabouring them or using them too hardly. Landlords say that their tenants cheat them; and tenants say that their landlords oppress and grind them. But if you were christians indeed, the commonest and saddest complaints would be against yourselves. I am not so good a ruler, so peaceable a subject, so good a landlord, so good a tenant, so good a master, so good a servant, as I ought to be. Your ruler's sin, your subject's sin, your landlord's sin, your tenant's sin, your master's sin, your servant's sin, shall not be charged upon you in judgment, nor condemn you, but your own sin. How much more, therefore, should you fear, and feel, and complain of your own, than of theirs!

3. As for the seeming christian, I have told you already, that selfishness is his nature and predominant constitution; and according to self-interest, he judgeth of almost all things, of the faults and duties of others and himself. And therefore no man seemeth honest or innocent to him who displeaseth him, and is against his worldly interest. Cross him about mine and thine, and he will beknave the honestest man alive, and call his ancient friend his enemy. But of his dealings with them, he is not so scrupulous, nor so censorious of himself.

XXXV. 1. A christian indeed is much taken up in the government of his thoughts, and hath them so much ordinarily in obedience, that God and his service, and the matters of his salvation, have that precedency in them, and his eye is fixed on his end and duty; and his thoughts refuse not to serve him for any work of God to which he calleth them. He suffereth them not to be the inlets or agents for pride, or lust, or envy, or voluptuousness, or to contrive iniquity; but if any such sparks from hell are cast into his thoughts, he presently laboureth to extinguish them. If they intrude, he letteth them not lodge or dwell there. And though he cannot keep out all disorder or vanity, or inordinate delights, yet is it his endeavour, and he leaveth not his heart in any thing to itself.

2. The weak christian also maketh conscience of his thoughts, and alloweth them not to be the inlets or servants of any reigning sin. But alas, how imperfectly doth he govern them! what a deal of vanity and confusion is in them! how carelessly doth he watch them! how remissly doth he rebuke them, excite them, and command them! how oft are they defiled with impurity and uncharitableness! and how little doth he repent of this, or endeavour to reform it! And little serviceable are his thoughts, to any high and heavenly work, in comparison of the confirmed christian.

3. And the seeming christian is very little employed about his thoughts, but leaveth them to be the servants of his pride, and worldliness, or sensuality, or some reigning sin, Psal. x. 4; Matt. xv. 19; 1 Cor. iii. 20; Isa. lv. 7; Jer. iv. 14; vi. 19.

XXXVI. 1. A christian indeed is much employed in the government of his passions; and hath so far mastered them, as that they prevail not to pervert his judgment, nor to discompose his heart so far as to interrupt much his communion with God, nor to insnare his heart to any creature, nor to breed any fixed uncharitableness or malice in him, nor to cause his tongue to speak things injurious to God or man, to curse, or swear, or rail, or lie; nor yet to cause him to hurt and injure any in his heart. But when passion would be inordinate, either in delights, or de-

sires, or anger, or grief, or fear, or hope, he flieth to his helps to suppress and govern them. (Though fear is more out of man's power than the rest, and therefore ordinarily hath less of sin.) He knoweth that Christ hath blessed the meek, Matt. v. 5, and bids us learn of "him to be meek and lowly," Matt. xi. 28, 29. And that a "meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price," 1 Pet. iii. 4. It is, therefore, his care and course to give place to wrath when others are angry; and "if it be possible, as much as in him lieth, to live peaceably with all men," Rom. xii. 18, 19; yea, to follow peace when it flieth from him; Heb. xii. 14; and not, when he is reviled, to revile again, nor to threaten or revenge himself on them that injure him, 1 Pet. ii. 21—24. Reason and charity hold the reins, and passion is kept under; yea, it is used holily for God, Eph. iv. 26. Slow to anger he is in his own cause, and watchful over his anger even in God's cause, Prov. xv. 18; xvi. 32; Eph. iv. 31; Col. iii. 8.

2. But the weak christian doth greatly show his weakness in his unruly passions (if he have a temper of body disposed to passion): they are oft rising, and not easily kept under; yea, and too often prevail for such unseemly words, as maketh him become a dishonour to his profession. Oft he resolveth, and promiseth, and prayeth for help, and yet the next provocation sheweth how little grace he hath to hold the reins. And his passionate desires, and delights, and love, and sorrows, are oft as unruly as his anger, to the further weakening of his soul. They are like ague fits, that leave the health impaired.

3. And the seeming christian hath much less power over those passions, which must subserve his carnal mind. For anger, it dependeth much upon the temperature of the body; and if that incline him not strongly to it, his credit or common discretion may suppress it; unless you touch his chiefest carnal interest, and then he will not only be angry, but cruel, malicious, and revengeful. But his carnal love, and desire, and delight, which are placed upon that pleasure, or profit, or honour, which is his idol, are indeed the reigning passions in him. And his grief, and fear, and anger, are but the servants unto these, Acts xxiv. 26, 27.

XXXVII. 1. A christian indeed is one that keepeth a constant government of his tongue; he knoweth how much duty or sin it will be the instrument of. According to his ability and opportunity he useth it to the service and honour of his Creator: in speaking of his excellences, his works, and word; inquiring after the knowledge of him and his will; instructing others, and pleading for the truth and ways of God, and rebuking the impiety and iniquities of the world, as his place and calling doth allow him. He brideth his tongue from uttering vanity, filthiness, ribaldry, and foolish and uncomely talk and jests; from rash and unreverent talk of God, and taking of his name in vain; from the venting of undigested and uncertain doctrines which may prove erroneous and perilous to men's souls; from speaking imprudently, unhandsomely, or unseasonably about holy things, so as to expose them to contempt and scorn; from lying, censuring others without a warrantable ground and call; from backbiting, slandering, false accusing, railing, and reviling; malicious, envious, injurious speech, which tendeth to extinguish the love of the hearers to those he speaketh of; from proud and boasting speeches of himself; much more from swearing, cursing, and blasphemous speech, and opposition to the truths and holy ways of God, or opprobrious speeches, or derision of his servants. And in the government of his tongue, he always beginneth with his heart, that he may under-

stand and love the good which he speaketh of, and may hate the evil which his tongue forbearth; and not hypocritically to force his tongue against or without his heart. His tongue doth not run before his heart, but is ruled by it, Eph. iv. 15, 29, 31; v. 3, 4, 6; Psal. xxxvii. 30; xv. 2, 3; Prov. xvi. 13; x. 20; xxi. 23; xviii. 21; xv. 2, 4; Psal. xxxiv. 13; Prov. xxv. 15, 23; xxviii. 23; Matt. xii. 31, 32, 34.

2. But the weak christian, though his tongue be sincerely subject to the laws of God, yet frequently misearrieth and blemisheth his soul by the words of his lips, being much oftener than the confirmed christian overtaken with words of vanity, meddling, folly, imprudence, uncharitableness, wrath, boasting, venting uncertain or erroneous opinions, &c.; so that the unruliness of his tongue is the trouble of his heart, if not also of the family, and all about him.

3. The seeming christian useth his tongue in the service of his carnal ends, and therefore alloweth it so much unjustice, uncharitableness, falsehood, and other sins, as his carnal interest and designs require; but the rest perhaps he may suppress, especially if natural sobriety, good education, and prudence do assist him; and his tongue is always better than his heart, Prov. x. 32; xix. 5, 9; Psal. i. 20; xii. 3; cxliv. 8; exx. 2, 3; Prov. xxi. 6, 23.

XXXVIII. 1. The religious discourse of a confirmed christian is most about the greatest and most necessary matters: heart-work and heaven-work are the usual employment of his tongue and thoughts; unprofitable controversies and hurtful wranglings he abhorreth; and profitable controversies he manageth sparingly, seasonably, charitably, peaceably, and with caution and sobriety, as knowing that the servant of the Lord must not strive, and that strife of words perverteth the hearers, and hindereth edifying, 1 Tim. vi. 4—6; iv. 7, 8; 2 Tim. ii. 14—17, 24, 25. His ordinary discourse is about the glorious excellences, attributes, relations, and works of God; and the mystery of redemption, the person, office, covenant, and grace of Christ; the renewing, illuminating, sanctifying works of the Holy Ghost; the mercies of this life, and that to come; the duty of man to God as his Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator; the corruption and deceitfulness of the heart; the methods of the tempter; the danger of particular temptations; and the means of our escape, and of our growth in grace; and how to be profitable to others, and especially to the church. And if he be called to open any truth which others understand not, he doth it not proudly, to set up himself as the master of a sect, or to draw disciples after him, nor make divisions about it in the church; but soberly, to the edification of the weak. And though he be ready to defend the truth against perverse gainsayers in due season, yet doth he not turn his ordinary edifying discourse into disputes, or talk of controversies; nor hath such a proud, pugnacious soul, as to assault every one that he thinks erroneous, as a man that taketh himself for the great champion of the truth.

2. But the weak christian hath a more unfruitful, wandering tongue, and his religious discourse is most about his opinions or party, or some external thing; as which is the best preacher, or person, or book. Or if he talk of any text of Scripture, or doctrine of religion, it is much of the outside of it; and his discourse is less feeling, lively, and experimental. Yea, many a time he hindereth the more edifying, savoury discourse of others, by such religious discourse as is imprudent, impertinent, or turneth them away from the heart and life of the matter in hand. But especially his opinions, and distinct manner of worship, are the chief of his discourse.

3. And for the seeming christian, though he can

affectedly force his tongue to talk of any subject in religion, especially that which he thinks will most honour him in the esteem of the hearers; yet when he speaketh according to the inclination of his heart, his discourse is first about his fleshly interest and concerns, and next to that of the mere externals of religion, as controversies, parties, and the several modes of worship.

XXXIX. 1. A christian indeed is one that so liveth upon the great substantial matters of religion, as yet not willingly to commit the smallest sin, nor to own the smallest falsehood, nor to renounce or betray the smallest holy truth or duty, for any price that man can offer him. The works of repentance, faith, and love, are his daily business, which take up his greatest care and diligence. Whatever opinions or controversies are afoot, his work is still the same; whatever changes come, his religion changeth not; he placeth not the kingdom of God in meats and drinks, and circumstances and ceremonies, either being for them or against them, but in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And he that in these things serveth Christ, as he is acceptable to God, so is he approved by such a christian as this, however factious persons may revile him, Rom. xiv. 17, 18, 1—5, 10. The strong christian can "bear the infirmities of the weak," and not take the course that most pleaseth himself, but that which "pleaseth his neighbour for his good to edification," Rom. xv. 1—3. The essentials of religion, faith, and love, and obedience, are as bread and drink, the substance of his food. These he meditateth on, and these he practiseth, and according to these he esteemeth of others.

But yet no price can seem sufficient to him, to buy his innocency; nor will he wilfully sin, and say, It is a little one, nor "do evil that good may come by it," nor offer to God the sacrifice of disobedient fools, and then say, I knew not that I did evil; for he knoweth that God will rather have obedience than sacrifice, and that "disobedience is as the sin of witchcraft;" and "he that breaketh one of the least commands, and teacheth men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of God." And he that teacheth men to sin by the example of his own practice, can little expect to turn them from sin, by his better instructions and exhortations. He that will deliberately sin in a small matter, doth set but a small price on the favour of God and his salvation. Wilful disobedience is odious to God, how small soever the matter be about which it is committed. Who can expect that he should stick at any sin, when his temptation is great, who will considerably commit the least; especially if he will approve and justify it? Therefore the sound christian will rather forsake his riches, his liberty, his reputation, his friends, and his country, than his conscience; and rather lay down liberty, and life itself, than choose to sin against his God, as knowing that never man gained by his sin, Rom. iii. 8; Eccles. v. 2; 1 Sam. xv. 15, 21—23; Matt. v. 19. The sin that Saul was rejected for seemed but a little thing; nor the sin that Uzzah was slain for; and the service of God, even his sacrifice and his ark, were the pretence for both. The sin of the Bethshemites, of Achan, of Gehazi, of Ananias and Sapphira, which had grievous punishments, would seem but little things to us. And it is a great aggravation of our sin to be chosen, deliberate, justified, and fathered upon God; and to pretend that we do it for his service, for the worshipping of him, or the doing good to others, as if God would own and bless sinful means, or needed a lie to his service or glory: when he hateth all the workers of iniquity, (Psal. v. 5.) and requireth only

the sacrifices of righteousness, Psal. iv. 5. He abhorreth sacrifice from polluted hands; they are to him as the offering a dog; and he will ask who hath required this at your hand. See Psal. 1. 8—14; Isa. i. 9—12, &c.; lviii. 1—4, &c.; Jer. vi. 19, 20. "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord," Prov. xv. 8; xxi. 27. It is not pleasing to him; "all that eat thereof shall be polluted," Hosea ix. 4. See Isa. lxvi. 1—6. The preaching, the prayer, the sacraments of wilful sinners, especially when they choose sin as necessary to his service, are a scorn and mockery put upon the most Holy One: as if your servant should set dung and carrion before you on your table for your food: such offer Christ vinegar and gall to drink.

2. In all this the weakest christian that is sincere, is of the same mind, saving that in his ordinary course, he useth to place too much of his religion in controversies, and parties, and modes, and ceremonies, (whether being for them or against them,) and allow too great a proportion in his thoughts, and speech, and zeal, and practice; and hindereth the growth of his grace, by living upon less edifying things, and turning too much from the more substantial nutriment.

3. And the seeming christians are here of different ways. One sort of them place almost all their religion in Pharisaical observation of little, external, ceremonial matters; as their washings, and fastings, and tithings, and formalities, and the traditions of the elders; or in their several opinions, and ways, and parties, which they call, being of the true church; as if their sect were all the church. But living to God in faith and love, and in a heavenly conversation, and worshipping him in spirit and truth, they are utterly unacquainted with. The other sort are truly void of these essential parts of christianity, in the life and power, as well as the former. But yet being secretly resolved to take up no more of christianity than will consist with their worldly prosperity and ends, when any sin seemeth necessary to their preferment or safety in the world, their way is to pretend their high esteem of greater matters, for the swallowing of such a sin as an inconsiderable thing. And then they extol those larger souls that live not upon circumstantial, but upon the great and common truths and duties, and pity those men of narrow principles and spirits, who by unnecessary scrupulosity make sin of that which is no sin, and expose themselves to needless trouble. And they would make themselves and others believe that it is their excellency and wisdom, to be above such trifling scruples. And all is because they never took God and heaven for their all, and therefore are resolved never to lose all for the hopes of heaven; and therefore to do that, whatever it be, which their worldly interest shall require, and not to be of any religion that will undo them.

And three great pretences are effectual means in this their deceit. One is, because indeed there are a sort of persons that tithe mint and cummin, while they pass by the greatest matters of the law, and that are causelessly scrupulous, and make that to be sin which indeed is no sin: and when such a scrupulous people are noted by their weakness, and under dishonour among wiser men, the hypocrite hath a very plausible pretence for his hypocrisy, in seeming only to avoid this ignorant scrupulosity, and taking all for such who judge not his sin to be a thing indifferent.

Another great shelter to the credit and conscience of this hypocrite, is the charity of the best, sincerest christians, who always judge rigidly of themselves, and gently of others. They would rather die than wilfully choose to commit the smallest sin

themselves; but if they see another commit it, they judge as favourably of it as the case will bear, and hope that he did it not knowingly or wilfully; for they are bound to hope the best till the worst be evident. This being the upright christian's case, the hypocrite knoweth that he shall still have a place in the esteem and love of those charitable christians (whose integrity and moderation maketh their judgments most valuable): and then for the judgment of God, he will venture on it; and for the censures of weaker persons, who themselves are censured by the best for their censoriousness, he can easily bear them.

And another covert for the hypocrite in this case, is the different judgments of learned and religious men, who make a controversy of the matter. And what duty or sin is there that is not become a controversy? Yea, and among men otherwise well esteemed of (except in the essentials of religion). And if once it be a controversy, whether it be a sin or not, the hypocrite can say, I am of the judgment of such and such good and learned men; they are very judicious, excellent persons; and we must not judge one another in controverted cases; though we differ in judgment, we must not differ in affection. And thus because he hath a shelter for his reputation from the censures of men, by the countenance of such as accompany him in his sin, he is as quiet as if he were secured from the censures of the Almighty.

XL. 1. A christian indeed is one that highly valueth time; he abhorreth idleness, and all diversions which would rob him of his time, and hinder him from his work. He knoweth how much work he hath to do, and of what unspeakable consequence to his soul (if not also to others). He knoweth that he hath a soul to save or lose; a heaven to win; a hell to escape; a death and judgment to prepare for; many a sin to mortify, and many graces to get, and exercise, and increase; and many enemies and temptations to overcome; and that he shall never have more time of trial; but what is now undone, must be undone for ever. He knoweth how short and hasty time is, and also how uncertain; and how short many hundred years is to prepare for an everlasting state, if all were spent in greatest diligence; and therefore he wondereth at those miserable souls, that have time to spare, and waste in those fooleries which they call pastimes, even in stage-plays, cards, and dice, and long and tedious feasting, delights, compliments, idleness, and over-long or needless visits or recreations. He marvelleth at the distraction or sottishness of those persons, that can play, and prate, and loiter, and feast away precious hours, as if their poor, unprepared souls had nothing to do, while they stand at the very brink of a dreadful eternity, and are so fearfully unready as they are. He taketh that person who would cheat him of his time, by any of these forenamed baits, to be worse to him than a thief that would take his purse from him by the highway. O precious time! how highly doth he value it, when he thinks of his everlasting state, and thinks what haste his death is making, and what reckoning he must make for every moment; what abundance of work hath he for every hour, which he is grieved that he cannot do! He hath a calling to follow, and he hath a heart to search, and watch, and study; and a God to seek and faithfully serve; and many to do good to; and abundance of particular duties to perform in order to every one of these. But, alas! time doth make such haste away, that many things are left undone, and he is afraid lest death will find him very much behindhand: and therefore he is up and doing, as one that hath use for

every minute; and worketh while it is day, because he knoweth that the night is coming when none can work, John ix. 4. Redeeming time is much of his wisdom and his work, Eph. v. 16; Col. iv. 5. He had rather labour in the house of correction, than live the swinish life of idle and voluptuous gentlemen, or beggars, that live to no higher end, than to live, or to please their flesh; or to live as worldlings, that lose all their lives in the service of a perishing world. He knoweth how precious time will be ere long, in the eyes of those that now make light of it, and trifle it away as a contemned thing, as if they had too much.

2. The weak christian is of the same mind in the main. But when it cometh to particular practice, he is like a weak or weary traveller, that goeth but slowly, and maketh many a stop. Though his face is still heavenwards, he goeth but a little way in a day: he is too easily tempted to idle, or talk, or feast, or play away an hour unlawfully, so it be not his ordinary course, and he do it but seldom. He taketh not the loss of an hour for so great a loss as the confirmed christian doth: he could sooner be persuaded to live (though not an idle and unprofitable, yet) an easier, less profitable life. The world and the flesh have far more of his hours, than they ought to have; though his weakness tell him that he hath most need of diligence.

3. But the time of a seeming christian is most at the service of his fleshly interest; and for that it is principally employed. And for that he can redeem it, and grudge if it be lost. But as he liveth not to God, so he cannot redeem his time for God. He loseth it even when he seemeth to employ it best; when he is praying, or otherwise worshipping God, and doing that good which feedeth his false hopes, he is not redeeming his time in all this. While he is sleeping in security, and deluding his soul with a few formal words, and an image of religion, and his time passeth on, and he is hurried away to the dreadful day, and his damnation slumbereth not, 2 Pet. ii. 3; Prov. xx. 4; Matt. xxv. 6-8.

XLI. 1. A christian indeed is one whose very heart is set upon doing good: as one that is made to be profitable to others, according to his ability and place; even as the sun is made to shine upon the world; he could not be content to live idly, or to labour unprofitably, or to get never so much to himself, and live in never so much plenty himself, unless he some way contributed to the good of others. Not that he grudgeth at the smallness of his talents, and lowness or obscurity of his place; for he knoweth that God may dispose his creatures and talents as he please; and that where much is given, much is required, Matt. xxv.; Luke xii. 48; xix. 23. But what his Lord hath trusted him with, he is loth to hide, and willing to improve to his Master's use. He is so far from thinking that God is beholden to him for his good works, that he taketh it for one of his greatest mercies in the world, that God will use him in doing any good; and he would take it for a very great suffering to be deprived of such opportunities, or turned out of service, or called to less of that kind of duty. If he were a physician, and denied liberty to practise, or a minister, and denied liberty to preach, it would far more trouble him that he is hindered from doing good, than that he is deprived of any profits or honours to himself. He doth not only comfort himself with the foresight of the reward, but in the very doing of good he findeth so much pleasure, as maketh him think it the delightfulest life in the world: and he looketh for most of his receivings from God, in a way of duty, John v. 29; Gal. vi. 10; Heb. xiii. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 11.

2. But the weak christian, though he have the same disposition, is far less profitable in the world: he is more for himself, and less able to do good to others: he wanteth either parts, or prudence, or zeal, or strength. Yea, he is oft like the infants and sick persons of a family, that are not helpful, but troublesome to the rest. They find work for the stronger christians to bear their infirmities, and watch them, and support and help them. Indeed, as an infant is a comfort to the mother, through the power of her own love, even when she endureth the trouble of its crying and uncleanness; so weak christians are a comfort to charitable ministers and people; we are glad that they are alive; but sadded often by their distempers, Rom. xiv. 1; xv. 12.

3. The seeming christian liveth to himself, and all his good works are done but for himself, to keep up his credit, or quiet his guilty conscience, and deceive himself with the false hopes of a reward, for that which his false-heartedness maketh to be his sin. If he be a man of learning and good parts, he may be very serviceable to the church; but the thanks of that is due to God, and little to him, who seeketh himself more than God, or the good of others, in all that he doth, Matt. xxv. 24—26.

XLII. 1. A christian indeed, doth truly love his neighbour as himself: he is not all for his own commodity: his neighbour's profit or good name is as his own. He feeleth himself hurt when his neighbour is hurt; and if his neighbour prosper, he rejoiceth as if he prospered himself. Though his neighbour be not united to him in the nearest bonds of christianity, or piety, yet he is not disregarding of the common unity of humanity. Love is the very soul of life, Lev. xix. 18; Matt. xix. 19; xxii. 39; Rom. xiii. 9; Gal. v. 14; James ii. 8; Mark x. 21; 1 John iv. 10.

2. But the love that is in weaker christians, though it be sincere, is weak as they are; and mixed with too much selfishness, and with too much sourness and wrath: little matters cause differences and fallings out: when it cometh to MINE and THINE, and their neighbours cross their interest or commodity, or stand in their way, when they are seeking any preferment or profit to themselves; you shall see too easily by their sourness and contention, how weak their love is, Matt. xxiv. 12; 1 Tim. vi. 10; Luke xxii. 24.

3. But in the seeming christian selfishness is so predominant, that he loveth none but for himself, with any considerable love: all his kindness is from self-love, because men love him, or highly value him, or praise him, or have done him some good turn, or may do him good hereafter, or the like. If he hath any love to any for his own worth, yet self-love can turn all that to hatred, if they seem against him, or cross him in his way; for no man that is a lover of the world, and flesh, and carnal self, can ever be a true friend to any other. For he loveth them but for his own ends; and any cross interests will show the falsehood of his love, 2 Tim. iii. 2—4; Matt. v. 46.

XLIII. 1. A christian indeed hath a special love to all the godly; such as endearth his heart unto them; and such as will enable him to visit them, and relieve them in their wants, to his own loss and hazard, according to his ability and opportunity. For the image of God is beautiful and honourable in his eyes: he loveth not them so much as God in them, Christ in them, the Holy Spirit in them. He foreseeth the day when he shall meet them in heaven, and there rejoice in God with them to eternity. He loveth their company and converse, and delighteth in their gracious words and lives. And

the converse of ungodly and empty men is a weariness to him (unless in a way of duty, or when he can do them good). "In his eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord," Psal. xv. 4. Other men grieve his soul with their iniquities, while he is delighted with the appearances of God in his holy ones, even the excellent ones on earth, Psal. xvi. 3; 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. Yea, the infirmities of believers destroy not his love; for he hath learned of God himself to difference between their abhorred frailties and their predominant grace; and to love the very infants in the family of Christ. Yea, though they wrong him, or quarrel with him, or censure him in their weakness, he can honour their sincerity, and love them still. And if some of them prove scandalous, and some seeming christians fall away, or fall into the most odious crimes, he loveth religion nevertheless; but continueth as high an esteem of piety, and of all that are upright, as he had before, 1 John iv. 7, 8, 10; John xii. 34, 35; 1 Thess. iv. 9; 1 John iii. 11, 14, 23; Matt. xxv. 39, 40, &c.

2. The weak christian sincerely loveth all that bear his Father's image; but it is with a love so weak (even when it is most passionate) as will sooner be abated or interrupted by any tempting differences. He is usually quarrelsome and forward with his brethren, and apter to confine his love to those that are of his own opinion or party. And because God hath taught him to love all that are sincere, the devil tempteth him to censure them as not sincere, that so he may justify himself in the abatement of his love. And weak christians are usually the most censorious, because they have the smallest degree of love, which covereth faults, and thinketh no evil, and is not suspicious, but ever apt to judge the best, till the worst be evident, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. "It beareth all things, believeth all things, (that are credible,) hopeth all things, endureth all things," ver. 7. But it is no wonder to see children fall out, even about their childish toys and trifles; and what the dissensions of the children of the church have done against themselves in these kingdoms, I need not, I delight not, to record. See 1 Cor. iii. 1—4, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able: for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men?"

3. The seeming christian may have some love to real christians, even for their goodness' sake; but it is a love subservient to his carnal self-love; and, therefore, it shall not cost him much. As he hath some love to Christ, so he may have some love to christians; but he hath more to the world and fleshly pleasures; and, therefore, all his love to Christ or christians, will not make him leave his worldly happiness for them. And, therefore, Christ, at the day of judgment, will not inquire after empty, barren love, but after that love which visited and relieved suffering saints. A hypocrite can allow both Christ and christians such a cheap, superficial kind of love, as will cost him little. He will bid them lovingly "Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled," James ii. 15—17. But still the world is most beloved.

XLIV. 1. A christian indeed doth love his enemies, and forgive those that injure him, and this out of a thankful sense of that grace which forgave him a far greater debt. Not that he thinketh it unlawful to make use of the justice of the government which

he is under, for his necessary protection, or for the restraint of men's abuse and violence. Nor is he bound to love the malice or injury, though he must love the man. Nor can he forgive a crime as it is against God or the common good, or against another, though he can forgive an injury or debt that is his own. Nor is he bound to forgive every debt, though he is bound so far to forgive every wrong as heartily to desire the good of him that did it. Even God's enemies he so far loveth, as to desire God to convert and pardon them, while he hateth their sin, and hateth them as God's enemies, and desireth their restraint, Psal. cxxxix. 21, 22; ci. 3; cxix. 4; lxxviii. 1; xxi. 8. But those that hate, and curse, and persecute himself, he can unfeignedly love, and bless, and pray for, Matt. v. 43-45. For he knoweth that else he cannot be a child of God, ver. 45. And that to love those that love him is not much praise-worthy, being no more than heathens and wicked men can do, ver. 46, 47. He is so deeply sensible of that wondrous love which so dearly redeemed him, and saved him from hell, and forgave him a thousandfold worse than the worst that ever was done against himself, that thankfulness and imitation, or conformity to Christ in his great compassions, do overcome his desires of revenge, and make him willing to do good to his most cruel enemies, and pray for them as Christ and Stephen did at their deaths, Luke xxiii. 34; Acts vii. 60. And he knoweth that he is so inconsiderable a worm, that a wrong done to him as such, is the less considerable; and he knoweth that he daily wrongeth God, more than any man can wrong him, and that he can hope for pardon but on condition that he himself forgive, Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15; xviii. 34, 35; and that he is far more hurtful to himself, than any other can be to him.

2. And the weakest christian can truly love an enemy, and forgive a wrong; but he doth it not so easily and so fully as the other. But it is with much striving, and some unwillingness and averseness; and there remaineth some grudge or strangeness upon the mind. He doth not sufficiently forget the wrong which he doth forgive. Indeed, his forgiving is very imperfect, like himself, (Matt. xviii. 21; Luke ix. 54, 55,) not with that freeness and readiness required. "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love," Eph. iv. 2. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye," Col. iii. 13, 18. "Avenge not yourselves," &c. Rom. xii. 14, 19.

3. As for the seeming christian, he can seem to forgive wrongs for the sake of Christ, but if he do it indeed it is for his own sake: as because it is for his honour, or because the person hath humbled himself to him, or his commodity requireth it, or he can make use of his love and service for his advantage, or some one hath interposed for reconciliation who must not be denied, or the like. But to love an enemy indeed, and to love that man (be he never so good) who standeth in the way of his preferment, honour, or commodity in the world, he never doth it from his heart, whatever he may seem to do, Matt. vi. 14, 15; xviii. 27, 30, 32. The love of Christ doth not constrain him.

XLV. 1. A christian indeed is as precise in the justice of his dealings with men, as in acts of piety to God. For he knoweth that God requireth this as strictly at his hands. "That no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter; for the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned and testified," 1 Thess. iv. 6. He is one that "walk-

eth uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart, that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. If he swear to his own hurt, he changeth not. He putteth not out his money to (unjust or unmerciful) usury; nor taketh reward against the innocent," Psal. xv. He obeyeth that, Lev. xix. 13, "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning." He can say as Samuel, "Whose ox or ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe, to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand," 1 Sam. xii. And if heretofore he was ever guilty of defrauding any he is willing to his power to make restitution; and saith as Zaccheus, "If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold," Luke xix. 8. Though flesh and blood persuade him to the contrary, and though it leave him in want, he will pay his debts, and make restitution of that which is ill gotten, as being none of his own. He will not sell for as much as he can get, but for as much as it is truly worth: he will not take advantage of the weakness, or ignorance, or necessity of his neighbour: he knoweth that "a false balance is abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight," Prov. xi. 1. He is afraid of believing ill reports, and rebuketh the backbiter, chap. xxv. 23. He is apt to take part with any man behind his back, who is not notoriously inexcusable; not to justify any evil, but to show his charity, and his hatred of evil-speaking, especially where it can do no good. He will not believe evil of another till the evidence do compel him to believe it. If he have wronged any by incautious words, he readily confesseth his fault to him, and asketh him forgiveness, and is ready to make any just satisfaction for any wrong that he hath done. He borroweth not when he seeth not a great probability that he is like to pay it. Nor will remain in debt by retaining that which is another man's against his will, without an absolute necessity. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another," Rom. xiii. 8. For to borrow when he cannot pay is but to steal. Begging is better than borrowing for such. "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not," Psal. xxxvii. 21.

2. And the weak christian maketh conscience of justice as well as acts of piety, as knowing that God hath no need of our sacrifices, but loveth to see us do that which is good for human society, and which we have need of from each other. But yet he hath more selfishness and partiality than the confirmed christian hath, and therefore is often overcome by temptations to unrighteous things. As to stretch his conscience for his commodity, in buying or selling, and concealing the faults of what he selleth, and sometimes overreaching others. Especially he is ordinarily too censorious of others, and apt to be credulous of evil reports, and to be over-bold and forward in speaking ill of men behind their backs, and without a call; especially against persons that differ from him in matters of religion, where he is usually most unjust and apt to go beyond his bounds, James iii. 15, 16; Tit. iii. 2; Eph. iv. 31; 1 Pet. ii. 1.

3. The seeming christian may have a seeming justice; but really he hath none but what must give place to his fleshly interest; and if his honour, and commodity, and safety require it, he will not stick to be unjust. And that justice which wanteth but a strong temptation to overturn it, is almost as bad as

none. If he will not seize on Naboth's vineyard, nor make himself odious by oppression or deceit, yet if he can raise or enrich himself by secret cozenage, and get so fair a pretence for his injustice, as shall cloak the matter from the sight of men, he seldom sticketh at it. It is an easy matter to make an Achan think that he doth no harm, or a Gehazi think that he wrongeth no man, in taking that which was offered and due. Covetousness will not confess its name; but will find some reasonings to make good all the injustice which it doth, 1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Kings v. 19, 20.

XLVI. 1. A christian indeed is faithful and laborious in his particular calling, and that not out of a covetous mind; but in obedience to God, and that he may maintain his family, and be able to do good to others. For God hath said, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread," Gen. iii. 19. "And six days shalt thou labour," Exod. xx. 10. And with quietness men must work, and eat their own bread; and "if any will not work, neither should he eat," 2 Thess. iii. 10—12. Abraham, and Noah, and Adam, laboured in a constant course of employment. He knoweth that a sanctified calling and labour is a help, and not a hindrance to devotion; and that the body must have work as well as the soul, and that religion must not be pretended for slothful idleness, nor against obedience to our Master's will, Prov. xxxi.

2. The weak christian is here more easily deceived, and made believe that religion will excuse a man from bodily labour; and under the colour of devotion to live idly. "They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not," 2 Thess. iii. 8; 1 Tim. v. 13. Slothfulness is a sin much condemned in the Scriptures, Ezek. xvi. 49; Prov. xxiv. 30; xviii. 9; xxi. 25; Matt. xxv. 26; Rom. xii. 11.

3. The seeming christian in his labour is ruled chiefly by his flesh. If he be rich, and it incline him most to sloth, he maketh small conscience of living in idleness, under the pretence of his gentility or wealth. But if the flesh incline him more to covetousness, he will be laborious enough; but it shall not be to please God by obedience, but to increase his estate, and enrich himself and his posterity, whatever better reason he pretend.

XLVII. 1. A christian indeed is exactly conscionable in the duties of his relation to others in the family and place of his abode. If he be a husband, he is loving and patient, and faithful to his wife; if he be a father, he is careful of the holy education of his children; if he be a master, he is just and merciful to his servants, and careful for the saving of their souls; if he be a child or servant, he is obedient, trusty, diligent, and careful, as well behind his parent's or his master's back, as before his face. He dare not lie, nor steal, nor deceive, nor neglect his duty, nor speak dishonourably of his superiors, though he were sure he could conceal it all. For he knoweth that the fifth commandment is enforced with a special promise, Eph. vi. 2, 5, 9. And that a bad child, or a bad servant, a bad husband or wife, a bad parent or master, cannot be a good christian, Col. iii. 18, 19, &c.; iv. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 18.

2. But weak christians, though sincere, are ordinarily weak in this part of their duty; and apt to yield to temptations, and carry themselves proudly, stubbornly, idly, disobediently, as eye-servants that are good in sight; or to be unmerciful to inferiors, and neglecters of their souls. And to excuse all this from the faults of those that they have to do with, and lay all upon others; as if the fault of husband, wife,

parent, master, or servant, would justify them in theirs; and passion and partiality would serve for innocency.

3. And the hypocrite ordinarily sheweth his hypocrisies by being false in his relations to man, while he pretendeth to be pious and obedient unto God. He is a bad master, and a bad servant, when his filthy interest requireth it, and yet thinketh himself a good christian for all that. For all men being faulty, it is easy to find a pretence from all men that he doth abuse, to cover the injury of his abuse. Cain, Ham, Eli, Absalom, Judas, &c. are sad examples of this.

XLVIII. 1. A christian indeed is the best subject, whether his prince be good or bad; though by infidel and ungodly rulers he be oft mistaken for the worst. He obeyeth not his rulers only for his own ends, but in obedience to God; and not only for fear of punishment, but for conscience' sake. He looketh on them in their relations as the officers of God, and armed with his authority, and therefore obeyeth God in them. He permiteth not dishonourable thoughts of them in his heart; much less dare he speak dishonourably of them, Exod. xii. 1; Prov. xxiv. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 13, 17; Prov. viii. 15; Acts xxiii. 4, 5; Eccles. x. 4, 20. He knoweth that every soul must be subject to the higher powers, and not resist; and that there is no power but of God. "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and he that resisteth shall receive to himself damnation," Rom. xiii. 1—6. Therefore in all things lawful he obeyeth them. And though he must not nor will not obey them against God, yet will he suffer patiently when he is wronged by them; and not only forbear resistance by arms or violence, but also all reproachful words, as knowing that the righting of himself is not so necessary to the public order and good, as the honour of his ruler is. Usurpers may probably charge him to be a traitor, and seditious and rebellious, because he dare not approve of their usurpations; and when several are contending for the government, and in a litigious title the lawyers mislead him, when the controversy is only among them, and belongs to their profession, it is possible he may mistake as well as the lawyers, and take him to have the better title that hath the worse. But in divinity he knoweth there is no controversy whether every soul must be subject to the highest power, so far as he can know it. And that prayer and patience are the subject's arms; and religion is so far from being a warrant to resist, that it plainly forbiddeth disobedience and resistance; and none are more obliged to submission and quietness than christians are. The spirit of christianity is not of this world; their kingdom and their hopes are not of this world; and, therefore, they contend not for dignities and rule; much less by resisting or rebelling against their lawful governors. But they are resolved to obey God, and secure their everlasting portion, and bear all the injuries which they meet with in the way, especially from those whom God hath set over them. There is no doctrine that ever was received in the world, so far from befriending seditions and rebellion, as the doctrine of Christ; nor any people in the world so loyal as christians, while christianity retained its genuine simplicity; till proud, domineering, worldly men, for carnal ends, pretended themselves to be christians, and perverted the doctrine of Christ, to make it warp to their ambitious ends. Suffering seemeth not so great a matter to a holy, mortified, heavenly mind, as to tempt him to hazard his salvation to resist it. No man is so likely to be true to kings, as he that believeth that his salvation

lieth on it, by the ordinance of God, Rom. xiii. 3. And princes that are wise and just, do always discern that the best christians are their best subjects; though those that are unbelieving and ungodly themselves, have ever hated them as the greatest troublemakers of the earth. And it hath ever been the practice of the enemies of Christ and godliness, to do all they can to engage the rulers of the earth against them; and to persuade them that the most godly christians are persons of disloyal and unquiet minds; and by vexing and persecuting them, they do their worst to make them such as they falsely called them. Even Christ himself was crucified as an enemy to Cæsar, and Pilate driven to it by the noise of them that cried out, that if he let them go he was not Cæsar's friend, John xix. 12. They first tempted him with the question, "Whether it were lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar," Matt. xxii. 17; Luke xx. 22. And though they could this way take no hold of him, yet this was the first article of his accusation: "We have found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar," Luke xxiii. 2. And how loyal would those rebellious Jews seem, when they thought it the only way to engage the Roman power against Christ! Then they cry out, "We have no king but Cæsar," John xix. 15. And this was the common accusation against the christians both by Jews and gentiles. The language of the Jews you may hear from Tertullus: "We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes," Acts xxiv. 5. And at Thessalonica, the charge against them was, that they "turned the world upside down, and did all contrary to the decrees of Cæsar," chap. xvii. 6, 7. And thus the best christians have by such been slandered from age to age; because the devil and his instruments know not how sufficiently to molest them, except they engage the rulers against them. But yet all this doth not conquer the patience and loyalty of confirmed christians. They are wiser than that wise man that Solomon saith "Oppression maketh mad," Eccles. vii. 7. If usurpers or malicious liars shall a thousand times call them rebellious and seditious, it shall not drive them from their due subjection. They can patiently follow their Lord and the ancient christians, in the enduring of such slanders, and suffering as enemies to Cæsar, so they do but escape the sin, and be not such as malice calleth them. They had rather die as reputed enemies to government, than to be such indeed. They prefer subjection before the reputation of it; for they look not for their reward from princes, but from God. If they can preserve their innocence, they can bear the defamation of their names, being satisfied in the hopes of the joyful day of the judgment of Christ, which will fully justify them and set all straight. Indeed they know that a state of subjection is easier and safer than places of command; and that it is easier to obey than govern. And so far are they from envying men's greatness, and from desiring dominions, that they pity the tempted, and dangerous, and troublesome state of those in power, and are thankful to God for their quieter and safer station. They heartily pray for kings and all that are in authority; not that by their favour they may rise to places of wealth and honour, but that "under them they may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty," 1 Tim. ii. 2. Yea, though infidel princes hate and persecute them, they continue to pray for them, and to honour their authority, and will not thereby be driven from their duty. If God cast their lot under infidel, ungodly, and malicious governors, they do not run to

arms to save themselves, or save the gospel; as if God had called them to reform the world, or keep it from the oppression of the higher powers. Nor do they think it a strange, intolerable matter for the best men to be lowest, and to be the suffering side, and so fall to fighting that Christ and the saints may have the rule. For they know that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, (John xviii. 36,) that is, not a visible monarchy, as his usurping vicar doth pretend; and that Christ doth most eminently rule unseen, and disposeth of all the kingdoms of the world, even where he is hated and resisted; and that the reign of saints is in their state of glory; and that all God's graces do fit them more for a suffering life, than for worldly power. Their humility, meekness, patience, self-denial, contempt of the world, and heavenly-mindedness, are better exercised and promoted in a suffering, than a prosperous, reigning state. When they think of the holy blood which hath been shed by heathen Rome, from Christ and Stephen, till the days of Constantine; and the far greater streams which have been shed by the bloody papal Rome, wherever they had power, in Piedmont, Germany, Poland, Hungary, in Belgia, England, and in other lands; the thirty or forty thousand murdered in a few days at the Bartholomew massacre in France; the two hundred thousand murdered in a few weeks in Ireland; they are not so unlike their suffering brethren, as to think that striving for honours and command is their way to heaven; when Christ hath foretold them that self-denial under the cross, tribulation, and persecution, is the common way, Luke xiv. 26, 27, 29, 33; Acts xiv. 22; John xvi. 33; Rom. v. 3; viii. 35; 2 Tim. iii. 12; Matt. v. 10—12; 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7, 10; Mark x. 30. So far are they from fighting against the injuries and cruelties of their governors, that they account the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all their treasures, (Heb. xi. 25, 26,) and think they are blessed when they are persecuted, (Matt. v. 10,) and say with Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world," Gal. vi. 14. And 2 Cor. xii. 19, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong." "Nay, in all these things, when persecuted and killed all the day long, and counted as sheep to the slaughter, they are more than conquerors through Christ," Rom. viii. 35—37. They obtain a nobler conquest than that which is obtained by the sword.

2. But the weak christian, having less patience, and more selfishness and passion, is easier tempted to break his bounds, and with Peter run to his unauthorized sword, when he should submit to suffering, Matt. xxvi. 51, 52. And his interest and sufferings cause his passion to have too great a power on his judgment, so that he is easier tempted to believe that to be lawful which he thinks to be necessary to his own preservation; and to think that the gospel and the church are falling, when the power of men is turned against them; and therefore he must with Uzzah put forth his hand to save the ark of God from falling. He is more troubled at men's injustice and cruelty, and maketh a wonder of it, to find the enemies of Christ and godliness to be unreasonably impudent and bloody; as if he expected reason and righteousness in the malicious world. His sufferings fill him more with discontent, and desires of revenge from God, Luke ix. 54; and his prosperity too much lifts him up, 2 Chron. xxxii. 35. And in the litigious titles of pretenders to supremacy, he is oft too hasty to interest himself in their contentions,

as if he understood not that whoever is the conqueror will count those rebels that were on the other side; and that the enemies of Christ will cast all the odium upon christianity and piety, when the controversy is only among the statesmen and lawyers, and belongs not to religion at all.

3. The seeming christian will seem to excel all others in loyalty and obedience, when it maketh for his carnal ends; he will flatter rulers for honours and preferment, and always be on the rising side, unless when his pride engageth him in murmurings and rebellions. He hath a great advantage above true christians and honest men, to seem the most obedient subject; because he hath a stretching conscience, that can do any thing for his safety or his worldly ends. If he be among papists, he can be a papist; if among protestants, he is a protestant; and if he were among Turks, it is like he would rather turn a Mahometan than be undone. No prince or power can command him any thing which he cannot yield to, if his worldly interest require it. If there be a law for worshipping the golden image, it is the conscionable servants of God, and not the time-servers, that refuse to obey it, Dan. iii. If there be a law against praying, Dan. vi. it is Daniel, and not the ungodly multitude, that disobey it. If there be a command against preaching, Acts iv. 17, 18, it is the holy apostles and best christians that plead the command of God against it, and refuse obedience to it, ver. 20, 29. The self-seeking, temporizing hypocrite can do any thing; and yet he obeyeth not, while he seemeth to obey: for it is not for the authority of the commander that he doth it, but for his own ends. He never truly honoureth his superiors; for he doth not respect them as the officers of God, nor obey them for his sake with a conscionable obedience. He feareth the higher powers as bears or tigers, that are able to hurt him; or useth their favour as he useth his horse, to do him service. Were it not for himself, he would little regard them. The true christian honoureth the basest creature more than the hypocrite and worldling honoureth his king; for he seeth God in all, and useth the smallest things unto his glory; whereas the worldling debaseth the highest, by the baseness of his esteem, and use, and end: for he knoweth not how to esteem or use the greatest prince, but for himself or for some worldly ends, 2 Tim. iii. 3, 4.

XLIX. 1. A christian indeed is a man of courage and fortitude in every cause of God; for he trusteth God, and firmly believeth that he will bear him out. He knoweth his superiors, and hath a charitable respect to all men; but as for any selfish or timorous respect, he hath the least regard to man. For he knoweth that the greatest are but worms, whose breath is in their nostrils, that pass away as shadows, and return to dust; and that the most potent are impotent when they contend with God, and are unequal matches to strive against their Maker; and that it will prove hard for them to kick against the pricks; and that whoever seemeth now to have the day, it is God that will be conqueror at last, Job xxv. 6; xvii. 14; xxiv. 20; Psal. lxxix. 31; ciii. 16; cxlv. 4; Acts ix. 4—6. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God," Psal. cxlvi. 3—5. "Woe to him that striveth with his Maker!" Isa. xlv. 9. He knoweth that it is more irrational to fear man against God, than to fear a flea or a fly against the greatest man. The infinite disproportion between the creature that is against him, and the Creator that is for him, doth resolve

him to obey the command of Christ: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him," Luke xii. 4, 5. "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of man, neither be afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation," Isa. li. 7, 8. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint; and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? Lo! they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up," Isa. l. 6—9; xxxv. 4; xli. 10, 13, 14; vii. 4; Jer. xlv. 27, 28; Matt. x. 26, 31. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. ii. 22. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, &c. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord," &c. Jer. xvii. 5, 8, 9. Alas, how terrible is the wrath of God, in comparison of the wrath of man! And how easy an enemy is the cruellest afflicter, in comparison of a holy, sin-revenging God! Therefore the confirmed christian saith as the three witnesses, Dan. iii. 16—18, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter; the God whom we serve is able to deliver us.—But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." When Daniel knew that the decree was past, he prayed openly in his house, as heretofore, Dan. vi. 10. Moses "feared not the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible," Heb. xi. 27. "The righteous is bold as a lion," Prov. xxviii. 1. "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled," Acts iv. 13. Paul's bonds made others bold, 2 Cor. xi. 21; Ephes. vi. 19, 20; Acts iv. 29, 31. "Perfect love casteth out fear," 1 John iv. 18. "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled," 1 Pet. iii. 14. "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me," Heb. xiii. 6.

2. But the weak christian, though he also trust in God, is much more fearful, and easily daunted and discouraged; and ready with Peter to be afraid, if he perceive himself in danger, Matt. xxvi. 69. He is not "valiant for the truth," Jer. ix. 3. Though he can forsake all (even life itself) for Christ, (Luke xiv. 26, 33,) yet is it with a deal of fear and trouble. And man is a more significant thing to him than to the stronger christian.

3. But the seeming christian doth fear man more than God, and will venture upon the displeasure of God, to avoid the displeasure of men that can do him hurt; because he doth not soundly believe the threatenings of the word of God.

L. 1. A christian indeed is made up of judgment and zeal conjunct. His judgment is not a patron of lukewarmness, nor his zeal an enemy to knowledge. His judgment doth not destroy, but increase his zeal; and his zeal is not blind nor self-conceited, nor doth run before or without judgment. If he be of the most excellent sort of christians, he hath so large a knowledge of the mysteries of godli-

ness, that he seeth the body of sacred truth with its parts, and compages, or joints, as it were at once. It is all written deeply and methodically in his understanding; he hath by long use his senses exercised to discern both good and evil, Heb. v. 14. He presently discerneth where mistaken men go out of the way, and lose the truth, by false suppositions, or by false definitions, or by confounding things that differ. And therefore he pitieth the contentious sects and disputers, who raise a dust to blind themselves and others, and make a stir to the trouble of the church, about things which they never understood: and in the sight of that truth which others obscure or contradict, he enjoyeth much content or pleasure in his own mind, though uncapable persons zealously reject it. Therefore he is stedfast, as knowing on what ground he setteth his foot. And though he be the greatest lover of truth, and would with greatest joy receive any addition to his knowledge, yet ordinarily by erroneous zealots he is censured as too stiff, and self-conceited, and tenacious of his own opinions, because he will not entertain their errors, and obey them in their self-conceitedness. For he that knoweth that it is truth which he holdeth, is neither able nor willing to hold the contrary (unless he imprison the truth in unrighteousness). But if he be one that hath not attained to such a clear, comprehensive judgment, yet with that measure of judgment which he hath, he doth guide and regulate his zeal, and maketh it follow after, while understanding goeth before. He treadeth on sure ground, and knoweth it to be duty indeed which he is zealous for, and sin indeed which he is zealous against; and is not put to excuse all his favour and forwardness after, with a *non putarem*, or, I had thought it had been otherwise, 1 Cor. i. 5; 2 Cor. viii. 7; Col. iii. 16; iv. 12.

2. But the weak christian either hearkeneth too much to carnal wisdom, which suppresseth his zeal, and maketh him too heavy, and dull, and indifferent in many of his duties, and the concerns of his soul, permitting the world to take up too much of the vigour of his spirit; or else he is confident in his mistakes, and verily thinks that he understandeth better than many wiser men, those things which he never understood at all. He chooseth his party by the zeal that he findeth in them, without any judicious trial of the truth of what they hold and teach. He is very earnest for many a supposed truth and duty, which proveth at last to be no truth or duty at all; and he censureth many a wiser christian than himself, for many a supposed sin, which is no sin, but perhaps a duty. For he is always injudicious, and his heat is greater than his light, or else his light is too flashy without heat. Peremptorily he doth set down some among the number of the most wise and excellent men, for keeping him company in his mistakes: and he boldly numbereth the best and wisest of his teachers with the transgressors, for being of a sounder understanding than himself, and doing those duties which he calleth sins. And hence it is that he is a person apt to be misled by appearances of zeal; and the passions of his teachers prevail more with him than the evidence of truth. He that prayeth and preacheth most fervently is the man that carrieth him away, though none of his arguments be truly cogent. If he hear any hard name against any opinion, or manner of worship, he receiveth that prejudice which turneth him more against it than reason could have done. So the bugbear names of heresy, Lutheranism, and Calvinism, frighteneth many a well-meaning papist both from the truth, and almost from his wits. And the names of popery, Arminianism, prelacy, presbyterian-

ism, independency, &c. do turn away the hearts of many from things which they never tried or understood. If a zealous preacher do but call any opinion or practice antichristian or idolatrous, it is a more effectual terror than the clearest proof. Big and terrible words do move the passions, while the understanding is abused, or a stranger to the cause. And passion is much of their religion. And hence, alas! is much of the calamity of the church, Rom. xiv. 1—4, &c. 1 Cor. iii. 1—4; Acts xxi. 20; Gal. iv. 17, 18.

3. But the seeming christian is only zealous finally for himself, or zealous about the smaller matters of religion, as the Pharisees were for their ceremonies and traditions, or for his own inventions, or some opinions or ways in which his honour seemeth to be interested, and pride is the bellows of his zeal. But as for a holy zeal about the substance and practice of religion, and that for God as the final cause, he is a stranger to it. He may have a zeal of God, and of for the law and worship of God as the material cause, but not a true zeal for God, as the chief final cause, Rom. x. 2; 2 Sam. xxi. 2; 2 Kings x. 16; Acts xxii. 3.

LI. 1. A christian indeed can bear the infirmities of the weak: though he love not their weakness, yet he pitieth it, because he truly loveth their persons. Christ hath taught him not to break the bruised reed, and “to gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead them that are with young,” Isa. xl. 11; xlii. 3. If they have diseases and distempers, he seeketh in tenderness to cure them, and not in wrath to hurt and vex them. He turneth not the infants or sick persons from the family, because they cry, or are unquiet, unclean, infirm, and troublesome; but he exerciseth his love and pity upon their weaknesses. If they mistake their way, or are ignorant, and peevish, and froward in their mistakes, he seeketh not to undo them, but gently to reduce them. If they censure him, and call him erroneous, heretical, antichristian, idolatrous, because he concurreth not with them in their mistakes, he beareth it with love and patience, as he would do the peevish chidings of a child, or the frowardness of the sick. He doth not lose his charity, and set his wit against a child, and aggravate the crimes, and being reviled revile again; and say, You are schismatics, hypocrites, obstinate, and fit to be severely dealt with. But he overcometh them with love and patience, which is the conquest of a saint, and the happiest victory both for himself and them. It is a “small matter to him to be judged of man,” 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. He is more troubled for the weakness and disease of the censorious, than for his own being wronged by their censures, Phil. i. 16—18; Rom. xv. 1—3; xiv. 2, 3.

2. But the weak christian is readier to censure others, than patiently to bear a censure himself. Either he stormeth against the censurers, as if they did him some unsufferable wrong (through the overgreat esteem of himself and his reputation); or else, to escape the fangs of censure, and keep up his repute with them, he complyeth with the censorious, and overruns his judgment and conscience to be well-spleen of, and counted a sincere and stedfast man, Gal. ii. 12—14.

3. But the seeming christian is so proud and selfish, and wanteth charity and tenderness to the weak, that he is impatient of their provocations; and would cure the diseases of the servants of Christ, by cutting their throats, or ridding the country of them. If a child do but wrangle with him, he crieth, Away with him, he is a troubler of the world. He taketh more notice of one of their infirmities, than of all their graces; yea, he can see nothing but obstinacy and hypocrisy in them, if they do but cross

him in his opinions, or reputation, or worldly ends. Selfishness can turn his hypocrisy into malignity and cruelty, if once he take them to be against his interest. Indeed his interest can make him patient: he can bear with them that he looketh to gain by, but not with them that seem to be against him. The radical enmity against sincerity, that was not mortified, but covered in his heart, will easily be again uncovered, Mark vi. 18, 20—22; Phil. i. 15, 16; 3 John 9.

LII. 1. A christian indeed is a great esteemer of the unity of the church, and greatly averse to all divisions among believers. As there is in the natural body an abhorring of dismembering or separating any part from the whole; so there is in the mystical body of Christ. The members that have life, cannot but feel the smart of any distempering attempt; for abscission is destruction; the members die that are separated from the body. And if there be but any obstruction or hinderance of communion, they will be painful or useless. He feelth in himself the reason of all those strict commands, and earnest exhortations: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment," 1 Cor. i. 10. "If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," Phil. ii. 1—4. "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ," Eph. iv. 1—7. Read also ver. 12—16; 1 Cor. xii. throughout. He looketh at uncharitableness and divisions with more abhorrence than weak christians do at drunkenness or whoredom, or such other heinous sin. He feareth such dreadful warnings, as Acts xx. 29, 30, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." And he cannot slight such a vehement exhortation, as Rom. xvi. 17, 18, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." There he is so far from being a divider himself, that when he seeth any one making divisions among christians, he looketh on him as one that is slashing and mangling the body of his dearest friend, or as one that is setting fire on his house, and therefore doth all that he can to quench it; as knowing the confusion and calamity to which it tendeth. He is of a christian, and therefore of a truly catholic, spirit; that is, he maketh not himself a member of a divided party, or a sect; he regardeth the interest and welfare of the

body, the universal church, above the interest or prosperity of any party whatsoever; and he will do nothing for a party which is injurious to the whole, or to the christian cause. The very names of sects and parties are displeasing to him; and he could wish that there were no name but that of christians among us, save only the necessary names of the criminal, such as that of the Nicolaitans, Rev. ii. 6, 15, by which those that are to be avoided by christians must be known. Christianity is confined to so narrow a compass in the world, that he is unwilling to contract it yet into a narrower. The greatest party of divided christians, whether it be the Greeks or papists, is too small a body for him to take for the catholic or universal church. He admireth at the blindness and cruelty of faction, that can make men damn all the rest of the church for the interest of their proper sect; and take all those as no christians that are better christians than themselves. Especially the papists, who unchurch all the church of Christ, except their sect, and make it as necessary to salvation to be a subject of the pope, as to be a christian. And when, by their great corruption and abuses of christianity, they have more need of charitable censures themselves than almost any sort of christians, yet are they the boldest condemners of all others. The confirmed christian can difference between the strong and weak, the sound and unsound members of the church, without dismembering any, and without unwarrantable separations from any. He will worship God in the purest manner he can, and locally join with those assemblies where, all things considered, he may most honour God, and receive most edification; and will not sin for communion with any. He will sufficiently difference between a holy, orderly assembly, and a corrupt, disordered one; and between an able, faithful pastor, and an ignorant or worldly hireling. And he desireth that the pastors of the church may make that due separation by the holy discipline of Christ, which may prevent the people's disorderly separation. But for all this, he will not deny his presence upon just occasion, to any christian congregation that worshippeth God in truth, though with many modal imperfections, so be it they impose no sin upon him as necessary to his communion with them. Nor will he deny the spiritual communion of faith and love to those that he holdeth not local communion with. He knoweth that all our worship of God is sinfully imperfect, and that it is a dividing principle to hold, that we may join with none that worship God in a faulty manner; for then we must join with none on earth. He knoweth that his presence in the worship of God, is no sign of his approbation of all the failings of pastors or people, in their personal or modal imperfections, as long as he joineth not in a worship so corrupt as to be itself unacceptable to God. While men who are all imperfect and corrupt, are the worshippers, the manner of their worship will be such as they, in some degree, imperfect and corrupt. The solid christian hath his eye upon all the churches in the world, in the determining of such questions: he considereth what worship is offered to God in the churches of the several parties of christians, the Greeks, Armenians, Abassines, Lutherans, &c. as well as what is done in the country where he liveth; and he considereth whether God disown and reject the worship of almost all the churches in the world, or not; for he dare no further reject them than God rejecteth them. Nor will he voluntarily separate from those assemblies where the presence of Christ, in his Spirit and acceptance, yet remaineth. And his fuller acquaintance with the gracious na-

ture, office, and tenderness of Christ, together with greater love to his brethren, doth cause him in this to judge more gently than young censorious christians do. And his humble acquaintance with his own infirmities, maketh him the more compassionate to others. If he should think that God would reject all that order not and word not their prayers aright, he would be afraid of being rejected himself, who is still conscious of greater faultiness in his own prayers, than a mere defect in words and order; even of a great defectiveness in that faith, and desire, and love, and zeal, and reverence which should be manifested in prayer. Though he be more apprehensive than others, of the excellency and necessity of the holiness and spirituality of the soul in worship; yet withal he is more judicious and charitable than the peevish and passionate infant christians, who think that God doth judge as they do, and seeth no grace where they see none; and taketh all to be superstitious or fanatical, that differ from their opinions or manner of worship; or that he is as ready to call every error, in the method or the words of prayer, idolatry or will-worship, as those are that speak not what they know, but what they have heard some teachers whom they reverence say before them. "He that dwelleth in love, doth dwell in God, and God in him." And he that dwelleth in God, is liker to be best acquainted with his mind, concerning his children and his worship, than he that dwelleth in wrath, and pride, and partiality.

2. But the weak christian (though so far as he hath grace, he is of the same mind, and abhorreth discord and division among the flock of Christ, yet) being more dark, and selfish, and distempered, he is much more prone to unwarrantable separations and divisions than the stronger christian is. He is narrower sighted, and looketh little further than his own acquaintance, and the country where he liveth; and mindeth not sufficiently the general state of the churches through the world, nor understandeth well the interest of Christ and christianity in the earth. His knowledge and experience being small, his charity also is but small; and a little thing tempteth him to condemn another, and aggravate his faults, and think him unworthy of the communion of the saints. He is much more sensible of the judgment, and affections, and concerns of those few with whom he doth converse, and that are of his opinion, than of the judgment, and practice, and concerns of the universal church. He knoweth not how to prefer the judgments and holiness of some that he thinketh more excellent than the rest, without much undervaluing and censuring of all others that are not of their opinion: he cannot choose the actual local communion of the best society, without some unjust contempt of others, or separation from them. He hath not so much knowledge as may sufficiently acquaint him with his ignorance; and therefore he is apt to be unreasonably confident of his present apprehensions, and to think verily that all his own conceptions are the certain truth; and to think them ignorant, or ungodly, or very weak at least, that differ from him. For he hath not thoroughly and impartially studied all that may be said on the other side. The authority of his chosen teacher and sect, is greater with him, (if he fall into that way,) than the authority of all the most wise and holy persons in the world besides. What the Scripture speaketh of the unbelieving world, he is apt to apply to all those of the church of Christ, that are not of his mind and party. And when Christ commandeth us to come out of the world, he is prone to understand it of coming out from the church into some stricter and narrower society; and is apt, with the papists, to appropriate the name

and privileges of the church, to his party alone, and to condemn all others. Especially if the church governors be carnal and self-seeking, or otherwise very culpable; and if discipline be neglected, and if profaneness be not sufficiently discountenanced, and godliness promoted, he thinketh that such a church is no church, but a profane society. God hath taught him by repentance to see the mischief of ungodliness, but he yet wanteth that experience which is needful to make him know the mischief of church divisions. He had too much experience himself of the evil of profaneness before his conversion; but he hath not tried the evil of schism; and without some sad experience of its fruits, in himself or others, he will hardly know it as it should be known: because it is the custom of some malignant enemies of godliness, to call the godly heretics, schismatics, factious sectaries, &c. therefore the very names do come into credit with him; and he thinks there are no such persons in the world, or that there is no danger of any such crimes, till he be taught by sad experience, that the professors of sincerity are in as much danger on that side as on the other; and that the church, as well as Christ, doth suffer between two thieves, the profane and the dividers. Paul was unjustly called the ringleader of a sect, (Acts xxiv. 5,) and christianity called a heresy and a sect, every where spoken against, Acts xxviii. 22; xxiv. 14. But for all that, heresy is a fruit of the flesh, (Gal. v. 20,) and some of them called damnable, (2 Pet. ii. 1,) and they are the trial of the church, to difference the approved members from the chaff, 1 Cor. xi. 19. And an obstinate heretic is to be avoided by true believers, Titus iii. 10. And the Pharisees and Sadducees are well reputed to be several sects, Acts v. 17; xv. 5; xxvi. 5. And dividers and divisions are justly branded in Scripture as aforesaid. There must be no schism in the body of Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 25. The following of selected teachers, in a way of division from the rest, or opposition to them, doth show, that men are carnal in too great a measure, though it be not in predominancy, as in the profane. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal. For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" 2 Cor. iii. 1-3. How much more when he that is for Paul doth censure and rail at Cephas and Apollos! He that hath seen the course of men professing godliness in England in this age, may easily and sadly know how prone weak christians are to unjust separations and divisions, and what are the effects. He that had heard many zealous in prayer, and other duties, and the next year see them turning quakers, and railing in the open congregations at the ablest, holiest, self-denying ministers of Christ, and at their flocks, with a Come down, thou deceiver, thou hireling, thou wolf, ye are all greedy dogs, &c. and shall see how yet poor souls run into that reviling and irrational sect, (to say nothing of all other sects among us,) will no longer doubt whether the weak be inclinable to schism, but will rather lament the dangerousness of their station; and know that all is not done when a sinner is converted from an ungodly state. Study the reason of those three texts, Eph. iv. 12-16, "For the edifying the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no

more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love." Here you see the children are apt to be carried into dividing parties. And that they are aptest to be proud, and that way to miscarry, see 1 Tim. iii. 6, "Not a novice, (or raw young christian,) lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil;" and then followeth the effect, Acts xx. 30, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." I would not have you groundlessly accuse any christian with a charge of pride; but I must tell you that the childish pride of apparel is a petty business, in comparison of that pride which many in sordid attire have manifested, who in their ignorance do rage and foam out words of falsehood and reproach against Christ's ministers and servants, as if they were all fools or impious in comparison of them, speaking evil of that which they never understood. The lifting up the heart above the people of the Lord, in the pride of supposed holiness, is incomparably worse than pride of learning, honour, greatness, wit, or wealth. Nay, it hath oft been to me a matter of wonder to observe how little all those plain and urgent texts of Scripture, which cry down division, do work upon many of the younger christians, who yet are as quickly touched as any with a text that speaketh against profaneness and lukewarmness. In a word, they are often of the temper of James and John, when they would fain have had Christ revenged himself on his opposers by fire from heaven; "They know not what manner of spirit they are of," Luke ix. 55. They think verily that it is a holy zeal for God, when it is the boiling of passion, pride, and selfishness. They feel not the sense of such words as Christ's, "I pray also for them who shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me," &c. John xvii. 20—24.

3. And as for the seeming christian, in this they are of several sorts. When their carnal interest lieth in compliance with the major part and stronger side, then no men do more cry up unity and obedience. What a noise do many thousand papist prelates, Jesuits, and friars make with these two words throughout the world! Unity and obedience (unto them upon their terms) do signify principally their worldly greatness, wealth, and power. But if the hypocrite be engaged in point of honour, or other carnal interest, on the suffering side, or be out of hope of any advantage in the common road, then no man is so much for separation and singularity as he. For he must needs be noted for somebody in the world, and this is the chief way that he findeth to accomplish it. And so being "lifted up with pride, he falleth into the condemnation of the devil," and becomes a firebrand in the church.

LIII. 1. A christian indeed, is not only zealous for the unity and concord of believers, but he seeketh it on the right terms, and in the way that is fittest to attain it. Unity, peace, and concord, are like piety and honesty, things so unquestionably good, that there are scarce any men of reason and common sobriety, that ever were heard to oppose them directly and for themselves: and therefore all that

are enemies to them are yet pretenders to them; and oppose them, 1. In their causes only. 2. Or covertly, and under some other name. Every man would have unity, concord, and peace in his own way, and upon his own terms. But if the right terms had been understood and consented to as sufficient, the christian world had not lain so many hundred years in the sin, and shame, and ruins as it hath done. And the cause of all is, that christians indeed, that have clear, confirmed judgments, and strength of grace, are very few; and for number and strength, unable to persuade or overrule the weak, the passionate, and the false-hearted, worldly, hypocritical multitude; who bear down all the counsels and endeavours of the wise.

The judicious, faithful christian knoweth, that there are three degrees or sorts of christian communion, which have their several terms. 1. The universal church communion, which all christians as such must hold among themselves. 2. Particular church communion, which those that are conjoined for personal communion in worship, do hold under the same pastors and among themselves. 3. The extraordinary intimate communion that some christians hold together, who are bosom friends, or are especially able and fit to be helpful and comfortable to each other.

The last concerneth not our present business; we must hold church communion with many that are unfit to be our bosom friends, and that have no eminency of parts or piety, or any strong persuading evidence of sincerity. But the terms of catholic communion he knoweth are such as these: 1. They must be such as were the terms of church communion in the days of the apostles. 2. They must be such as are plainly and certainly expressed in the holy Scriptures. 3. And such as the universal church hath in some ages since been actually agreed in. 4. And those points are likeliest to be such, which all the differing parties of christians are agreed in, as necessary to communion to this day (so we call not those christians that deny the essentials of christianity). 5. Every man in the former ages of the church, was admitted to this catholic church communion, who, in the baptismal vow or covenant, gave up himself to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, his Owner, Governor, and Father, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil. And more particularly, as man hath an understanding, a will, and an executive power, which must all be sanctified to God, so the creed was the particular rule for the *credenda*, or things to be believed, and the Lord's prayer for the *petenda*, or things to be willed, loved, and desired, and the ten commandments for the *agenda*, or things to be done; so that to consent to these rules particularly, and to all the holy Scriptures implicitly and generally, was the thing then required to catholic communion. The belief of the doctrine being necessary for the sanctifying of the heart and life, the belief of so much is of necessity, without which the heart cannot be sanctified, or devoted in covenant to God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator; and without which we cannot love God (as reconciled to us in Christ) above all, and our neighbours as ourselves. So that, in a word, he that can tell what the baptismal vow or covenant is, can tell what is necessary to that catholic church communion, which belongeth to christians as christians, at how great a distance soever they dwell from one another.

And then for particular church communion, which is local and personal, it is moreover necessary, 1. That each member acknowledge and submit to the

same pastors. 2. That they be guided by them in the convenient circumstances and adjuncts of worship. For if some persons will not consent or submit to the same pastors that the body of the church consenteth and submitteth to, they cannot have communion particularly and locally with that church, nor are they members of it, no more than they can be members of the same kingdom that have not the same king. And there being no solemn worship performed but by the ministry of those pastors, they cannot join in the worship that join not with the minister. And if some members will not consent and submit to the necessary determination of the adjuncts or external modes of worship, they cannot join in local, particular church communion where that worship is performed. As if the pastor and the body of the church will meet in such a place, at such a day and hour, and some members will not meet with them at that place, and day, and hour, they cannot possibly then have their local, personal communion. Or if the pastor will use such a translation of the Scriptures, or such a version of the Psalms, or such a method in preaching and prayer, or such notes or books, and other like helps; if any members will not submit, nor hold communion with the rest, unless that translation, or version, or method of preaching or praying, or notes or books, be laid aside, he cannot have communion while he refuseth it. If the pastor and all the rest will not yield to him, he must join with some other church that he can agree with. And as long as the catholic church communion is maintained, (which consisteth in unity of the christian covenant, or of christianity, or of faith, love, and obedience,) the difference of modes and circumstances between particular churches, must be allowed without any breach of charity, or without disowning one another. And he that cannot be a member of one particular church, may quietly join himself to another, without condemning that which he dissenteth from, so far as to hinder his catholic communion with it (even as among the papists, men may be of which order or of religious persons they best like, as long as they submit to their general government). And here the strong, judicious christian, for his part, will never be guilty of church divisions. For, 1. He will make nothing necessary to church communion, which any sober, pious, peaceable minds shall have any just reason to except against, or which may not well be manifested to be for the edification of the church. 2. And he will bear with the weak dissenters so far as will stand with the peace and welfare of the church. 3. And he will particularly give leave to such weak ones as cannot yet hold communion with him, being peaceable, and not promoting heresy, ungodliness, or sedition, to join to another church where they can hold communion with peace to their own consciences; as long as they continue their foresaid catholic communion. For the strong know that they must not only bear with, but bear the "infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves, but every one of them to please his neighbour for good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself." And so they will "receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God, not despising the weak, nor rejecting them that God receiveth," Rom. xv. 1—3, 7; xiv. 1—4, 17, 18. And thus you may see how easy a matter it were to unite and reconcile all the christian world, if the principles of the judicious, confirmed christian might be received and prevail; and that it is not he that is the cause of the abundance of sin and calamity which divisions have caused and continued in the church. But that which now seemeth an impossible thing, may quickly and easily be accom-

plished if all were such as he. And that the difficulty of reconciling and uniting christians, lieth not first in finding out the terms, but in making men fit to receive and practise the terms from the beginning received by the churches. This is *Lirinensis's Quod semper, ubique, et ab omnibus receptum est*: supposing still that the magistrate be submitted to by every soul, even as he is the keeper of both tables, Rom. xiii. 1—3.

2. But the weak christian is too easily tempted to be the divider of the church, by expecting that it be united upon his impossible or unrighteous terms. Sometimes he will be orthodox over-much, or rather wise in his own conceit, Rom. xii. 16; and then none are judged fit for his communion that be not of his opinion, in controverted doctrinals (e. g. predestination, the manner of the work of grace, free-will, perseverance, and abundance such). Sometimes he will be righteous over-much, or (to speak more properly) superstitious; and then none are fit for his communion that worship not God in that method and manner for circumstantialia, which he esteemeth best. And his charity is so weak, that it freeth him not from thinking evil, (1 Cor. xiii.) and so narrow, that it covereth not either many or great infirmities. The more need he hath of the forbearance and charity of others, the less can he bear or forbear others himself. The strong christian must bear the infirmities of the weak; but the weak christian can scarce bear with the weak or strong. Nay, he is oft too impatient with some of their virtues and duties, as well as with their infirmities. He is of too private a spirit, and too insensible of the public interest of the church of Christ. And therefore he must have all the world come over to him, and be conformed to his opinion and party, and unite upon his mistaken, narrow terms, if they will have communion with him. I mean, it is thus with him, when the temptation on that side prevailleth. And sometimes he is overcome with the temptation of domination, to make his judgment a rule to others; and then he quite overvalueth his own understanding, and will needs be judge of all the controversies in the church; and taketh it as unsufferable, if wiser and better men do not take him as infallible, and in every thing observe his will. And when his brethren give him the reason of their dissent, as his judgment is not clear enough to understand them, so his passion and partiality are too strong to suffer his judgment to do its part. And thus oftentimes he is a greater hinderance to the church's unity, than the enemies of the church themselves. For he hath not judgment enough to guide him the right way, and yet he hath so much zeal as will not suffer him to keep his errors to him.

3. And all these distempers that are but in a lower degree in the weak christian, are predominant in the hypocrite. The church shall have no concord or peace if he can hinder it, but what is consistent with his carnal interest, his honour, or wealth, or dignity in the world. The pride and covetousness which rule himself, he would have to make the terms of concord, and to rule all others. It is hypocrites in the church that are the greatest cause of discord and divisions, having selfish spirits, principles, and ends, and having always a work of their own to do, which suits not well with the work of Christ; and yet Christ's work must be subjected to it, and ordered, and overruled by it. And while they pretend to go to the Scriptures, or to councils or fathers, for their reasons, indeed they go first for them to their worldly interest; and then would fain hire or press the Scripture, church, or fathers to serve their turn, and come in as witnesses on their side. And thus the church, as well as Christ, is betrayed by the covetous

Judases of his own family. And the servants of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that take up the livery of Christ, and usurp the name and honour of christians, do more effectually hinder the concord and prosperity of the church, than any open enemies do. And those that are indeed no christians, do cause christianity to be reproached; even as spies and traitors that are hired by the enemy to take up arms in the army which they fight against, that they may betray it by their fraud, and do more harm to it by raising mutinies, and by false conduct, than a multitude of professed enemies could have done. It is proud, and worldly, carnal hypocrites, that hinder most the concord of believers.

LIV. 1. A confirmed christian is of a peaceable spirit. He is not masterly, domineering, turbulent, hurtful, cruel, seditious, factious, or contentious. He is like ripened fruits that are mellow and sweet, when the younger, greener fruits are sour and harsh. He is not wise in his own conceit, Rom. xii. 16; and therefore not over-urgent in obtruding his conceits on others, not quarrelsome with all that cannot entertain them, nor will he easily lay men's salvation or damnation, no, nor the church's peace, upon them. He is "kindly affectioned to others with brotherly love, yea, loveth his neighbour as himself," ver. 10; xiii. 9, 10. And therefore he doth to others as he would they should do to him, and uses them as he would be used by them. And then how far they are like to suffer by him, you may easily judge. For "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour," ver. 10. He is above the portion of the worldly, and a contemner of that vanity which carnal men account their felicity; and therefore he preferreth love and quietness before it, and can lose his right when the interest of love and peace requireth it. He is become as a little child in his conversion, (Matt. xviii. 3), and is low and little in his own eyes, and therefore contendeth not for superiority or pre-eminence, either in place or power, or reputation of his learning, wisdom, or piety; but "in honour preferreth others" before himself, Rom. xii. 10. "He mindeth not high things, but condescendeth to men of low estate," ver. 16; and therefore will not contend for estimation or precedence, nor scramble to be highest, though he rise by the ruins of men's bodies and souls. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in him, he will live peaceably with all men," ver. 18. For he is not one that by word or deed will avenge himself; but when the wrath of others is up like a blustering storm, he giveth place to it, he boweth before it, or goeth out of the way. "If his enemy hunger, he feedeth him; if he thirst, he giveth him drink," ver. 19; when oppressors would deprive not only an enemy, but the righteous, of their meat and drink; and thus he melteth his hardened enemies by heaping kindnesses upon them when they are wrathful, and proud, and contentious, and do him wrong, or use provoking words against him: he is not overcome of their evil to imitate them, but he overcometh their evil with his good, ver. 20, 21. If God have given him more knowledge and abilities than others, he doth not presently set up himself to be admired for it, nor speak disdainfully or contemptuously of those that are not of his mind. But he sheweth the eminency of his wisdom, "with meekness by the works of a good conversation," and by doing better than the unwiser do, James iii. 1-13. He is endued with the "wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality," (or wavering in persecution, as Dr. Hammond renders it,) and without hypocrisy. And thus the "fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them

that make peace," James iii. 17, 18. As he is "taught of God to love his brother," 1 Thess. iv. 9; so that same teaching with experience of the effects assureth him, that they that pretend to be wiser and better than others, when "they have bitter, envious zeal and strife in their hearts, they vainly glory and lie against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work," James iii. 14-16. (Read but the story of the Jewish zealots in Josephus, and the heretical zealots in all ages of the church, and you will perceive the truth of this.) When such quarrelsome spirits are filling the church with contentions or vexations about their meats, and drinks, and days, &c. the christian indeed understandeth that the kingdom of God consisteth not of such things as these, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of (wise and sober) men. Therefore he followeth after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another: and will not for meats, &c. destroy the work of God," Rom. xiv. 17-20. He stayeth not till peace be offered him, or brought home to him, but he "followeth peace with all men, as well as holiness," Heb. xii. 14. If it fly from him, he pursueth it; if it be denied him, he seeketh it; and will not refuse to stoop to the poorest for it, and to beg it of his inferiors, if it were upon his knees, rather than be denied it, and live an unpeaceable, disquiet life, Psalm xxxiv. 14. For he believeth that "blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God," Matt. v. 9.

2. And the weak christian hath the same spirit, and therefore the love of peace is most predominant in him. But, alas, he is too easily tempted into religious passions, discontents, contentious disputations, quarrels and opprobrious words; and his judgment lamentably darkened and perverted, whenever contentious zeal prevaileth, and passions do perturb the quiet and orderly operations of his soul. He wanteth both the knowledge, and the experience, and the mellowness of spirit, which ripen christians have attained; he hath a less degree of charity, and is less acquainted with the mischiefs of unpeaceableness; and therefore it is the common course of young professors, to be easily tempted into unpeaceable ways; and when they have long tried them (if they prove not hypocrites) to come off at last upon experience of the evils of them: and so the young christians, conjunct with some hypocrites, make up the rigorous, fierce, contentious, and vexatious party; and the aged, ripen christians make up the holy, moderate, healing party, that groan and pray for the church's peace, and mourn in secret both for the ungodliness and violence which they cannot heal. Yea, the difference is much apparent, in the books and sermons which each of them is best pleased with. The ripe, experienced christian loveth those sermons that kindle love, and tend to peace; and love such healing books as do narrow differences, and tend to reconcile and heal; such as Bishop Hall's "Peace-maker," and "Pax terris," and all his writings; and Bishop Davenant's, Bishop Morton's, and Bishop Hall's "Pacifactory Epistles to Dureaus," and Mr. Burroughs' "Irenicon," Ludov. Crotius, Amyraldus, Junius, Paræus's and many other Irenicons written by foreign divines, to say nothing of those that are upon single controversies. But the younger, sour, uncharitable christians are better pleased with such books and sermons, as call them aloud to be very zealous for this or that controverted point of doctrine, or for or against some circumstance of worship

or church discipline, or about some fashions, or customs, or indifferent things, as if the kingdom of God were in them, Rom. xiv. 1, 2, 15, 16.

3. But the seeming christian is either a mere temporizer that will be of that religion, whatever it be, which is most in fashion, or which the higher powers are of, or which will cost him least; or else he will run into the other extreme, and lift up himself by affected singularities, and by making a bustle and stir in the world about some small and controverted point, and careth not to sacrifice the peace and safety of the church to the honour of his own opinions. And as small as the christian church is, he must be of a smaller society than it, that he may be sure to be amongst the best; while indeed he hath no sincerity at all, but placeth his hopes in being of the right church, or party, or opinion: and for his party or church, he burneth with a feverish kind of zeal, and is ready to call for fire from heaven; and to deceive him, the devil sendeth him some from hell, to consume those that are not of his mind: yet doth he bring it as an angel of light, to defend the truth and church of Christ. And indeed, when the devil will be the defender of truth, or of the church, or of peace, or order, or piety, he doth it with the most burning zeal: you may know him by the means he useth. He defendeth the church, by forbidding the people to read the Scriptures in a known tongue, and by imprisoning and burning the soundest and holiest members of it, and abusing the most learned, faithful pastors; and defendeth the flock by casting out the shepherds, and such like means, as the murders of the Waldenses, and the massacres of France and Ireland, and the Spanish inquisition, and Queen Mary's bonfires, and the powder-plot; yea, and the Munster and the English rage and phrensies, may give you fuller notice of. He that hath no holiness nor charity to be zealous for, will be zealous for his church, or sect, or customs, or opinions; and then this zeal must be the evidence of his piety. And so the inquisitors have thought they have religiously served God, by murdering his servants; and it is the badge of their honour to be the devil's hangmen, to execute his malice on the members of Christ; and all this is done in zeal for religion by irreligious hypocrites. There is no standing before the malicious zeal of a graceless Pharisee, when it riseth up for his carnal interest, or the honour, and traditions, and customs of his sect; Luke vi. 11. "And they were filled with madness, and communed with one another what they might do to Jesus:" Luke iv. 28; Acts v. 17; xiii. 45; John xvi. 2; Rom. x. 2; Phil. iii. 6; Acts xxvi. 10, 11. The zeal of a true christian consumeth himself with grief to see the madness of the wicked; but the zeal of the hypocrite consumeth others, that by the light of the fire his religiousness may be seen. You may see the christian's fervent love to God, by the fervent flames which he can suffer for his sake: and you may see the fervent love of the hypocrite, by the flames which he kindleth for others. By these he crieth with Jehu, "Come and see my zeal for the Lord," 2 Kings x. 16; 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

LV. 1. A christian indeed, is one that most highly esteemeth and regardeth the interest of God and men's salvation in the world, and taketh all things else to be inconsiderable in comparison of these. The interest of great men, and nobles, and commanders; yea, and his own in corporal respects, as riches, honour, health, and life, he taketh to be things unworthy to be named, in competition with the interest of Christ and souls. The thing that his heart is most set upon in the world is, that God be glorified, and that the world acknowledge him their King, and

that his laws be obeyed, and that darkness, infidelity, and ungodliness may be cast out; and that pride, and worldliness, and fleshly lusts, may not hurry the miserable world unto perdition. It is one of the saddest and most amazing thoughts that ever entereth into his heart, to consider how much of the world is overwhelmed in ignorance and wickedness, and how great the kingdom of the devil is, in comparison with the kingdom of Christ; that God should forsake so much of his creation; that christianity should not be owned in above the sixth part of the world; and popish pride and ignorance, with the corruptions of many other sects, and the worldly, carnal minds of hypocrites, should rob Christ of so much of this little part, and leave him so small a flock of holy ones, that must possess the kingdom. His soul consenteth to the method of the Lord's prayer, as prescribing us the order of our desires. And in his prayers he seeketh first, (in order of estimation and intention,) the hallowing of God's name, and the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is done in heaven; before his daily bread, or the pardon of his sins, or the deliverance of his own soul from temptations and the evil one. Mark him in his prayers, and you shall find that he is above other men, taken up in earnest petitions for the conversion of the heathen and infidel world, and the undeceiving of Mahometans, Jews, and heretics, and the clearing of the church from those papal tyrannies, and sopperies and corruptions, which make christianity hateful or contemptible in the eyes of the heathen and Mahometan world, and hinder their conversion. No man so much lamenteth the pride, and covetousness, and laziness, and unfaithfulness of the pastors of the church, because of the doleful consequences to the gospel and the souls of men; and yet with all possible honour to the sacred office, which they thus profane. No man so heartily lamenteth the contentions and divisions among christians, and the doleful destruction of charity thereby. It grieveth him to see how much selfishness, pride, and malice, prevail with them that should shine as lights in a benighted world, and how obstinate and incurable they seem to be, against the plainest means, and humblest motions, for the church's edification and peace, Psal. cxx. 6, 7; cxxii. 6; Phil. ii. 1—4; Psal. cxix. 136; Zeph. iii. 18; Ezek. ix. 4; Psal. lxxix. 9; John ii. 17. He envieth not kings and great men their dominions, wealth, or pleasure; nor is he at all ambitious to participate in their tremendous exaltation. But the thing that his heart is set upon is, "that the kingdoms of the world may all become the kingdoms of the Lord," Rev. xi. 15; and that the gospel may every where "have free course and be glorified," and the preachers of it be encouraged, or at least "delivered from unreasonable, wicked men," 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2. Little careth he who is uppermost or conquereth in the world, or who goeth away with the preferments or riches of the earth, (supposing that he fail not of his duty to his rulers,) so that it may go well with the affairs of the gospel, and souls be but helped in the way to heaven. Let God be honoured, and souls converted and edified, and he is satisfied. This is it that maketh the times good in his account; he thinketh not as the proud and carnal church of Rome, that the times are best when the clergy are richest and greatest in the world, and overtop princes, and claim the secular power, and live in worldly pomp and pleasures; but when holiness most aboundeth, and the members of Christ are likeliest to their Head, and when multitudes of sincere believers are daily added to the church, and when the mercy and holiness of God shine forth in the numbers and purity of his saints. It is no riches

or honour that can be heaped upon himself, or any others, that make the times seem good to him, if knowledge and godliness are discountenanced and hindered, and the way to heaven is made more difficult; if atheism, infidelity, ungodliness, pride, and malignity do prevail, and truth and sincerity are driven into the dark; and when "he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey," Psal. lix. 15. When "the godly man ceaseth and the faithful fail from among the children of men; when every man speaketh vanity to his neighbour, and the poor are oppressed, and the needy sigh, and the wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted," Psal. xii. 1, 2, 5, 8. The times are good when the men are good; and evil when the men are evil, be they never so great or prosperous. As Nehemiah, when he was cup-bearer to the king himself, yet wept and mourned for the desolations of Jerusalem, Nehem. i. 3, 4; ii. 2, 3. Whoever prospereth, the times are ill when there is a "famine of the word of the Lord, and when the chief of the priests and people do transgress and mock God's messengers, and despise his word, and misuse his prophets," 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, 16; Amos viii. 11, 12. When the apostles are "charged to speak no more in the name of Christ," Acts iv. 18; v. 40. It is a text enough to make one tremble, to think into what a desperate condition the Jews were carried by a partial, selfish zeal: "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sin always, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost," 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. When the interest of themselves and their own nation and priesthood, did so far blind and pervert them, that they durst persecute the preachers of the gospel, and "forbid them to speak to the people that they may be saved;" it was a sign that "wrath was come upon them to the uttermost." A christian indeed had rather be without Jeroboam's kingdom, than make Israel to sin, and make the basest of the people priests, and stretch out his hand against the prophet of the Lord, 1 Kings xii. 30, 31; xiii. 4. He had rather labour with his hands, as Paul, and live in poverty and rags, so that the gospel may be powerfully and plentifully preached, and holiness abound, than to live in all the prosperity of the world, with the hindrance of men's salvation. He had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, than be a lord in the kingdom of Satan. He cannot rise by the ruins of the church, nor feed upon those morsels that are the price of the blood of souls.

2. And the weakest christian is in all this of the same mind, saving that private and selfish interest is not so fully overcome, nor so easily and resolutely denied, Luke xiv. 26, 33.

3. But here the hypocrite sheweth the falseness of his heart. His own interest is it that chooseth his religion; and that he may not torment himself, by being wicked in the open light, he maketh himself believe, that whatsoever is most for his own interest, is most pleasing unto God, and most for the good of souls and the interest of the gospel; so that the carnal Romish clergy can persuade their consciences, that all the darkness and superstitions of their kingdom, and all their opposition of the light of the gospel of Christ, do make for the honour of God and the good of souls; because they uphold their tyranny, wealth, and pomp, and pleasure. Or if they cannot persuade their consciences to believe so gross a lie, let church and souls speed how they will, they will favour nothing that favoureth not their interest and ends. And the interest of the flesh and Spirit,

of the world and Christ, are so repugnant, that commonly such worldlings take the serious practice of godliness for the most hateful thing, and the serious practisers of it for the most unsufferable persons, Acts vii. 57; xxi. 36; xxii. 22; xxiv. 5, 6; John xix. 15. The enmity of interests, with the enmity of nature, between the woman's and the serpent's seed, will maintain that warfare to the end of the world; in which the prince of the powers of darkness shall seem to prevail (as he did against our crucified Lord): but he shall be overcome by his own successes, and the just shall conquer by patience, when they seem most conquered. The name, and form, and image of religion, the carnal hypocrite doth not only bear, but favour, and himself accept; but the life and serious practice he abhorreth, as inconsistent with his worldly interest and ends. For these he can find in his heart, with Ahab, to hate and imprison Micahiah, and prefer his four hundred flattering prophets, 1 Kings xxii. 6, 8, 24, 27. If Luther will touch the pope's crown and the friars' bellies, they will not scruple to oppose and ruin both him and all such preachers in the world, if they were able, John xi. 48, 50; Acts v. 28.

LVI. 1. A christian indeed, is one whose holiness usually maketh him an eyesore to the ungodly world; and his charity, and peaceableness, and moderation, maketh him to be censured as not strict enough, by the superstitious and dividing sects of christians. For seeing the church hath suffered between these two sorts of opposers, ever since the suffering of Christ himself; it cannot be but the solid christian offend them both, because he hath that which both dislike. All the ungodly hate him for his holiness, which is cross to their interest and way; and all the dividers will censure him for that universal charity and moderation, which is against their factious and destroying zeal, (described, James iii.) Even Christ himself was not strict enough (in superstitious observances) for the ceremonious, zealous Pharisees. He transgressed, with his disciples, the tradition of the elders, in neglecting their observances, who transgressed the commandment of God by their tradition, Matt. xv. 2, 3. He was not strict enough in their uncharitable observation of the sabbath day, Matt. xii. 2. John, who was eminent for fasting, they said, had a devil. "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children," Matt. xi. 18, 19. And the weak christians, Rom. xiv. 1—3, did censure those that durst eat those meats and do those things, which they conceived to be unlawful. They that err themselves, and make God a service which he never appointed, will censure all as lukewarm, or temporizers, or wide-conscienced men, that err not with them, and place not their religion in such superstitious observances, as "touch not, taste not, handle not," &c. Col. ii. 18, 21—23. And the raw, censorious christians are offended with the charitable christian, because he dameth not as many and as readily as they, and shutteth not enough out of the number of believers, and judgeth not rigorously enough of their ways. In a word, he is taken by one sort to be too strict, and by the other to be too compliant or indifferent in religion; because he placeth not the kingdom of God in meats and days, and such like circumstances, but in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 15—17. And as Paul withstood Peter to his face, for drawing men to make scruple or conscience of things lawful, Gal. ii. 11—13; so is the sound christian withstood by the superstitious, for not making scruple of lawful things.

2. And the weak christian is in the same case, so long as he followeth prudent, pious, charitable guides. But if he be taken in the snares of superstition, he pleaseth the superstitious party, though he displease the world.

3. And whereas the solid christian will not stir an inch from truth and duty, to escape either the hatred of the wicked, or the bitterest censures of the sectary, or the weak; the hypocrite must needs have one party on his side: for if both condemn him, and neither applaud him, he loseth his peculiar reward, Matt. vi. 2, 5; xxiii. 5—8.

LVII. 1. The confirmed christian doth understand the necessity of a faithful ministry, for the safety of the weak, (as well as the conversion of the wicked,) and for the preservation of the interest of religion upon earth. And therefore no personal unworthiness of ministers, nor any calumnies of enemies, can make him think or speak dishonourably of that sacred office. But he reverence it as instituted by Christ; and though he loathe the sottishness and wickedness of those that run before they are sent, and are utterly insufficient or ungodly, and take it up for a living or trade only, as they would a common work; and are "sons of Belial, that know not the Lord, and cause the offering of the Lord to be abhorred," 1 Sam. ii. 2, 17; yet no such temptation shall overthrow his reverence to the office, which is the ordinance of Christ; much less will he be unthankful to those who are able and faithful in their office, and labour instantly for the good of souls, as willing to spend and be spent for their salvation. When the world abuset, and derideth, and injureth them, he is one that honoureth them both for their work and Master's sake, and the experience which he hath had of the blessing of God on their labours to himself. For he knoweth that the smiting of the shepherds, is but the devil's ancient way for the scattering of the flock; though he knoweth that "if the salt hath lost its savour, it is good for nothing, neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out, and it is trodden under foot; (he that hath ears to hear, let him hear);" Luke xiv. 34, 35; Matt. v. 13, 14. Yet he also knoweth, that he "that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward," Matt. x. 41, 42. And that "he that receiveth them, receiveth Christ, and he that despiseth them, (that are sent by him,) despiseth him," Luke x. 16. He therefore readily obeyeth those commands: Heb. xiii. 17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as those that must give account." 1 Thess. v. 12, 13, "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake, and be at peace among yourselves." 1 Tim. v. 17, "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."

2. But though the weak christian be of the same mind so far as he is sanctified, yet is he much more easily tempted into a wrangling censoriousness against his teachers, though they be never so able and holy men; and by seducers may be drawn to oppose them, or speak contemptuously of them, as the Galatians did of Paul, and some of the Corinthians; accounting him as their enemy for telling them the truth, when lately they would have plucked out their eyes to do him good, Gal. iv. 15, 16.

3. But the hypocrite is most easily engaged against them, either when they grate upon the guilt of his bosom sin, or open his hypocrisy, or plainly cross him in his carnal interest; or else when his

pride hath conquered his sobriety, and engaged him in some sect or erroneous way, which his teachers are against, and would reduce him from, John vi. 66; Mark v. 27; 2 Chron. xxv. 16.

LVIII. 1. A christian indeed is one that hath stored up such manifold experience of the fulfilling of God's promises, and the hearing of prayers, and the goodness of his holy ways, as will greatly fortify him against all temptations to infidelity, apostasy, or distrust. No one hath stronger temptations usually than he, and no one is so well furnished with weapons to resist them. The arguments of most others are fetched out of their books only; but he hath moreover a life of experience to confirm his faith, and so hath the witness in himself. He hath tried and found that God, in holiness, in faith, in prayer, which will never suffer him to forsake them. Yea, it is like that he hath upon record some such wonders in the answer of prayers, as might do much to silence an infidel himself. I am sure many christians have had such strange appearances of the extraordinary hand of God, that hath done much to destroy the remnants of their own unbelief, Psal. lxxvi. 16.

2. But the experiences of the younger, weaker christians are much shorter, and less serviceable to their faith; and they have not judgment enough to understand and make use of the dealings of God; but are ready to plead his providences unto evil ends and consequences, and to take their own passionate imaginations for the workings of the Spirit. It is ordinary with them to say, This or that was set upon my heart, or spoken to me, as if it had been some divine inspiration, when it was nothing but the troubled workings of a weak, distempered brain: and it is their own fancy and heart that saith that to them, which they think the Spirit of God within them said, Heb. v. 11—13; 2 Thess. ii. 21; John iv. 1. 1 Tim. iv. 1; 1 Cor. xii. 10; Jer. xxiii. 28, 29, 32; xxix. 8.

3. And the hypocrite wanteth those establishing experiments of the power of the gospel, and the hearing of prayers, and fulfilling of promises, and communion with Christ in the Spirit; and therefore he is the more open to the power of temptations, and a subtle disputer will easilier corrupt him and carry him away to flat apostasy; for he wanteth the root and witness in himself, Matt. xiii. 21, 22; 1 John v. 10; Heb. vi. 6, 7, 8; Luke viii. 13.

LIX. 1. A christian indeed, is one that highly valueth sanctified affections and passions, that all he doth may be done as lively as possibly he can; and also holy abilities for expression. But he much more valueth the three great essential, constant parts of the new creature within him; that is, 1. A high estimation of God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness, in his understanding, above all that can be set in any competition. 2. A resolved choice and adhesion of the will, by which he preferreth God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness, above all that can be set against them, and is fixedly resolved here to place his happiness and his hopes. 3. The main drift and endeavours of his life, in which he "seeketh first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," Matt. vi. 33; ix. 20, 21. In these three (his highest estimation, his resolved choice and complacencies, and his chief endeavours) he taketh his standing, constant evidences of his sincerity to consist; and by these he trieth himself as to his state, and not by the passionate feelings or affections of his heart; nor by his memory, or gifts, or orderly thinking, or expression. And it is these rational operations of his soul, in which he knoweth that holiness doth principally consist; and therefore he most laboureth to be strong in these. 1. To ground his judg-

ment well. 2. And to resolve to fix his will. 3. And to order his conversation aright, Psal. l. 23. Yet highly valuing sensible affections and gifts of utterance, but in subserviency to those which are the vital acts, 1 Cor. xiii.; Rom. vii. 18, &c.; vi. 16, 22; Rom. viii. 13; James ii. 9; Col. i. 9; iii. 16.

2. But the weak christian usually placeth most of his religion in the more affectionate and expressive part; he striveth more with his heart for passionate apprehensions, than for complacency and fixed resolution. He is often in doubt of his sincerity, when he wanteth the feeling, affectionate workings which he desireth, &c.; thinketh he hath no more grace than that he hath sensibility of expressive gifts; and so as he buildeth his comfort upon these unconstant signs, his comforts are accordingly unconstant. Sometimes he thinketh he hath grace, when his body or other advantages do help the excitation of his lively affections; and when the dulness of his body, or other impediments, hinder this, he questioneth his grace again, because he understandeth not aright the nature and chiefest acts of grace.

3. The hypocrite hath neither the rational nor the passionate part in sincerity; but he may go much further in the latter than in the former. A quick and passionate nature, though unsanctified, may be brought to shed more tears, and express more fervour, than many a holy person can; especially upon the excitation of some quickening sermon, or some sharp affliction, or great conviction, or at the approach of death. Few of the most holy persons can constantly retain so lively, fervent, passionate repentings, and desires and resolutions to amend, as some carnal persons have in sickness. The power of fear alone doth make them more earnest, than love maketh many a gracious soul; but when the fear is over, they are the same again. How oft have I heard a sick man most vehemently profess his resolutions for a holy life, which all have come to nothing afterward! How oft have I heard a common drunkard, with tears, cry out against himself for his sin, and yet go on in it! And how many gracious persons have I known whose judgments and wills have been groundedly resolved for God and holiness, and their lives have been holy, fruitful, and obedient, who yet could not shed a tear for sin, nor feel any very great sorrows or joys! If you judge of a man by his earnestness in some good moods, and not by the constant tenor of his life, you will think many a hypocrite to be better than most saints. Who would have thought, that had seen him only in that fit, but that Saul had been a penitent man, when he lift up his voice and wept, and said to David, "Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good; whereas I have rewarded thee evil?" 1 Sam. xiv. 16—21. A smaller matter will raise some sudden passions, than will renew the soul, and give the pre-eminence to God, and holiness, and heaven, in the judgment, will, and conversation, Hos. vi. 4; xiii. 3; Isa. lviii. 2; Matt. xiii. 20.

LX. 1. A christian indeed, confirmed in grace, is one that maketh it the business of his life to prepare for death; and delayeth not his serious thoughts of it, and preparations for it, till it surprise him; and therefore when it cometh it findeth him prepared, and he gladly entertaineth it as the messenger of his Father, to call him to his everlasting home. It is not a strange, unexpected thing to him, to hear he must die: he died daily in his daily sufferings, and mortified contempt of worldly things, and in his daily expectation of his change. He wondereth to see men at a dying time, surprised with astonishment and terror, who jovially or carelessly neglected it before, as if they had never known till then that they must

die. Or as if a few years' time were reason enough for so great a difference. For that which he certainly knoweth will be, he looketh at as if it were even at hand; and his preparation for it is more serious in his health, than other men's is on their death-bed. He useth more carefully to bethink himself what graces he shall need at a dying time, and in what case he shall then wish his soul to be; and accordingly he laboureth in his provisions now, even as if it were to be to-morrow. He verily believeth that it is incomparably "better for him to be with Christ," than to abide on earth; and therefore, though death of itself be an enemy, and terrible to nature, yet being the only passage into happiness, he gladly entertaineth it. Though he have not himself any clear and satisfactory apprehensions of the place and state of the happiness of departed souls, yet it quieteth him to know that they "shall be with Christ," and that Christ knoweth all, and prepareth and secureth for him that promised rest, John xii. 26; 2 Cor. v. 1, 7, 8; Phil. i. 21, 23; Luke xxiii. 43. Though he is not free from all the natural fears of death, yet his belief and hope of endless happiness doth abate those fears by the joyful expectation of the gain which followeth. See my book, called "The Last Enemy, and the Last Work of a Believer;" and that of "Self-denial," against the fears of death.

But especially he loveth and longeth for the coming of Christ to judgment, as knowing that then the marriage-day of the Lamb is come, and then the desires and hopes of all believers shall be satisfied: "then shall the righteous shine as stars in the kingdom of their Father;" and the hand of violence shall not reach the. Every enemy then is overcome, and all the Redeemer's work is consummated, and the kingdom delivered up unto the Father. Then shall the ungodly and the unmerciful be confounded, and the righteous filled with everlasting joy, when their Lord shall thoroughly plead their cause, and justify them against the accusations of Satan, and all the lies of his malicious instruments. O blessed, glorious, joyful day, when Christ shall come with thousands of his angels, "to execute vengeance on the ungodly world, and to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that now believe," 2 Thess. i. 8—10. When the patient followers of the Lamb shall behold him in glory, whom they have believed in, and shall see that they did not pray, or hope, or wait in vain! When Christ himself, and his sacred truth, shall be justified and glorified in the presence of the world, and his enemies' mouths for ever stopped! "When he shall convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him!" Jude 14, 15. Where then is the mouth that pleadeth the cause of infidelity and impiety? and reproached the serious holiness of believers? and made a jest of the judgments of the Lord? Then what terrors, and confusion, and shame, what fruitless repentings, will seize upon that man, that set himself against the holy ones of the Lord, and knew not the day of his visitation, and embraced the image and form of godliness, while he abhorred the power. The joys which will then possess the hearts of the justified, will be such as now no heart can comprehend. When love shall come to be glorified in the highest expression, to those that lately were so low; when all their doubts, and fears, and sorrows, shall be turned into full contenting sight, and all tears shall be wiped away, and all approaches turned into glory, and every enemy overcome, and sin destroyed, and holiness perfected, and our "vile bodies changed, and made like the glorious body of Christ," Phil. iii. 20, 21; Col. iii. 3,

4. Then will the love and work of our redemption be fully understood. And then a saint will be a saint indeed, when with Christ they shall "judge the angels and the world," 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3; and shall hear from Christ, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 34. "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord," Matt. xxv. 21. Then "every knee shall bow to Christ, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," Phil. ii. 9—11. Then sin will fully appear in its malignity, and holiness in its lustre, unto all. The proud will then be abased, and the mouths of all the wicked stopped; when they shall see, to their confusion, the glory of that Christ whom they despised, and of those holy ones whom they made their scorn. In vain will they then "knock when the door is shut, and cry, Lord, Lord, open unto us," Matt. xxv. 10—12. And in vain will they then wish, Oh that we had known the day of our visitation, that we might have died the death of the righteous, and our latter end might have been as his, Numb. xxii. 10; Rom. iii. 19; Job v. 16; Psal. cvii. 42; xxxi. 23; xiii. 6, 8.

The day of death is to true believers a day of happiness and joy; but it is much easier for them to think with joy on the coming of Christ, and the day of judgment, because it is a day of fuller joy, and soul and body shall be conjoined in the blessedness; and there is nothing in it to be so great a stop to our desires as death is, which naturally is an enemy. God hath put a love of life, and fear of death, into the nature of every sensible creature, as necessary for the preservation of themselves and others, and the orderly government of the world. But what is there in the blessed day of judgment, which a justified child of God should be averse to? Oh, if he were but sure that this would be the day, or week, or year of the coming of his Lord, how glad would the confirmed christian be! and with what longings would he be looking up, to see that most desired sight!

2. And the weak christian is so far of the same mind, that he had rather come to God by death and judgment, than not at all (except when temptations make him fear that he shall be condemned). He hath fixedly made choice of that felicity, which till then he cannot attain. He would not take all the pleasures of this world for his hopes of the happiness of that day: but yet he thinketh not of it with so strong a faith and great consolation, nor with such boldness and desire, as the confirmed christian doth; but either with much more dull security, or more perplexity and fear. His thoughts of God and of the world to come, are much more dark and doubtful, and his fears of that day are usually so great, as make his desires and joys scarce felt: only he thinketh not of it with that contempt or stupidity as the infidel or hardened sinner, nor with the terrors of those that have no God, no Christ, no hope (except when temptation bringeth him near to the borders of despair). His death indeed is unspeakably safer than the death of the ungodly, and the joys which he is entering into will quickly end the terror; but yet he hath no great comfort at the present, but only so much trust in Christ, as keepeth his heart from sinking into despair.

3. But to the hypocrite or seeming christian, death and judgment are the most unwelcome days, and the thoughts of them the most unwelcome thoughts. He would take any tolerable life on earth, at any time, for all his hopes of heaven; and that not only through the doubts of his own sin-

cerity, (which may sometimes be the case of a tempted christian,) but through the unsoundness of his belief of the life to come, or the utter unsuitableness of his soul to such a blessedness; which maketh him look at it as less desirable to him, than a life of fleshly pleasures here. All that he doth for heaven is upon mere necessity, because he knoweth that die he must, and he had rather be in heaven than in hell, though he had rather be in prosperity on earth than either. And as he taketh heaven but as a reserve or second good, so he seeketh it with reserves, and in the second place. And having no better preparations for death and judgment, no marvel if they be his greatest terror. He may possibly by his self-deceit have some abatement of his fears, and he may by pride and wit seem very valiant and comfortable at his death, to hide his fear and pusillanimity from the world. But the care of all his misery is, that he sought not first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and laid not up a treasure in heaven, but upon earth, and loved this world above God, and above the world to come; and so his heart is not set on heaven, nor his affections on things above; and therefore he hath not that love to God, to Christ, to saints, to perfect holiness, which should make that world most desirable in his eyes, and make him think unfeignedly that it is best for him to depart and live with Christ for ever. Having not the divine nature, nor having lived the divine life in walking with God, his complacency and desires are carnal, according to the nature which he hath. And this is the true cause (and not only his doubts of his own sincerity,) of his unwillingness to die, or to see the day of Christ's appearance, Matt. vi. 33, 19—21; 1 John ii. 15; Col. iii. 1—4; Rom. viii. 5—8; 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14; 2 Pet. i. 4.

And thus I have showed you from the word of God, and the nature of christianity, the true characters of the confirmed christian, and of the weak christian, and of the seeming christian.

The uses for which I have drawn up these characters, and which the reader is to make of them, are these:

1. Here the weak christian and the hypocrite may see what manner of persons they ought to be. Not only how unsafe it is to remain in a state of hypocrisy, but also how uncomfortable, and unserviceable, and troublesome it is, to remain in a state of weakness and diseasedness; what a folly (and indeed a sign of hypocrisy) is it to think, If I had but grace enough to save me, I would desire no more, or I would be well content. Are you content, if you have but life here, to difference you from the dead? If you were continually infants that must be fed, and carried, and made clean by others; or if you had a continual gout, or stone, or leprosy, and lived in continual want and misery; you would think that life alone is not enough; and that *non vivere tantum sed valere vita est*; that life is uncomfortable when we have nothing but life, and all the delights of life are gone. He that lieth in continual pain and want is weary of his life, if he cannot separate it from those calamities. He that knoweth how necessary strength is, as well as life, to do any considerable service for God, and how many pains attend the diseases and infirmities of the weak, and what great dishonour cometh to Christ and religion, by the faults and childishness of many that shall be pardoned and saved, would certainly bestir him with all possible care to get out of this sick or infant state.

2. By this you may see who are the strong chris-

tians, and who are the weak. It is not always the man of learning and free expressions, that can speak longest and wiseliest of holy things, that is the strong, confirmed christian; but he that most excelleth in the love of God and man, and in a heavenly mind and holy life. Nor is it he that is unlearned, or of a weak memory, or slow expression, that is the weakest christian; but he that hath least love to God and man, and the most love to his carnal self, and to the world, and the strongest corruptions, and the weakest grace. Many a poor day-labourer, or woman, that can scarce speak sense, is a stronger christian (as being stronger in faith, and love, and patience, and humility, and mortification, and self-denial) than many great preachers and doctors of the church.

3. You see here what kind of men they be that we call the godly; and what that godliness is which we plead for, against the malicious serpentine generation. The liars would make men believe that by godliness we mean a few affected strains, or hypocritical shows, or heartless lip-service, or singular opinions, or needless scrupulosity, or ignorant zeal; yea, a schism, or faction, or sedition, or rebellion, or what the devil please to say. If these sixty characters describe any such thing, then I will not deny, that in the way that such men call heresy, faction, schism, singularity, so worship we the God of our fathers. But if not, the Lord rebuke thee, Satan, and hasten the day when the "lying lips shall be put to silence," Psal. cxxxi. 18; cxx. 2; cix. 2. Prov. xii. 19, 22; x. 18.

4. By this also you may see how unexcusable the enemies of christianity and godliness are, and for what it is that they hate and injure it. Is there any thing in all this character of a christian, that deserveth the suspicion or hatred of the world? What harm is there in it? or what will it do against them? I may say to them of his servants as Christ did of himself, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?" John x. 32. Many heavenly graces are in the sanctified believer: for which of these do you hate and injure him? I know that goodness is so far in credit with human nature, that you will answer as the Jews did, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy," ver. 33. We hate them not for godliness, but for hypocrisy and sin. But if it be so indeed, 1. Speak not against godliness itself, nor against the strictest performance of our duty. 2. Yea, plead for godliness, and countenance and promote it, while you speak against hypocrisy and sin. 3. And choose out the hypocrite whose character is here truly set before you; and let him be the object of your enmity and distaste. Let it fall on those that are worldlings and time-servers, and will stretch their consciences to their carnal interest, and can do any thing to save their skin; and being false to Christ, can hardly be true to any of their superiors, but only in subordination to themselves. As it is said of Constantius, that he commanded that all his servants should be turned out of their places that would not renounce christianity. And when he had thereby tried them, he turned out all the apostates, and kept in the sincere, and told them, they could not be true to him, that were not true to their God and Saviour. 4. And see that you be not hypocrites yourselves. You profess yourselves christians; and what is it to be a christian indeed, you may here perceive. If any that fall under the character of hypocrites, or worse, shall vilify or hate the sincere christians as hypocrites, what a horrid aggravation of their hypocrisy will it be!

Indeed it is the best and strongest christians that have most of the hatred both of the unbelieving and

the hypocritical world. And for my own part I must confess, that the very observation of the universal, implacable enmity, which is undeniably seen throughout the world, between the woman's and the serpent's seed, (being such as is not found among any other sorts of men on other occasions,) doth not a little confirm my belief of the holy Scriptures, and seemeth to be an argument not well to be answered by any enemy of the christian cause. That it should begin between the two first brothers that ever were born in the world, and stop in nothing lower than shedding the righteous blood of Abel, for no other cause, but because the works of Cain were evil, and his brother's righteous, 1 John iii. 12, 13; and that it should go down to the prophets, and Christ, and the apostles, and primitive saints, and continue to this day throughout the earth; and that the profession of the same religion doth not alter it, but rather enrage the enmity of hypocrites against all that are serious, and sincere in the religion which they themselves profess: these are things that no good account can be given of, save only from the predictions and verities of the word of God.

5. Also you may hence perceive how exceedingly injurious hypocrites and scandalous christians are to the name of Christ, and cause of christianity and godliness in the world. The blind, malicious enemies of faith and godliness, instead of judging of them by the sacred rule, do look only to the professors, and think of religion as they think of them. If they see the professors of christianity to be covetous, proud, usurpers, time-servers, self-exalters, cruel, schismatical, rebellious, they presently charge all this upon their religion; and godliness must bear the blame, when all comes but for want of godliness and religion. And all the world hath not done so much against these and all other sins, as Christ hath done. What if Christ's disciples strive who shall be the greatest, is it long of him who girdeth himself to wash and wipe their feet? and telleth them, that "except they be converted, and become as little children, they shall not enter into the kingdom of God?" Matt. xviii. 3; and telleth them, that though "the kings of the gentiles do exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors, yet ye shall not be so?" Luke xxii. 25, 26. Is it long of him that hath said to the elders, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock?" who hath set the elders such a lesson as you find in Acts xx.; 2 Tim. iv. 1-3; 1 Tim. v. 17? If any called christians should be truly schismatical, factious, or turbulent, is it long of him that hath prayed the Father that they may all be one? John xvii. 21-23; and hath so vehemently entreated them "that they speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among them, and that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment," 1 Cor. vii. 10, and hath charged them to "mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and to avoid them?" Rom. xvi. 16, 17. If any called christians shall be seditious, or rebellious, or as the papists believe that the clergy are from under the jurisdiction of kings, and that the pope hath power to excommunicate princes, and absolve their subjects from their allegiance, and give their dominions to others, as it is decreed in the general council at the Lateran under Innocent the Third, Can. 3; is all this long of Christ, who hath paid tribute to Cæsar, and hath commanded that every soul be subject to the higher

powers, and not resist, and this for conscience' sake? Rom. xiii. 1—3; and hath bid his disciples rather to turn the other cheek, than to seek revenge? Luke vi. 29; and hath told them that they that use the sword (of rebellion, or revenge, or cruelty) shall perish by the sword? John xviii. 11. If any christians will, under pretence of religion, set up a cruel inquisition, or kill men to convert them, or become self-lovers, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, &c.; is this long of him that hath forbid all this? 2 Tim. iii. 2—5. If for their own domination, lust, or covetousness, men called christians will be worse than heathens and wolves to one another, is this long of him that hath made it his sheep-mark, by which we must be known to all men to be his disciples, that "we love one another?" John xiii. 35; and hath told them, that if they "bite and devour one another, they shall be devoured one of another," Gal. v. 15; and hath blessed the merciful, as those that shall find mercy, Matt. v. 7; and hath told men that what they do to his little ones, shall be taken as if it were done to himself, Matt. xxv.; and hath commanded the "strong to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves," Rom. xv. 1—3; and "to receive one another as Christ received us," ver. 7; and hath told those that offend but "one of his little ones," that it "were good for that man that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea," Matt. xviii. 6; and hath told him that "smiteth his fellow-servants, that his Lord will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," chap. xxiv. 48—51. I wonder what men would have Christ do, to free himself and the christian religion from the imputation of the sins of the hypocrites, and the weak, distempered christians. Would they have him yet make stricter laws, (when they hate these for being so strict already,) or would they have him condemn sinners to more grievous punishment, when they are already offended at the severity of his threatenings? Oh what an unrighteous generation are his enemies, that blame the law, because men break it, and blame religion, because many are not religious enough. As if the sun must be hated, because that shadows and dungeons do want light; or life and health must be hated, because many are sick and pained by their diseases! But Christ will shortly stop all the mouths of these unreasonable men; and oh how easily will he justify himself, his laws, and all his holy ways, when all iniquity shall be for ever silent! And though "it must needs be that offences come, yet woe to the world because of offences, and woe to the man by whom they come," Matt. xviii. 7; Luke xvii. 1.

The wrong that Christ receiveth from hypocrites and scandalous christians (of all ranks and places) is not to be estimated. These are the causes that christianity and godliness are so contemptible in the eyes of the world; that Jews, and heathens, and Mahometans, are still unconverted and deriders of the faith; because they see such scandalous tyranny and worship among the papists, and such scandalous lives among the greatest part of professed christians in the world: whereas, if the papal tyranny were turned into the christian ministry, (Luke xxii. 25—27; 1 Tim. v. 17,) and their irrational fopperies, and historical, hypocritical worship, were changed into a reverent, rational, and spiritual worship; and the cruel, carnal, worldly lives of men called chris-

tians, were changed into self-denial, love, and holiness; in a word, if christians were christians indeed, and such as I have here described from their rule, what a powerful means would it be of the conversion of all the unbelieving world! Christianity would then be in the eye of the world, as the sun in its brightness, and the glory of it would dazzle the eyes of beholders, and draw in millions to inquire after Christ, who are now driven from him by the sins of hypocrites and scandalous believers.

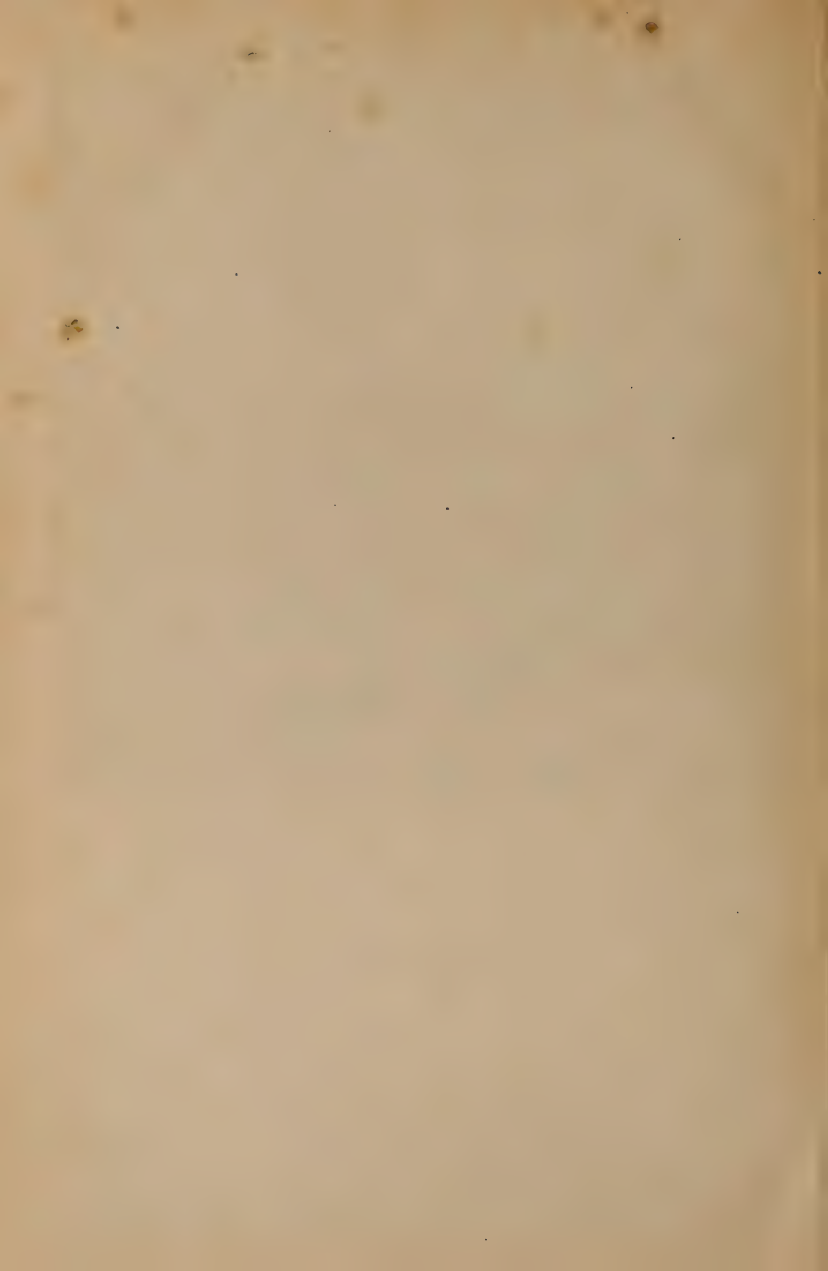
And this doth not contradict what I said before of the enmity of the world to holiness, and that the best are most abused by the ungodly. For even this enmity must be rationally cured, as by the error of reason it is fed. God useth by the power of intellectual light, to bring all those out of darkness whom he saveth, and so bringeth them from the power of Satan to himself, Acts xxvi. 18. Men hate not holiness as good, but as misconceived to be evil. Evil, I say, to them, because it is opposite to the sensual pleasures, which they take to be their chiefest good. And the way of curing their enmity, is by showing them their error; and that is, by showing them the excellency and necessity of that which they unreasonably distaste, Acts xxvi. 9—11, 14, 19; Luke xv. 13—16; Acts ii. 36, 37.

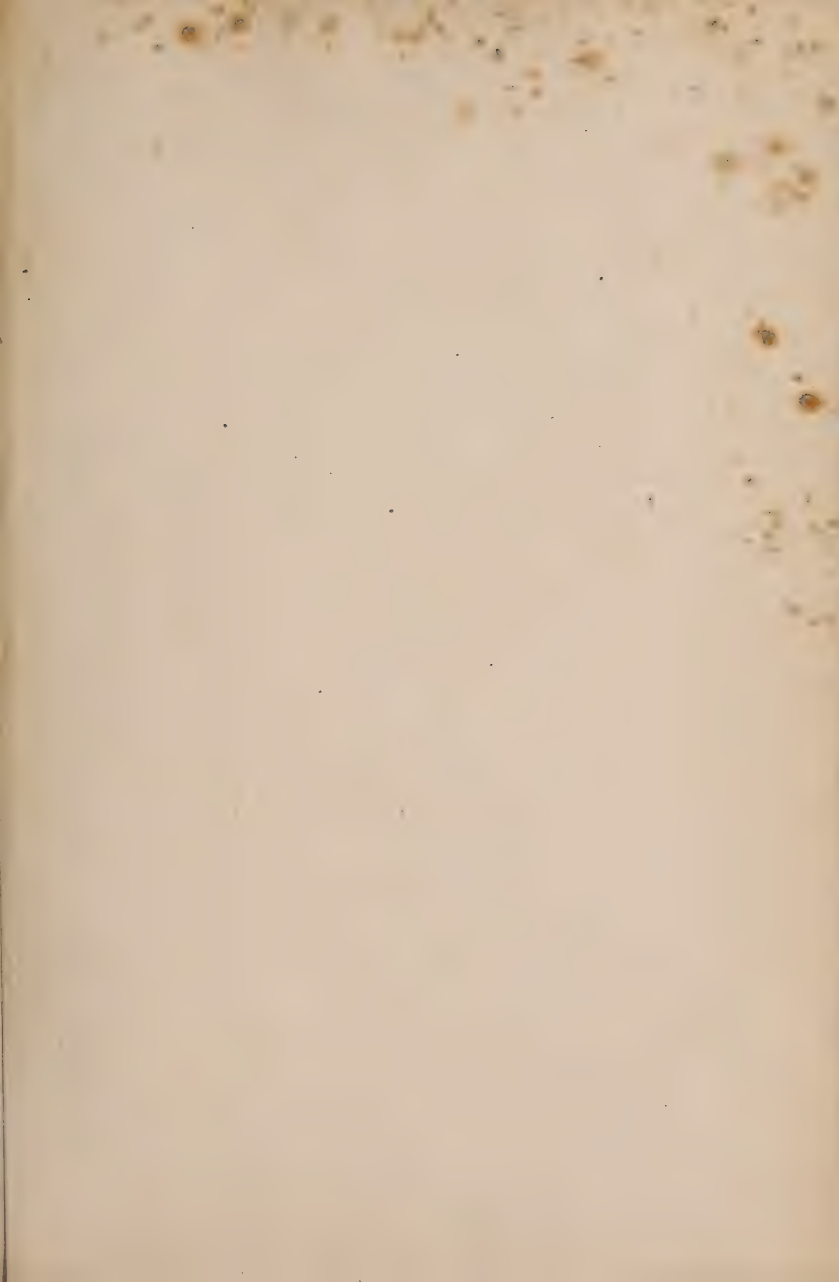
6. Lastly, in these characters you have some help in the work of self-examination, for the trial both of the truth and strength of grace. I suppose it will be objected, that in other treatises I have reduced all the infallible marks of grace to a smaller number. To which I answer, I still say, that the predominancy or prevalency of the interest of God as our God, and Christ as our Saviour, and the Spirit as our Sanctifier, in the estimation of the understanding, the resolved choice of the will, and the government of the life, against all the worldly interest of the flesh, is the only infallible sign of a justified, regenerate soul. But this whole hath many parts, and it is abundance of particulars materially in which this sincerity is to be found. Even all the sixty characters which I have here named, are animated by that one, and contained in it. And I think to the most the full description of a christian in his essential and integral parts, (yet showing which are indeed essential,) is the best way to acquaint them with the nature of christianity, and to help them in the trial of themselves. And as it were an abuse of human nature, for a painter to draw the picture of a man without arms, or legs, or nose, or eyes, because he may be a man without them; so would it have been in me to draw only a maimed picture of a christian, because a maimed christian is a christian. Yet, because there are so many maimed christians in the world, I have also showed you their lamentable defects; not in a manner which tendeth to encourage them in their sins and wants under pretence of comforting them, but in that manner which may best excite them to their duty, in order to their recovery, without destroying their necessary supporting comforts.

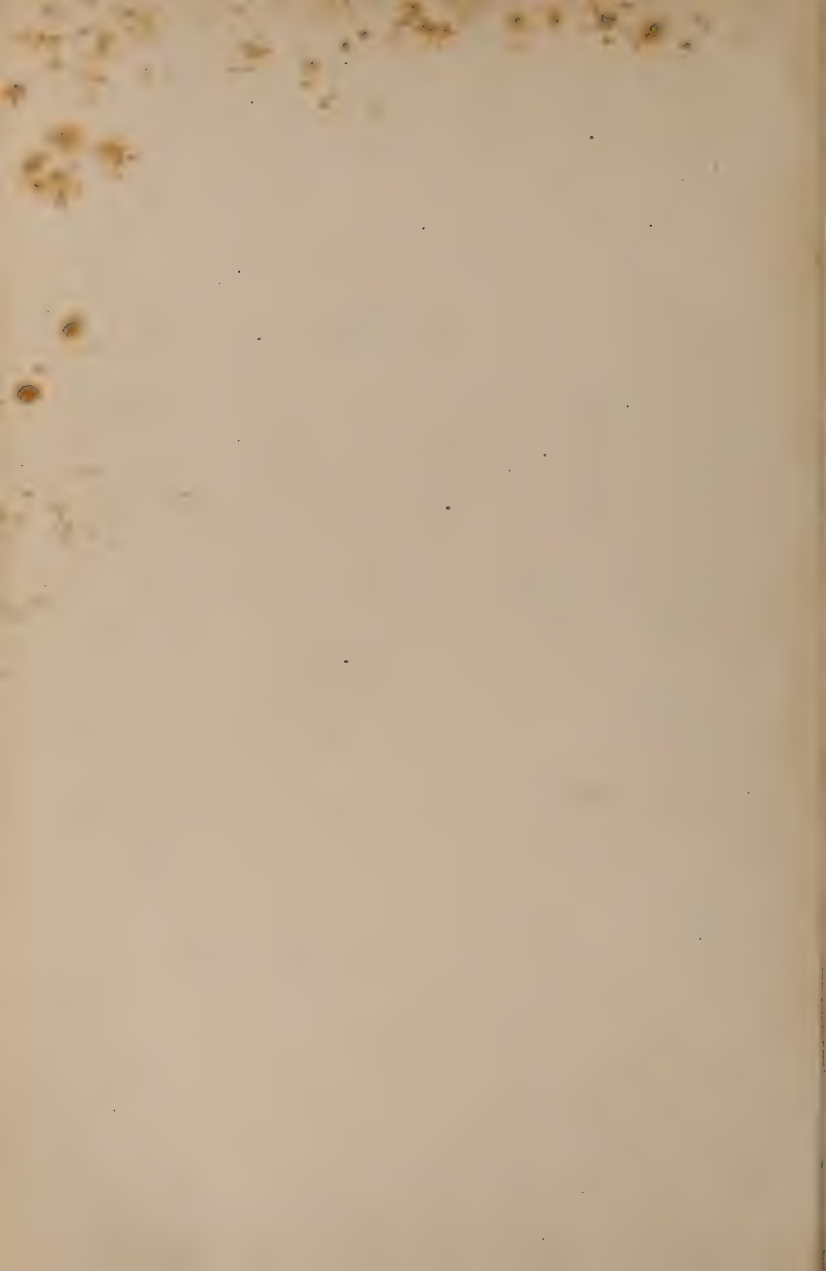
O happy church, and state, and family, which are composed of such confirmed christians, where the predominant temperature is such as I have here described! Yea, happy is the place where magistrates and ministers are such; who are the vital parts of state and church, and the instruments appointed to communicate these perfections to the rest! But how much more happy is the new Jerusalem, the city of the living God, where the perfected spirits of the just in perfect life, and light, and love, are perfectly beholding, and admiring, and praising, and pleasing the eternal God, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier for ever! where the least and meanest is

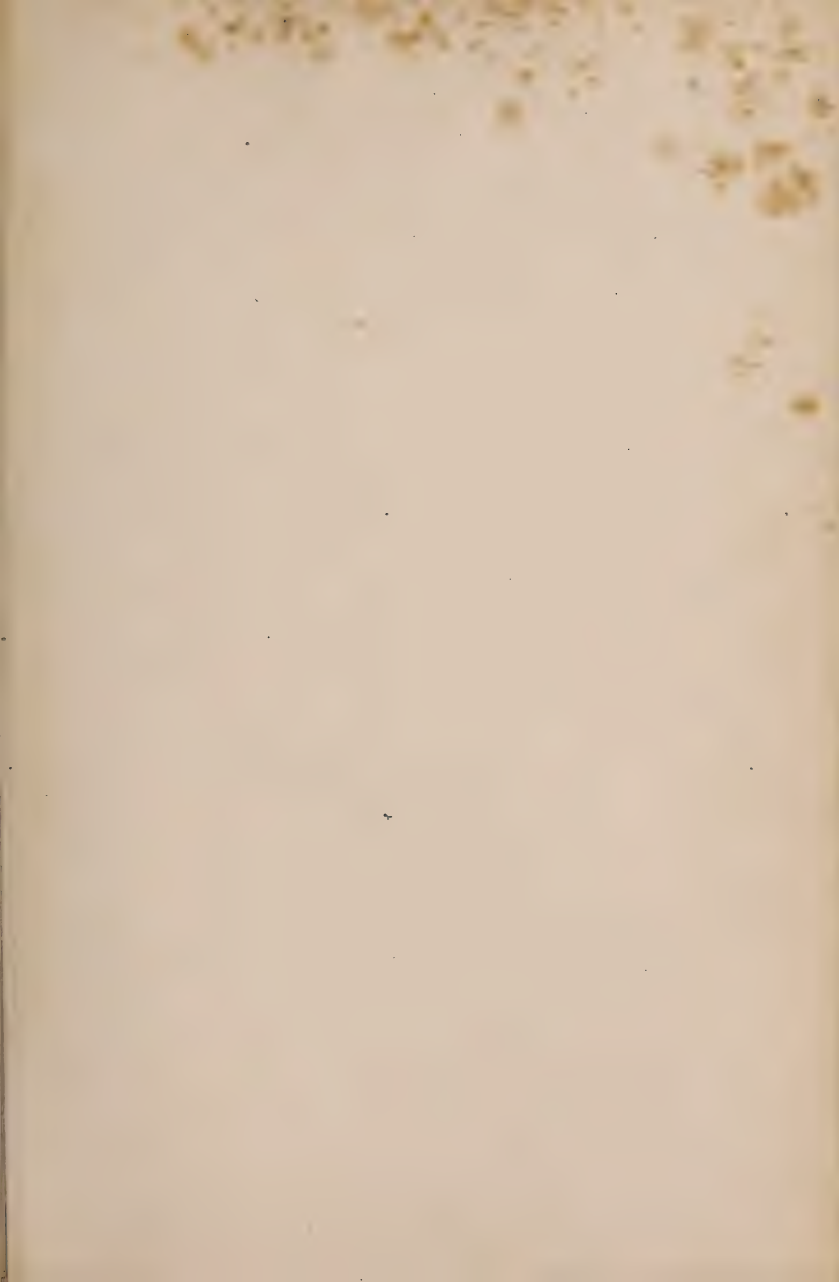
greater and more perfect than the confirmed christian here described; and where hypocrisy is utterly excluded, and imperfection ceaseth, with scandal, censures, uncharitableness, division, and all its other sad effects; and where the souls that thirsted after righteousness shall be fully satisfied, and love God more than they can now desire, and never grieve themselves or others with their wants, or weaknesses, or misdoings any more! And, O blessed day, when our blessed Head shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, and shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that now believe; whose weakness here occasioned his dishonour, and their own contempt! When the seed of grace is grown up into glory, and all the world, whether they will or not, shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not; between the clean and the unclean, and between him that sweareth and him that feareth an oath. And though now "our life is hid with Christ in God," and it yet "appeareth not (to the sight of ourselves or others) what we shall be; yet then when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory," Heb. xii. 22, 23; Rev. xxii. 3—5, 14, 15; xxi. 3, 4, 8; 2 Thess. i. 9, 10; Matt. v. 4, 6; Mal. iii. 18; Eccles. ix. 2; 1 John iii. 2, 3; Col. iii. 3, 4. Away then, my soul, from this dark, deceitful, and vexatious world! Love not thy diseases, thy fetters and calamities. Groan daily to thy Lord, and earnestly groan to be clothed upon with thy house that is from heaven, 2 Cor. v. 2, 4, that mortality may be swallowed up of life! Join in the harmonious desires of the creatures, who groan to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, Rom. viii. 20—22. "Abide in him, and walk in righteousness; that, when he shall appear, thou mayest have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming," 1 John ii. 28, 29. Join not with the evil servants, who say in their hearts, "Our Lord delayeth his coming, and begin to smite their fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; whose Lord shall come in a day when they look not for him, and in an hour that they are not aware of, and shall cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites, where shall

be weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xxiv. 48—51. O watch and pray that thou enter not into temptation! and be patient, for the Judge is at the door! Lift up thy head with earnest expectation, O my soul, for thy redemption draweth near! Rejoice in hope before thy Lord, for he cometh; he cometh to judge the world in righteousness and truth. Behold, he cometh quickly, though faith be failing, and iniquity abound, and love waxeth cold, and scoffers say, Where is the promise of his coming? Make haste, O thou whom my soul desireth, and come in glory as thou first camest in humility, and conform them to thyself in glory whom thou madest conformable to thy sufferings and humility! Let the holy city, new Jerusalem, be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and let God's tabernacle be with men, that he may dwell with them and be their God, and wipe away their tears; and death, and sorrow, and crying, and pain may be no more, but former things may pass away! Keep up our faith, our hope, our love! and daily vouchsafe us some beams of thy directing, consolatory light in this our darkness! and be not as a stranger to thy scattered flock, in this desolate wilderness! But let them hear thy voice, and find thy presence, and have such conversation with thee in heaven, in the exercise of faith, and hope, and love, which is agreeable to their low and distant state. Testify to their souls that thou art their Saviour and Head, and that they abide in thee, by the Spirit which thou hast given them, abiding and overcoming in them, and as thy agent preparing them for eternal life. O let not our darkness, nor thy strangeness, feed our odious unbelief! O show thyself more clearly to thy redeemed ones! And come and dwell in our hearts by faith! And by holy love, let us dwell in God, and God in us, that we grope not after him, as those that worship an unknown God. O save us from temptation! And if the messenger of Satan be sent to buffet us, let thy strength be manifest in our weakness, and thy grace appear sufficient for us. And give us the patience which thou tellest us we need, that having done thy will, we may inherit the promise. And bring us to the sight and fruition of our Creator, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

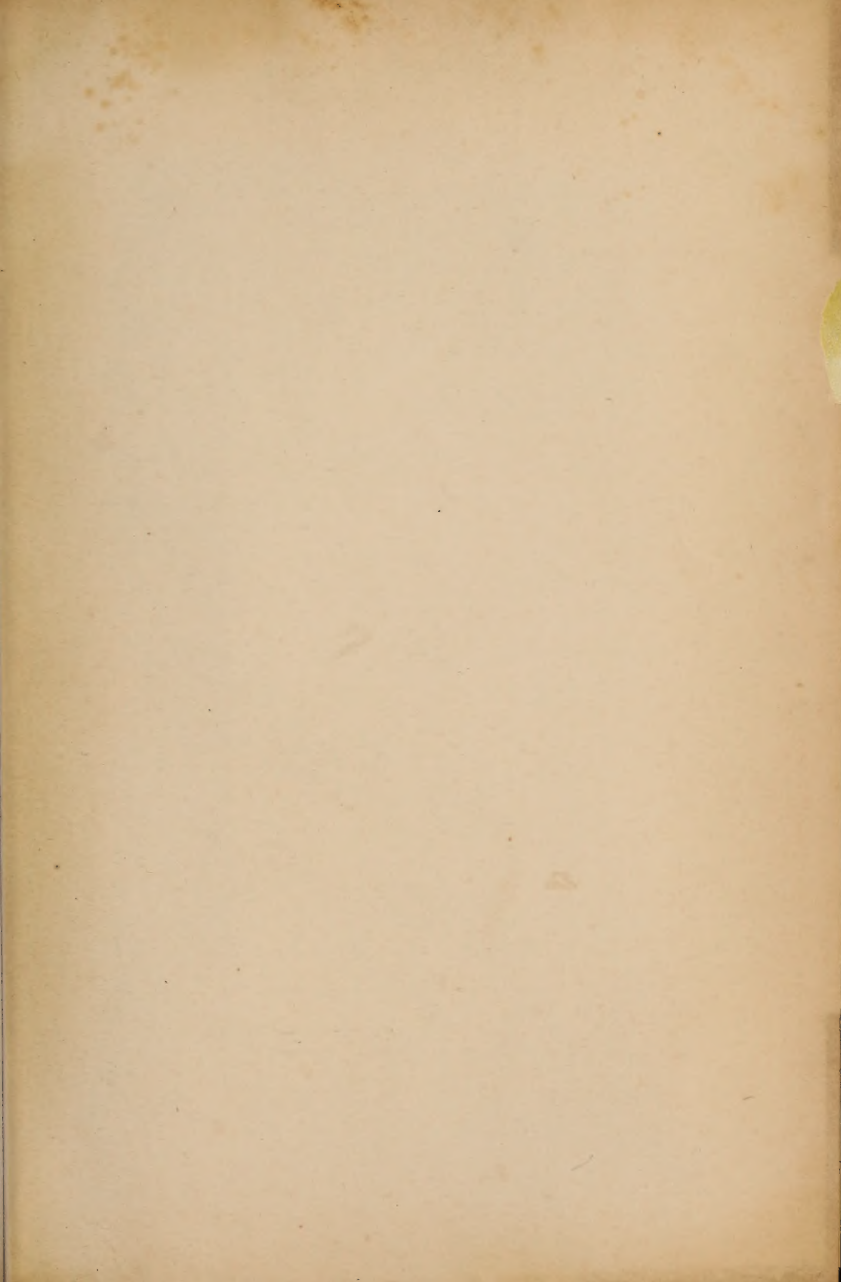












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